

Ypres & the Menin Gate

Suggested Two-Day Itinerary via Dover

The tour is designed to give young cadets an overview of the events of the Great War, to explain the regimental system, the nature of war and to explain what soldiers fought for.

The tour will look at the nature of remembrance and pilgrimage and the main focus of the visit will be the Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate where it is expected several of the group will be part of the wreath-laying party.

The VC decoration will be explained and an appropriate grave visited.

Day One: Outward Travel & Ypres

Pick-up at 06.00 hours (approx)
Travel via Eurotunnel to Ypres.

Visit Hooze to understand its strategic importance and the necessity of holding Ypres

The Menin Road & Hellfire Corner
Check-in at hostel for evening meal
20.00 hours: Last Post at the Menin Gate
Return to hostel

Day Two: Passchendaele

09.00 hours: Depart after breakfast to visit:
Langemark German Cemetery
Pilckem Ridge
Essex Farm Cemetery
Essex Farm Dug-Outs
Lunch Period in Ypres
Artillery Wood Cemetery

Passchendaele Ridge
Tyne Cot Cemetery

Depart for Eurotunnel to UK & return to drop-off point

Scroll down for further details about location visited on this tour



Background to War

The Alliance System in Europe
The Causes of the First World War
The Schlieffen Plan & "Race to the Sea"
The Regimental System
How the War Came to Ypres
The First Battle of Ypres
Importance of the High Ground
The Geography of the Ypres Salient

Remembrance

Trench Warfare & Attrition

Stalemate & Attrition
The Role of the BEF in 1914
The First Gas Attack (April, 1915)
For Valour: The Victoria Cross
Medics & Casualty Evacuation
Nature of Field Burials & Work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Haig's Flanders Offensive
Reflections on War
The Development of Tactics
Winning the War

Precise pick-up & drop-off times will be indicated on Final Tour Details

For a free quotation:

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Tour Overview

- Historical context
- Chronology of events
- Britain's four armies
- Strategy & tactics
- Terrain & weather
- Weapons
- Styles of leadership
- Cemetery study
- Key turning points
- The Victoria Cross
- Significant locations

Tour Price Includes

- Pick-up & drop-off
- Tour guide
- Battlefield notes & maps
- 49-seat executive coach
- Return Eurotunnel to Dover
- Full-board accommodation

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Battlefield Tours



Official Tour Operators to the Normandy Veterans' Association

Hooge

This small area of high ground was constantly fought over during the Great War because of the commanding views it offered over the British lines to the south-east of Ypres.

Langemark German Cemetery

The *Kameradengrab* (mass grave) and the *Alter Friedhof* (old cemetery) contain many of the casualties of the Student Battalions who encountered the professionals of the British Expeditionary Force during the First Battle of Ypres. Other German casualties were concentrated here after the original front line cemeteries were removed. In all, with the addition of the new cemetery around bunkers of the former Langemark Line, the remains of over 44,000 German dead are buried here. Held by the British in 1914, Langemark fell to the Germans in 1915, was recaptured by the 20th Light Division in 1917 and changed hands on two further occasions in 1918.

Pilckem Ridge

Pilckem was the scene of the first German Gas Attack in April 1915 during the opening phase of the Second Battle of Ypres. A Memorial to the French and Algerian troops who died here marks this place. The Germans failed to press home their advantage before the breach was filled by the Canadians who held firm between this point and the village of St Juliaan. On the opening day of the Passchendaele Offensive, the 38th Welsh Division was in the line near this point (including Yorkshire Trench – see below) with the task of capturing Langemark.

Essex Farm

During the Second Battle of Ypres, the Canadian army surgeon John McCrae wrote “In Flanders Fields” here in 1915. The site of an Advanced Dressing Station, the surgeons’ dug-outs, protected by the bank of the Yser Canal, can still be seen. The second youngest British casualty of the war, Private Strudwick is buried here. Private Barratt VC is also buried at Essex Farm.

The Menin Road & “Hellfire Corner”

The Menin Road was one of the main approaches for troops going up to the front. “Hellfire Corner” was so-called because, as a major junction (a crossroads during the Great War) it was regularly shelled by German artillery. By the end of the war it was one of the most frequently shelled places on Earth. A Demarcation Stone near the modern roundabout marks the high-watermark of the German advance in 1918.

The Menin Gate

This Memorial, designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield, commemorates 55,000 Missing of the Ypres Salient. Inaugurated in 1927, it was the first Memorial to the Missing completed by the (then) Imperial War Graves Commission. The Last Post is sounded every evening at 20.00 hours in a ceremony commemorating the fallen of the Salient.

Artillery Wood Cemetery

The Germans held the east bank of the Yser Canal until the opening phase of the Battle of Passchendaele, when it was captured by the Guards Division. They began the cemetery and it continued to be used as a front line battlefield cemetery until March 1918. At the end of the war it contained 141 burials, including 42 artillerymen. After the Armistice it was greatly enlarged as field burials from the surrounding battlefield and smaller burial sites were transferred to Artillery Wood. There are now 1,307 casualties of the First World War buried here of whom 506 are unknown. Of the latter, the names of 12 men are known and they are commemorated by a dozen special memorials. The Irish poet Francis Ledwidge and Welsh poet “Hedd Wyn” (Ellis Evans) are buried in the cemetery. The cemetery was designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield.

Passchendaele Ridge & Tyne Cot Cemetery

Tyne Cot was so-named because of the similarity in appearance of the German machine-gun bunkers to the “Tyne Cotts” or crofters’ cottages of the north-east of England. It stands on the forward slope of Passchendaele Ridge and is the largest British War Cemetery in the world with nearly 12,000 graves, of which nearly two-thirds are unknown. The names of 35,000 missing are recorded on the panels at the rear. The remains of two bunkers which formed part of the German Flanders I Line still stand within the cemetery; a third is now under the Cross of Sacrifice. The small original battlefield cemetery is situated behind the central cross. A new Visitor Centre to the rear of the cemetery offers excellent views towards Ypres and across the Passchendaele battlefield.

