

Fromelles and Pozieres Anniversary Tour

10 Nights 14-24 July 2012

This moving tour through the former battlefields of the First World War commemorates the anniversary of the Battles of Fromelles and Pozieres in July 1916. This is a very special opportunity to pay our respects to the more than 30,000 Australians who were killed or wounded in these two great battles. Our 10-night tour visits all the key Australian battlefield sites as well as Paris, Champagne, Reims and Bruges. On July 19 we will spend the day at Fromelles, commemorating the anniversary of the disastrous battle. On July 23 we will spend the morning on the battlefield of Pozieres, commemorating the anniversary of that monumental battle. Our Historian on this special journey is First World War expert Will Davies.



DAY 1 14 July – Paris

STAR INCLUSIONS

- ★ 4-star central Paris hotel
- ★ Welcome drink ★ Dinner

Welcome to our Western Front tour, and a moving journey to honour the fallen Diggers of Fromelles and Pozieres. After checking in to our Paris hotel, meet the rest of the group in the lobby at 6pm as we come together for a welcome drink. This is an excellent opportunity to get to know your fellow passengers, Tour Manager and War Historian. After drinks, we'll enjoy a welcome dinner in the hotel. (D) **Overnight: Paris**

DAY 2 15 July – Paris

STAR INCLUSIONS

- ★ Paris sightseeing tour ★ Traditional French restaurant lunch

Spend the day exploring Paris with the group. In the morning we will enjoy a Panoramic Tour of the city's iconic sights. The Eiffel Tower, Champs Elysées, the Arc de Triomphe, the Louvre and Notre Dame will all be seen. We will also enjoy a traditional French restaurant lunch. Our afternoon and evening is at leisure. (B, L) **Overnight: Paris**

DAY 3 16 July – Paris to Ypres

STAR INCLUSIONS

- ★ Champagne tasting at Moët & Chandon ★ Free time in Reims ★ Central 4-star hotel in Ypres ★ Dinner

Our tour in the footsteps of the Anzacs begins today. After breakfast we depart Paris for Ypres, just across the Belgian border and our home for the next five nights. On the way we will stop at Epernay and visit the famous Champagne house of Moët & Chandon. After a guided tour of the cellars and a tasting of their famous bubbly, we will travel to Reims, the historic city in the heart of the Champagne district. While there we will see the magnificent cathedral where the kings of France were once crowned. After leaving Reims we will visit the inspiring Australian 2nd Division Memorial and see the remains of trenches captured by Australian troops on the 1918 battlefield of Mont St Quentin. After checking into our hotel we will enjoy dinner. (B, D) **Overnight: Ypres**

DAY 4 17 July – Ypres

STAR INCLUSIONS

- ★ Walking tour around Ypres
- ★ In Flanders Fields Museum
- ★ Participation in the Last Post service at the Menin Gate

Between 1914 and 1918 the town of Ypres was the centre of four great battles, and was completely destroyed by shellfire. Today the rebuilt town is one of the iconic places on the Western Front. This morning Will Davies will take us on a walking tour around the town, visiting key sights from the war such as the magnificent Cloth Hall, St George's Chapel, St Martin's Cathedral, the Menin Gate and Ramparts Cemetery. After some free time for lunch, we will visit the outstanding In Flanders Fields Museum, a provocative collection of relics and displays that chronicles the fighting in Flanders and the personal stories of the people involved. This evening we will return to the Menin Gate, where the names of 54,000 missing British and Commonwealth soldiers are recorded, for the moving Last Post ceremony. The Ypres fire brigade has performed this bugle ceremony every day and in all weather since 1928. The only interruption was during the four years of German occupation during the Second World War – the ceremony recommenced on



OPPOSITE: Taxi near the Arc de Triomphe, Paris; Australian artillerymen near Bullecourt, 1917.
 ABOVE: Australian National Memorial, Villers-Bretonneux; Australian soldiers about to attack at Fromelles.

the day the town was liberated. Two of our passengers will be invited to lay a wreath on behalf of the group. (B) **Overnight: Ypres**

DAY 5 18 July – The Ypres Salient

STAR INCLUSIONS

- ★ Full day touring the Australian battlefields in the Ypres Salient
- ★ Passchendaele Museum
- ★ Lunch and presentation with Johan Vandewalle

The Ypres Salient was a bulge in the front line that curved around Ypres for most of the war. More than a million men were killed or wounded trying to gain control of this small patch of ground. Today we will explore the Australian battlefields in the Salient, places where the Anzacs made history in 1917. Our first stop will be the Passchendaele Museum, which features a recreated British dugout. We will then visit the 5th Australian Division Memorial at Polygon Wood and see the graves of Private Hunter and Sergeant Calder, the two Australian soldiers who featured in Mat McLachlan's documentary *Lost in Flanders*. Lunch is included at Cafe de Dreve, where the owner, Johan Vandewalle, will tell us about his discovery of the bodies of Private Hunter and Sergeant Calder in a Belgian field. We then get a taste of the devastation caused by four years of continuous artillery fire at the cratered landscape of Hill 60, before visiting Tyne Cot, the world's largest Commonwealth war cemetery. Tyne Cot sits in the heart of one of the most horrific battlefields of the war – Passchendaele. Our final stop today is at the German Cemetery at Langemarck, where we will learn about the men on the other side of the line. As we drive back to our hotel we will see the magnificent Canadian memorial at Langemarck, marking the site where poison gas was first used in the war. (B, L) **Overnight: Ypres**

DAY 6 19 July – Fromelles Anniversary

STAR INCLUSIONS

- ★ Full day on the Fromelles battlefield
- ★ Anniversary commemorations
- ★ Picnic lunch

This morning we will drive across the French border to Fromelles, where we will join local people and visitors to commemorate the anniversary of the battle (details of commemorative events to be advised). We will then dedicate the rest of the day to exploring the Fromelles battlefield and gaining a better understanding of this ill-fated attack that cost so many young lives. We will see the Australian Memorial Park, VC Corner Cemetery (the only all-Australian cemetery in France), Le Trou Aid Post Cemetery, Rue Petillon Cemetery and also the site of the mass grave where the soldiers lay for 90 years at Pheasant Wood and the new cemetery where they now lie. In the afternoon we will return to Ypres and spend the evening at leisure. A packed lunch will be included today. (B, L) **Overnight: Ypres**

DAY 7 20 July – Bruges

STAR INCLUSIONS

- ★ Tour to beautiful Bruges
- ★ Essex Farm Cemetery

Today we have the opportunity to explore Bruges, one of Europe's most charming medieval cities. Wander the cobbled streets, take a cruise on one of the city's enchanting canals, ride through the picturesque squares in a horse and cart or sample the lace boutiques, chocolate shops and cafes that make Bruges famous. In the evening we will return to Ypres, stopping en route to visit Essex Farm Cemetery, where John McCrae wrote *In Flanders Fields*, probably the most famous poem of the war. (B) **Overnight: Ypres**

DAY 8 21 July – Ypres to the Somme

STAR INCLUSIONS

- ★ Touring of the battlefields between Ypres and the Somme including Messines, Vimy Ridge and Bullecourt
- ★ Picnic lunch
- ★ Central Amiens Hotel
- ★ Dinner

Today we leave Ypres and travel south to the battlefields of the Somme. En route we will visit the battlefield of Messines, where 19 huge mines were detonated beneath the German defenders in June 1917. Crossing the border into France, we will visit the magnificent Canadian memorial at Vimy Ridge and spend time wandering the maze of preserved trenches on the site. Our final stop of the day is the battlefield of Bullecourt, where Australia lost 10,000 men in two great battles in 1917. We will pay our respects to them at the Slouch Hat memorial in the centre of town and the Australian Memorial Park on the site of the German front line. After arriving in Amiens we will enjoy dinner in our hotel. A packed picnic lunch has also been included today. (B, L, D)

Overnight: Amiens

DAY 9 22 July – The Somme

STAR INCLUSIONS

- ★ Full day touring the Australian battlefields of the Somme
- ★ Victoria School Museum
- ★ Traditional Somme restaurant lunch

Few names carry as much infamy as the Somme, and today we will explore the region that became synonymous with the carnage of the First World War. Our journey begins at the Victoria School in Villers-Bretonneux where we will see the sign that entreats the children of Villers-Bretonneux to 'Never Forget Australia'. We will also visit Adelaide Cemetery, where Australia's Unknown Soldier

lay for 75 years before being returned to Australia in 1993. Next we will travel to the imposing Australian National Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux, which bears the names of almost 11,000 Australians missing in France. The memorial, set in the middle of one of Australia's most famous battlefields of the war, is where the Anzac Day Dawn Service is held each year. We will also visit the Australian Memorial Park on the battlefield of Hamel, scene of the great victory orchestrated by General John Monash in July 1918. After a delightful traditional lunch in the town of Albert, we will begin our tour of the 1916 battlefields of the Somme. Our first stop is the huge Lochnagar Crater, blown by the British beneath the German lines on the first day of the Battle of the Somme. We will then visit the Thiepval Memorial, where the names of 72,000 British soldiers missing from the Somme fighting are recorded. Later we will explore the trenches at the Newfoundland Memorial Park. Returning to Amiens, our evening is free. (B, L)

Overnight: Amiens

DAY 10 23 July – Pozieres Anniversary

STAR INCLUSIONS

★ Full morning on the Pozieres battlefield ★

Anniversary commemorations ★ Seine river cruise with dinner and entertainment

Our last day on the battlefields will be one of the most moving. We will spend the entire morning on the battlefield of Pozieres, commemorating the battle that cost so many Australian lives. We will explore all the key sites on the battlefield including the Australian 1st Division Memorial, the Windmill Memorial, the Tank Memorial, Pozieres British Cemetery and Mouquet Farm. We will also have time to walk along Dead Man's Road to the Chalk Pit, a place that many veterans remembered with dread. After this memorable morning we will farewell the battlefields and return to Paris. In the evening we will join a cruise along the Seine River, where we will enjoy a farewell dinner and musical entertainment. This will be a wonderful opportunity to share the memories of our special tour with our travelling companions while cruising past the landmarks of Paris bathed in light. (B, D) **Overnight: Paris**

DAY 11 24 July – Paris

STAR INCLUSIONS

★ Assistance with hotel check-out

Sadly our Western Front Tour ends this morning after breakfast. The journey may be over, but the memories of the men who gave so much at Fromelles and Pozieres will last a lifetime. (B)

YOUR HISTORIAN

(see page 41 for more information about our leading War Historians)



Will Davies

Will Davies has been a documentary producer for over 30 years. He is the author of six books including the bestseller *Somme Mud* (editor), *In the Footsteps of Private Lynch* and *Beneath Hill 60*.



Your tour includes

- ★ The best historian – Will Davies is a Western Front expert. There is no better guide to travel with around the battlefields
- ★ All excursions, scenic drives and sightseeing as described in the itinerary
- ★ A full day at Fromelles on the anniversary of the battle (details of commemorative events to be confirmed)
- ★ A full morning at Pozieres on the anniversary of the battle (details of commemorative events to be confirmed)
- ★ Educational kit – follow the service of an Australian soldier as you travel across the battlefields
- ★ 10 nights' 3- and 4-star accommodation
- ★ Hotel portorage
- ★ Breakfast daily, 5 lunches, 4 dinners
- ★ Welcome drink in Paris
- ★ Services of a Tour Manager, Driver plus a WWI War Historian and experienced local guides
- ★ Extensive touring of the WWI battlefields
- ★ All entrance fees as per the itinerary
- ★ Travel by first-class air-conditioned coach
- ★ Local taxes and end of tour tips to your Tour Manager and Driver
- ★ Commemorative cap
- ★ Autographed copy of Mat McLachlan's definitive guide to the Western Front, *Walking with the Anzacs*
- ★ Quality travel bag

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*Conditions apply



Mat McLachlan Battlefield Tours is the tour operator for the NSW Premier's Anzac Scholarships and the Victorian Premier's Spirit of Anzac Prize 2011.



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