

Western Front Explorer Tour

4 Days Multiple departures, March-October

This 4-day tour provides the perfect opportunity to explore the Australian battlefields of the Western Front in comfort and convenience. The tour begins and ends in Paris and visits all the main battlefield sites in the Somme, Flanders and the Ypres Salient. Choose from a range of departure dates from March to October. Each tour is escorted by an expert WWI Historian.



DAY 1 – PARIS TO YPRES

STAR INCLUSIONS

★ Pick-up in Paris ★ Deluxe Touring Coach ★ Touring of Mont St Quentin and Ypres ★ Services of a leading Western Front Historian ★ Participation in wreath laying at the Menin Gate

Welcome to our Western Front tour! The tour group will assemble at our central meeting point in Paris at 8.30am for a 9am departure. We will leave Paris on our deluxe touring coach and drive north towards the Belgian border. Our first stop will be the battlefield of Mont St Quentin, where Australian troops won a great victory in September 1918. We will visit the 2nd Division Memorial and preserved trenches on the site. We will then travel to Ypres, our home for the next two nights, and check into our central 4-star hotel. Between 1914 and 1918 Ypres was completely destroyed by shellfire, and came to symbolise the horror of the First World War. This afternoon we will enjoy a walking tour with our Historian around the rebuilt town, visiting key landmarks from the war. This evening we will visit the Menin Gate to take part in the moving Last Post ceremony. Two passengers will be invited to lay a wreath on behalf of our group.

Overnight: Ypres

DAY 2 – THE YPRES SALIENT

STAR INCLUSIONS

★ Breakfast ★ Full day touring the battlefields of the Ypres Salient ★ Passchendaele Museum ★ Lunch ★ Presentation by 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, a provocative collection of relics and displays that chronicles the fighting in Flanders and the personal stories of the people involved. 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 spot where poison gas was first used in the war. Our evening is free to enjoy dinner in one of Ypres' outstanding restaurants. (B, L)

Overnight: Ypres

DAY 3 – YPRES TO THE SOMME

STAR INCLUSIONS

★ Breakfast ★ Touring of the battlefields between Ypres and the Somme including Fromelles, Vimy Ridge and Bullecourt ★ Picnic lunch ★ Central Amiens Hotel

Today we leave Ypres and travel south to the battlefields of the Somme. Our first stop is the battlefield of Messines, scene of a huge Allied attack in 1917 that was heralded by the explosion of 19 massive mines. We will then travel to French Flanders, and the very moving 1916 battlefield of Fromelles, where Australia lost 5533 men during its first action on the Western Front. While here we will visit the Australian Memorial Park, VC Corner

Cemetery (the only all-Australian cemetery in France), the site of the recently discovered Australian mass grave at Pheasant Wood and the brand new Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Cemetery, where 250 Australian and British soldiers were laid to rest in 2010. Leaving Fromelles, 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 checking in to our central Amiens hotel we will have free time to enjoy dinner at one of the city's charming riverside restaurants. A packed picnic lunch is included today. (B, L)

Overnight: Amiens

DAY 4 – THE SOMME TO PARIS

STAR INCLUSIONS

- ★ Breakfast
- ★ Touring of the 1916 and 1918 Somme battlefields including Villers-Bretonneux, Pozieres and Mouquet Farm
- ★ Victoria School Museum
- ★ Drop-off in Paris

Today we will explore the killing fields of the Somme, where Australian troops performed magnificently in both 1916 and 1918. Our first visit is to the Australian Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux, where the names of almost 11,000 Australians missing in France are recorded. We will then visit the Victoria School in Villers-Bretonneux, where a sign entreats that the schoolchildren 'Do Not Forget Australia'. We will also visit the excellent Franco-Australian Museum at the school. Our next stop is the Australian Memorial Park at Hamel, scene of a great Australian victory orchestrated by General John Monash on July 4, 1918. We will then enjoy some free time for lunch in the town of Albert and see the famous 'Leaning Virgin' statue. In the afternoon we will visit the 1916 battlefields of the Somme, beginning with Pozieres, scene of the most costly battle in Australia's history. 23,000 men were killed or wounded here in six weeks of fighting and we will pay tribute to them at the 1st Division Memorial and the Windmill. We will then see Mouquet Farm, where the Australians fought a bitter campaign against the Germans in August 1916. Our final stop is the imposing Thiepval Memorial, which commemorates more than 70,000 British soldiers missing from the Somme fighting. We then farewell the battlefields and drive back to Paris, arriving at our central drop-off point at approximately 5pm. The journey may be over but the memories will last a lifetime. (B)

DEPARTURE DATES 2012

TOUR CODE	DEPARTURE DATE	TOUR CODE	DEPARTURE DATE
EFW1209	Mar 04	EFW1229	Jul 25
EFW1211	Mar 18	EFW1231	Aug 04
EFW1214	Apr 04	EFW1233	Aug 18
EFW1218	May 04	EFW1236	Sep 04
EFW1220	May 18	EFW1238	Sep 18
EFW1223	Jun 04	EFW1239	Sep 25
EFW1225	Jun 18	EFW1240	Oct 04
EFW1227	Jul 04	EFW1242	Oct 18



Your tour includes

- ★ The best guides – our Western Front Explorer tours are escorted by leading war historians, personally selected by Mat McLachlan. There are no better historians to travel with on this special journey
- ★ Paris pick-up and drop-off
- ★ All excursions, scenic drives and sightseeing as described in the itinerary
- ★ 3 nights' 3- and 4-star accommodation
- ★ Hotel portorage
- ★ Breakfast daily and 2 lunches
- ★ Extensive touring of the WWI battlefields
- ★ All entrance fees as per the itinerary
- ★ Travel by First Class air-conditioned coaches with fridge, toilet, DVD player and seatbelts
- ★ All tips to your Historian and Driver
- ★ Autographed copy of Mat McLachlan's definitive guide to the Western Front, *Walking with the Anzacs*
- ★ Souvenir cap, luggage tags and document wallet
- ★ Detailed map showing the battlefields and key sites visited on the tour

\$1597 per person, twin share (land only)

Single supplement: \$497. Ask about our airfare deals, which offer great discounts when booked in conjunction with our tours.

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Imagine standing on the sacred ground where Australian soldiers fought and died, the sun cresting the horizon as the haunting strains of the *Last Post* fill the dawn air. Every Australian dreams of visiting our iconic battlefields – let Mat McLachlan Battlefield Tours turn that dream into reality.



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Mat McLachlan Battlefield Tours

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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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