

Trendsetter



Travel Tours Pty Ltd

ANZAC – France/Belgium Military History Tour

WW I - Western Front

WW II – Dunkirk and Normandy Beaches



Bespoke Battlefield Tours' (a division of Trendsetter Travel Tours Pty Ltd) own Military History consultant has designed this tour of the Western Front military campaigns over the period from 1915 to 1918. Also included are 3 days covering the Normandy D Day Landings and a day travelling to Dunkirk, where we will gain specialist insight into the British retreat in May/June 1940 and that remarkable rescue of the British Expeditionary Force, without which a capitulation in 1940 of the British nation would, almost certainly, have followed.

Our journey commences in Paris. All the key ANZAC battlefields on the Western front of WW I – Fromelles, Pozieres, Ypres, Villers Bretonneux – are included. We then visit the battlefields of Normandy. The highlights include Pegasus Bridge, Point du Hoc and Omaha Beach – all made famous on D Day, 6 June 1944. Together we will walk on the Normandy beaches where so many brave soldiers risked all to secure this critical beach head. Our tour will finish in Paris.

This will be a SMALL GROUP JOURNEY and while the itinerary is planned as follows, we can personalise to incorporate the special interests of participants, who might want to locate and visit family graves within the areas we visit.

To maximise your enjoyment, touring will generally not start earlier than 9.00 a.m. and we have included some free time for individual exploring. Breakfast daily, plus at least 7 evening meals, including welcome and farewell dinners, are included as part of the tour price. Other meals are not included, to allow for flexibility of choice with regard to cuisine and budget.

Our accommodation is the best available in Ypres and Arras. Near the Normandy beaches we will stay 3 nights in a French Chateau. In Paris, we will stay at a well located, 4 star inner city hotel. Our choice of accommodation is to best ensure a memorable time in these wonderful cities and towns.

YOUR TOUR ESCORT & BATTLEFIELD GUIDES

David Cooper, a director of Trendsetter Travel & Cruise Centre who with his extensive military history knowledge, has crafted this unique tour. David will be on hand to manage all the practical aspects of the tour and ensure everyone has a great time.

We have contracted leading local battlefield guides for each touring day who are experts, with longstanding experience, on the particularly campaigns. Importantly, their expertise includes a detailed knowledge of the ANZAC participation in WW1.

Our five expert battlefield guides offer a level of expertise and knowledge which could not be matched if one individual battlefield guide was used for the entire tour. This policy, together with seeking the best accommodation (almost always) and the better restaurants, is what sets Bespoke Battlefield Tours apart from other battlefield tour companies.



Please refer to the following web page link to view all our current military history tour offerings:

www.bespokebattlefieldtours.com.au

Itinerary

Day 1 - Paris, France

Group members arrive independently at our 4 star Paris Hotel unless separate arrangements have been made to check in earlier. Note that we do recommend you arrive at least one day earlier to experience the charms of Paris and recover from your flight.

This evening, rendezvous in the hotel bar for a drink before walking to a nearby Paris restaurant for our get together welcome dinner.



Day 2 - Ypres, Belgium

This morning we drive from Paris to Ypres, stopping for lunch at Peronne, immortalised in Australian history by the taking of this town and nearby Mont St Quentin by the Australian Corp in early September 1918.

Then it is on to Ypres, a small and now peaceful Belgian town, which name is still famous due to its military importance. Our hotel for the next 4 nights is located less than 5 minutes walk to the Menin Gate, where we will experience the always moving Last Post Ceremony which occurs every day at 8 pm. While this ceremony takes place daily, each day's version has unique characteristics and it is not unusual for our tour party members to schedule a repeat visit.

For dinner (own arrangements) you will find that Ypres has a good range of reasonably priced restaurants, many with outdoor seating and generally reasonably priced by Australian standards. As with all days where meals are not included as part of the tour, we will provide restaurant recommendations and will make forward bookings.

Day 3 – Ypres, Belgium

After meeting our local guide, we will explore the Menin Road, the main artery of what was later named the Immortal Salient and the road which dissects the fiercely contested battlefields of the first battle of Ypres, in the autumn of 1914. It was in the fields around Ypres that the British nicknamed Ypres 'Wipers' and witnessed the destruction of the First British Expeditionary Force.

Here we will visit the scene of the Christmas truce of 1914, Langermarck German Cemetery, Hooge Crater Museum & Trenches, Hill 60, Vancouver Corner (where the Canadians faced the first use of gas), the Shot at Dawn Memorial and the Talbot House Museum at Poperinghe.



Ypres Cloth Hall in WW1 (left) and rebuilt (right)

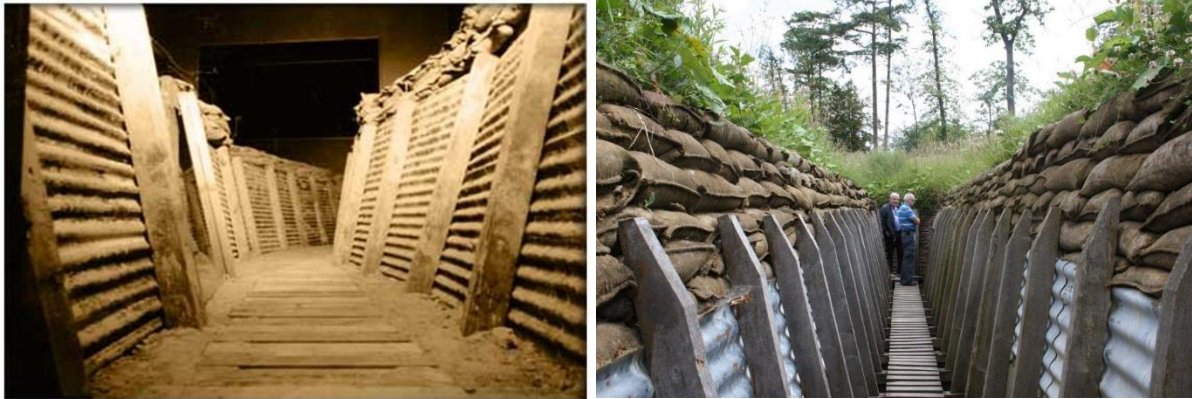
Day 4 – Ypres, Belgium - Dunkirk & The Blitzkrieg 1940

The strategic location of Ypres has ensured that it is no stranger to war, invasion and siege. In the summer of 1940 Ypres was again in the path of an invading German Army. With our local expert battlefield guide, we will look at the momentous events of the summer of 1940. We will follow the hard pressed soldiers of the Second BEF as they withdrew through the graveyards of their forbears, across Belgian Flanders, with the Panzers of the German Army and the relentless Stukas of the Luftwaffe in pursuit. We will follow the British retreat and include visits to some of the small towns where critical rear-guard actions were fought by BEF troops as they attempted to delay the German Blitzkrieg. Today culminates with a visit to the Bray Dunes, scene of the evacuation, a visit to the Dunkirk Museum and finally, the Dunkirk Memorial and the Operation Dynamo exhibition. We will then return directly to our hotel in Ypres in time for a further optional visit to the Menin Gate 8.00 pm ceremony followed by a Tour dinner at one of the better Ypres restaurants.



Day 5 – – Ypres, Belgium - Passchendaele, The Third Battle of Ypres

Today we'll examine in depth the huge efforts and terrible cost of the British 1917 offensive that concluded with the bloody fight in the muddy fields of Passchendaele – exactly 100 years prior to our tour. The big push of July 1917 involved men from every country in the British Commonwealth, with this gigantic offensive resulting in a massive loss of lives. Our day will include visits to Messines Ridge, Polygon Wood, the New Zealand Memorial at Gravenstafel, Crest Farm, the fantastic Passchendaele Museum and Tyne Cott, the largest Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery in the world. The Passchendaele museum recreates life in the trenches as it would have been in WWI and is almost certainly the best example of its kind.



Day 6 – Fromelles and the Somme

This morning we leave Ypres and drive one hour south to Fromelles - a battlefield forever associated with the needless sacrifice of the 5th Australian Division. Here, we will spend half a day looking at the controversial handling of Australian troops in their first significant action on the Western Front in July 1916. Within a period of 24 hours the Australian division suffered over 5,500 casualties, nearly 2000 of whom were killed in action. The mass grave, discovered in 2007, is now a peaceful cemetery honouring some 200 of the soldiers recovered to date. Included will be a visit to the recently opened Fromelles Museum, located adjacent to the war graves cemetery.

If time permits, we will look to visit one of Wellington Quarry underground museum or Vimy Ridge (the Canadian Battlefield Park). Our arrival in Arras is scheduled for late afternoon when we will check into our Arras Hotel for 3 nights. You will find our hotel an easy walk to the many restaurants located at Grand Square.



Day 7 – The Somme Offensive of 1 July 1916

After meeting up with our local guide, we will spend most of the day studying the Somme offensive, launched in a spirit of great optimism on 1 July 1916. Yet the disaster that followed was later described as the blackest day in the history of the British Army. Today we will walk some of the fields that witnessed the near destruction of Kitchener's New Citizens' Army to gain an understanding of what went wrong. What happened to result in 60,000 British casualties (including 20,000 dead) in a single catastrophic day? Our day includes visits to various sites near Arras including the Flying Services Memorial, Battlefield walk, Ulster Tower, Thiepval Wood Trenches, Pozieres, Lochnagar Crater and Thiepval Memorial. We will have a tour dinner at one of the better Arras restaurants.

Day 8 – ANZACs on the Somme 1917 & 1918

Our final day on the Somme will focus on the achievements of the ANZACs and the momentous events of 1918. Sites we will visit include the original resting place of the Australian Unknown Soldier, Villers Bretonneux (the Australian National Memorial and Museum), Le Hamel (the Australian Corps Memorial) and Corbie Plateaux.



Day 9 – Travelling forward in time from Arras to Normandy

Today we travel from Arras to historic Normandy. Following a light lunch, we will meet our Normandy guide for the next 3 days at the iconic Pegasus Bridge. This was the site of the glider-borne coup de main assault on 6 June 1944 mounted by the men of the Glider Pilot Regiment and the Ox & Bucks Light Infantry and was later described as the greatest feat of airmanship of WWII. We will visit the excellent museum at Pegasus Bridge and the extensive outdoor displays of glider planes etc. Our hotel in Normandy is a French Chateau, offering delicious cuisine, with dinner included on all 3 evenings as part of the tour cost.



Day 10 – Normandy - the British & Canadian Experience

Over the course of today, we will visit a number of locations that bring the dramatic events of the D-Day invasion to life, including the Merville Battery & Museum (photo left below), Point du Hoc (photo right below), Sword Beach, Juno Beach and the port of Arromanches, together with its Mulberry Harbour. Included will be visits to many new and upgraded museums built to celebrate the 70th anniversary of D Day.

There will be free time to wander the beautiful French port town of Arromanches and chose one of the many restaurants for lunch.



Day 11 –the American experience

Our final day on the battlefields will take us across to the Western flank of the Normandy beachheads to visit the landing grounds used by the US Airborne forces, and the infamous Omaha beach immortalised in Steven Spielberg's film Saving Private Ryan. Here, we'll visit the St Mere Eglise Airborne Museum, the German Cemetery, Omaha Beach (photos below of actual landing and German gun emplacement facing beach), Utah Beach and the US Military Cemetery with its newly built interactive museum. A photo of dinner at the Chateau with one of our prior tour groups is shown below.



Day 12 — Drive to Paris

Today we drive to Paris and check into our well located hotel. Some free time will be available that afternoon for independent exploring or the alternative of a (tour included) visit to the French Army Museum and the nearby tomb of Napoleon Bonaparte.

We will have a farewell dinner tonight to celebrate our enhanced knowledge and the camaraderie of newfound friends.



Day 13 – Paris

Our tour ends officially after breakfast this morning.

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Participation Cost: EUR 4,300 pp twin share/EUR 1,100 single supplement.

The Tour Cost Includes:

- 12 nights accommodation, at least 7 dinners and touring as specified
- Entrance fees to all included sightseeing and gratuities.
- Services of Specialist Battlefield Tour Guides and Trendsetter Travel Tour Manager.

The Tour Cost Does NOT Include:

- International travel to and from Paris
- Pre/post tour accommodation and items of a personal nature
- Insurance

TERMS AND CONDITIONS – PLEASE READ

A completed reservation form is due at the time of deposit. Payment of your deposit and balance constitutes acceptance of these terms and conditions.

1. A non refundable deposit of **A\$2,500 per person** is to accompany the booking form to secure your place on this tour. As the tour is subject to a minimum number of 4 persons (and a maximum of 7), if the tour does not proceed the deposit will be fully refundable. The final payment will be for the full tour price in EUR converted to AUD based on the best EUR sell rate from the Major 4 banks on the date of final payment. The deposit will then be deducted from this to give the balance owing. No refunds are available after this date other than through your travel insurance policy.
2. Insurance is mandatory and in place at time of booking to cover any potential need to cancel.
3. While every effort will be made to operate the tour exactly as per the brochure, the organisers reserve the right to make changes, should these be deemed essential, due to changed conditions outside of our control, or in the best interests of the group.
4. Payment by credit card is subject to a merchant fee of 1.25% (VC/MC) and 3.1% (AX)

FOR BOOKINGS & ALL ENQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT

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WEB PAGES: www.trendsettertravel.com.au and www.bespokebattlefieldtours.com

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