

# Battlefield Exploration



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## The 1916 Somme Experience

*The battlefields of the Somme are certainly worth a visit, especially as the area still very much looks like the battlefield in 1916: rolling countryside and villages dotted all over the area. The unbelievable story of the 1916 campaign by the British and French troops is one of those key stories in the history of the Great War.*

### The Tour

Your professional battlefield guide will come pick you up at your accommodation\*.

From Ypres, we'll drive via the motorways passing Lille to **Serre** to drive along the several cemeteries in the area, including the largest CWGC cemetery in the Somme area and the French national military cemetery. Our first visit will be the Newfoundland Memorial Park at **Beaumont-Hamel**. The story of the Newfoundland Regiment being annihilated on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July is even more remarkable because you can still see the actual trenches from where they attacked. The memorial park – an area of 30 ha – was purchased by Father Thomas Nangle, chaplain to the Royal Newfoundland Regiment after the war, but now is one of two foreign Canadian Heritage Sites. The site perfectly illustrates how trenches were organised.

Onwards to Thiepval to visit the **Ulster Tower** and the **Thiepval Memorial to the Missing** with the very interesting Visitor Cemetery. The *Ulster Tower* commemorates the 'blood sacrifice' of the Ulstermen. The fact that the attack was launched on July 1<sup>st</sup> gave the attack mythic proportions. The Ulstermen captured the *Schwaben Redoubt*, an impressive German fortification, but eventually were driven back. The *Thiepval Memorial to the Missing* is even more impressive: more than 72,000 names of missing soldiers have been listed on the memorial. From Thiepval we drive to Albert for lunch.

After lunch we continue to the **Lochnagar Crater**, one of the most impressive remains of the underground war. On July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1916 the British detonated 19 deep mines just prior to the infantry attack. The Lochnagar Mine was one of the largest. The crater – owned by Richard Dunning and his Lochnagar Crater Trust – offers visitors the chance to see the impact of underground warfare.

From La Boiselle we drive through Fricourt (where you can see the German military cemetery) to **Devonshire Trench Cemetery** at Mametz. The story of Captain Duncan Martin shows the ignorance of the British commanders prior to the battle. We'll also find the grave of war poet Lt. William Noel Hodgson here.

Next onwards to Longueval to visit the South African Memorial and Museum at **Delville Wood**. During the Battle of the Bazentin Ridges the South African Brigade – attached to the Scottish 9<sup>th</sup> Division – attacked the woods east of Longueval. After 6 days they were withdrawn, leaving 3 quarters of the brigade in the woods: killed or missing in action. A little further is also the memorial to the New Zealand Division who took part in the Battle of Flers-Courcelette on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 1916. This was the battle that introduced the tank on the battlefield.

From Longueval we continue to **Pozières** to see the memorial to the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Division, the Australian Memorial Park and the Tank Memorial. Time permitting you can also stop at *Le Tommy* to see the private museum and reconstructed trenches. Driving along the Canadian Memorial of **Courcelette** and the battlefield of the **Butte de Warlencourt** we head back to the motorways. Back in Ypres by 6 pm.

*\* When accommodated in the Ypres area, there will be no extra charge for the pick-up and drop-off at your accommodation. If you want to be picked up from other places (like Bruges, Ghent, Lille, Arras, ... et cetera), there will be an extra charge for the extra mileage.*

## Practical Information

- » **Departure** from your accommodation in Ypres at about 9 am; back in Ypres by 6 pm. Other departure points (Bruges, Ghent, Lille, ...) are possible, but may result in an extra charge.
- » **Tariff:** € 295 (with a maximum of 7 participants).
  - > If more than 7 participants, tariff will be depending on the coach tariff.
  - > In the price is included: transportation with minibus and professional guide/driver.
  - > Extra entrance fee to be paid during this tour: € 7 p.p. for Le Tommy. This is optional, however; you can also decide not to visit the museum.
- » **Walking:** only short distances from the car to the actual sites. Never more than 500 yards.

**Want to add a specific site to the itinerary? Or want to combine several itineraries?  
Please let us know, and we'll provide a quote!**