

Battlefield Exploration



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Irish in Flanders Fields

The British Imperial Force consisted of many nationalities from all over the world. Yet, the Irish story is a very special one. With a massive rebellion against the English rule the island of Ireland was internally divided: fight with the English or against the English. The MP brothers John and Willie Redmond chose to fight with the English in the hope of getting home rule for Ireland...

The Tour

Your professional battlefield guide will come pick you up at your accommodation* at about 9 am.

From Ypres we drive to **Locre**, where the Irish Divisions had their headquarters in 1916-1917. At Locre we have a look at Locre Churchyard where a lot of Irish soldiers found their last resting place. Passing Locre Hospice we go for a look at the grave of Willie Redmond, who was wounded during the Battle of Messines and died of shock. He was buried in the garden of the convent.

From Locre we drive on towards **Kemmel** and the hilly area where lots of shelters and dugouts were created. In the local tourist information centre we'll watch an interesting introduction film on the Mine Battle of Messines Ridge.

From Kemmel we follow in the footsteps of the 16th (Irish) and 36th (Ulster) Division who conquered **Wijtschate** during the Mine Battle of Messines Ridge. We stop over at the **Spanbroekmolen Crater (Pool of Peace)** and visit the memorials to the Irish at Wijtschate. We also pass by the place where Willie Redmond was shot and nursed by John Meeke.

From Wijtschate the tour brings us to **Messines**, where we visit the moving **Island of Ireland Peace Park**. The memorial park was laid out in 1998 by Irish students in the 'Journey of Reconciliation' project. Paddy Hart and Glenn Barr were the leading figures in this project. The memorial park was laid out with hints to the common history of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Back to Ypres for lunch.

After lunch we'll have a look at the **Munster Fusiliers Memorial** in the former churchyard of Ypres Cathedral. The memorial was erected there in 1924 and was one of the first Great War memorials in Ypres.

Next onwards to **Artillery Wood Cemetery** to see the grave of war poet **Francis Ledwige**. Just a little further we'll also visit the private memorial to Francis Ledwige. The Irish nationalist joined the army after a break up with his girlfriend, and was active in Gallipoli and Flanders. He was killed on the 1st day of the 3rd Battle of Ypres.

From Pilckem onwards to **Frezenberg** to see the Irish Memorial for the disastrous attack on the German lines during the 3rd Battle of Ypres. While the Irish were successful at Wijtschate, they were destroyed during this attack on Frezenberg.

Next we'll visit **Tyne Cot Cemetery**, the largest CWGC cemetery in the world. Nearly 12,000 British soldiers have been buried at Tyne Cot Cemetery, while the Tyne Cot Memorial list another 35,000 names of missing.

Our final visit of the day will be **Poelcapelle New British Cemetery**, where the grave of a 14-year old Irish soldier can be found: John Condon. Or not?

Back to Ypres. End of the tour at about 5 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 5 pm.
Other departure points (Bruges, Ghent, Lille, ...) are possible, but may result in an extra charge.
- » **Tariff:** € 245 (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.
 - > No entrance fees to be paid during this tour.
- » **Walking:** only short distances from the car to the actual sites. Never more than 750 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!**