

# Exploring WARTIME HISTORY

Your [norfolkline.com](https://www.norfolkline.com) guide

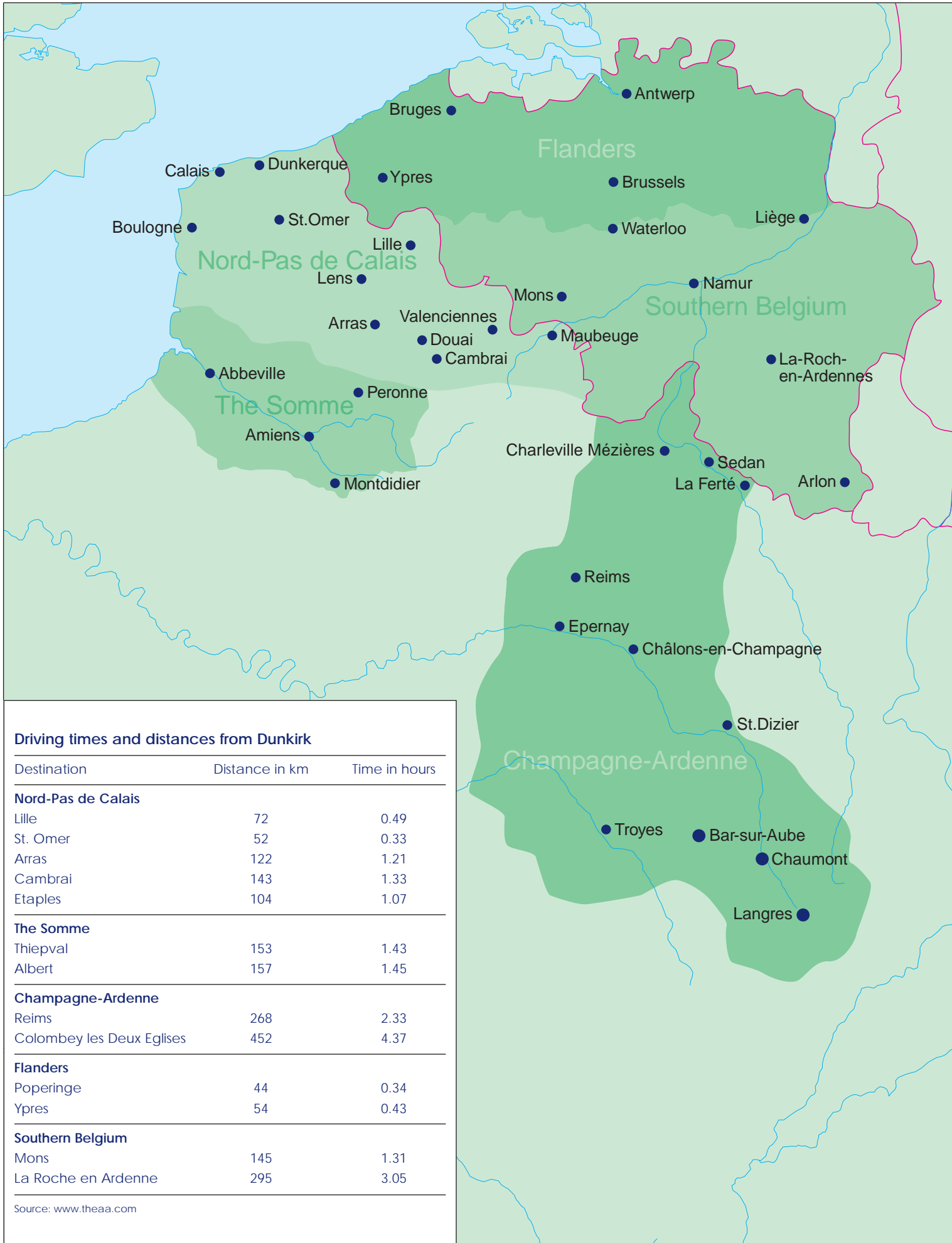


## Your guide to wartime history

The memorials, museums, cemeteries and sights of Europe's two World Wars

Nord Pas de Calais • The Somme  
Champagne-Ardenne • Flanders • Southern Belgium





# Memories of the World Wars

History can bring stories of past events to life. Museums, cemeteries, battlefields, forts and gun emplacements recapture the events of two world wars fought on the fields and in the towns of France and Belgium. Many families can trace relatives who bravely lost their lives fighting for their country and it can be a rewarding, if emotional experience, to visit the burial sites or the Menin Gate at Ypres where the names of those whose bodies were never recovered are remembered in perpetuity. These battlefields are easily visited from Britain and this guide covers most of the main places of interest in Northern France and Belgium. Those wanting to go further back in time will discover the relics of the day in 1815 when the Duke of Wellington defeated Napoleon Bonaparte at Waterloo.

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Images: Rex Features

***‘In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.’***

John McCrae  
Canadian Army Medical Corps  
8 December 1915  
Died in Base Hospital 1918

# Conflict in Europe

Over the centuries Europe has seen more than its fair share of wars. In more recent times the wars that engulfed countries beyond the continent, WW1 and WW2, have been recorded and remembered in ways that were not possible before at the time of earlier conflicts. Developments in technology meant that photographs taken in action and voice recordings now give us a much more real understanding of war.

The legacy of those two wars and much detail from the Battle of Waterloo, a hundred years earlier, remain in France and Belgium where a substantial amount of the fighting took place and where the loss of life was so horrendous. Although Britain suffered severe bombing it was never occupied by German troops and it is often not until one visits the scenes of battles, the museums and cemeteries does the sheer magnitude of the war and the deprivation of living in an occupied land begin to become in any way real.

Gradually WW1 is becoming less and less possible to describe as 'in living memory'. Fortunately the work of thousands of volunteers who are determined that future generations should never forget the sacrifices made ensure that many of these sites across the war zone remain intact and open to the public. They are supported hugely by The War Graves Commission, The Royal British Legion, national governments and local tourist boards so that visitors can learn more about the people, the armaments, the uniforms and vehicles that were involved.

**THE KM<sup>2</sup> WAR & PEACE SHOW**  
 16 - 20 JULY 2008  
 22 - 26 JULY 2009  
 21 - 25 JULY 2010

**THE LARGEST MILITARY VEHICLE SPECTACULAR IN THE WORLD**

**THE HOP FARM**  
 The Hop Farm, Beltring, Nr Tonbridge, Kent O1622 972068  
 War and Peace Office 01304 813945  
 www.thewarandpeaceshow.com · rex@warandpeace.uk.com

## Information in this booklet

Every effort has been made to ensure that all information including opening hours, contact details and websites are correct but as these may change the publishers cannot be responsible for any inaccuracies or their consequences. Telephone numbers are shown including the international dialling code (the first four numbers). When dialling from the UK omit the (0). When dialling from the locality omit the international dialling code but include the (0).

Whilst this guide is a comprehensive introduction to the main sites of interest for the Battle of Waterloo, WW1 and WW2 in Northern France and Belgium it is by no means exhaustive. Much of the history of the Allied landings in Normandy in 1944 are covered by local museums and cemeteries in that region. The Musée de Mémorial in Caen is dedicated to Peace and, in addition to the usual collection of memorabilia, also covers the events leading up to the outbreak of WW2.

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## War beyond the battlefields

### Memorial to the fallen of Lille

Situated in the Square Daubenton, near to the Citadelle of Lille in the Bois de Boulogne, this monument was erected after WW1 to commemorate those members of the Résistance who were shot by the Germans.

It was destroyed by the invading forces in WW2 but fortunately the sculptor's original *maquette*, which can be seen in the Musée des Beaux Arts, was saved and it has been restored to the original design.



Image: John Northover

## The British Torch of Remembrance

In 1926 it was suggested that ex-servicemen would like to have their own personal way of remembering their fallen comrades.

It was decided that torches as symbols of the 'Torch of Freedom' should be lit and a pilgrimage made to memorial sites. The ceremony is held on 11 November each year when nine torches are lit representing the nine provinces of Belgium, and marched to the National Memorial to the Unknown Soldier in Brussels to pay homage.

At Westminster Abbey the British and Belgian National Torches are lit by the Dean of Westminster. The following morning a service is held at Dover attended by the Mayor. The pilgrimage then travels by ferry to Oostende where it is met by civil dignitaries and a ceremony held at the town war memorial.

There is a varying programme of visits to war cemeteries en-route to Brussels. The pilgrims then participate in the ceremony conducted at the Menin Gate, Ypres.

## South Eastern & Chatham Railway War Memorial

The South Eastern & Chatham Railway War Memorial was unveiled at Dover Marine Station on 28 October 1922.

It was erected to the memory of the 556 South Eastern & Chatham railwaymen who gave their lives in the Great War whose names are borne on a Portland stone wall behind the monument. To the inscription on the monument was added the later dedication to the 626 men of the Southern Railway who gave their lives in the 1939-1945 war.

The monument consists of a grey royal granite base, surmounted by a bronze group designed by the sculptor, W.C.H. King and cast by the founder M. Manenti. Of the two steps above the level of the platform, only the top step is currently visible above resurfacings.

**Dover Cruise Terminal 1, Western Docks, Dover**

## The Invicta Military Vehicle Preservation Society

This organisation of owners of military vehicles brings together those with an interest in preserving and restoring many of the vehicles that took part in manoeuvres during the two World Wars and later campaigns. Many of these would otherwise be in a state of decay or lost for ever.

The membership looks after these vehicles and as many as 4,000 of them congregate at the annual War and Peace Show in Kent. Several years ago, a group of French enthusiasts in the town of Béthune decided to mark the liberation of their area in 1944 by the British 7th Armoured Division with a parade. This has now grown into a major three-day event which is actively supported by the members of the IMVPS with as many as 150 vehicles creating a 5km long convoy. The Society also organises a London to Brighton run, many smaller events and 1940s themed dances.

**IMPS Membership, Hagar's Hall, Seaview Gardens, Warden Bay, Sheerness, Kent. ME12 4NG**

**Email: [membership@imps.org.uk](mailto:membership@imps.org.uk) [www.imps.org.uk](http://www.imps.org.uk)**

## The Royal British Legion

The Royal British Legion is a charity that supports the serving and ex-service community, and their families, as well as being one of the country's largest membership organisations. It is probably best-known for its role as the nation's custodian of Remembrance and for the Poppy Appeal which it organises annually. In addition the Royal British Legion assists with the Remembrance Sunday march past the Cenotaph in Whitehall and also organises the Festival of Remembrance at the Royal Albert Hall. The Legion, as it is fondly known, now marks the two minutes' silence on the 11th day of November, the date of the Armistice of the Great War, with individuals placing poppies on the waters of the famous fountains in Trafalgar Square, as well as worldwide recognition of this emotive moment.

**The Royal British Legion, 48 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5JY  
Tel: 020 7973 7200 [www.britishlegion.org.uk](http://www.britishlegion.org.uk)**

## Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission was established by Royal Charter in 1917 and is responsible for marking and maintaining the graves of those members of the Commonwealth forces who died during the two World Wars, for building memorials to those whose graves are unknown and for providing records and registers of these 1.7 million burials and commemorations.

In northern France and Belgium, where the bulk of the Commission's commemorative task is focused, there are nearly 780,000 Commonwealth war dead of the two World Wars buried or commemorated at some 3,500 locations. From great memorials commemorating many thousands, like Thiepval in France or the Menin Gate in Belgium, to small intimate cemeteries containing no more than 40 graves, each site is lovingly maintained by the Commission's dedicated staff. By preserving the memory of the dead with simple dignity and true equality, the Commission hopes to encourage future generations to remember the sacrifice made by so many.

Further information about the work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and enquiries about the location of individual burials and commemorations may be directed to the offices below or to the Debt of Honour Register – a search by surname database at the Commission's website at [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)

### Commonwealth War Graves Commission

#### United Kingdom:

2 Marlow Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 7DX, UK  
Tel: 01628 634221 Fax: 01628 771208  
Email: [casualty.eng@cwgc.org](mailto:casualty.eng@cwgc.org)

#### France Area:

Rue Angele Richard, 62217 Beaurains, France  
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 21 21 77 00 Fax: 00 33 (0)3 21 21 77 10  
Email: [france.area@cwgc.org](mailto:france.area@cwgc.org)

#### Northern Europe Area:

Elverdingsestraat 82, B-8900 Leper, Belgium  
Tel: 00 32 (0)57 20 01 18 Fax: 00 32 (0)57 21 80 14  
Email: [neaooffice@cwgc.org](mailto:neaooffice@cwgc.org)

# Nord-Pas de Calais

The Nord-Pas de Calais region has historically been one of the most fought-over regions in Europe; in fact, Charles de Gaulle once referred to it as a "fatal avenue" through which invading armies repeatedly passed.

Indeed, during the Great War, much of the region was occupied by Germany. A number of its towns and hundreds of square miles of land were destroyed in four years of trench warfare, with the area suffering more damage than any other part of France.

But whereas before the twentieth century the French and the English monarchs had been enemies in battles to defend each country's national pride, WW1 saw the two nations unite as allies, fighting shoulder-to-shoulder to see off the enemy. The cost was huge and irreversible – the loss of lives can be seen all over the Nord-Pas de Calais in the hundreds of cemeteries and memorials that are a stark reminder of the horror that took place during this period.



Image: Commonwealth War Graves Commission

## Etaples Military Cemetery

### WW1

This is the largest Commonwealth cemetery in France, with 10,773 burials from WW1, and 119 from a period of WW2 in 1940, when hospitals were stationed at Etaples once again. Designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, the cemetery also contains some German burials, and a total of 73 sadly unidentified burials.

OPEN: All year round  
Free of charge

## Fromelles Museum and Cemetery

### WW1

In the open fields just north-west of the village of Fromelles, the horrific Battle of Fromelles was fought on 19th and 20th July 1916 – one of the great tragedies of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). The German attack cost the 5th Australian Division over 5,500 casualties. 410 of these were unidentified, and rest 'Known unto God' in the Victoria Cross Corner of Fromelles Cemetery. The War Museum at Fromelles contains a poignant and fascinating collection of original Australian artefacts from the Battle, and other items recovered from German and British troops who fought hereabouts over the duration of the war.

Fromelles Museum  
Rue de Verdun  
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 20 50 20 43  
MUSEUM OPEN:  
2nd Sunday of each month &  
11th Nov 09.00-12.00 & 14.00-19.00  
CLOSED: Aug except by  
appointment  
Adults €3.50 Children €2.00

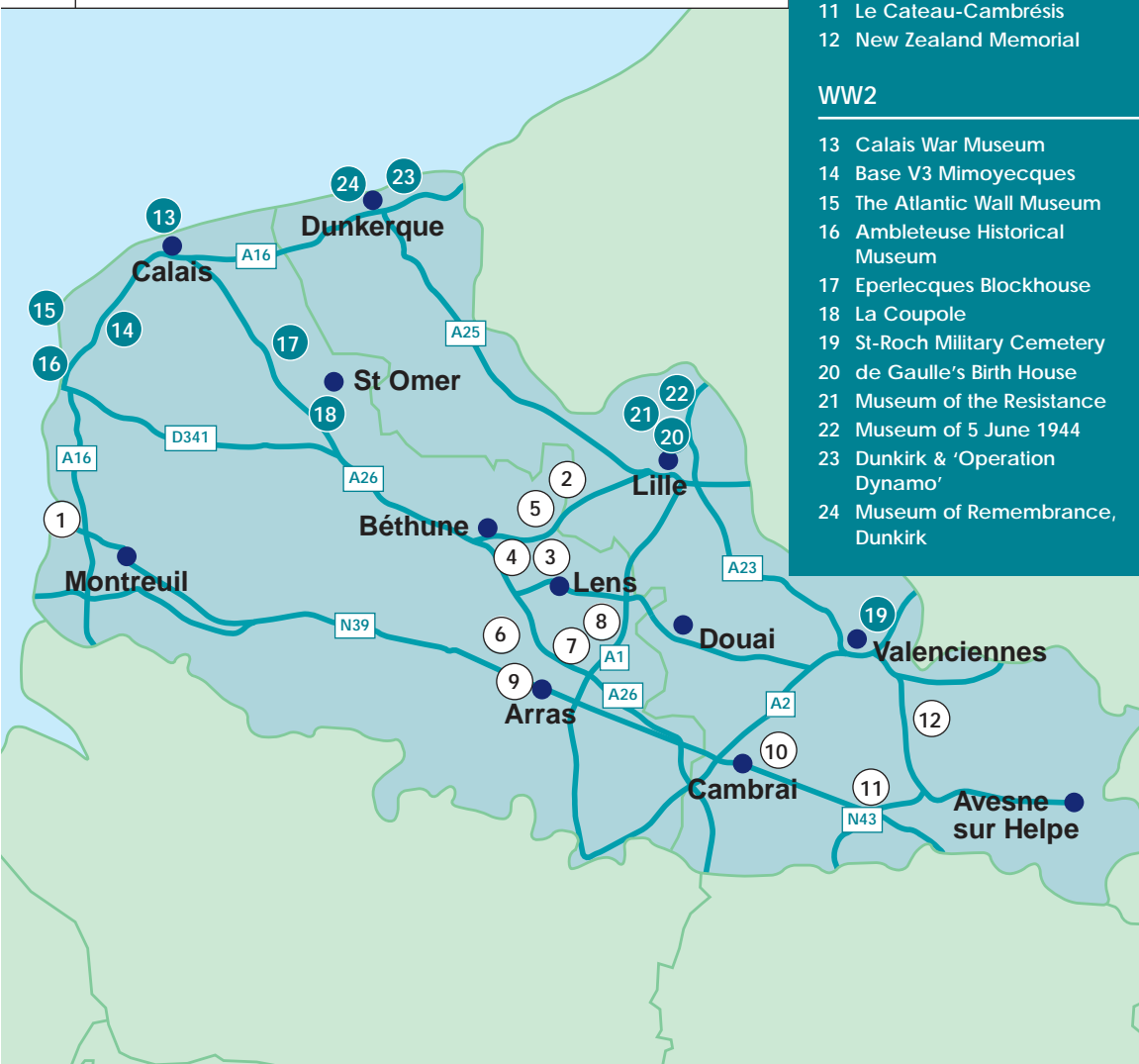
## Map key

### WW1

- 1 Etaples Military Cemetery
- 2 Fromelles Museum and Cemetery
- 3 Loos Memorial and Dud Corner Cemetery
- 4 The Museum Alexandre Villedieu
- 5 St Mary's Advanced Dressing Station Cemetery
- 6 Cemetery of Notre-Dame de Lorette
- 7 Vimy: Canadian Monument
- 8 La Targette Cemetery
- 9 Underground Tunnels of Arras
- 10 The Cambrai Memorial
- 11 Le Cateau-Cambrésis
- 12 New Zealand Memorial

### WW2

- 13 Calais War Museum
- 14 Base V3 Mimoyecques
- 15 The Atlantic Wall Museum
- 16 Ambleuse Historical Museum
- 17 Eperlecques Blockhouse
- 18 La Coupole
- 19 St-Roch Military Cemetery
- 20 de Gaulle's Birth House
- 21 Museum of the Resistance
- 22 Museum of 5 June 1944
- 23 Dunkirk & 'Operation Dynamo'
- 24 Museum of Remembrance, Dunkirk



Nord-Pas de Calais Tourist Board  
6, place Mendès  
BP 99  
59028 LILLE Cedex  
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 20 14 57 57  
Fax: 00 33 (0)3 20 14 57 58  
contact@crt-nordpasdecalais.fr  
www.northernfrance-tourism.com

## The Museum Alexandre Villedieu, Loos-en-Gohelle

### WW1

The museum relating to the Battle of Loos displays everyday objects recovered from the battlefield, including a Waterman fountain pen that still worked after 80 years under the ground. A tour around the 'double crassier' footpath will give you a view of the whole battlefield including Lorette and Vimy.

Advanced booking is advised  
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 21 78 31 29

€3.00 each for guided tour of museum only

€6.00 each for group of 6 minimum or €5.00 each for group of more than 10 for guided tour of museum & 'double crassier' guided walk



Images: Commonwealth War Graves Commission

## St Mary's Advanced Dressing Station Cemetery, Haisne-les-La Bassée

### WW1

This post-war battlefield clearance cemetery contains the graves of 1,810 soldiers who died during the Battle of Loos; the majority of whom are unidentified. However, one grave is engraved with the name of Rudyard Kipling's son John (Plot VII, row D, grave 2).

OPEN: All year round  
Free of charge  
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 21 25 43 43

## National Military Cemetery of Notre-Dame de Lorette

### WW1

One of the major French National Memorials and Cemeteries, the chapel and lighthouse tower at Notre Dame de Lorette dominate the ridge for which the French fought a long and bloody battle. The cemetery has 20,000 white crosses, which commemorate over 120,000 men from both sides who died in this ferocious conflict in 1915.

OPEN: All year round  
Free of charge

## The Museum of Notre-Dame de Lorette, Souchez

### WW1

See a collection of over 2,000 evocative exhibits that tell the story of the soldiers' lives in the trenches, with reconstructed scenes and over 150 slides.

OPEN: Every day 09.00-20.00  
CLOSED: 25th Dec & 1st Jan  
€3.00 entry  
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 21 45 15 80

## La Targette, Neuville Saint Vaast

### WW1 & WW2

The British Cemetery, although dwarfed somewhat by the French National Cemetery in the background, is the resting place of 612 soldiers, buried mostly when medical units were based here between 1917 and 1918. There are also three WW2 burials, two of which are unidentified. The 'Peace Torch' sculpture here is a striking tribute to the fallen soldiers. La Targette Military Museum houses an extensive collection of artefacts from WW1 battles, including helmets, weapons and gas masks.

OPEN: All year round  
Adults: €4.00 Children: €2.00  
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 21 45 15 80

## Loos Memorial and Dud Corner Cemetery

### WW1

The Loos Memorial forms the side and back of Dud Corner Cemetery, and commemorates 20,000 officers and men who have no known grave, and who were killed in the area between the first day of the Battle of Loos (25th September 1915) and the end of the war. Although the battle was won, inexperienced soldiers paid the price. The 'Dud Corner' part of the site is thought to be named as such due to the number of unexploded enemy shells found there after the Armistice. Again, the remains of hundreds of unidentified men lie in this cemetery.

OPEN: All year round. Free of charge



Image: Commonwealth War Graves Commission

## Vimy: Commemorative Monument of Canada

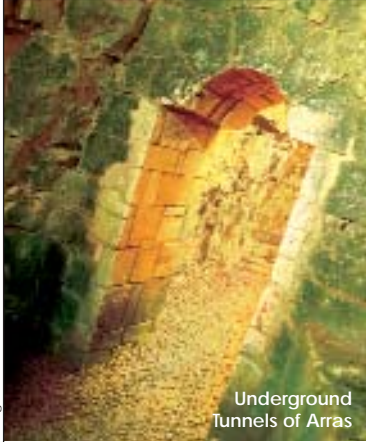
### WW1

Commemorating the Canadian victory at the Battle of Vimy Ridge atop Hill 145 is the Canadian National Vimy Memorial, a great structure of white stone, and the largest of Canada's war monuments. The land on which it stands is a Canadian National Park, given in perpetuity by the French nation to the people of Canada for their efforts in war. Inscribed on the Memorial's ramparts are names of over 11,000 'missing' Canadian soldiers.

OPEN: All year round. Free of charge. Tel: 00 33 (0)3 21 50 68 68



Image: Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Underground Tunnels of Arras

Image: C. Situation & Ensemble

## Underground Tunnels of Arras

### WW1

Underneath the Place des Héros in Arras runs a labyrinth of tunnels carved out of the chalk rock. Used by some 10,000 British and Commonwealth soldiers for up to four years, this subterranean world linked up to the front line at Vimy and had its own generator, dressing station and headquarters. You can visit this network of tunnels by guided tour only. For more information call Arras Tourist Information.

Arras Tourist Office  
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 21 51 26 95 or email  
arras.tourisme@wanadoo.fr

## The Cambrai Memorial

### WW1

This beautiful memorial stands at one end of the Louverval Military Cemetery and commemorates more than 7,000 servicemen of the UK and South Africa, who died in the Battle of Cambrai of November and December 1917, and whose graves are not known. The Memorial was designed by H. Chalton Bradshaw, with sculpture by C.S. Jagger.

Cambrai Tourist Office  
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 27 78 36 15

## Le Cateau-Cambrésis

### WW1

Here the monument to commemorate the 'Heroic defeat' of the British Second Armed Corps on 26th August

1914 marks the decision of the Commander of the British forces to defend the town. The four divisions of infantry and one division of cavalry were no match for the six divisions of the Germans led by von Kluck. Many British battalions never received the order to retreat and almost 8,000 were killed or wounded.

## New Zealand Memorial, Le Quesnoy

### WW1

Just days before the Armistice, on 4th November 1918, Le Quesnoy, a small town in the north of France, was liberated from four years of German occupation by New Zealand forces. The town was occupied by 1,500 Germans, who refused to give themselves up. 400 soldiers from the New Zealand division were wounded, 93 of whom died and were buried in Le Quesnoy's cemetery. The liberation is still remembered by the town's inhabitants, and by New Zealanders, who visit the memorial and pay tribute to their countrymen.

Tourist Office  
1, rue du Maréchal Joffre  
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 27 25 54 70

## Calais War Museum

### WW2

The Calais area suffered badly during WW2. Its museum is situated in a bunker, formerly used by the war time German navy as a command post. A total of 20 rooms display a large number of interesting objects relating to the conflict in the area, including military uniforms and equipment, posters and photos.

Calais War Museum  
Parc Saint-Pierre  
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 21 34 21 57  
OPEN: 15th Feb - 31st Mar  
11.00-17.00 (every day except Tues)  
1st Apr - 30th Sept 11.00-17.30 (every day)  
1st May - 30th Aug 11.00-17.00 (every day)  
1st Oct - 15th Nov 12.00-17.00 (every day except Tues)

## Base V3 Mimoyecques, Landrethun-le-Nord

### WW2

An ambitious German construction designed to rain death and destruction upon the enemy was the V3 base at Mimoyecques, equipped with 25 giant canons, which were capable of firing shells into London every six seconds. This did not succeed, however, due to Allied air attacks.

OPEN: 1st Apr - 11th Nov  
11.00-18.00 (every day)  
1st Jul - 30th Aug 10.00-19.00 (every day)  
Adults: €5.00 Children: €3.50  
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 21 87 10 34

## Historical Museum of the Second World War, Ambleteuse

### WW2

This museum pays tribute to all the veterans of WW2. 800 square metres of displays follow history from the invasion of Poland in 1939 to the bombing of Hiroshima in 1945.

Musée Historique de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale  
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 21 87 33 01  
OPEN: 1st Apr - 15th Oct  
09.30-18.00  
16th Oct - 31st Mar weekends only  
10.00-18.00  
CLOSED Dec, Jan & Feb  
Adults: €6.00 Children: €4.30



Eperlecques Blockhouse

### WW2

This looming concrete structure was intended to shelter a factory for assembling, fuelling and launching V2 rockets and for making liquid oxygen, although neither of these plans succeeded.

OPEN: 1st Mar - 30th Nov,  
July/Aug 10.00-19.00  
Mar-Apr 14.15-18.00  
May-Jun & Sept 10.00-12.00,  
14.15-19.00;  
Oct-Nov 14.15-19.00  
Adults: €6.50 Children: €5.25  
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 21 88 44 22

## The Museum of the Atlantic Wall, Audinghen

### WW2

The ugly concrete gun turret that stands on the picturesque Cap Gris-Nez was part of Hitler's formidable line of defences around the north French coast - the Atlantic Wall. The 21 German soldiers it housed had the job of bombarding the coast of Kent with 35 metre-long canons. The building and the guns remain, along with German army memorabilia.

OPEN: All year round except Dec & Jan 10.00-12.00 & 14.00-17.00  
1st Jun - 30th Sept 09.00-19.00  
Adults: €5.50 Children: €2.80  
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 21 32 97 33

## La Coupole, Saint-Omer

### WW2

Following bomb damage to the Eperlecques Blockhouse, Hitler called for more resources to be poured into another underground rocket launch base a few miles away. Known as 'La Coupole', this is now a museum dedicated to WW2. Learn about the development of the V1 and V2 secret weapons and their military use during the war, see rare archive films and much more.

OPEN: All year round, 09.30-18.30;  
10.00-19.00 at weekends & public holidays  
CLOSED: 25th Dec & first 2 weeks of Jan.  
Adults: €9.00 Children: €6.00  
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 21 12 27 27

Image: Richard Sowersby / Rex Features

## The Military Cemetery of St-Roch, Valenciennes

### WW2

North-east of Valenciennes lies the Communal Cemetery of St Roch Valenciennes. Although the town was in German hands until November 1918 the Canadians liberated the town and it became a Casualty Clearing Station until October 1919. 1.5 km from Valenciennes on the north side of the road to Brunay-sur-L'Escaut.

OPEN: Nov-Feb 08.00-17.00  
Mar-Sept 08.00-18.00  
Oct 08.00-17.30  
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 27 46 22 90

## Charles de Gaulle's Birth House, Lille

### WW2

Charles de Gaulle, renowned for the encouragement he gave to the French Resistance during the Second World War, was born in 1890 at his grandmother's house in Lille. In 1990, the house was listed as an historic monument and it is now a museum celebrating the great man's life.

OPEN: Weds - Sun 10.00-13.00 & 14.00-18.00  
Adults: €5.00 Groups: €4.00  
Children: €3.00  
Children under 10: Free of charge  
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 28 38 12 05

## Museum of the Resistance, Bondues

### WW2

This area of northern France was ravaged by WW2 and the Nazi occupation of the region. The resistance movement were a group of local men and women who worked under cover to help the Allied forces regain control of occupied Europe. This museum is dedicated to the people that were involved and traces, through documents and artefacts, the lengths they went to helping the cause, at great risk to themselves.

OPEN: First Sunday of the month (except Aug) 14.30-18.00  
Adults: €3.00  
Children under 12: Free of charge  
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 20 28 88 32



Image: Haringue / Rex Features

Image: Musée du 5 Juin 1944, Message Verlaine



## Museum of 5 June 1944: Message Verlaine

### WW2

On the day before the Normandy Landings the BBC sent a coded message to the French Resistance in the form of two lines from a poem by Verlaine. This was correctly deciphered in the German HQ bunker at Tourcoing, near Lille, but the message was disregarded by the German high command.

*Les sanglots longs des violons de l'automne*

*Blessent mon cœur d'une langueur monotone*

*The long sighs of autumn's violins*

*Injure my heart with a dull languor*

The HQ Bunker (SK1) of the Armees Ober Kommando 15 is open on the 1st & 3rd Sundays of each month. 09.00-12.00 & 14.00-18.00. Guided tours last 1hr 30min.

## Dunkirk and 'Operation Dynamo'

### WW2

Dunkirk was the scene of the historic evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from France in May 1940. 'Operation Dynamo' saw 350,000 men evacuated by boat in 9 days under artillery fire and German air attack in perhaps the greatest naval operation of all time.

The Dunkirk Memorial, commemorating over 4,500 casualties from this time, can be seen at the entrance to the British war graves section of Dunkirk Town Cemetery.

## Museum of Remembrance, Dunkirk

### WW2

This museum tells the story of the Battle of Dunkirk and Operation Dynamo. Several objects and archive documents can be viewed here.

OPEN: Every day from 1st May - 31st Sept 10.00-12.00 & 14.00-17.00  
Adults: €3.50  
Children under 12: Free of charge  
Veterans: Free of charge  
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 28 69 02 04



Dunkirk Memorial, Dunkirk

Image: Commonwealth War Graves Commission

# The Somme

The Somme was an unfortunate victim of WW1, most notably for being the location of one of the bloodiest battles in human history in 1916. On 1st July, after a week-long artillery barrage, the Allied forces attempted to break through the German lines along a 25 mile front. The German troops, having anticipated the attack, had consolidated their position and escaped to underground shelters. Believing that they had obliterated the enemy, British troops slowly approached the German lines, and thus was the beginning of the massacre that was the Battle of the Somme. 60,000 British and Commonwealth troops died and 20,000 were wounded or missing on the first day of the battle, mainly within the first hour.

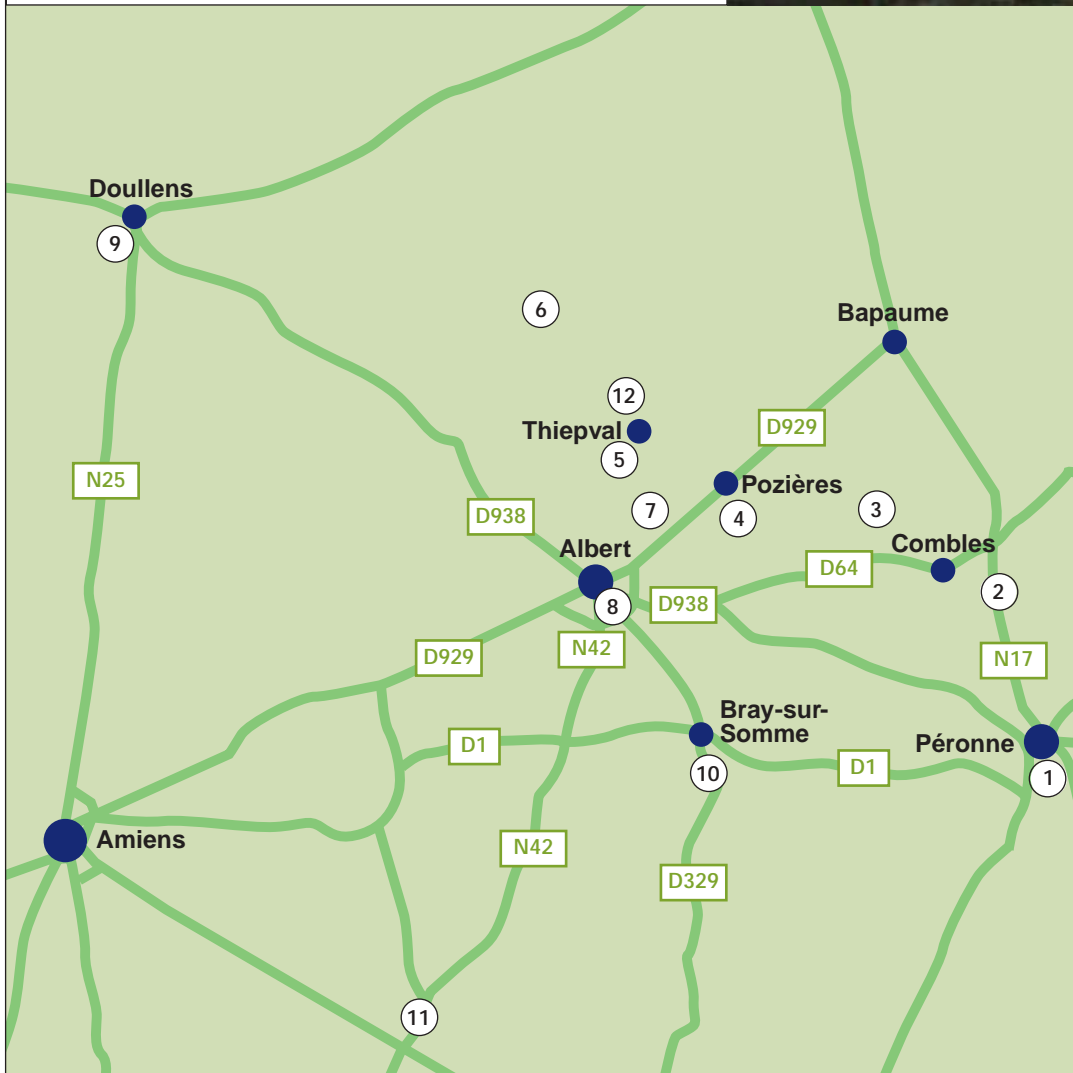
Later on in the war in March and April 1918, the British line on the Somme Front was again attacked by the German Army, until the Allied forces gradually pushed it out of its defensive positions during the Second Battle of the Somme in August 1918.

Today, this horrific period in history can be explored and envisaged along the Circuit of Remembrance, which takes you to impressive memorials, remains of battlefields and beautifully maintained cemeteries, and all the significant war sites of the Somme.

Image: 'Somme 1916' Museum



'Somme 1916' Museum



## Map Key

### WW1

- 1 Historial of the Great War, Péronne
- 2 The Chapel of the 'Souvenir Français', Rancourt
- 3 The South African National Memorial & Museum, Longueval
- 4 The British Tanks Memorial / Australian Monument, Pozières
- 5 The Franco-British Memorial, Thiepval
- 6 Newfoundland Memorial, Beaumont-Hamel
- 7 The Lochnagar Crater, La Boisselle
- 8 'Somme 1916' Museum, Albert
- 9 Hall of the 'Sole Command', Doullens
- 10 'P'tit Train de la Haute-Somme', Amiens
- 11 National Australian Memorial, Villers-Bretonneux
- 12 The Thiepval Visitor Centre

Somme Tourist Board  
21, rue Ernst Cauvin  
80000 AMIENS

Tel: 00 33 (0)3 22 71 22 71  
Fax: 00 33 (0)3 22 71 22 69  
accueil@somme-tourisme.com  
www.somme-tourisme.com



## Historial of the Great War, Péronne

### WW1

Located at the historic heart of the Battlefields of the Somme, this museum offers full and comprehensive illustrations of the causes, events and consequences of the Great War, for all who were involved. Learn about the daily lives of the British, German and French civilians who were drawn into the war, due to the overpowering social and political climate of the time. The fascinating collections ranging from posters to objects to film footage express only a fraction of the horror and the universal suffering of war.

Château de Péronne

Tel: 00 33 (0)3 22 83 14 18

Fax: 00 33 (0)3 22 83 54 18

doc@historial.org

www.historial.org

OPEN: Every day from 10.00-18.00

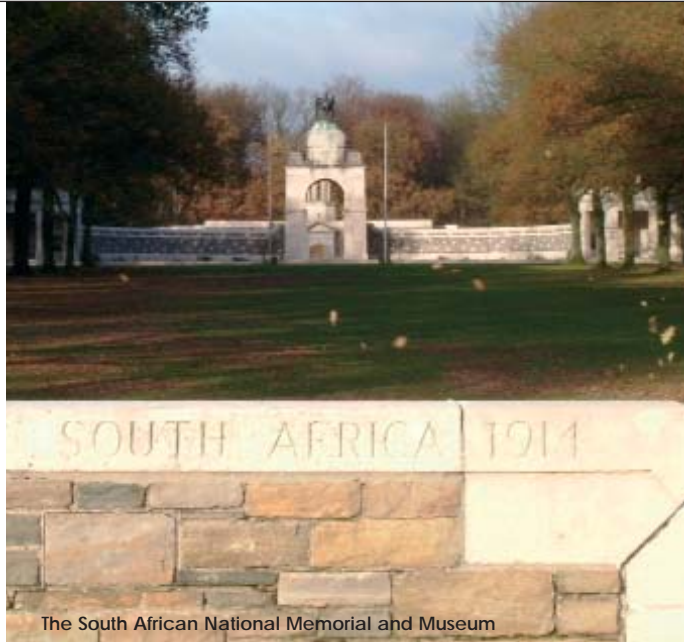
(except Mondays from 1 Nov - 31 Mar)

CLOSED: from mid-Dec to mid-Jan

Adult: €7.50

Children (6-18): €3.80

Children under 6: Free of charge



The South African National Memorial and Museum

## The South African National Memorial and Museum, Longueval

### WW1

The capture of Delville Wood was assigned to the South Africans, 4,000 of whom went into the attack on 15th July 1916. Five days later, just 143 came back unharmed. The memorial and museum commemorate those that perished and the South African contribution to WW1 and the other wars that followed.

OPEN:

Museum and visitor centre: Every day except Monday and public holidays, from 1st Feb -10th Nov 10.00-15.45

(10.00-17.45 from 1st Apr - 14th Oct)

Free of charge

Memorial & wood: Open all year round

Tel: 00 33 (0)3 22 85 02 17

## The Chapel of the 'Souvenir Français', Rancourt

### WW1

This memorial chapel was originally built at the wish of a family from this region who wanted to commemorate their son and his comrades, who were killed in battle on 25th September 1916. Now maintained by the Souvenir Français association, the chapel holds an official ceremony every second Sunday in September. The village is also a place of poignance due to its three cemeteries for each of the combatant nations – French, British and German.

OPEN: Every day from

1 Apr - 30th Sept, 08.00-18.00

Every day except Monday from

1st Oct - 31st Mar, 10.00-17.00

Free of charge

## Pozières

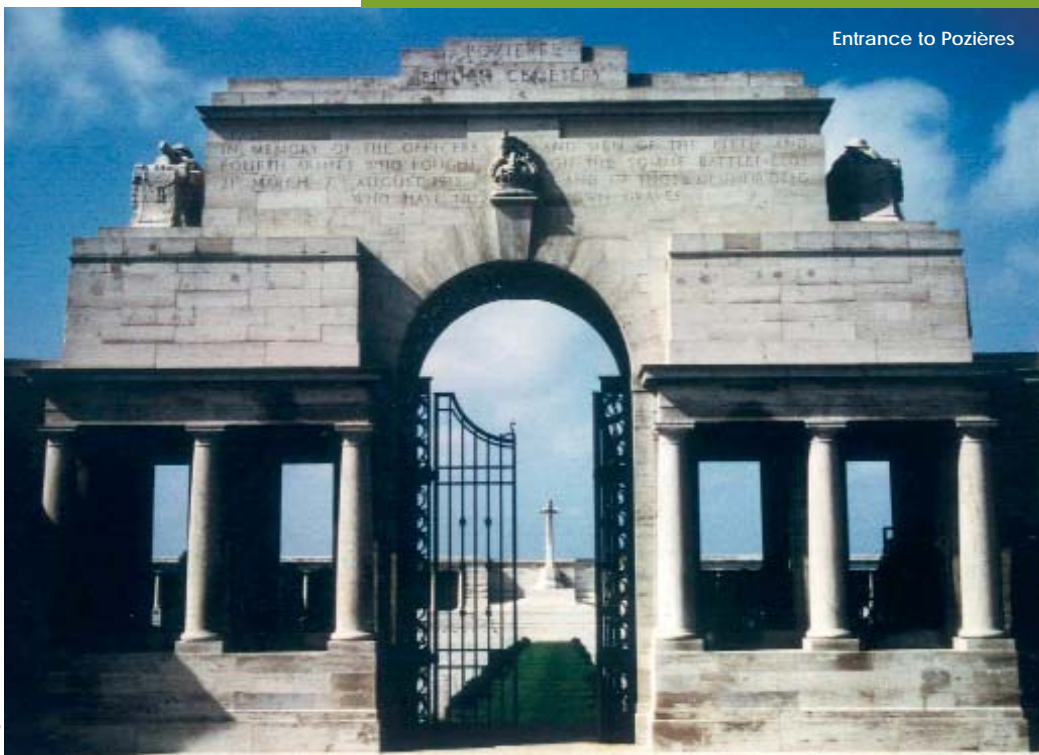
### WW1

The village of Pozières was captured by Australian troops on 23rd July 1916. It was crossed by a double network of trenches that made up the 2nd German line, and flanked by two blockhouses, named 'Gibraltar' and 'The Windmill'. The Australian attack caused the deaths of many men, and the total annihilation of the village. The Monument to the 1st Australian Division here commemorates the dead, while 'Gibraltar' has been adapted to give a first hand view of the battlefield, with an observation table and look-out tower.

The British Tanks Memorial in Pozières marks the arrival of the first tanks on the battlefield on 15th September 1916, with four small-scale model tanks.

OPEN: All year round

Free of charge



Entrance to Pozières

Image: Commonwealth War Graves Commission



The Franco-British Memorial

**The Franco-British Memorial, Thiepval**

**WW1**

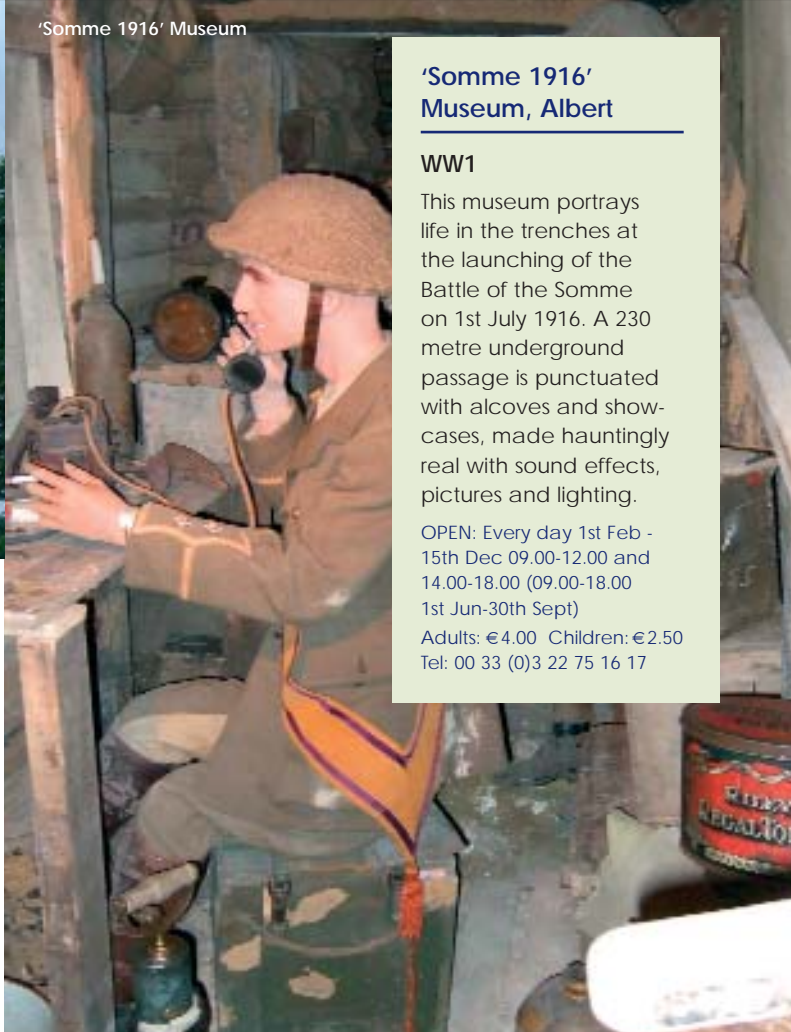
The pillars of this majestic memorial designed by Edwin Lutyens bear the names of 73,367 men, dubbed the 'Missing of the Somme' as they died in battles here between 1915 and 1918 but have no known grave. The arch bears a meaningful inscription:

*'Aux armées françaises et britannique, l'Empire britannique reconnaissant'*

*(To the French and British armies, from the grateful British Empire).*

OPEN: Every day  
1st May - 31st Oct 10.00-18.00  
Low season 09.00-17.00  
CLOSED:  
mid-Dec to mid-Jan  
Free of charge  
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 22 74 81 11

Image: Somme 1916 Museum



'Somme 1916' Museum

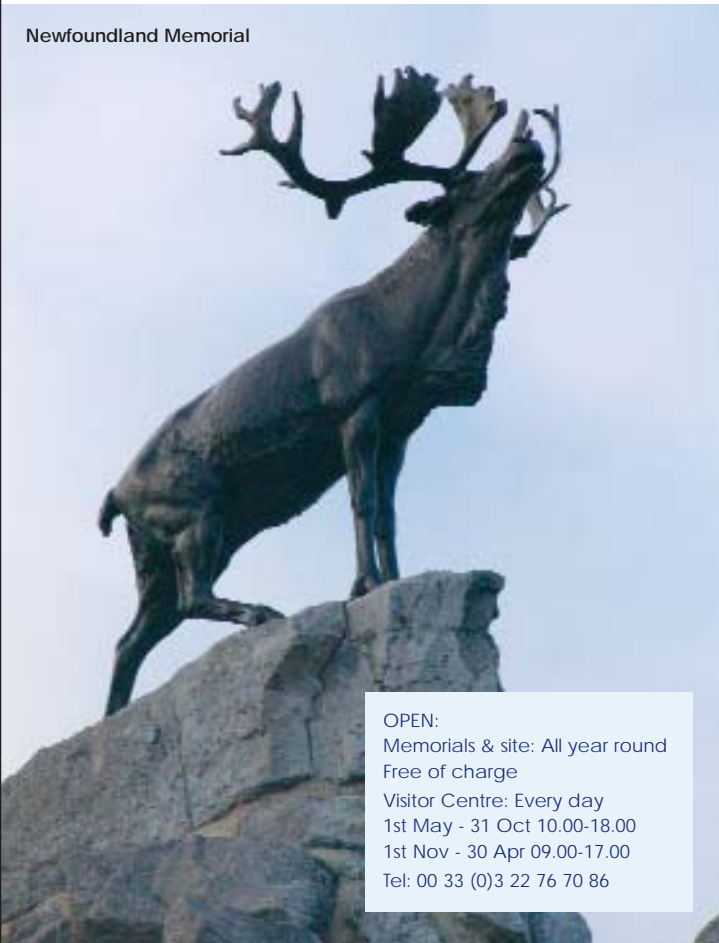
**'Somme 1916' Museum, Albert**

**WW1**

This museum portrays life in the trenches at the launching of the Battle of the Somme on 1st July 1916. A 230 metre underground passage is punctuated with alcoves and show-cases, made hauntingly real with sound effects, pictures and lighting.

OPEN: Every day 1st Feb - 15th Dec 09.00-12.00 and 14.00-18.00 (09.00-18.00 1st Jun-30th Sept)  
Adults: € 4.00 Children: € 2.50  
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 22 75 16 17

Image: Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Newfoundland Memorial

**Newfoundland Memorial, Beaumont-Hamel**

**WW1**

Being a British colony at the time of the First World War, Newfoundland raised a volunteer army. On 1st July 1916 the men of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment came under heavy German

fire. Within just half an hour, only 68 men remained unharmed, placing this battle as perhaps the most murderous of the Battle of the Somme. A bronze statue of the regiment's emblem, the Caribou, graces this memorial, from where you can view the whole battlefield with its preserved British and German front line trenches.

OPEN:  
Memorials & site: All year round  
Free of charge  
Visitor Centre: Every day  
1st May - 31 Oct 10.00-18.00  
1st Nov - 30 Apr 09.00-17.00  
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 22 76 70 86



Image: Alertomalibu



## The Lochnagar Crater, La Boisselle

### WW1

This mine crater, 100 metres in diameter and 30 metres deep, is the only one open to the public, and marks the launching of the Battle of the Somme by British troops on 1st July 1916.

## Hall of the 'Sole Command', Doullens

### WW1

This room in Doullens Town Hall presents an evocation of a key moment in the war, when Generals Petain and Foch, Lord Milner and General Haig met in that very room and decided to create a unified command. On 18th July, General Foch, appointed by the British and French to coordinate the operations of the two armies, launched his final counter-offensive which led to the Armistice of 11th November.

OPEN: Every day except Sunday  
Free of charge

Hall of the Sole Command  
Hotel de Ville  
2, avenue du Maréchal Foch  
Doullennais Tourist Office  
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 22 32 54 52

## The 'P'tit Train de la Haute-Somme', Amiens

### WW1

This narrow-gauge railway was used by the infantry men of 1914-1918 to carry supplies up to the French front line. At its departure point, Froissy, is the Museum of Narrow Gauge Railways, where you can view some of the vehicles used to provision the trenches in the Battle of the Somme.

OPEN: From 30th Apr - 1st Oct, 14.00-19.00 on Sundays and French bank holidays.  
From 14th Jul - 26th Aug, 14.00-18.00 Tues-Sat, & 14.00-19.00 Sundays and French bank holidays.  
Adults: €8.50 Children: €5.50  
Children under 5: Free of charge  
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 22 44 55 40

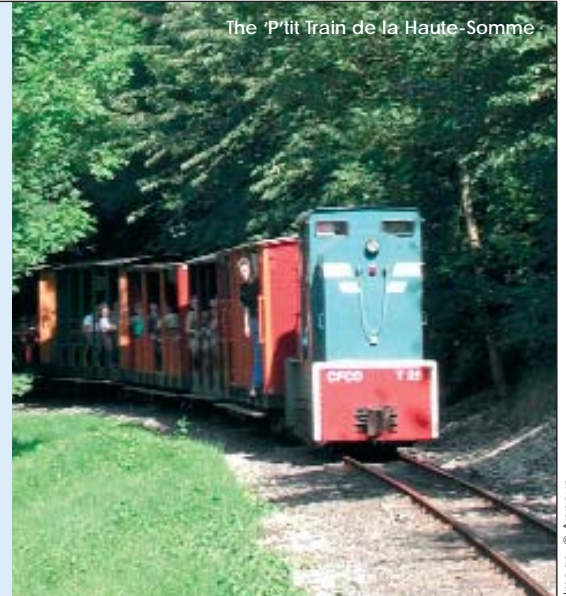


Image: © Appeva



Image: The Thiepval Visitor Centre

## The Thiepval Visitor Centre

### WW1

This Visitor Centre provides a place for the visitors of the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing to put the memorial into the context of the battlefield. Display panels present the course of WW1 from 1914 to 1918, and an area focuses on the events of the Battle of the Somme that took place in and around Thiepval in 1916. The moving Panel of the Missing features photographs of 600 of the staggering 72,000 commemorated on the Memorial.

OPEN: Every day, 10.00-18.00 Free of charge  
[www.thiepval.org.uk](http://www.thiepval.org.uk)



Image: Didier Cuy

## The National Australian Memorial, Villers-Bretonneux

### WW1

It was in Villers-Bretonneux on 25th April 1918 that Australian troops finally halted the German offensive of March 1918, exactly three years after Anzac Day. The white stone memorial bears the names of all the missing soldiers who do not have a known grave. It is also the location of the annual Anzac Day celebration.

On the first floor of the village school building is the Franco-Australian Museum, illustrating the contribution of Australian troops during the First World War with photographs, uniforms and weapons, and highlighting the mutual recognition between the two nations.

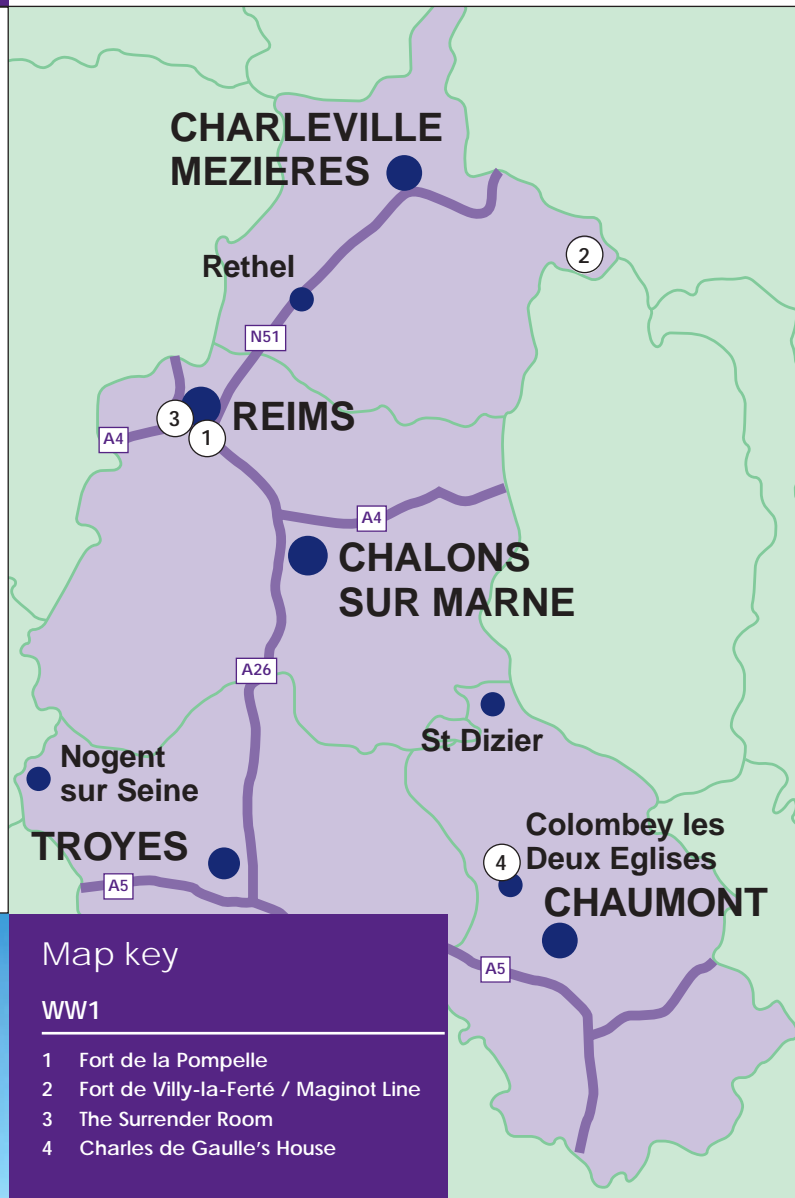
Memorial open: All year round Free of charge  
Museum open: 11th Jan - 23rd Dec from Tues - Sat, 10.00-12.30 and 14.00-18.00  
First and third Sunday of the month 14.00-18.00  
Adults: €3.05 Children: €1.55 Children under 6: Free  
Tel: 00 33 (0)3 22 96 80 79

# Champagne-Ardenne

WW1 battles, notably in 1914 and 1918, account for a great deal of fighting across open land and the destruction of much of the region's capital, Reims. Significantly the encounter of 1918 is regarded as something of a turning point in the war and one in which troops from many lands, including Italy, France, Russia, America and the British Commonwealth, fought side by side. The collapse and surrender of Germany followed soon after.

In WW2 the last fortress of the Maginot Line, at La Ferté, came under heavy attack and the Ardennes, to the north east of Reims suffered heavily from sustained action. Significantly the signing of the surrender at the end of WW2 took place in Reims on 7 May 1945 and in 1962 Charles de Gaulle and Chancellor Adenauer signed an accord of reconciliation between France and Germany in this city. The famous French general was finally laid to rest in his village of Colombey les Deux Eglises, near Chaumont. His home since 1933, La Boisserie, has now been opened as a museum, while a giant Cross of Lorraine, dedicated to his memory, towers over the forested landscape.

Image: © MAISON DE LA FRANCE - CRT Champagne-Ardenne-Sivade\*



## Map key

### WW1

- 1 Fort de la Pompelle
- 2 Fort de Villy-la-Ferté / Maginot Line
- 3 The Surrender Room
- 4 Charles de Gaulle's House



Fort de la Pompelle

## Fort de la Pompelle, Reims, Marne

### WW1

One of a series of forts constructed in the 1880s to protect Reims was armed until only a year before the outbreak of WW1 when the French General Staff decided to disarm it. On 4th September 1939 the Germans captured it without a fight. Twenty days later, after the first battle of the Marne, the fort was recaptured and held for the remainder of the war. Only 2km from the fort lies the cemetery at Sillery with the graves of 12,000 French soldiers who died in the brutal fighting of WW1 in that area.

The badly damaged fort has become a museum with a collection of trench mortars. There are also maps of the trenches and some aerial photographs, German helmets, a considerable amount of war memorabilia and weaponry. The Fort de Montbre, to the south west of Reims, remained behind French lines and is still intact.

Fort de la Pompelle Tel: 00 33 (0)3 26 85 23 36

OPEN:

1st Nov - 31st Mar 10.00-17.00

1st Apr - 31st Oct 11.00-18.00 weekdays, 11.00-19.00 weekends

CLOSED:

Annually from 24th Dec - 6th Jan, Mondays

Champagne-Ardenne Regional Tourist Board  
 15, avenue du Maréchal Leclerc  
 BP 319  
 51013 CHALONS-EN-CHAMPAGNE Cedex  
 Tel: 00 33 (0)3 26 21 85 80 Fax: 00 33 (0)3 26 21 85 90  
[contact@tourisme-champagne-ardenne.com](mailto:contact@tourisme-champagne-ardenne.com)  
[www.tourisme-champagne-ardenne.com](http://www.tourisme-champagne-ardenne.com)



Fort de la Pompelle

## Fort de Villy-la-Ferté & The Maginot Line

### WW1 and WW2

The Maginot Line was named after the French politician who served, and was wounded in, WW1. In 1929 he persuaded a reluctant government to construct a line of defences along the Franco-German border to protect his country from another attack. He died in 1932 before they were completed. By the time of the 1939 invasion Germany had developed tanks that could cross the hills and marshes between the defences that only ten years earlier had been regarded as impenetrable to invasion.

On 18/19th May 1940 the German Army struck the Fort de Villy-la-Ferté, killing all its 104 French officers and soldiers who refused to surrender, and breached the French line. The fort was originally built to withstand an onslaught and was equipped with facilities to cope with the wounded, but the German attack was overwhelming.

The fort can be visited and the scars of the bombing remain as vivid reminders of the horrors of this momentous event. Other forts along the Maginot Line, usually distinguished by their mushroom shaped turrets, remain. Many bearing the shell marks of the war, most lying forgotten and unmarked in the countryside.

Visit by guided tour only

OPEN:

Palm Sunday to All Saints Sunday on weekends and public holidays only 14.00-16.30

1 July to 31 Aug every day except Monday

Tel: 00 33 (0)3 24 22 61 49 / 06 72



Maginot Line



Signature Room of the Surrender, Reims

### The Surrender Room, Reims, Marne

#### WW2

Eisenhower's base in Reims was in a technical college and the room in which the Germans signed their unconditional surrender remains to this day as it was then. With large scale maps covering the walls from floor to ceiling and the same furniture in place. This is a place for acknowledging the tribute due to those dedicated commanders of the Allied Forces, their brave officers and men who sacrificed so much to bring peace in Europe.

Tel: 00 33 (0)3 26 85 23 36



Charles de Gaulle's House, Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises

### Charles de Gaulle's House and Tomb, Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises, Haute-Marne

#### WW2

There is no doubt that General Charles de Gaulle, leader of the Free French and stalwart opponent of the Vichy government deserved a place in the history of WW2. No better place to record his achievements than the town of Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises where, in 1934, he bought a house, once a brewery, called La Boisserie. Part of the house and grounds are open to the public and the tomb of the General in the modest churchyard of Notre Dame de l'Assomption is carefully tended.

De Gaulle died in 1970 and to commemorate his life his nation decided to erect a giant Cross of Lorraine, symbol of the Free French, on the highest point in the commune, surrounded by trees. Here on 18 June 1973 the memorial, which is 43.5m high and is built from 1,500 tonnes of Brittany rose granite, was inaugurated.

OTSI

72, rue du Général de Gaulle

Tel: 00 33 (0)3 25 01 52 33

Colombeylesdeuxglises-tourism@wanadoo.fr

Image: L'Office de tourisme de Reims

Image: John C. Watkins

Image: Paul Cooper / Rex Features

# Flanders

Ypres, in Belgium, became a pivotal battlefield in the years of The Great War and the Ypres Salient is the name given to the ridge of higher ground around the city.

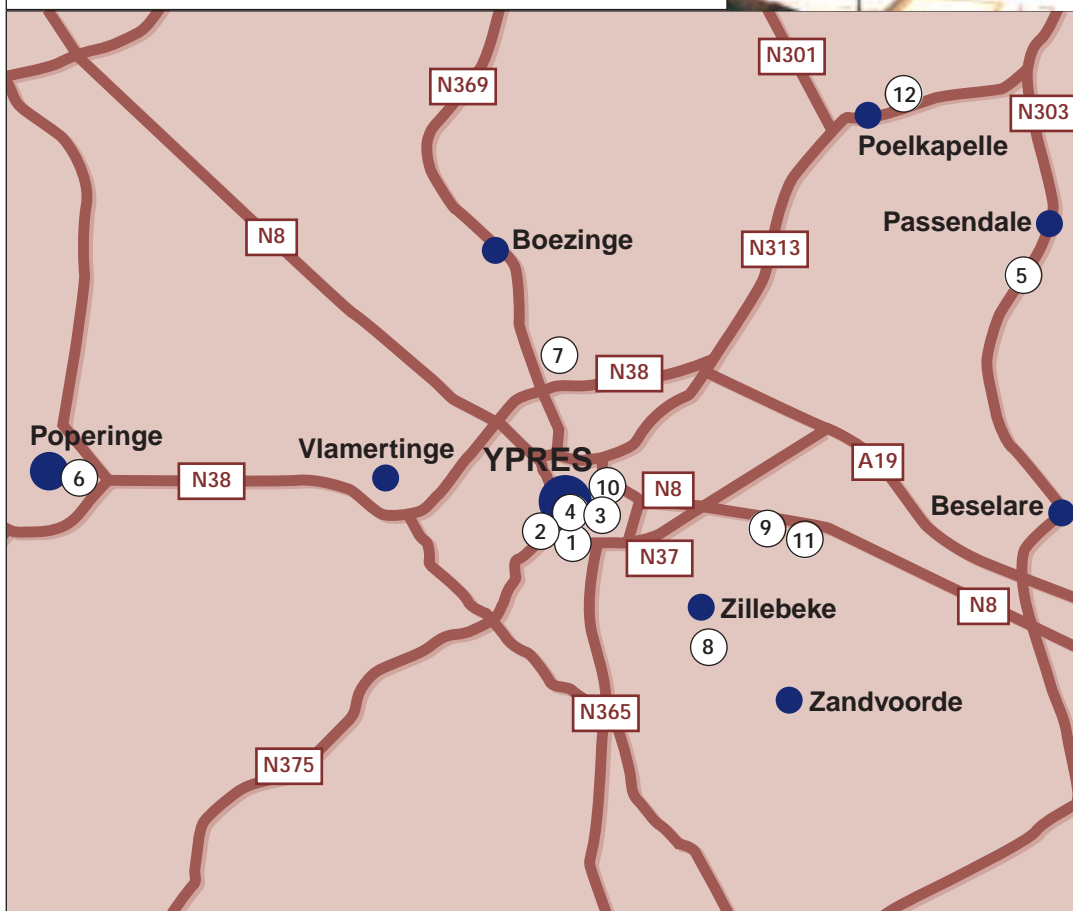
The British were determined never to let the city fall to the invaders even though the onslaught was sustained throughout most of the time. The area around Ypres saw four major battles between the Allies and the Germans, one of which was the memorable conflict at Passchendaele in 1917 when hundreds of thousands of men on both sides perished.

Here the British suffered enormous losses and there are over 250,000 fallen lying in some 600 cemeteries in this region. Soldiers often referred to 'being in France', although they were in fact in Belgium, at a place that was dubbed 'Wipers' by the servicemen. The old medieval city, despite almost complete devastation during the four war years, was rebuilt and serves as a perfect centre from which to explore the sites and cemeteries of Flanders.

Images: © Stad Leper / Tjil Capoen



In Flanders Fields Museum



## In Flanders Fields Museum, Ypres

### WW1

Renowned as one of the most devastated towns of the Great War, Ypres now has one of the best museums dedicated to this period of history.

Opened in 1998 it is called the In Flanders Fields Museum and is situated in the Old Cloth Hall, an elegant building dating back to the Middle Ages when this region was an important wool area. Located on the first floor of the Hall,

### Map key

#### WW1

- |                                 |                                      |                                   |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 The In Flanders Fields Museum | 3 Menin Gate                         | 7 Essex Farm Cemetery             |
| 2 Yorkshire Trench & Dugout     | 4 St George's Memorial Church        | 8 Hill 60: Battle for Messines    |
|                                 | 5 Tyne Cot Memorial & Cemetery       | 9 Hill 62: Battle of Mount Sorrel |
|                                 | 6 Talbot House & Poperinge Town Hall | 10 Sanctuary Wood Museum          |
|                                 |                                      | 11 Hooze Crater                   |
|                                 |                                      | 12 Poelcapelle British Cemetery   |

which over-looks the Market Square, the museum is dedicated to peace. Here you will find accounts by soldiers serving in the field, their uniforms, weaponry and maps together with audio-visual displays all re-creating the horrific years and the suffering of the local people, their captors and their liberators. There is a section showing the run-up to the war which then takes you on a chronological path through the events of 1914-1918 including cameo exhibits relating to the lot of prisoners of war, the medical facilities and conditions, and how the nations involved made their contributions.

The archives include over 5,000 books, trench maps, photographs, periodicals and original documents.

In Flanders Fields Museum  
Lakenhallen, Grote Markt 34  
Tel: 00 32 (0)57 23 92 20  
flandersfields@ieper.be  
OPEN: 1st April - 15th Nov Mon-Sun  
10.00-18.00  
16th Nov - 31st Mar Tue-Sun  
10.00-17.00  
Adults: €7.50 Children 7-15: €3.50  
Under 7: Free Families: €18.00  
Mixed groups: €5.00 per person  
Schools: €3.50 per person

Image: Commonwealth War Graves Commission

## St George's Memorial Church, Ypres

### WW1

St George's Memorial Church was built as a memorial to the 500,000 men who died in the three battles of the Ypres Salient. The English-style parish church was opened in 1929, and subsequently a British school was built next to it – Eton Memorial School – which was to educate the children of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's many British employees.

OPEN: Daily from 09.30 till dusk  
(16.00 in winter) Free of charge



St Georges Memorial Church

Image: © Stad Ieper / Tijl Capoen



The Menin Gate Memorial

## Yorkshire Trench and Dugout, Ypres

### WW1

Nearly ninety years after the Yorkshire Trench had been dug near the village of Boesinghe, south-west of Ypres, it was rediscovered and restored as a very telling example of the cramped conditions, often flooded with water, that beset the soldiers here from 1915-1917. Reconstructed timber A-frames and duckboards, designed to keep above the mud and water are on show here, allowing a unique insight into trench warfare. If you want to see the originals, rescued from the site when it was re-discovered, you will find them at the **In Flanders Fields Museum** at the Cloth Hall in Ypres.

OPEN: All year round  
Free of charge

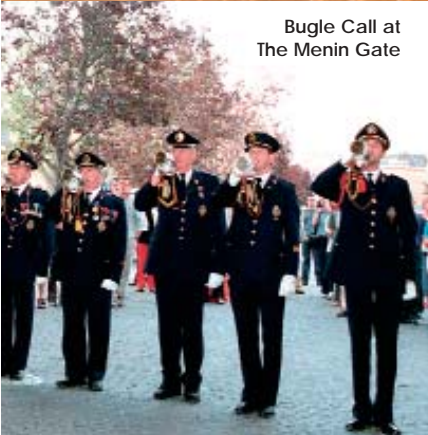


Image: © Stad Ieper / Tijl Capoen

## Old Cloth Hall



## Bugle Call at The Menin Gate



## Menin Gate, Ypres

### WW1

This vast monument to the east of the town of Ypres is an impressive and moving tribute to the 54,896 soldiers whose names are inscribed on its walls. The sheer numbers of officers and their men is both salutary and awesome. Every night, just before 8pm, the police stop the traffic through the gate and, at 20.00hrs, the Last Post is sounded, its notes resonating around this massive arch ensuring that the loss of life in this campaign for freedom will never be forgotten.

The Menin Gate Memorial was built from Portland

stone to commemorate the Missing – those members of the British and Empire armies who had died in the fighting around Ypres, but who had no known graves. Since 1929 the last post has been sounded every night and in all weathers, except during the German Occupation in WWII when the ceremony was continued in England at the Brookwood Military Cemetery near Guildford.

The bugle call is sounded by members of the local voluntary Fire Brigade on six silver bugles presented by the Brussels and Antwerp Branches of the Royal British Legion.

Images: Tourism Flanders & Brussels / www.visitflanders.co.uk

Sanctuary Wood Museum



Image: © Stad Ieper / Tjil Capoen

## Hill 62: The Battle of Mount Sorrel and Sanctuary Wood

### WW1

East of Ypres lies Sanctuary Wood, so named because it provided cover for troops just behind the front line. There were three war cemeteries already in existence in the wood prior to the battle of Mount Sorrel, in June 1916. The battle, fought between the Germans and the Canadians, severely damaged these cemeteries, the remains of one of which is now recognised as the Sanctuary Wood Cemetery. Here lie the remains of almost 2,000 servicemen, most of whom remain unidentified. Hill 62, from which you can look back over Ypres, is commemorated by a memorial to the Canadians.

## Sanctuary Wood Museum, Ypres

### WW1

This museum is owned by the grandson of the farmer who reclaimed his land after WW1. Original British trenches in Sanctuary Wood, as it is known to the British Army, have been preserved exactly as they were at the time, with bomb craters,

'dug-outs' and underground passages, as well as the tunnel that was discovered in the 1980s. The museum collection features equipment removed from the battlefield, and many photographs including a large, rare collection of stereoscopic photos in viewing boxes.

Sanctuary Wood Museum  
 Canadalaan 26  
 Tel: 00 32 (0)57 46 63 73

OPEN: Daily 10.00-19.00  
 Adults: €6.00  
 Children: Free of charge  
 School groups: €3.00 per person

Image: Redvers



OPEN:  
 Tuesday - Friday 11.00-17.00  
 Saturday & Sunday 11.00-18.00  
 Adults: €3.00 Children: €1.50  
 Groups: €2.00 per person  
 Schools: €1.50 per person

## Hooze Crater: Museum and Cemetery

### WW1

A carefully renovated chapel, the museum here is home to unique and valuable collections including original WW1 uniforms and life sized reconstructions of tableaux from the theatre of war.

Behind it is the Crater Cemetery, where thousands of soldiers have been buried since the Third Battle of Ypres. The theme park of Bellewaerde now stands on the site where the Hooze Crater château was, before its destruction began on 31st October 1914.



Tyne Cot Memorial and Cemetery

## Tyne Cot Memorial and Cemetery, Passchendaele

### WW1

Nearly 12,000 British and Commonwealth troops rest at Tyne Cot Cemetery. The names of 35,000 missing soldiers are recorded on the memorial covering the period Aug 1917-1918. Beside the cemetery's iconic Cross of Sacrifice stand the original, unevenly spaced graves from that time. It is a shocking yet moving sight to see so many thousands of lives lost – many not even retaining their name and whose headstones read 'A soldier of the Great War. Known unto God'

Image: Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917

## Talbot House and Poperinge Town Hall, Poperinge

### WW1

Named in memory of Gilbert Talbot, who was killed at Hooge in 1915, Talbot house was set up by Reverend Philip 'Tubby' Clayton and Gilbert's brother, Padre Neville Talbot as a clubhouse for soldiers, regardless of rank. It soon became known by the thousands of soldiers that used it for rest and recreation, as 'Toc H'; 'Toc' being the army signal for 'T'. The chapel on the third floor is untouched since 1918. In the inner court of the nearby Poperinge Town Hall, the sight of the execution pole is a sombre reminder of those 'deserters' shot at dawn on this very spot, some of them only boys.

Talbot House, Gasthuisstraat 43, 8970 Poperinge, Belgium  
Tel: 00 32 (0)57 33 32 28 [www.talbothouse.be](http://www.talbothouse.be)

OPEN: all year round, 09.00-12.00 and 14.00-17.00

Closed: between Christmas and New Year

Adults: €3.00 Children: €2.00 Family: €10.00

Talbot House is also open for accomodation for individuals and groups of up to 18 people.

Image: Talbot House, Poperinge, [www.talbothouse.be](http://www.talbothouse.be)



Talbot House

## The Rampart Route

Originally constructed in 1100 with earth walls and wooden gates, the present ramparts were designed in the 17th century on the orders of Louis XIV. You can obtain a free information guide in English from the Ypres Tourist Information Centre. There are 12 monuments dating back to the 13th century on the 4km walk.

## In Flanders Fields Car Route WW1

If you want to visit the most important cemeteries and monuments in the area, you can follow the 'In Flanders Fields' route which is 82km long and starts and ends in Ypres. It also gives you the chance to explore the local countryside. The map and guide are available from the Ypres Tourist Information Centre.

Price: €2.50



Essex Farm Cemetery

Image: Commonwealth War Graves Commission

## Essex Farm Cemetery, Boezinge

### WW1

This military cemetery was named after the homeland of the British soldiers from Essex who sheltered there. It was also here that in May 1915 Canadian Army Medical Corps, John McCrae wrote the poignant war poem 'In Flanders Fields' before he died of pneumonia in 1918. Today there is a house in place of the farm, behind which are concrete structures that were once Advanced Dressing Stations (ADS) for wounded soldiers, and the remains of bunkers. Just recently, an excavation also uncovered a narrow gauge railway, thought to be used for transporting supplies.

OPEN: All year round  
Free of charge

## Hill 60: The Battle for Messines

### WW1

After British troops dug 22 tunnels under the hill along the German-occupied Messines Ridge, 19 of them were exploded under the German lines. Once the ground was recaptured, the mine battle that ensued on the ridge left enormous craters in the ground from all the bomb and shell explosions. Part of this landscape has been preserved, the largest crater now existing as the ironically tranquil 'Pool of Peace' in Wijtschate.

## John Condon, Poelcapelle British Cemetery

### WW1

One grave at this cemetery is said to be that of Private John Condon, 'thought to be the youngest battle casualty of the First World War commemorated by the Commission' at the age of 14. However, there is speculation that neither the age nor the identification on the headstone at plot LVI, Row F grave 8 are indeed correct. Close to 7,500 soldiers of the Commonwealth are also commemorated or buried at Poelcapelle.

OPEN: All year round Free of charge



Tyne Cot Memorial

Image: Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917



Talbot House

Image: Talbot House, Poperinge, [www.talbothouse.be](http://www.talbothouse.be)

Tourism Flanders-Brussels  
Flanders House  
1a Cavendish Square  
London W1G 0LD

Tel: 020 7307 7730

Fax: 020 7307 7731

[info@visitflanders.co.uk](mailto:info@visitflanders.co.uk)

[www.visitflanders.co.uk](http://www.visitflanders.co.uk)

# Southern Belgium

Draw a line between the main industrial cities of Germany and the French capital, Paris, and the region of Southern Belgium is in the path of any invading force. Not surprisingly, therefore, this part of Belgium suffered the onslaught of German troops in both World Wars. A hundred years earlier and the conflict was between Napoleon on one side and the British and Prussian armies on the other culminating in the defining victory at Waterloo, just south of Brussels, in 1815.

Visitors to Southern Belgium, otherwise known as Wallonia, will find themselves in a region that has suffered conflict and devastation. The scars, memorials, museums and cemeteries bear testament to many years of loss of life on a massive scale. That the countryside and its inhabitants have risen above those times of tragedy to make it as beautiful as it is today is a tribute to human endeavour and perseverance.

## Lion's Mount and Panorama

Much to the displeasure of the Duke of Wellington a man-made hill, called Lion's Mount, was created to mark the battle and at its foot a round building with a domed roof houses a panorama of the battle painted on its walls. An absolute must on a visit to Waterloo.

Image: © Culturespaces



### Map key

- 1 Battle of Waterloo
- 2 Lion's Mount Visitors' Centre
- 3 Last Headquarters of Napoleon
- 4 Panorama of the Battle
- 5 Wellington Museum

### WW1

- 6 Battle of Mons
- 7 Museum of Military History

### WW2

- 8 Museum of Battle of Ardennes
- 9 Bastogne Historical Centre
- 10 December 44 Museum

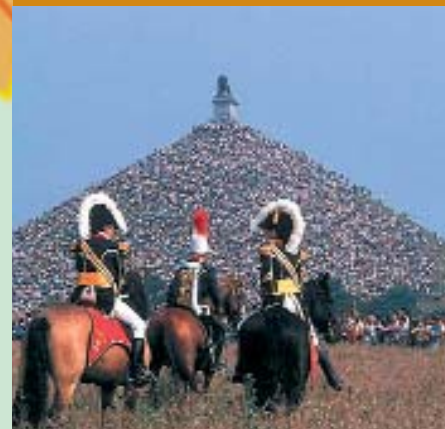


Image: © Culturespaces

When thinking of the war-torn regions of Belgium and Northern France it's easy to forget a conflict a century earlier that brought many of the protagonists in the two World Wars together in a different political alignment, namely the Battle of Waterloo in 1815.

Nelson had defeated the French at sea in the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805 and Napoleon had been forced to abdicate in 1814. He was banished by the Allies to the Island of Elba. The French, disaffected with Louis XVIII, rallied behind Napoleon, who escaped in February 1815, and re-grouped as he wanted to split the coalition of nations against him that included Prussia, Holland and Britain together with Nassau, Hanover and Brunswick.

Waterloo Tourist Office  
Chausée de Bruxelles 218  
Tel: 00 32 (0)2 352 0910  
Fax: 00 32 (0)2 354 2223

## The Battle of Waterloo 1815

Waterloo was the culmination of three previous battles and on 18 June 1815 the combined forces of Prussia and the United Kingdom finally overthrew Napoleon Bonaparte. It was a triumph for the Duke of Wellington, who described it as, 'the nearest run thing you ever saw in your life', and a landmark in British history. The British forces suffered some 5,000 casualties (killed and wounded), the Prussians 7,000 and the French 25,000 and 7,000 prisoners of war. The Wellington Museum, south west of Waterloo, is an absolute must and the information there will make a visit to the actual battlefield and the Lion's Mount so much more evocative. The visitors' centre there screens a short film and Napoleon's last headquarters and the Panorama of the Battle widen your understanding of this great battle further.



Images: © OPT

### Combination Ticket

A combination ticket is great value and admits visitors to:

**Lion's Mount & Panorama Visitor's Centre, Braine-L'Alleud**

Route du Lion 254,  
Braine-l'Alleud  
Tel: 00 32 (0)2 385 1912  
www.waterloo1815.be  
Apr - Oct 09.30-18.30  
Nov - Mar 10.00-17.00

**The Last Headquarters of Napoleon, Vieux-Genappe**

Chausée de Bruxelles 66,  
Vieux-Genappe  
Tel: 00 32 (0)2 384 2424

**The Wellington Museum, Waterloo**

Chaussée de Bruxelles 147  
B1410 Waterloo  
Tel: 00 32 (0)2 357 28 60  
www.museewellington.com  
Open every day except  
1 Jan & 25 Dec  
1 Apr - 30 Sep 09.30-18.30  
1 Oct - 31 Mar 10.00-17.00

### COMBINATION TICKET:

Adult: €12  
Child: €6  
Senior/student: €10

Image: © O. I. Mons



Mons Tourist Office  
Grand' Place 22  
7000 Mons  
Tel: 00 32 (0)65 335 580  
Fax: 00 32 (0)65 356 336

Image: Michel LeFrancq



## The Battle of Mons

### WW1

By the 23 August, only 20 days after Germany declared war on France, British troops were in position at Mons to support the French. However, the allied forces were outnumbered 20:1 along a 45km front and were forced to evacuate the town of Mons and withdraw.

Legend has it that some

soldiers saw a vision of an angel in the sky giving courage to the retreating British Army and forcing the Germans to retreat. A painting in Mons Town Hall depicts 'The Angel of Mons', now believed to be the creation of a journalist.

### Mons

### WW2

The town came under attack on 10 May 1940 and was occupied by the Germans 9 days later. The next attack on Mons came from the Allies and it was liberated on 2 September by American forces, who subsequently took 27,000 prisoners.

There is a Museum of Military History in Mons covering both conflicts and, outside the town, 230 British servicemen's graves from WW1 are to be found at the St Symphorien Military Cemetery, set in quiet countryside.

## The Battle of the Ardennes

### WW2

By September 1944 the advances that had begun with the D-Day invasions in Normandy had progressed to Southern Belgium where in the wooded countryside of The Ardennes the British Army helped to free the region for a respite period of three months. The Germans then launched a counter attack which became known as the Battle of the Bulge which saw some of the fiercest fighting of the war, lasting six weeks and accounting for many lives lost. In La Roche the Museum of the Battle of the Ardennes has many interesting exhibits

including one of the encrypting machines, 'Enigma'. The town of La Roche suffered heavy damage with 90% of its buildings destroyed and over 100 inhabitants killed. At Hotton you will find the Commonwealth Military Cemetery where 325 British soldiers are buried.



Bastogne Memorial

Image: © OPT

## Bastogne Historical Centre, Bastogne

### WW2

The star-shaped building is divided into two exhibition areas showing the German and American memorabilia separately. There are interesting authentic uniforms and weapons including a leather jacket presented by a German officer who actually wore it during the Battle of the Bulge.

Bastogne Historical Centre  
Colline du Mardasson  
00 32 (0) 61 21 14 13  
[www.bastognehistoricalcenter.be](http://www.bastognehistoricalcenter.be)

## December 44 Museum, La Gleize (Stoumont)

### WW2

Advancing German infantry were stopped at this village and the museum not only has many objects including vehicles, arms, documents, models and dioramas, but covers the period when the nearby village of Verdenne was in the hands of different armies four times in five days.

December 44 Museum  
Rue d'Eglise 7,  
La Gleize (Stoumont)  
00 32 (0) 80 78 51 91  
[www.december44.com](http://www.december44.com)

Image: © OPT



Bastogne Historical Centre

Belgian Tourist Office –  
Brussels & Wallonia  
217 Marsh Wall  
London E14 9FJ  
Tel: 020 7531 0390  
Fax: 020 7531 0393  
[info@belgiumtheplaceto.be](mailto:info@belgiumtheplaceto.be)  
[www.belgiumtheplaceto.be](http://www.belgiumtheplaceto.be)

# Motoring Information

## Before you go

Remember that spot checks on foreign registered vehicles are widespread, so don't run the risk of an on-the-spot fine and/or vehicle confiscation by overlooking compulsory documents and equipment.

## Documents

You may be asked to produce your documents at any time. To avoid a police fine and/or confiscation of your vehicle, be sure that the following are in order and readily available for inspection.

- A valid full driving licence (not provisional), with paper counterpart if you have a photocard licence
- The original vehicle registration document
- Your motor insurance certificate with cover for European travel
- Your passport

## Equipment

You must make sure that your vehicle is correctly equipped as follows:

- GB sticker (UK registered vehicles displaying Euro-plates (circle of 12 stars above the national identifier on blue background) do not need a GB sticker)
- Warning triangle
- Reflective jacket/waistcoat
- Headlamp adjustment for driving on the right
- Spare bulb kit
- First aid kit (not compulsory but recommended)
- Fire extinguisher (not compulsory but recommended)

## Seat belts

Front and rear seat passengers are required to use seat belts, where fitted. Children up to 9 months old may travel in the front seat if in a rear-facing child's seat, except where an airbag is installed. Children under 10 must travel in the rear seats.

## Driving on the right

It is advisable to have an external rear view mirror fitted if you do not already have one. Driving on the right needs care and attention particularly at junctions and when negotiating roundabouts. The French rule of 'priority to the right' (priorité à droite) is still relevant in towns where, in the absence of any road markings or a yellow lozenge on a signpost, drivers entering the road you are on from your right take precedence. Useful information on travelling in France and Belgium can be obtained from the Automobile Association website: [www.theaa.com](http://www.theaa.com)

## Drinking and driving

France and Belgium have stricter limits than the UK. If the level of alcohol in the bloodstream is 0.5mg/ml or more (0.2mg/ml for bus/coach drivers), severe penalties include fine, imprisonment and/or confiscation of driving licence. The only safe rule is if you drink, don't drive.

## Speeding

Both countries have strict limits and radar traps and you can be fined on the spot. In France speeding at 25km/h above the limit can lead to your licence being confiscated.

### Speed Limits: France

Motorways	130 km/h	(81 mph)
	110 km/h wet*	(68 mph)

Some motorways have tolls (Péage) and you should keep a handful of euros available, or you can pay by credit card.

Dual Carriageway	110 km/h	(68 mph)
	100 km/h wet*	(62 mph)

Open Road	90 km/h	(56 mph)
	80 km/h wet*	(50 mph)

Towns	50 km/h	(31 mph)
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Town limits may only be defined by the name of the town on a white background with a red border at the start and the same sign with a black diagonal line through it on your exit.

\* Drivers with less than 2 years full licence are subject to wet weather limits.

### Speed Limits: Belgium

Motorways & Dual Carriageway	120 km/h	(74 mph)
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Open Road	90 km/h	(56 mph)
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Towns	50 km/h	(31 mph)
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Nr hospitals schools etc	30 km/h	(19 mph)
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## Fines

On-the-spot fines or 'deposits' are severe. An official receipt should be issued. Vehicles parking contrary to regulations may be towed away and impounded.



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