

## ANZAC 25 APRIL 2010 FRANCE

**Step back in time and relive the history of world wars, Landing beaches and the Somme & Flanders Fields** 8 days / 7 Nights

**Fully Escorted Tour with English speaking guide**

Group Leaders - Mr. Marc Pilcer France Tourism & Mrs. Angélique Sinclair Eastern Eurotours

**WEDNESDAY 21 APR 10** PARIS

Arrival at Hotel - HOLIDAY INN BASTILLE

**THURSDAY 22 APR 10** PARIS

Buffet breakfast

**VISIT OF VERSAILLES PALACE:** All through the excursion, our guide interpreter will bring back to life the Palace of Versailles where, from 1682, Louis XIV officially installed the court and government of the Kingdom. In particular, you will discover the Great Royal Apartments, the Hall of Mirrors and the Queen's Apartments. Free time at the end of the excursion to stroll through the French gardens surrounded by sculptures (statues, busts, and marble vases) made from 1661 by teams of sculptors initially supervised by Charles Le Brun, the King's leading painter.

Free time for lunch

**LOUVRE MUSEUM:** In 1793, during the Revolution, the first state museum was opened in the Louvre, consisting of the former royal collections of painting and sculpture. It was enriched temporarily by loot from the Napoleonic wars and then permanently by purchases and gifts, including archaeological finds. More and more specialized divisions were created.

The present Louvre departments include Oriental (ancient Mesopotamian) antiquities; Egyptian antiquities; Greek and Roman antiquities; sculpture from the Middle Ages to modern times; furniture and objects d'art; and paintings representing all the European schools. A section of the museum is devoted to Islamic art. Universally famous ancient works of art in the Louvre include a statuette of the Sumerian ruler Gudea, a stele bearing Hammurabi's code, an Egyptian painted stone statue of a scribe sitting cross-legged, the Venus de Milo and the Victory of Samothrace. Among outstanding later works are two marble Slaves by Michelangelo, the treasure of the abbey of St. Denis, and the French crown diamonds. Important paintings include the Pietà of Avignon, Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa, Veronese's immense Wedding at Cana, and Watteau's Embarkation for Cythera.

Overnight HOLIDAY INN BASTILLE

**FRIDAY 23 APR 10** PARIS - CAEN

Buffet breakfast

**ROUEN:** Our tour commence with free time to discover Rouen known for its Notre Dame cathedral, with its Tour de Beurre. The cathedral was the subject of a series of paintings by Claude Monet. The Gros Horloge an astronomical clock though the movement is considerably older (1389). Other famous structures include the Gothic Church of Saint Maclou (15th century); the Tour Jeanne d'Arc, where Joan of Arc was brought in 1431 to be threatened with torture; the Palais de Justice, which was once the seat of the Parliament (French court of law) of

Normandy and the Museum of Fine Arts and Ceramics which contains a splendid collection of faïence and porcelain for which Rouen was renowned during the 16th to 18th centuries. Rouen is noted for its surviving half-timbered buildings. There are many museums in Rouen: Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen, an art museum with pictures of well-known painters such as Claude Monet and Gericault, The Jardin des Plantes de Rouen is a notable botanical garden dating to 1840 in its present form. In the centre of the Place du Vieux Marché is the modern church of Saint Joan of Arc. This large, modern structure which dominates the square. The form of the building represents the pyre on which Joan of Arc was burnt.

Free time for lunch

**COUDRAY-RABUT:** Much of the best calvados production comes from the Pays d'Auge area, which is located on the highway when driving from Paris. The distillery is a few kilometres off the highway at Coudray Rabut, near Pont l'Évêque (of cheese fame). Christian Drouin took over a farm and has since transformed it into a cidre, pommeau, and calvados producer distributed worldwide. Its offers an opportunity to visit both old and modern facilities, to understand how these apple-based beverages are produced, to have a thorough Calvados tasting.

Overnight HOLIDAY INN

## **SATURDAY 24 APRIL 10** CAEN - BEAUVAIS

Buffet breakfast

**CAEN:** known for its historical buildings built during the reign of William the Conqueror, who was buried here, and for the Battle for Caen—heavy fighting that took place in and around Caen during the Battle of Normandy in 1944, destroying much of the town.

Free time for lunch

**MEMORIAL POUR LA PAIX:** the visit begins with the guided tour of the Second World War area of Le Memorial de Caen. You slowly enter a spiral, which proposes a retrospective about a fragile time between the two wars, which suffered the rise of Nazism and the step closer to war. The next space tells you the Occupied France through both movements, which divided the population at that time: Collaboration and Resistance. The horror of Deportation and Genocide, the war in the East front and the world war effort are related in the following thematic spaces.

Overnight MERCURE Beauvais or similar

## **SUNDAY 25 APR 10** Beauvais - Lille

EARLY BREAKFAST AT HOTEL

**VILLERS-BRETONNEUX Memorable Dawn Service (5:30am)** Villers-Bretonneux saw action in August 1914 and the incessant movement of British and French troops over the next four years, but the name of this large village entered the history of the war on 24 April 1918 when Australian troops finally halted the German offensive of March 1918. Since the construction of the Victoria School in 1927 and the inauguration of the memorial in 1938, public and private links with Australian have grown steadily stronger. The twinning in Canberra of the Australian Unknown Soldier in November 1993 has sealed this close relationship. Its history, the annual visit of the Australian ambassador to commemorate Anzac day on the Saturday nearest to 25 April, and the many Australian visitors throughout the year, give the village an image and identity in Australia that are not easily grasped here.

**ALBERT:** With a rich historical past and well known as an industrial centre in the nineteenth century, Albert had 7,343 inhabitants in 1914. In January 1919 the total number was 120...

Occupied by the Germans from 29 August to 14 September 1914, then evacuated after the Battle of the Marne, the town was subjected to ceaseless bombardment after the stabilisation of the front in October 1914 along the line La Boisselle-Ovillers-Thiepval. In January 1915 the base of the Statue of the Golden Virgin on the basilica was hit by a German shell: the figure tipped over until it was horizontal until 1918, when it fell. Known as "the Leaning Virgin", it gave rise to a belief among the troops that its fall would mean the end of the war. In July 1915 the British army relieved the French units in the town, which became a centre of intensive military activity, particularly during the Battle of the Somme – staff offices, billets, munitions and equipment depots, hospitals, as well as the incessant convoys of troops and supplies to and from the front. Albert still retains its symbolic importance for the British. After its recapture by the Germans in March 1918 and final recovery by the British in August 1918, nothing remained of the town but a vast expanse of ruins. The large French military cemetery and the military part of the civil cemetery, including a memorial to Breton soldiers of the Great War, reflect the great contribution of the Breton regiments in this sector from August 1914 to July 1915.

Free time for lunch

## **THIEPVAL FRANCO-BRITISH MEMORIAL**

Overnight HOTEL DES TOURS Lille

Visit many historical spots from the World Wars, such as Messines Ridge Memorial Visit many historical spots from the World Wars, such as Messines Ridge Memorial

## **MONDAY 26 APR 10 LILLE - YPRES**

Buffet breakfast

**YPRES:** The city of Ypres, at the heart of the Salient, was involved early in the First World War. The British were associated with Ypres throughout the war, and involved in all four battles, which bear the name of the town. During the war, the town was almost constantly under bombardment, and was reduced to ruins. After the War there was a proposal to preserve the ruins of the town as a memorial to the British and Empire soldiers who had fought and died in the salient. This was then modified to preservation of just the ruined Cloth Hall and cathedral. However, the town was eventually fully rebuilt, including the Cloth Hall and cathedral and today, standing in the town, you would hardly believe that most buildings are at most 80 or so years old.

## **VISIT TO ANZAC RIDGE.**

Free time for lunch

**MENIN GATE:** It is well known that every evening at 8 pm, the Last Post is played at the Menin Gate in Ypres. The Menin Gate is the site of the memorial to the missing of the Salient, designed by Reginald Blomfield with construction completed in 1927. It lists the names of 54,332 men who fell in the Salient and who have no known grave. Consider this figure for a moment. It is equivalent to the population of a small town, and this is just the men who have no known grave. The names represent the fallen of Britain, Ireland, and what were then the Dominions up until 16 August 1917. Those with no known grave after that date are recorded at Tyne Cot. The names are inscribed on panels arranged by Regiment, and within that by rank. Overnight HOTEL - FLANDERS LODGE

## **TUESDAY 27 APR 10 YPRES**

Buffet breakfast

**VISIT TO MESSINES RIDGE MEMORIAL:** The battle for Messines ridge, which commenced on 07 June 1917, was hailed as a triumph in strategy. Following the harsh lessons learned on the Somme the previous year, the taking of Messines ridge preceded the main Third Battle of Ypres (or Passchendaele), and was General Plumer's more cautious approach using "bite and hold" tactics. Rather than attempting to make sweeping gains on a wide front with very large numbers of troops, the attack on Messines ridge was one of limited, but realistic, objectives, utilising a "creeping barrage" and preceded by the detonation of nineteen mines. The overall front of the Messines offensive was around 15 kilometres, stretching from near Hill 60 in the north in a crescent shape reflecting the German held salient or bulge here, to St. Yves just above Ploegsteert Wood in the south. Visit the Hill 62 Battlefields Museum.

Free time for lunch

**VISIT TO PASSCHENDAELE BATTLEFIELD:** Now spelt Passendale, this small village eight kilometres northeast of Ypres is the name by which the final stages of the Third Battle of Ypres is known. It is the name, along with the Somme, which has come to symbolise the Great War for many. The Third battle of Ypres was preceded by the attack on Messines ridge in June 1917. The main battle commenced on the 31 July 1917, and stretched on until 10 November 1917. The final phase, the advance on Passchendaele, took place in October and November, the aim being to take the strategically important high ground of the Passchendaele ridge. The first battle of Passchendaele, on the 12 October, failed to take the village, and the second battle of Passchendaele lasted from the 26 October until the 10 November.

**VISIT TO POLYGON WOOD:** A small wood, which is about 6 kilometres east of Ypres. The wood was sometimes known as Racecourse Wood, as there was a track within it. Before the Great War, Polygon Wood was by the Belgian Army and within it stands a large mound known as the Butte, which was used for musketry training. On the Butte today stands a memorial to the 5th Australian Division. During the War, Polygon Wood was totally destroyed, and the wood was replanted after the war. There are 'rides' or tracks running through the wood, which can be walked, and in terms of the Great War, there is a large cemetery, plus an Australian Memorial to the Missing within the wood itself. Just outside the wood is a small original wartime cemetery. In fact, the entrances to the sites are directly opposite on either side of the road, at the north-eastern apex of the wood.

Overnight - FLANDERS LODGE

**WEDNESDAY 28 APR 10** YPRES - PARIS

Buffet breakfast

**FROMELLES:** about 9 kilometres west of Lille and eight kilometres south of Armentieres. The Australians have a close association with Fromelles, as this is one of the sites where they lost heavily during the Great War. The Australian 5th Division, along with the 61st British (South Midland) Division, attacked here on 19 July 1916. At this time, the main Somme battles were raging around 65 kilometres to the south of Fromelles, and the intention was to make a feint here to prevent the Germans from bringing reinforcements to the Somme. Originally an artillery barrage only was planned, but then an infantry assault was also agreed. The Australian attack here was their first serious battle in France, and the only one in which they achieved no success.

**VISIT OF VC CORNER AUSTRALIAN CEMETERY:** This is an interesting and unusual cemetery, for several reasons. Firstly, it is the only wholly Australian cemetery in France, and the name at the entrance way reflects this. The name itself is also interesting - "VC Corner".

# France Tourism

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There was a spot on the battlefields, about another kilometre northeast, which was known as VC Corner, not far from Le Trou Aid Post Cemetery.

The origin of the name VC Corner (the cemetery itself is not at VC Corner) probably dates from May 1915 - with four VCs being won on the 9 May 1915, and another on the 16 May. However, the awards do not relate directly to action near the Cemetery itself, and the origin of the name remains unclear. Perhaps the most interesting point about this cemetery is that there are no headstones here. The plan of the cemetery on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website shows a regular layout of graves, in four plots with 10 graves in each of the rows within each of these plots. There are 410 graves here, but when the bodies were recovered from the battlefield at Fromelles, which only happened more than two years later, after the Armistice, none could be identified. Rather than mark these graves with the usual "known Unto God" headstones for unidentified soldiers, the names of all the Australian soldiers killed in the Fromelles attack but with no known grave were instead inscribed on the wall at the rear of the cemetery.

Free time for lunch

PARIS End of Tour at Charles de Gaulle Airport or downtown Paris

**Cost per person: 8 Days / 7 nights Guided tour**

**Earlybird booking before 09 January 10**

**Twin share \$ 2159**

**Single \$ 2889**

After 08 January10

**Twin share \$ 2399**

**Single \$ 3208**

Not included: Airfares, Lunch and Dinners, Beverages, Tipping & Personal expenses

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