



## Commemorative events to mark the centenary of Passchendaele, the Third Battle of Ypres

31 July 2017 marks 100 years since the start of the Third Battle of Ypres, also known as Passchendaele. By the end of the Offensive on 10 November 1917, the Allied forces had sustained over 320,000 casualties, and had gained just five miles of the Ypres Salient.

The centenary is an opportunity for people in the UK to come together to remember those, on both sides, who lost their lives at Passchendaele and reflect upon the impact of the First World War.

The First World War Centenary Partnership, led by Imperial War Museums (IWM), is presenting a series of exhibitions, events and artworks from July to November this year to commemorate the centenary of the Third Battle of Ypres. For further details visit: [www.1914.org](http://www.1914.org)

### Exhibitions

**The National Museum of Ireland** has opened their free temporary exhibition [\*War in the Mud: The Irish soldier in Belgium in the summer of 1917\*](#), featuring a number of artefacts on display for the first time. The exhibition runs until December 2017 and will express the story of Irish soldiers who served at Passchendaele.

**The Memorial Museum Passchendaele** has crafted the exhibition [\*The Belgians Have Not Forgotten\*](#), which will be touring New Zealand and Australia until November 2017. The exhibition intends to show New Zealanders and Australians, many of whom had relatives who fought in Flanders Fields a century ago, that Belgians have not forgotten their traumatic common history. Illustrated by an array of photographs, movies, artwork and artefacts from the battlefields, the exhibition will highlight the war experience alongside commemorative events.

**Worcester Soldier Gallery** is hosting [\*The Worcestershire Regiment at the Battle of Passchendaele\*](#) until 31 October 2017. This free exhibition charts the involvement of regional regiments who fought at Passchendaele.

### Art Projects

The [\*London Jews in the First World War—Were There Too project\*](#), funded by the **Heritage Lottery Fund**, will commemorate the Anglo-Jewish contribution to the British Armed Forces during the Third Battle of Ypres. Passchendaele was a multi-national battle fought by men from many different countries, religions and backgrounds, and the Anglo-Jewish contribution will be highlighted through articles and stories about those that served. The commemoration will be populated on the website on the week commencing 24 July 2017, one week before the anniversary of the start of the battle.

**Ceridwen Theatre Company** present the play [\*Hell Was Passchendaele\*](#), a gripping tale of survival, courage and impossible choices in the most terrible of conditions. Commissioned by the National Museum Cardiff, this free production runs from 9-10 September 2017, inviting viewers to glimpse into the lives of three soldiers, cut off from their allies and surrounded by the desolate conditions of Passchendaele.

**Salford Museum & Art Gallery** and **Ordsall Hall** have held a research residency for artist James Bloomfield, who has created the artwork [In Service 1918-2017](#). The outcome of this research is the creation of 226 commemorative ceramic plates. Each plate represents a conflict during the First World War, and will be placed into service in the café of both venues on 31 July to be decommissioned on Friday 10 November, coinciding with the centenary of the Third Battle of Ypres.

**Mesh Theatre Co.** is putting on the play [Journey's End at the historic](#) Kruitmagazijn (ammunition dump) in Ypres, Belgium. The play, written by R.C. Sherriff, is set in a dugout over four days leading up to a massive attack, and will be running from 10th October – 12th November 2017 (standard tickets €15 each). Sherriff, who himself was injured at the Third Battle of Ypres, is the only person who fought in the First World War to create a drama about the conflict

**Big Ideas Company** have conceived the [Passchendaele at Home](#) initiative for schools and community groups. The challenge encourages participants to discover graves in the UK belonging to British soldiers who were wounded at the Third Battle of Ypres, but who died of their wounds in the UK. The initiative runs over the period of the Passchendaele centenary, and provides participants with a map which will guide research on graves of those who fought in Ypres, as well as funding and a comprehensive online database.

**Museum of Liverpool** is marking the centenary of the death of Noel Chavasse VC and Bar through a new display of two beautiful stained-glass memorial windows. The windows, commissioned by the Chavasse family, will be on display 30 June until 31 August and commemorate both those who served and those who 'laid down their lives' in the Great War.

Since March 2014, the **WW1 Soldier's Tale** online project has been following the progress of 'Walter Carter', a fictional soldier who tells of his experience of the First World War in real-time as though it were today on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and through a [blog](#). To mark the centenary of Passchendaele, Company Sergeant Major Carter and the men of the 10 Battalion The Queen's (Royal West Surrey) are about to go over the top at Passchendaele amidst the heaviest rain for 30 years...

## **Events**

**DCMS (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport)** have organised a series of national events to commemorate the centenary of the first day of Passchendaele, the Third Battle of Ypres. An exclusive short story written by Michael Morpurgo, the best-selling author of *War Horse*, will be performed in the Market Square at Ieper, Ypres, on the evening of 30 July. **From Farm Horse to War Horse** has been specially written for the [public commemorations](#). The live reading will be accompanied by the horse puppet Joey from the acclaimed National Theatre stage adaptation of *War Horse*. Extracts from Ian Hislop and Nick Newman's *The Wipers Times*, the play based on the satirical trench newspaper published by British soldiers fighting on the Ypres Salient, will also be performed. These live performances are accompanied by archive interviews and images of the battle, and will be projected onto the town's Cloth Hall, which itself was famously destroyed during the War, and later rebuilt.

The following day, 31 July, a service of [commemoration](#) at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Tyne Cot Cemetery will be attended by thousands of descendants of those who served who have a connection to the battle. Tyne Cot is the largest CWGC cemetery in the world, with nearly 12,000 men buried there. The service of commemoration will feature descendants who will share letters and diaries penned by their ancestors.

The **Welsh National Service of Remembrance** will take place at the Welsh National Memorial in Langemark, Belgium on 31 July 2017. The Third Battle of Ypres and the location of the memorial are of particular resonance to Wales, due to the heavy involvement of 38 (Welsh) Division at Pilkem Ridge. Passchendaele also claimed the lives of many Welsh soldiers, including the renowned Welsh language poet Hedd Wyn.

Please contact [Non Jones](#) at the Welsh Government for further information.

**The National Memorial Arboretum** is hosting a [Battle of Passchendaele Centenary Service](#) on 31 July. This special service will include acts of Remembrance, poetry, readings and a musical accompaniment provided by a military band. Following the Arboretum service, a broadcast of the Government service of Remembrance at The Tyne Cot Memorial will be relayed onto a large screen in Heroes' Square.

Every year, the **Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917** organises a museum weekend with WWI Living History, which in this centenary year will take place in the chateau grounds, Zonnebeke on 29 and 30 July. Over 400 reenactors from home and abroad will spend the weekend at the chateau ground, giving demonstrations beside historic objects to give visitors a sense of stepping back in time.

On 31 July, the **Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917** is offering one thousand people the opportunity to experience a Passchendaele [programme](#) as an alternative to the official commemorations. Tickets range from €12 to €20 and include a museum visit, entrance to the *Passchendaele Centenary Exhibition field*, a Tommy Tucker meal, dawn walks as well as live coverage of the British commemoration ceremony at Tyne Cot on a large screen. Participants will also have the chance to visit Zonnebeke Church Dugout, an exceptionally well-preserved dugout and will be eligible for a ballot to attend the official ceremony.

The **Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917**, in collaboration with Municipality of Zonnebeke, has organised [Silent City Meets Living City](#), facilitating a moment of silence and reflection to commemorate the many victims of Passchendaele. During a serene sound and light show, participants will illuminate the gravestones and the names on the Tyne Cot Memorial to mark a tribute. The silence will take place on Saturday 14 October at 7pm and participants can register [online](#).

**Museum of Liverpool** is hosting a number of events to mark the centenary on 31 July. This includes a [hands on](#) activity with real objects from the First World War, a [talk by Major Paul Knight](#) on the Third Battle of Ypres and an informative [session](#) on the life of Noel Chavasse, led by a local historian.

**Lives of the First World War** is an online platform to discover, remember and share stories of the 8 million men and women who contributed to the British war effort in the First World War. To mark the centenary of Passchendaele, [free educational resources](#) have been made available for teachers to inspire their pupils with the stories of ordinary people living through extraordinary times. Discover stories of those who experienced Passchendaele, from combatants to medics, and browse our ideas for use in the classroom and in wider school projects. Furthermore, students and teachers can create their own free accounts and make their mark on the digital memorial by adding photos and stories pertinent to their own families, or contribute research on a former pupil or local serviceman.

– Ends –

**For further information, images or to interview an IWM historian about Passchendaele, Third Battle of Ypres please contact:**

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## **Notes to editors**

**About the Third Battle of Ypres, commonly known as Passchendaele:**

On 31 July 1917, the British forces launched a major offensive around the Belgian town of Ypres in an attempt to capture German U-boat bases on the Belgian coast. The Third Battle of Ypres, also known as Passchendaele, took place between 31 July and 10 November 1917. The campaign was fought in appalling weather conditions: muddy ground threatened to drown the men, guns could not be transported and low cloud grounded aerial reconnaissance planes. By the end of the offensive, the Allied forces had sustained over 320,000 casualties, and had gained just five miles of the Ypres Salient.

## **Context to the First World War Centenary Partnership**

IWM established the First World War Centenary Partnership in 2010 to encourage a programme of activities and events to mark the centenary, developed at grass roots levels. The founding ambition for the Partnership was

that its members would collectively organise and present a vibrant, diverse and far-reaching programme. This programme would reflect how people want to remember, commemorate and debate the conflict in their own communities, in a way that is meaningful for them.

## **IWM**

IWM (Imperial War Museums) tells the story of people who have lived, fought and died in conflicts involving Britain and the Commonwealth since the First World War.

Our unique Collections, made up of the everyday and the exceptional, reveal stories of people, places, ideas and events. Using these, we tell vivid personal stories and create powerful physical experiences across our five museums that reflect the realities of war as both a destructive and creative force. We challenge people to look at conflict from different perspectives, enriching their understanding of the causes, course and consequences of war and its impact on people's lives.

IWM's five branches attract over 2 million visitors each year. [IWM London](#), our flagship branch, marks the Centenary of the First World War with new permanent First World War Galleries and a new Atrium with iconic large object displays. Our other branches are [IWM North](#), housed in an iconic award-winning building designed by Daniel Libeskind; [IWM Duxford](#), a world-renowned aviation museum and Britain's best preserved wartime airfield; [Churchill War Rooms](#), housed in Churchill's secret headquarters below Whitehall; and the Second World War cruiser [HMS Belfast](#).

## **IWM Centenary**

2017 marks Imperial War Museums (IWM) centenary. IWM was established while the First World War was still being fought. Since its establishment people have entrusted IWM with their stories of war from 1917 to the present day, in the knowledge it will continue to share these stories with future generations. IWM will commemorate its 100 years through a centenary of stories from its rich collections across its five branches (IWM London, IWM North, IWM Duxford, Churchill War Rooms and HMS *Belfast*).



100 YEARS

## **About the First World War Centenary**

2014 - 2018 marks the centenary of the First World War, a landmark anniversary for Britain and the world. IWM is marking the centenary by leading a vibrant, four year programme of cultural activities across the world. For more information visit [www.1914.org](http://www.1914.org).

