

# Canadians on the Western Front Tour

## 4-6 April 2017

This is a three-day (two night) private tour of significant Canadian WW I sites using a [mini-coach](#) that will comfortably hold up to 15 persons. The tour is being organized through [Dr. Thomson's Tours](#) of Canterbury, England.

Dr. Thomson will be our host and tour guide. The tour begins and ends at the Lille train station. The Lille station is just one-hour north of Paris. You will need to pre-book the [train](#) (booking opens around three months before the tour starts).

This tour will be of particular interest to Canadians as it focuses on Canadian WW I battle sites and WW I monuments on the Western Front. Tour highlights, extracted from Dr. Thomson's website are as follows:

**Tuesday, 4 April 2017.** After we depart the Lille train station we will travel south to Vimy Ridge. Here our tour will take in the preserved trenches and craters, the beautifully restored Canadian National World War I memorial, and less-visited parts of the battlefield such as Zivy Crater cemetery.



We will visit the nearby Cabaret Rouge cemetery to see where the Unknown Soldier, now in Ottawa, was taken from.

Then we will drive 20 minutes east to the scene of brave Newfoundland

resistance in April 1917 during the Battle of Arras. This battle is often referred to as Newfoundland's Vimy.

Finally, we will travel a further 20 minutes to Cambrai to see the Canal du Nord and its Bourlon Wood Memorial which celebrates Canada's impressive September and October 1918 advance.

The Broulon Wood Memorial commemorates the actions of the Canadian Corps during the final months of the First World War; a period also known as Canada's Hundred Days, part of the Hundred



Days Offensive. Particularly celebrated are the Canadian Corps crossing of the Canal du Nord, their flushing the German forces from Broulon and Broulon Wood and the 'Pursuit to Mons' through Cambrai, Denain, Valenciennes and into Mons on the 11th of November 1918.

After Cambrai we will travel on to Ypres itself to check in to our hotel for two nights.

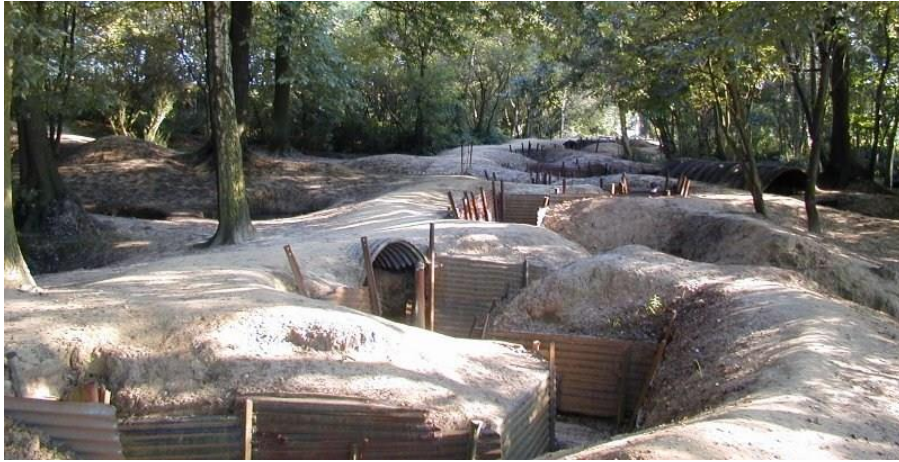
**Wednesday, 5 April 2017.** A day tour of the Ypres sights, starting with a visit to the 'Brooding Soldier' monument in St Juliaan. This Canadian memorial commemorates the Canadian 1st Division. This Canadian war memorial commemorates the Canadian First Division's participation in the Second Battle of Ypres which included the defence against the first poison gas attacks along the Western Front in April of 1915.



Next we will visit Essex Farm where Lieutenant Colonel (then Major) John McCrae, MD served as a surgeon during the Second Battle of Ypres. He is best known for writing the famous war memorial poem "In Flanders Fields". He wrote it in early May 1915 in his medical aid station near Essex farm, 2 km to the north of the centre of Ypres.



We now proceed to Sanctuary Wood. The Hill 62 (Sanctuary Wood) Memorial



commemorates the actions of the Canadian Corps in defending the southern stretches of the Ypres Salient between April and August 1916 including actions in battle at the St. Eloi Craters, Hill 62, Mount Sorrel and Sanctuary Wood. These battles marked the first occasion in which Canadian divisions engaged in

planned offensive operations during World War I. In those actions the Canadians reconquered vital high-ground positions that denied the Germans a commanding view of the town of Ypres itself.

The memorial is located beside Sanctuary Wood on the top of Mount Sorrel, which lies next to 'Hill 62' all of which the Canadians held or recaptured from the Germans during those offensive operations in early June 1916. The British Official History of the war recorded "The first Canadian deliberately planned attack in any force, had resulted in an unqualified success."

Next we visit Caterpillar/Hill 60 (Canadian mining operations). Tunnelling units were occupied in offensive and defensive mining that included the placing and maintaining of mines under enemy lines, as well as other underground work such as the construction of deep dugouts for troop accommodation; the digging of subways; saps (a narrow trench dug to approach enemy trenches); cable trenches; and underground chambers for signals and medical services.



The 3rd Canadian Tunnelling Company took over tunneling here from the British in April 1916 and completed the galleries. By October 1916, Hill 60A had been charged with 24,200 kilograms of explosives and Hill 60B with 32,000 kilograms.

Our last stop today will be at Passchendaele. The Battle of Passchendaele, also known as the Third Battle of Ypres, took place on the Western Front, from July to November 1917, for control of the ridges south and east of the Belgian city of Ypres. Passchendaele lay on the last ridge east of Ypres which was vital to the supply system of the German 4th Army. The campaign ended in November, when the Canadian Corps captured Passchendaele.



Back to our hotel - and a chance to attend the 8 p.m. Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing.

**Thursday, 6 April 2017.** Today our tour will take in the Courcellette area (Canada's part of the Battle of the Somme, September to November 1916). Rain and snow finally brought the Battle of the



Somme to an end. After five months' fighting, the Allies had only penetrated about 13 km along a 35 km front. Allied losses were estimated at 623,907, of whom more than 24,700 were Canadians and Newfoundlanders. German losses were estimated at 660,000.

Our last stop of the day will include the Thiepval Memorial (the preserved trenches in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont Hamel); the Newfoundland Memorial at Guedecourt; and the Lochnagar Crater (the largest crater on the Western Front).

We will leave mid-afternoon, aiming to get you to our finishing point by 1730 hrs. Our tour will officially end when we are dropped off at the Eurostar station in Lille so we can take a train to Paris.



Accommodations during the tour will be at the [Ariane Hotel](#), Ypres (subject to availability).

**Prices include:** private guiding fee; accommodation in 3-star hotels (exceptionally 2-star due to availability) in twin/double rooms with en-suite facilities (breakfast included); road tolls; parking; your guide's subsistence; and reimbursement of the costs of using mini-coach. As at this writing, our planned accommodations are at the [Ariane Hotel](#), Ypres (subject to availability).

**Prices do not include:** train tickets to/from Lille; meals other than breakfast; museum entries (thus giving flexibility depending on the weather to go to as many or as few as desired); and personal insurance (purchase of cancellation and general travel insurance is strongly advised).

The cost for this option depends on the number of booked passengers. The dollar amounts shown below are estimates and are subject to change due to the fluctuating Canadian dollar:

Per Person Costs Based on Double Room Occupancy

8 persons in four hotel rooms: £615 (\$1171.00 CAD)

9 persons in five hotel rooms: £573 (\$1091.00 CAD) \*

10 persons in five hotel rooms: £516 (\$982.00 CAD)

11 persons in six hotel rooms: £491 (\$935.00 CAD) \*

12 persons in six hotel rooms: £450 (\$857.00 CAD)

13 persons in seven hotel rooms: £434 (\$826.00 CAD) \*

14 persons in seven hotel rooms: £403 (\$767.00 CAD)

15 persons in eight hotel rooms: £392 (\$746.00 CAD) \*

\* Hotel costs are based on double room occupancy and are fixed (no room reduction when a single individual occupies a double room). Therefore, if we have an odd number of participants, everybody will share the additional cost associated with having that person in a double occupancy room. However, we will also benefit from the reduced cost of the tour by having that extra person to things roughly balance out. This also means when we have an even number on the tour that single individuals will have to bunk with another single individual. Adjustments will be made on a case-by-case basis as the bookings progress.

**Cut-Off Date:**

This tour will be cancelled if the minimum booking number is not realized before **1 Jul 2016**.

**Additional Info or Booking:**

If you have difficulty accessing or understanding the hyperlinked web pages, please contact Jim Eakins by e-mail at [jim.eakins@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:jim.eakins@ns.sympatico.ca).

To express an interest in either of these tour options, please contact Jim Eakins by e-mail at [jim.eakins@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:jim.eakins@ns.sympatico.ca) or by telephone at 902-825-4379.

**Note:**

This file contains hyperlinks that will take you to websites where additional information will be found. Hyperlinks are identified by underlined, usually blue, words. Hover your mouse over a hyperlink for information on how to activate the hyperlink to go to that website.