

# THE GREAT WAR in Context

## THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME: A DARK DAY UNFOLDS

1<sup>st</sup> July 1916. 0720. Several mines went off, launching the offensive. During the days running up to that moment, a continuous hail of artillery was intended to destroy the German defences.

100 000 inexperienced British soldiers went out on the assault, only to be mown down by the German machine guns. That same evening, the horrifying statistics came through: 60 000 British soldiers had been taken out. This was to be the British army's darkest day of all. It wasn't until that September that they took back Thiepval, and only in November did the Battle of the Somme come to a halt. The British army lost a total of 420 000 men, but this battle where the Germans had been forced to fight in the Somme, as well as in Verdun, had had the merit of heavily draining German resources.

It was the strategic high point of Thiepval that the British government chose as the highly symbolic site on which to build the largest memorial in the Commonwealth: an immense brick and stone arch, reaching 45 metres high, upon the pillars of which are remembered the 72 000 missing men of the British and South African Armies.

## 1918 : A PIVOTAL YEAR

Amongst other things, 1918 was marked by the extraordinary Australian advances and the great Picardy offensives, leading to the Armistice in November.

On 26<sup>th</sup> March, Maréchal Foch was named as the head of the United Allied Command, based in Doullens. This was a strategy to better coordinate the Allied troops. The Australians took back Villers-Bretonneux on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> April and halted the German advance which had begun on 21<sup>st</sup> March. The psychological, rather than strategic, effects of the first American victory at Cantigny on 31<sup>st</sup> May were felt around the world. The 4<sup>th</sup> July Battle of Le Hamel is known as an example of modern warfare, led by General John Monash. The battle was a great success: in just 1½ hours, with very few Australian casualties, the Allies had the upper hand over the Germans. The Battle of Amiens began on 8<sup>th</sup> August, and led to the Armistice on 11<sup>th</sup> November. The Allies successfully launched several offensives, and by 28<sup>th</sup> September the whole of the Somme had been liberated.

+ find out more at [somme14-18.com](http://somme14-18.com)

## TIME LINE OF THE GREAT WAR IN THE SOMME

### 1914

**28 JUNE**  
Assassination of the Austrian Arch-Duke in Sarajevo

**3 AUGUST**  
Germany declares war on France

**6 - 13 SEPTEMBER**  
Battle of the Marne

**15 SEPTEMBER - 15 OCTOBER**  
"The Race to the Sea"

### 1915

**DECEMBER**  
Allied Conference at Chantilly setting out Allied plans for 1916

### 1916

**21 FEBRUARY - 18 DECEMBER**  
Battle of Verdun

**1<sup>ST</sup> JULY - 18 NOVEMBER**  
Battle of the Somme

### 1917

**6 APRIL**  
The United States join the war

**16 APRIL**  
French offensive at the Chemin des Dames in the Aisne

### 1918

**3 MARCH**  
Brest-Litovsk Treaty signed by Russia and the central Empire.

**26 MARCH**  
Doullens Conference - United Allied Command

**25 APRIL**  
Battle of Villers-Bretonneux - Australian victory

**JULY**  
Second Battle of the Marne

**8 AUGUST**  
Battle of Amiens

**11 NOVEMBER**  
Armistice signed



## THE REMEMBRANCE TRAIL, meaningful tourism

The Somme was deeply marked by the First World War. The 1916 Battle of the Somme was of huge proportions, considering the sheer numbers of nationalities involved, the dead, missing and wounded, and by the scarring of the landscape: mine craters, trenches, devastated plant life, villages in ruins.

The Remembrance Trail, linking the towns of Albert and Péronne: both emblematic of the Great War. The trail is a great way to explore and understand this page of international history.

**Since the 1990's there has been a collective desire to offset the tourism potential of this historic area, unique in Europe.**

Remembrance tourism contributes to reconstruction, even the development of a new identity for the places concerned: built around hospitality, opening up to outsiders, exchange and mutual development.

It is a means to accompany the local people in a movement away from being the victims of invasion, towards becoming a place of welcome.

We have moved from pilgrimages (remembering, and honouring) to tourism based on historical motivation (learning and understanding), and are even now leaning towards more ethical and moral reasoning (accepting).

**13 French départements and Belgium are committed to getting landscapes and 14-18 memorial sites listed by UNESCO.**

The exceptional universal value of this funerary architecture has come to represent shared history and reconciliation. It is a manifestation of the desire to remember together. A century after the war, these sites are places of both remembrance and learning, so that such carnage should never again occur.

**Where once there was destruction, there is reconciliation, these sites are now the symbols of nations that were enemies at war, but are now united in peace, remembrance and history.**

### IN FIGURES

- 20 nationalities involved in the fighting
- 27 Remembrance sites in the Somme
- 506 cemeteries (470 Commonwealth cemeteries, 14 German cemeteries and 22 French cemeteries)
- 1 Remembrance cycle path (V32)
- 1 network of 125 partners :  
« Somme Battlefields' Partner »



# Somme Battlefields FOR PEACE



## The Somme Battlefields for Peace

To come to the aid of countries in the midst of awful conflict, Somme Tourisme is collecting donations at Great War memorial sites with the support of those involved in Remembrance tourism. The funds raised will be transferred to an NGO.

## LEST WE FORGET

A century after the First World War, our region still bears the scars of the Battle of the Somme. Once the scene of terrible fighting, it is now a place of remembrance and learning. In these troubled times, it is vital to keep those historic events in mind. As François Bergez, the director of Somme Tourisme underlines, *"The traumatic memory of that conflict must help to build peace today."* So that we never forget, and as a way to help countries who are enduring those same trials of war, Somme Tourisme has undertaken the gesture of solidarity, full of meaning and values, that is Somme Battlefields for Peace. Funds will be raised by collecting donations from visitors to the battlefields, and sent to a humanitarian NGO.

## TOWARDS MORE MEANINGFUL TOURISM

Remembrance of the Great War in the Somme will now provide the basis for a humanitarian cause and movement of solidarity, aimed at easing suffering in countries at war. Not only this, it is also a means to give hope to their populations and bring a form of peace to the world. *"Somme Battlefields for Peace is the first step toward a more virtuous tourism, by providing concrete humanitarian help,"* adds Sabrina Holleville-Milhat, president of Somme Tourisme. *"It's also an opportunity to pass a part of their own history on to future generations, and to give them the possibility of having an impact on their future, and that of their neighbours."* This is an innovative and daring step, one which sets out the Somme as a humanist and compassionate destination, united with those who suffer.

## HOW WE ARE COLLECTING

- Collection boxes
- Rounding-up
- Organising events
- Sale of merchandise
- Donations, legacies, patrons

## TAKING ACTION IN SOLIDARITY

On 26th July, Somme Tourisme signed a contract with Essentiem endowment fund who will collect the fund and transfer them to the NGO **"Humanity & Inclusion"**. They work in war zones, providing medical and moral support to victims. To help us achieve our aim, various ways to donate will be set up, including collection boxes, merchandise, online participation and events

## OUR FIRST PARTNERS HAVE SIGNED UP

- The Zénith d'Amiens will be donating fund collected through the promotion of their reusable plastic cups to Somme Battlefields for Peace. Concert-goers will be encouraged to drop their reusable plastic cups into the branded collecting machine, thereby making a donation to the Somme Battlefields for Peace endowment fund.
- Collection boxes will be placed in museums, memorials, tourist offices and in tourist accommodation on the Remembrance Trail.
- All takings from the Date With World History from 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> November will be transferred to the endowment fund.

Make a donation at: [www.sommebattlefieldsforpeace.com](http://www.sommebattlefieldsforpeace.com)

## Key dates

- **26<sup>th</sup> July 2022**, Somme Tourisme signed a contract with Essentiem to set up a specific endowment fund, earmarking the donations for NGOs working in countries at war.
- **11<sup>th</sup> November 2022**, official project launch of « Somme Battlefields for Peace » at the Historical of the Great War with our partners Humanity & Inclusion and Essentiem.

Newfoundland Memorial,  
Beaumont-Hamel

# Our partners

SOMME BATTLEFIELDS FOR PEACE



## HUMANITY & INCLUSION

Humanity & Inclusion (Handicap International) is an NGO for international solidarity, working in over 60 developing countries alongside vulnerable populations and the handicapped helping them access their essential needs and improve their living conditions.

Founded in 1982 by two French doctors, Humanity & Inclusion is an independent international organisation for solidarity, working in situations where there is extreme poverty, armed conflict, and where natural disasters occur in developing countries.

Working alongside vulnerable populations, amongst whom are people with handicaps, the organisation takes action to provide for their essential needs and improve their living conditions.

Humanity & Inclusion is currently leading over 400 programmes in around sixty countries around the world. They have long been known for their fight against anti-personnel mines and their assistance to victims, for which the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded them in 1997.

Humanity & Inclusion has a wide scope of action: caring for the wounded, orthopaedic prosthetics and physiotherapy, helping people get back into education or work, mother and child health, psychological support, humanitarian mine clearance and risk prevention surrounding explosive weapons..

Find out more at: [handicap-international.fr](http://handicap-international.fr)

## ESSENTIEM

### *Towards more respectful tourism*

Essentiem is an endowment fund led by dedicated patrons with the aim of accompanying tourism through the deep changes it is undergoing with projects for the common good.

Set up in 2020, Essentiem acts as a lever to commitment and influence, connecting three types of profile: project leaders, patrons, and active members of Essentiem, as well as those who benefit from the actions undertaken.

Their objectives are many: developing projects for the common good, being of use to different geographical areas, working hand in hand on sustainability projects, promoting good practice and attractivity, supporting considerate tourism.

By signing a contract with Essentiem, Somme Tourisme will benefit from their support and administrative and financial assistance. They provide the structure with their financial expertise, stand as legal guarantors, and manage the fiscal obligations. In exchange, Essentiem takes a small percentage to cover their running costs.

Find out more at: <https://dons.essentiem.org>

Make a donation:



The donations collected by Somme Battlefields for Peace will be paid to Humanity & Inclusion from 11<sup>th</sup> November 2022 to 11<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

The charity is a leader:

- Against the bombing of civilians
- For mine clearance and disarmament
- Assisting the victims of armed combat

Find out more on : [handicap-international.fr](http://handicap-international.fr)

# THE REMEMBRANCE TRAIL

## The top sites

The Somme still bears the scars of the Great War: trenches, mine craters and razed villages are all reminders of the painful events which took place here over 100 years ago.

The Remembrance Trail, linking the towns of Albert and Péronne: both emblematic of the Great War. The trail is a great way to explore and understand this page of international history.



The Ulster Tower, Thiepval

©Somme Tourisme - L. Desbats/wood

### SOMME 1916 MUSEUM, ALBERT

Set in the heart of the battlefields and in the centre of Albert, emblematic town of the First World War. The museum entrance is at the foot of the basilica and from there, visitors can explore trench life at the time of the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916 offensive. Alcoves and displays line the 250 metre underground tunnel which was used as an air-raid shelter in the Second World War. Sound and light effects and visuals plunge visitors into the soldiers' daily life.

### THE NEWFOUNDLAND MEMORIAL, BEAUMONT-HAMEL

The memorial at Beaumont-Hamel provides a moving and realistic portrayal of the battles, as the trench network there has been very well preserved. The park, inaugurated in 1925, stretches over 39 hectares. Visit the memorial to the 29<sup>th</sup> Division – to which the Newfoundland regiment belonged – a caribou standing proud on a mound, representing the Newfoundland regiment insignia. The original battlefield is intact and allows visitors to understand the trench system. The visitors' centre will make your visit complete.

### THE BRITISH MEMORIAL AND SITE MUSEUM, THIEVPAL

The Thiepval Memorial, maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), is the largest Commonwealth military memorial in the world. Standing 45 metres tall, the memorial bears the names of over 72 000 British and South African soldiers who fell on the battlefields of the Somme before March 1918, and who have no known grave. Designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, it was inaugurated on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1932.

The site museum is devoted to the Battles of the Somme. Spanning 60 metres, Joe Sacco's cartoon-style fresco tells the story of the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the Battle of the Somme.

### THE ULSTER TOWER, THIEVPAL

In the very place where the men of Ulster fought and died, stands a memorial. The Ulster Tower is also known as the Belfast Tower or Helen's Tower. It is a replica of a tower which stands on the Clondeboy Estate, where the Ulster Division trained for battle. Built in 1921 with funds raised by a public appeal, the Troubadour-style tower is a memorial to the soldiers of the Ulster battalions who fought here, and in particular on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916.

### «LOCHNAGAR CRATER», LA BOISSELLE

Here on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916, the men leapt from their positions at 0728, ignorant of the fact that they were rushing headlong to their deaths.

A few minutes before the infantry gave the assault, a series of explosions designed to break the German front line caused deep craters to form, identical to the one at La Boisselle.

This mine crater, 91 metres across and 21 metres deep, is the only one on the Western Front to remain accessible.



©Somme Tourisme - L. Desbats/wood

Newfoundland Memoria, Beaumont-Hamel

## THE SOUTH AFRICAN MEMORIAL AND MUSEM, LONGUEVAL

Delville Wood, is also known as Devil's Wood, where for five nights and six days, the soldiers strained against the enemy. Outnumbered and attacked from three sides, practically decimated, they managed to hold part of the wood, after bitter fighting, sometimes hand to hand. Today the shell holes and remains of trenches are still visible. The dome of the memorial is topped with a bronze statue by Alfred Turner. It represents Castor and Pollux, hands linked in friendship, leading a warhorse. They represent the union of all South African peoples in their determination to defend common ideals. The museum is housed in a replica of a Cape fort. Massive bronze plaques tell of the conflicts in which South Africa has taken part.

## THE HISTORIAL OF THE GREAT WAR, PÉRONNE

Explore this sumptuous regional museum, dedicated to the 14-18 world war. Get a comparative perspective on the front-line experience of the French, German and British troops. The permanent and temporary exhibitions about the military side of the Great War are accessible to all ages, but the Historial is also concerned with society, and relates civilian life behind the lines. From the moving multimedia displays to the unusual artefacts on display, the museum aims to offer visitors a global approach to the war!



## THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL MEMORIAL, VILLERS-BRETONNEUX

Designed by architect Sir Edwin Lutyens, this imposing memorial was inaugurated in 1938. Engraved on its walls are the names of 11 000 Australians who died for France, were reported missing in action or who have no known grave. **The Sir John Monash Centre:** built behind the National Memorial by the Australian Government, this interpretive centre commemorates the Australian contribution to the fighting in the Great War. The setting is majestic and the materials of high quality, so that the homage paid there might reflect the sacrifice made. The centre, the height of modern technology, combines archive footage and re-enaction on 400 screens so as to show what the soldiers' daily life was really like on the front lines and behind them. An immersive 360° room plunges the visitor into the harsh reality of combat using highly evocative images and light and sound effects as well as smoke. Also in Villers-Bretonneux, the Musée franco-australien on the 1st floor of the Ecole Victoria.

## THE UNDERGROUND CITY OF NAOURS

The immense underground city of Naours was dug deep into the limestone of the plateau Picard. Originally quarries, it became a hiding place for local residents in the Middle Ages. The underground city of Naours is home to approximately 3 000 graffiti (discovered to date), of which over 700 were made by Australians. This is the greatest concentration of graffiti on the Western Front. The Travelling Soldiers Museum explores the life stories of the soldiers who came here as visitors, as well as soldiers' leisure activities when they were behind the lines.



## VIGNACOURT 14-18

During the Great War, Vignacourt was an important logistics hub for the French army and their allies. Passionate photographers Louis and Antoinette Thullier immortalised village life and soldiers who were passing through from all over the world. In 2010 their collection of 4 000 photographic plates was found. Now housed in The Thullier's farm, some of their prints are on display: a portrait gallery filled with humanity, where the details provide perspective on the bigger picture.

## THE UNITED ALLIED COMMAND ROOM, DOULLENS

On 21<sup>st</sup> March 1918 Ludendorff launched the greatest offensive of the war since 1914 from the Hindenburg Line. He had two objectives: separate the French and British armies, and take Amiens. If the situation were drawn out, it would turn into an irreversible military disaster. On 26<sup>th</sup> March, Presidents Poincaré and Clemenceau, Generals Petain and Foch, Lord Milner and General Haig met in Doullens town hall and resolved to implement a united command. On 18<sup>th</sup> July Foch launched his final counter offensive, leading ultimately to the Armistice on 11<sup>th</sup> November.

# Key Figures

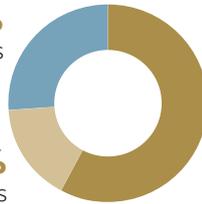
## REMEMBRANCE TOURISM IN 2018



**1 020 000** visits  
To the Somme battlefields

**26%**  
Schools

**16%**  
Groups



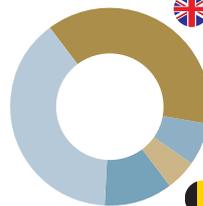
**58%**  
Individuals



**21 261 000 €**  
Economic benefits

### NATIONALITIES

**39%**  
French



**38%**  
British

**7%**  
Australian

**11%**  
Other



**5%**  
Belgian

### DURATION OF STAY

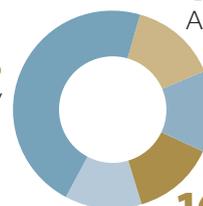


**3,7** nights

### REASONS FOR VISITING

**56%**  
Finding out about history

**15%**  
Family reasons  
(remembrance, genealogy)



**17%**  
A change of scene

**16%**  
Site notoriety

**16%**  
Exploring the area



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# Our ambassadors

## SOMME BATTLEFIELDS FOR PEACE



*"Taking part in Somme Battlefields for Peace is both an honour and a source of pride for me as President of the Poppy Country Tourist Office. It is very important to show the people that come to the Somme for Remembrance, that this duty to remember is not just British, it's French too! It's essential to make it visible and for people to take on board that even now, such as when we see what's happening in Ukraine, peace is so fragile. We must never forget."*

*Linking Great War history to today's world is the best way to promote awareness amongst tourists and local residents. We are delighted to have a collection box in the Tourist Office and to involve the local businesses who are interested. It would be great to have a flyer in English so that our British friends can understand what it's all in aid of. We could also make and sell badges with the Somme Battlefields for Peace logo, as a further contribution."*

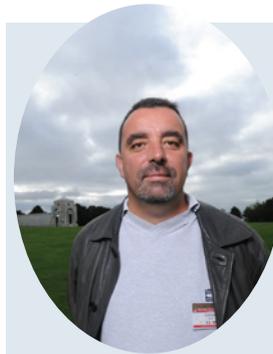
**Didier Petit** - President of the Poppy Country Tourist Office



*« For Peace" says it all, and this is a value in tune with those of the team at the Zénith Amiens. Our performance hall is a place where music and emotion are entwined with joy and happiness. Why not make the most of it, to help and give to those in need? Somme Battlefields for Peace is, in this sense, a great opportunity. The Zénith and their Audience are happy to be partners in this international effort. On concert evenings, members of the audience can donate their reusable plastic cups:*

*one of these dropped into the collector is 1€ for the endowment fund. We ran a similar operation for Grandir Sans Cancer [Growing up Cancer-free] last year. The Audience in Amiens is generous, and we are proud of them!"*

**Céline Garnier** - Director of the Zénith Amiens



*"As a battlefield guide, I share in the emotion of visitors from around the world on a daily basis, as I accompany them to Remembrance sites in the Somme. I signed up to Somme Battlefields for Peace without*

*hesitation: over a hundred years ago tragedy unfolded right here, thousands of destinies were smashed and lives lost during the four years of World War One.*

*As we remember and commemorate our destructive past, Somme Battlefields for Peace is a way to take part individually and collectively in building our future on a human scale.*

*Whether soldiers of the past or the present, it's their humanity which touches us all. I am very happy to be involved in "Somme Battlefields for Peace" and help promote it."*

**Sylvestre Bresson**  
Battlefield Guide





*"The "Somme Battlefields for Peace" initiative, founded and developed by Somme Tourisme really stands out! It is an expression of the tourist industry's commitment and responsibility, as well as the diversity of things that can be done for the common good, thereby giving an even greater resonance and sense of modernity to remembrance tourism. Essentiem is proud to assist such a process, one which will have to unite*

*all the participants in the area in order to pull this daring venture off, and inspire others."*

**Lionel Flasseur** - President of Essentiem



*"Humanity & Inclusion is proud to work alongside the Somme and their "Somme Battlefields for Peace" initiative, so that the places which were the scenes of past conflict become promoters of peace. This initiative echoes the organisation's 40 years on the ground, on the eve of the historic signature of an international agreement against the bombing of civilians, on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2022. Sixty states will*

*meet in Dublin to recognise and respond to the suffering caused to civilians by the bombing of populated areas."*

**Xavier du Crest de Villeneuve** - President of Humanity & Inclusion

## SOMME BATTLEFIELDS PARTNERS NETWORK



### *A network of tourism professionals, unique in France*

Launched in 2007, the Somme Battlefields Partner accreditation was born of a strong desire to unite tourism professionals around the "Great War" theme, on the initiative of the Historical of the Great War, Somme Tourisme, Péronne Chambre of Commerce and Industry and the Somme 1916 Museum.

The accreditation has become a benchmark for hospitality, authenticity and knowledge of the local heritage.

Today "Somme Battlefields Partner" draws together 125 tourism professionals (museums, Remembrance sites, tourist offices, accommodation, restaurants, independent guides, taxis, shops...), ambassadors for the area. Members sign up to professionalisation, taking courses in history and participating in éductours. These committed professionals are the primary ambassadors for the Somme Battlefields for Peace endowment fund.

Somme 1916 Museum - Albert

