



Order of Service

Commemoration of the Battle of Fromelles
19-20 July 1916

19 July 2022

at Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery

Introduction

The Battle of Fromelles was a combined attack by British and Australian troops on 19-20 July 1916, in France, during the First World War. The aim of the operation was to seize the German-held salient just north of the village of Fromelles.

It was the first offensive operation by the Australian Imperial Force on the Western Front and was intended to divert German troops away from the epic Battle of the Somme. The British and Australian attackers had little time to prepare and the odds greatly favoured the well-entrenched Germans. After a night and day of fierce fighting the German defensive line remained unbroken. When the attack was called off on the morning of 20 July, over 7,000 British and Australian troops had been killed, wounded, captured or were missing.

The high casualties from Australia's 5th Division, fighting alongside the British 61st Division, remind us that the battle remains the worst loss of life in a 24 hour period in Australia's history.

The remains of 250 Australian and British soldiers recovered from mass graves in 2009 were reinterred in the Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery, with full military honours, in 2010. A ceremony to dedicate the new cemetery occurred on 19 July 2010, the anniversary of the Battle of Fromelles, during which the dead of Pheasant Wood gave their lives.

During the period of 2010 to 2014 Joint Australian and British Identification Boards identified one hundred and forty four (144) Australian soldiers by name.

From 2015 to 2019 the Australian Army's Fromelles Identification Boards identified a further twenty two (22) Australian soldiers by name. To date 166 Australian Soldiers who were killed during the Battle of Fromelles and buried here at Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery have been identified.



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Arrival of the Official Party

Arrival of the Flag Bearers and Official Party

Welcome

Master of Ceremonies -

Lieutenant Colonel Francois Nozaie – Australian Army

Mayor of Fromelles – Mr Jean-Gabriel Masson

Opening Prayer

Chaplain Major Frank Langford – Australian Army

Almighty God, we confess that we are slow to accept death as an inevitable part of life.

We confess that we struggle to let go of our family and friends into your eternal care.

You know and understand the depth of our sorrow, may your Holy Spirit - come to us as the Comforter you promised.

Grant us the peace and love we need as we reach out to comfort one another.

And as we remember this Unknown Soldier, this nameless man.

May we hold his memory dear to us as a father, brother, son, uncle and friend.

He is someone who was loved and missed and today we honour him and thank you for his sacrifice.

Even though the pain of loss may have diminished, once again we are reminded that death stole him from those whom he loved.

But he is not alone in this hallowed ground, and we will always remember him, the Unknown Soldier.

We pray for him, and others who sacrificed their lives, and all men, women, and children, who suffered due to cruel days of war. Lord, in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayer

French Commemorative Address

Senior Representative of the French Government

Australian Commemorative Address

Senior Representative of the Australian Government

Official Wreath Laying

Wreaths will be laid by the Official Party

Wreaths will now be laid by other parties

Ode of Remembrance

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old: Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning We will remember them.

All: We will remember them

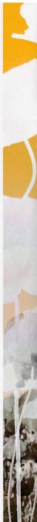
The Last Post

Minute's Silence

Rouse

National Anthems

The National Anthems of France, Germany, the United Kingdom and Australia will now be played.



Closing Prayer

Chaplain Major Frank Langford – Australian Army

Almighty God, as we depart this solemn place of remembrance, we give thanks for this man who gave his life and all those who sacrificed themselves in the service of others.

May we go as a people who know life and hope and peace?

Holding fast to that which is good, giving respect and honour to all.

May God bless the bonds of friendship, reverence, and understanding that have grown amongst nations once pitted against each other in this poignant place?

And help us to keep these bonds unbroken through the generations ahead.

And may we know the blessing of God almighty the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

For now and forever – **Amen.**

Farewell and Conclusion

Flag Bearers Depart

Official Party Departs

After the official party has thanked the flag bearers the general public are invited to join the officials and families within the cemetery. The public are invited to lay Australian Commemorative Crosses and pay their respects at other soldier's graves in the cemetery.