



Order of Service

Commemoration of the Battle of Fromelles

19-20 July 1916

19 July 2024

at 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 prevent German troops from reinforcing the epic Battle of the Somme. The British and Australian soldiers had little time to prepare and the odds greatly favoured the well-trenched 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 Allied soldiers recovered from mass graves in 2009 were reinterred in the Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery in 2010 with full military honours. A ceremony to dedicate the new cemetery occurred on 19 July 2010, the anniversary of the Battle of Fromelles, during which the soldiers from Pheasant Wood gave their lives.

During the period of 2010 to 2014 Joint Australian and British Identification Boards confirmed the identities of 144 Australian soldiers by name.

From 2016 to 2019 Australian Army Fromelles Identification Boards identified a further 22 Australian soldiers by name.

In 2020 and 2021, during a COVID 19-related hiatus, a holistic review of the Fromelles Project was undertaken and a decision was made to bring the specialist scientific functions in-house within the Australian Defence Force, and for Fromelles Project governance arrangements to be aligned with routine historic soldier identification arrangements.

In 2022 and 2023 Australian identification boards identified a further seven soldiers, whose new headstones were unveiled last year, and today, the 108th anniversary of the battle, we are pleased to unveil new named headstones for a further seven previously unknown Australian soldiers.

To date 180 Australian soldiers who were killed during the Battle of Fromelles and buried here at the Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery have now been identified, and efforts to identify the remaining 70 soldiers continue.





Order of Service

Arrival of the Official Party

Arrival of the Flag Bearers and Official Party

Welcome

Master of Ceremonies

Lieutenant Colonel Dean Kachab – Australian Army

Mayor of Fromelles – Mr Jean-Gabriel Masson

Opening Prayer

Reverend Martin Hislop DL

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 these soldiers,

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

They are individuals who were loved and missed and today we honour them and thank you for their sacrifice.

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

But they are not alone in this hallowed ground, and we will always remember them.

We pray for them, 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

Australian Commemorative Address

Dedication Prayer

Reverend Martin Hislop DL

On earth our dear ones do live on through those of us to whom they were so very precious. We now fondly dedicate these headstones to the blessed memory of those whose remains lie not only in this plot of ground but in every heart their lives did touch. Amen


Headstone Rededication (Roll of Honour)

- 3006 Corporal Percy George BARR
54th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force
Killed in action 19 July 1916.
- 4474 Lance Corporal Harold Thompson SMITH
8th Field Company Engineers, Australian Imperial Force
Killed in action 19 July 1916.
- 2825 Private Albert William Fitch ANSELL (aka FITCH)
5th Pioneer Battalion, Australian Imperial Force
Killed in action 23 July 1916.
- 1062 Private George Robert BARNATT
29th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force
Killed in action 20 July 1916.
- 585 Private William Christopher BRUMBY
31st Battalion, Australian Imperial Force
Killed in action 21 July 1916.
- 3543 Private Herbert James GRAHAM
54th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force
Killed in action 20 July 1916.
- 1311 Private Ernest Frank STUDDON (aka WELLING)
30th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force
Killed in action 20 July 1916.

Official Wreath Laying

Wreaths will be laid by the Official Party





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

Reverend Martin Hislop DL

Almighty God, as we depart this solemn place of remembrance, we give thanks for these men who gave their lives 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.**

Let us gather these thoughts, memories and prayers together in the words given to us by Jesus Himself:

Our Father

**Who art in heaven,
Hallowed by thy Name.
Thy Kingdom Come,
Thy Will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us;
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power
And the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

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 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 to other Australian and British soldier's graves in the cemetery.





Locations of the Identified Soldiers

- ☆ 3006 Corporal Percy George BARR
Plot IV Row E Grave 10
- ☆ 4474 Lance Corporal Harold Thompson SMITH
Plot III Row E Grave 14
- ☆ 2825 Private Albert William Fitch ANSELL
Plot III Row E Grave 12
- ☆ 1062 Private George Robert BARNATT
Plot IV Row C Grave 10
- ☆ 585 Private William Christopher BRUMBY
Plot I Row B Grave 6
- ☆ 3543 Private Herbert James GRAHAM
Plot IV Row A Grave 2
- ☆ 1311 Private Ernest Frank STUDDON
Plot II Row B Grave 2