



# Order of Service

Headstone Dedication and  
Commemoration of the Battle of Fromelles

19-20 July 1916

19 July 2023

*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 Allied 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 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 2015 to 2019 Australian Army Fromelles Identification Boards identified a further 22 Australian soldiers by name.

In late 2022 and early 2023 Australian identification boards identified a further seven soldiers, whose new headstones we unveil here today, as we commemorate the 107th anniversary of the battle.

To date 173 Australian soldiers who were killed during the Battle of Fromelles and buried here at Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery have now been identified, while efforts to identify the remaining 77 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 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

Her Excellency Ms Gillian Bird PSM, Ambassador of Australia to the Republic of France

## **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)**

- 10 Sergeant Oscar Eric BAUMANN, 32nd Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, Killed in action 20 July 1916.
- 2772 Corporal William John STEPHEN, 55th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, Killed in action 20 July 1916.
- 3873 Private Richard James McGUARR, 55th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, Killed in action 20 July 1916.
- 1082 Private Alexander Russell Robert PAGE, 32nd Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, Killed in action 20 July 1916.
- 1239 Private Maurice James CLAXTON, 32nd Battalion Australian Imperial Force, Killed in action 20 July 1916.
- 1537 Private Walter Allen GRACE, 31st Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, Killed in action 20 July 1916.
- 20 Private Edwin Charles GRAY, 32nd Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, Killed in action 20 July 1916.

## **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

*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 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.





#### Locations of the Identified Soldiers

- ★ 10 Sergeant Oscar Eric BAUMANN, Plot II Row E Grave 11
- ★ 2772 Corporal William John STEPHEN Plot II Row E Grave 5
- ★ 3873 Private Richard James McGUARR, Plot III Row C Grave 1
- ★ 1082 Private Alexander Russell Robert PAGE, Plot IV Row D Grave 3
- ★ 1239 Private Maurice James CLAXTON Plot IV Row D Grave 11 1537
- ★ Private Walter Allen GRACE Plot II Row F Grave 15
- ★ 20 Private Edwin Charles GRAY, Plot IV Row D Grave 8