Thank you for your enquiry about our acclaimed Self-Drive tours to the Somme and Ypres battlefields of the Great War 1914-1918.

Below are some general points to consider should you be thinking of booking a Self-Drive tour to the Somme and/or Ypres battlefields. I’m sorry it’s a bit on the long side but we’ve tried to consider as much as possible.

Please also see the ‘Self-Drive Tour’ page of our website which contains lots of information about the tours we offer, including where the battlefields are in France and Belgium, travel distances and more.

Please also click the video link icon to the left here for a quick overview of our Self-Drive guides.

Please note that our self-drive Somme and Ypres battlefield guides are only available as part of the package quoted below (which must include hotel accommodation) and as such cannot be sold separately.

Booking well in advance (especially for 2014-2018), is strongly recommended as the few hotels we personally recommend, hotels we have been working with for many years, soon get fully booked.

Here’s some more about what we offer:

BACKGROUND

We are not a big commercial company offering everything to everybody. We are a small but professionally-run company having a life-long interest in the Great War, and just the Great War, so everything we do is focused on the tours we provide. Our Self-Drive tours are the result of many years’ research, coupled with a determination to
provide clear written guides and directions for the first-time visitor. Just as you may have done, I too have read many, many books about the Somme and Ypres battles over the years but none to date have ever explained precisely and clearly how to explore these two battlefields. This is the challenge I set out to resolve after having run over 300 small-group tours to these battlefields and our self-drive guides are the result, guides which have proved immensely popular because they have been written with you, perhaps a first time visitor, specifically in mind.

We understand that you don’t know us so you may have understandable reservations as to whether a self-drive tour is for you. Our advice is to please have a closer look at our client testimonials. Unlike some companies, we don’t just cherry-pick the ones we want you to read. The testimonials you see on our website are exactly as we received them. None have been excluded or edited (other than when referring to private or confidential matters). Please also see our website for details of our many national press awards and recommendations (including Vanity Fair's much coveted 'Best Guided Tour' award, the Sunday Telegraph, and most recently as the only WWI self-drive battlefield tour company to be featured in the December edition of Country Life magazine). We’re also not a strictly ‘9-5 Monday-Friday’ company. We are here just about all hours seven days a week to take calls from clients who have booked with us. It’s all part of the personal service we endeavour to provide.

**Why a Self-Drive Tour?**

One of the most enjoyable and rewarding ways to explore the battlefields of the Great War is to do so by yourself, or in the company of friends/relatives. Conducted tours, whether small or large, understandably require you to comply with a fairly strict itinerary. If you travel as part of a group you may well be frustrated by not being able to explore the landscape and ‘follow your nose’ to uncover for yourself the legacy of the Great War (which is what I and so many others have always so enjoyed doing!). There is nothing more exasperating than being sat in a coach or minibus watching the battlefields pass by, when you would so love to have the freedom to stop and explore unhindered by others. This is why our Self-Drive tours are so popular.

**Our Self-Drive Guides**

As I mentioned above, despite all the many excellent books that have been written about the Great War, few provide sufficient detail to allow you to locate the exact places where any particular action took place. If you do not travel properly prepared you could well end up just staring at French/Belgium countryside without knowing precisely what took place where and when (most often beneath your very feet!). This is what happens with so many battlefield visitors who travel without comprehensive written explanations/diagrams/maps/photos etc.

To see the terrain of today for what it was like all those years ago requires a combination of present day and original WWI ‘Trench Maps’, as well as a clear narrative of precisely what took place and where, and how to get to these places. One also needs clear directions as to where to drive, where to stop, what to look for and how to relate the landscape of today to how it was back in the Great War. This is just what our self-drive guides provide. Our written guides are not just any old collection of briefing notes or cobbled together maps as offered by some as ‘self-drive’
companies. Our self-drive battlefield guides are professionally produced and regularly updated colour booklets which have been carefully designed to take you on a journey of exploration, so you know exactly where to stop, where to walk and, most importantly of all, what to look for. It’s the time and effort we have spent in producing our guides that has resulted in our national press recommendations and awards and why we have received such positive feedback from those who have undertaken one of our self-drive battlefield tours.

**PLANNING YOUR TOUR**

**How much time should I allocate?**

First and foremost, you can travel whenever you wish! We’ll organise everything around YOUR dates.

‘I wish we had allocated more time’ is a comment we hear many times from our clients on returning from one of our self-drive tours. You’ll be surprised how time seems to fly by when you are exploring the battlefields of the Great War. Our self-drive Somme and Ypres guides take about two full days each to complete (may be even more including museum visits), so as a general rule we recommend that you try and spend at least three nights visiting either the Somme or Ypres battlefields, plus whatever time you can spare from your arrival and departure days. If you have in mind to explore both the Somme and Ypres then may be try and earmark a minimum of four nights divided 2:2 between these two most poignant battlefields of the Great War 1914-1918. If you have five nights to spare then may be divide your time 3:2 between the Somme and Ypres, your time away being weighted towards the Somme as this battlefield is more open and easier to explore, using our self-drive guide. Six nights divided 3:3 is best of all. If time is really limited then at a push consider spending two nights visiting the Somme and one night at Ypres.

If you have in mind to visit both the Somme and Ypres battlefields then one other option to consider is basing yourself in Ypres for all three or four nights and to travel south to the Somme battlefield for one or two days (about 90 minute drive each way). Ypres is a vibrant and more English-speaking town with far more restaurants/bars etc than Albert, coupled with having the Menin Gate in the centre of the town. This way you’ll not have to change hotels but may possibly spend more time ‘on the road’. It’s a matter of personal choice.

**Getting around the battlefields**

As previously mentioned, you’ll need to have a car to follow our self-drive guides. Most people travelling from the UK take their own car, crossing the Channel by ferry or tunnel. We can easily extend your Channel crossing so as to include any additional days you may wish to add on to your battlefield tour to be arranged by yourself. Please note that we are only able to offer ferry and tunnel crossings from Dover/Folkestone-Calais. If you wish to travel a different route (such as from Portsmouth or Hull) then please make your own arrangements and we will deduct the Channel crossing cost from your quotation.
One other option is to either fly direct to either Brussels or Paris CDG, or take the passenger ‘Eurostar’ train direct from London to Lille. I’m sorry but at present we cannot help with passenger trains from London to Lille, or flying to France or Belgium. I’m also sorry but we are unable at present to help with car hire. That said, there are plenty of rental companies located in Paris (especially Paris CDG airport), Lille, Brussels and other key cities near the Somme and Ypres battlefields (Lille is an especially convenient city as it has a direct high-speed train link with London and Paris as well as most popular car hire outlets close to the international rail station).

The Battlefields
Visiting the battlefields of the Great War takes more time than one may at first imagine. When exploring the legacy of the First World War there is an understandable tendency to slow down and reflect upon these tragic and most thought provoking past events, coupled with a natural desire to explore the terrain (as a battlefield detective…) using our popular Self-Drive guides.

Which battlefield to visit if just time for one?
Ypres is a vibrant town with an abundance of restaurants, fine museum and the famous ‘Last Post’ ceremony held at the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing every evening. The Ypres battlefield has seen development over the years but can still be explored, but not as easy as the Somme. The Somme however is still open rolling countryside which can easily (using our guide that is…) be compared ‘then and now’. It would possibly be my preferred battlefield if its ‘explorability’ (a new word…) was the sole criteria. However Albert, the nearest town where you will most likely be staying, is much less commercialised compared to Ypres with just a few basic restaurants and fewer museums. The Somme’s even larger Memorial to the Missing (Thiepval) does not attract huge crowds every evening as the Memorial sits on a lonely ridge right in the centre of the battlefield. Here’s more.

The Somme Battlefield
We strongly recommend that your stay in either Albert or Peronne for the Somme battlefield, as opposed to either Arras or Amiens, as both these smaller towns lie just a mile or so from the old front line, and so were very much part of the battlefield, especially as final staging posts for troops coming up to the battlefield (both towns were almost totally destroyed by the end of war).

The Somme battlefield lies in an area of the Somme department of northern France called Picardie. This battlefield is easier to explore as there has been relatively little domestic and commercial development over the intervening years which, coupled with the gentle rolling countryside, makes comprehending the events of the battle so much easier. Our Self-Drive Somme guide takes a good two days to complete (taking in to account time spent visiting the small museum in the centre of Albert).

The biggest Commonwealth Memorial in the world is the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing, which stands high above the Somme battlefield and which can be seen from miles around. Please see our Somme itinerary below for details of where our self-drive guide will take you and see our hotels page for accommodation options.
The Ypres Battlefield
Ypres lies in the heart of an area known as Flanders, with infamous villages such as Passchendaele, Hooge, Messines, Hill 60 and so many others that have become so synonymous with the Great War, making up the 'salient' that lies just a few kilometres to the east of the town. The Ypres area (now spelt the Flemish way 'Ieper') has a flatter terrain when compared to other battlefields such as the Somme and has seen some degree of development over the intervening years. Ypres is a most vibrant town with a particularly strong legacy of the battles that almost encircled the town throughout 1914-1918. The second largest Memorial to the Missing, the Menin Gate Memorial, located close to the town centre, is perhaps the most visited memorial on the Western Front, due largely to the famous 'Last Post' ceremony which takes place at 8.00 pm each and every evening. See our hotels page for accommodation options.

The superb ‘In Flanders Fields’ museum, house in the old Cloth Hall in the centre of Ypres is a must to visit. The museum was completely refurbished and enlarged in 2012 and is ideally suited for both adults and younger visitors (say 8+).

Please see our Ypres itinerary below for details of where our self-drive guide will take you and see our hotels page for accommodation options.

Australians in WW1
The principal Australian battlefields are to be found on the Somme (Pozieres 1916) battlefield and the area around Villers Bretonneux (1918) which forms part of the greater Somme battlefield. Our Somme guide can easily be extended so as to a separate guide for Villers Bretonneux. (Our Self-Drive Somme guide does not include the 1917-1918 actions further east in the area of the Hindenburg Line). Our guide to the Ypres battlefield includes the 1917 ANZAC battlefields of Passchendaele. There are of course many other important Australian battlefields which are not included in our printed Self-Drive Somme and Ypres guides such as Fromelles, Messines etc. These battlefields are best explored by using the services of a personal guide (see below).

HERE’S WHAT YOUR SELF-DRIVE TOUR WILL COMPRIS

Please note:

😊 Hotel accommodation is based on 'bed and breakfast' as past experience has shown that our clients have preferred not to be committed to a hotel’s ‘standard’ evening meal, but to have the freedom to try a local restaurant, of which there are many (especially in and around Ypres).

😊 As the cost is based on the number of nights away you can easily juggle how you apportion those nights between the Somme and Ypres battlefields. We usually suggest the Somme first followed by Ypres but we can easily make Ypres your first battlefield. It’s what best fits around your plan that is most important to us.

➢ CHANNEL CROSSING
Return Channel crossing (Eurotunnel or ferry) for a vehicle (i.e., car/MPV/4X4) and all occupants. Please note that we are only able to offer ferry and tunnel crossings from Dover/Folkestone-Calais. If you wish to travel a different route (such as from Portsmouth or Hull) then please make your own arrangements and we will deduct the Channel crossing cost from your quotation.

➢ HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

Your Somme battlefield hotel options

Click names to find out more about each hotel. See our website ‘Self-Drive Hotels’ for hotel location maps.

Most of our hotels are centred on the town of Albert, from where our self-drive guide commences. We chose Albert as this town lies only a mile or so behind the old Front Line and is steeped in the history of the battle. There are few restaurants in Albert and sometimes it can be difficult finding somewhere to dine on Sunday and Monday evenings, especially during the national holiday month of August.

Avril Williams Guest House (please see our website for details)

Hotel de la Basilique (2-star)

The Hotel de la Basilique is a privately owned hotel situated right in the centre of the historic WWI town of Albert, just a mile or so behind the old Front Line of 1916. The hotel is also directly opposite the famous Basilica, of leaning tower legend (see our website for details). The hotel, which now comes under the respected Logis ‘umbrella’, has an excellent restaurant. The Hotel Basilique has a lovely ‘French’ (and just a trifle quirky) feel, so typical of small French town centre hotels, and has been used by us for many years (40+!!). We have seen the original owner’s children mature to become the owners of today, with their little children getting less and less little every year that passes.

Please note, the Hotel Basilique is closed after lunch on Sundays and all day Mondays (admittedly rather an unusual way of running an hotel, but they say this is a consequence of French employment laws).

OR:

Hotel Royal Picardie (3-star Best Western)

The more luxurious Hotel Royal Picardie is a privately owned hotel. The hotel is situated on the edge of the small town of Albert, one of the two principal ‘battlefield towns’ for those seeking to explore the legacy of the Somme battles (the other being Peronne). The centre of the town, which is dominated by the famous basilica, is about ten minutes’ walk away. All rooms have a bath with overhead shower and a separate WC. The Royal Picardie also has a bar restaurant which offers light meals. Please note
that the hotel Royal Picardie’s restaurant may be closed on Sundays. There are however a limited number of other dining options to be found in the centre of Albert (about 10 minutes’ walk away). Please also note that some twin-bed rooms comprise a double and a slightly narrower (but full length) single bed, this combination also being used for triple-occupancy.

OR:

**Hotel Saint Claude** (3-star Best Western)

The Hotel St Claude is situated right in the very heart of Peronne, one of the principal ‘battlefield towns’ of the Great War - and the Somme battle in particular. Its location is just a stone’s throw from the superb French WWI Historical Museum, and a few more paces takes you to the banks of the River Somme as it passes through the town. The hotel is about 13 miles from Albert from where your self-drive tour commences (directions from Peronne across the battlefield to Albert are included).

The Hotel Saint Claude is a privately owned hotel (new owners 2014) which is undergoing renovation 2014-2015. The hotel, which dates from the Great War (and just about survived), now comes under the Comfort Hotel ‘umbrella’. Because of the age of the building many of the rooms are accessed by way of a series of corridors running this way and that (but a lift to all floors) which can at first seem confusing.

OR:

**Le Macassar** (luxury guest house at an extra cost)

It is difficult to compare this jewel with other hotels as the owners, Ian and Miguel, have created a guest house that simply defies any pre-conception one may have of the term ‘guest house’ or ‘B&B’. Le Macassar combines opulent luxury with beautiful art deco furnishings brought alive by Ian and Miguel’s warm and welcoming personalities, coupled with their eye for attention to the smallest detail.

Le Macassar is situated in the centre of Corbie (about 12 miles east of Amiens) and offers six large rooms and suites beautifully appointed with a mixture of antique and modern furniture, art works, marble fireplaces and equipped with amenities such as CD players and tea/coffee making facilities. High quality beds, duvets and pillows ensure a comfortable night’s sleep and luxurious, newly appointed bathrooms (many with whirlpool tubs) offer the opportunity for guests to pamper themselves. Each room has its own individual appeal. For example, the 1920s decadence of the Art Deco suite is fully fitted in its original ash and bird’s-eye maple furniture, with a separate living room centred around an elaborately carved stone fireplace, day bed and stylish period armchairs.

**Your Ypres battlefield hotel options**

*(click names to find out more about each hotel)*
Ariane Hotel (4-star)

The lovely Ariane Hotel is situated in the centre of Ypres (now renamed ‘Ieper’). Ypres is one of the most important (and infamous) ‘battlefield towns’ of the Great War. The Ariane Hotel is a privately owned establishment and is situated just five minutes’ walk from the famous Cloth Hall and charming Town Square (Grote Markt). The Cloth Hall also houses the superb “In Flanders Fields” Museum, generally regarded as being one of the best WWI museums to be found in all of France and Belgium.

The Ariane also has an excellent restaurant befitting its four-star status with set dinners available from about €40 per person.

OR:

Albion Hotel (3-star)

The Albion Hotel, situated in the centre of Ypres, is a privately owned establishment and is situated just off the main square. It is not far from the famous Cloth Hall and “In Flanders Fields” Museum, and just a couple of minutes’ walk from the Menin Gate and ramparts (please see our website for more details of this most understated but highly rated hotel).

The Albion Hotel does not have a restaurant offering evening meals as it sits very close to the main square (Grote Markt) with many restaurants all competing to offer you the best of Belgium cuisine, combined with meals for the palates of just about all visitors.

Main Street ‘Boutique’ Hotel

Main Street, which opened in 2011, has just six rooms, each of which has been individually designed with the utmost care and attention to detail following very different, very intimate and very personalised themes.

Main Street Hotel is quite unique within Ypres. It’s not like any other hotel. Main Street offers a quiet retreat for those seeking something truly homely and personalised, where attention to detail and personal service are a priority. The hotel is located in the centre of the old (best…) part of Ypres, just like the Ariane and Albion hotels.

OUR SELF-DRIVE SOMME AND/OR YPRES BATTLEFIELD GUIDES

As mentioned earlier, our printed guides very much lie at the heart of our Self-Drive Tours for without them, any visit to the battlefields could well result in frustration as relating the ground ‘then and now’ takes some explaining. It is hard to describe the importance of our printed guides until you’ve taken one of our tours (…or not taken one and returned home frustrated at not being able to see the land for how it was back in the Great War!). A measure can be gained from the feedback we have received from people, like yourselves, who have taken our Self-Drive Tour and appreciated just
how necessary it is to be properly briefed when planning a visit to the battlefields of 1914-1918.

Our detailed Somme and Ypres battlefield guides are believed to be the only such comprehensive guides currently available (as opposed to just briefing notes). They provide battlefield visitors with a variety of trench maps, linked to present day easy-to-read maps, battlefield diagrams, panoramic photographs and descriptions, all arranged in very easy to follow sections. The comprehensive guides have been specifically written and styled for the first time visitor, and as such aim to give a good overview of the key areas of the battlefields we cover. The guides also include a separate easy-to-follow route plan and laminated map, so you can easily navigate the narrow roads that criss-cross the battlefields. The itineraries for each of our guides is detailed below.

As commented upon earlier, please bear in mind that the Western Front extended for some 400 or so miles so it is impossible for us to cover every part of the battlefields, even for the specific battlefields we do provide guides for. This is important if you are seeking to follow a particular country’s servicemen, regiment or battalion which may have seen action in areas not covered by our written guides. For those areas we do not cover, we will endeavour to provide a trench map of the specific battlefield you are interested in, which in most cases can be easily compared to a modern-day map, thus opening the door for you to explore any WW1 battlefield. Here are the battlefields that comprise our self-drive guides:

**YOUR SOMME SELF-DRIVE GUIDE ITINERARY**

**Section A (Serre and Sheffield Park)**

*It was here that many of the ‘Pals’ battalions from towns such as Accrington, Barnsley and Chorley went ‘over the top’ at 0730 hrs on Saturday 1st July 1916. Some of the many accounts of those who were there is included in the ‘The Battlefields’ section (Somme) of the main menu to the left of our website.*

**Section B (Newfoundland Park)**

*This ‘park’ is in fact an area of front line left almost exactly as it was after the battle, with no attempt having been made to artificially reconstruct trenches etc. To stand in the very trenches of 1st July 1916, and to then walk across the exposed killing fields of ‘No Man’s Land’, is a very moving experience indeed. Nearby is the massive Hawthorn Ridge mine crater where, at ten minutes before zero hour on the first day of the Battle, more than eighteen tons of explosive was detonated beneath the German trenches, footage of which is so often seen on television. Your guide will direct you to the exact spot where the film was taken from so that you may compare the picture of the mine exploding ‘then’ to the scene today, a very easy comparison as the terrain looks pretty much the same today as all those years ago.*

**Section C (Thiepval)**

*Thiepval was the scene of particularly savage fighting as British troops battled throughout July, August and September of 1916 to take the ridge that dominated the battlefield. It was here that the 36th Ulster Division famously achieved such success on the opening day (but at a terrible cost). It was on this ridge that the massive Memorial to the Missing of the 1916 and*
1917 battles was erected in 1932, which today bears the names of nearly 73,000 British and South African soldiers who have no known grave.

Section D (La Boisselle)
This section includes the tragic attack across ‘Mash Valley’, the attack on La Boisselle and Ovillers La Boisselle, as well as a visit to the huge ‘Lochnagar Crater’, the largest mine crater still to be found on the Western Front today. Using the maps supplied you will be able to convert the valley today to how it would have looked in July, a task the is almost impossible if one does not have the appropriate maps/diagrams etc to hand.

Section E (Fricourt)
This latest addition to the guide takes you to Mansel Copse and the Devonshire Trench where the inscription at the cemetery entrance simply says:

The Devonshires held this trench.
The Devonshires hold it still.

This section (like all the other sections) includes an original trench map of the battle to take Fricourt and Mametz, as well as diagrams and present day maps. Your ‘guide’ for this area also includes the famous ‘Tambour Mines’ (three mines detonated beneath the German trenches at the start of the Somme offensive on 1st July 1916).

Section F (Mametz Wood)
The battles for Fricourt and Mametz saw varying degrees of success on 1st July, but once again at a high cost. Fricourt includes a visit to the Tambour Mine Craters and the famous ‘Devonshire Trench’ where the 8th Devons were cut down by machine gun fire as they left their trench at Mansel Copse. Many were buried in the trench they had left that fateful morning, the trench now being a small cemetery.

Section G (Delville Wood)
Delville Wood became a cauldron of almost unimaginable suffering as South African, followed by British and Commonwealth troops met the German defenders head-on. The battle for the wood lasted from 15th July through to mid-September, as the battle raged one way then the other. The wood, and those who occupied it from both sides, were ground to fragments, a haunting fact which seems to permeate the wood today, which has been left as it was at the end of the battle. This section also includes the New Zealand Memorial the Missing of the Somme battlefield 1916.

Section H (Pozieres)
It was here that over 22,000 Australian soldiers were lost in the taking and holding of this small village in July/August of 1916. Such was the intensity of the bombardment of the Australian ‘positions’ at Pozieres that hardly a single brick remained intact at the end of the battle. The Windmill Memorial, which stood at the furthest edge of the village, was the scene of particularly bitter fighting. The Memorial simply says:

“This spot was the centre of the struggle in this area and was captured by Australian troops who fell more thickly on this ridge than on any other battlefield of the war”

Villers Bretonneux
Our Somme self-drive guide can be extended so as to include a separate half-day (ish…) guide to the Australian, Canadian and British battlefield of Villers Bretonneux 1918. This guide will be provided at no extra cost for those (mainly Australian) clients wishing to make a detour to this Somme battlefield.

Coureclette
This extension for Canadian visitors covers the major offensive which commenced 15 September 1916 at Coureclette (the Canadian assault on the German Regina Trench – and more…).
YOUR YPRES SELF-DRIVE GUIDE ITINERARY

The Menin Gate
The Menin Gate is located at the eastern edge of Ypres town centre and is included in the opening section of our Ypres guide under the introduction to the town, including best places to stand etc when attending the ceremony, which is held at 8.00 pm every evening (without exception).

Section A (Hellfire Corner)
Notorious intersection of roads and former railway where navigating the junction was very much a matter of life and death. Our ‘then and now’ photos and accompanying narrative will allow you to stand at this very spot to see how the busy roundabout of today looked back in 1916!

Section B (Hill 60)
Preserved area of one of the most violently contested areas of the Ypres battlefield, both above and below ground: Tunnelling companies, including many from Australia, lost hundreds of tunnellers in the underground battles as each side tried to burrow beneath each other’s defences. There is a memorial here to all those soldiers from Australia who lost their lives on and under this most heavily defended area of the Ypres battlefield (a memorial which also has bullet/shrapnel marks from another war to follow this ‘war to end all wars…’). The surface of the land still shows the shell holes and mine craters that speak volumes for the appalling battles that ravaged this ‘hill’. At the rear of the ‘hill’ one can discover one of the best German (and subsequently ‘modified’ to being British) concrete fortifications, as witnessed by the bunker’s shell-ravaged exterior. This is an area most large coach visitors rarely get to see due to a weight restriction on an adjacent bridge.

Section C (The Bluff)
Near to Hill 60 is an part of the battlefield very few people get to visit. The Bluff was a hotly disputed area of high ground adjacent to the Ypres-Comines canal. The British endeavoured to hold this high ground (the old spoil from when the canal was constructed) at a high cost. The remains of the numerous mines detonated here by both sides can still be seen today (if one knows where to look....)

Section D (Clapham Junction)
German third-line defences fought over during the Third battle of Ypres (and other occasions)

Section E (Hooge)
Another hotly contested areas of the front line where so many lives were lost in the continuing ebb and flow of attacks and counter attacks. At the spot close to where Hooge crate once defined this ‘hotly contested spot’, there now stands an excellent though small museum, including many artefacts from the battle (including a well preserved German bunker a short distance further up the Menin Road)

Section F (Sanctuary Wood and Hill 62)
Famous preserved battlefield and trenches open to visitors to the adjacent museum

Section G (Royal Engineer’s Memorial)
A most poignant memorial to just a few of the many servicemen who died undertaking mining operations on the Ypres battlefield (many of whom stand beneath your feet where you stand surveying the battlefield). Your self-drive guide will allow you to contrast and compare the farmland of today with the very same spot as so clearly shown when one studies the gripping reality of the battlefield as depicted in the trench maps of 1916

Section H (Passchendaele)
The final and most tragic phase of the Third battle of Ypres 1917 where soldiers from the UK, Australia, New Zealand and Canada suffered losses in such unimaginable numbers. A battlefield whose name, like the Somme and many other battlefields, still casts a shadow over the legacy of the Great War. This section includes Tyne Cot, Zonnebeke (and an option to visit the recently opened Passchendaele Museum).

Section I (Vancouver Corner)
The battlefield of April 1915 where the Germans first used gas and where there now stands the striking ‘Brooding Soldier’ Canadian Memorial to over 2000 of their servicemen who died here defending the eastern flank of the German advance.

Section J (Langemarck)
The largest German cemetery in the area and new visitor centre.

Section K (Yorkshire Trench and Dug-Out)
Following excavations back in the late nineties an area of the old Front Line dating back to 1915-1917 was excavated and made available for visitors to explore today.

Section L (Essex Farm)
The cemetery and striking remains of a First Aid station just behind the Front Line where the Canadian physician John McCrae penned his memorable poem ‘In Flanders Fields’. It is here where many believe the origins of the poppy can be traced, which today acts as an enduring symbol of remembrance for all wars.

➢ THE SERVICES OF A PERSONAL GUIDE (Optional at £380 per day)

Your Self-Drive Tour can easily be combined with a one or two day (or more...) personal conducted tour which will be undertaken by one of our experienced, independent English-speaking guides who now live on or close to the WW1 battlefields of France and Belgium. We can arrange for our guide to collect you at your hotel and take you on a tour of the Somme and/or Ypres battlefields (or indeed just about any WW1 Western Front battlefield!) using their vehicle. I'm sorry but our personal guide service is only possible for whole days and not half days.

This will be a truly personal service and as such you will not be joining a group comprising other persons. This option adds considerably to the total cost of a Self-Drive tour when compared with joining a fixed-itinerary ‘public’ tour, but is by far and away the very best way to see the battlefield, especially bearing in mind this may be your only occasion to make the visit you have in mind. A personal tour is also better suited for the quiet exploration and reflection of past events, without the possible distraction of others making up your group - and the need for the tour leader to stick to a fixed time schedule!

A personal conducted tour is particularly suited to those seeking to explore the legacy of a distant relative, as this more often than not requires a more focussed study of a specific part of a battlefield. The personal tour we will be pleased to arrange can easily focus on other areas of specific interest to you, such as battlefields where soldiers from any particular country or regiment fought and died (especially helpful for those seeking to explore battlefields where the British, Australians, New Zealander, Canadians, Irish etc saw action).
PAYMENT

Security of Payments
As a small tour operator we fully comply with the UK and EU Tour Package, Tour Travel etc Regulations 1992. These regulations make specific and quite strict provision for small companies such as ours. The regulations provide that all monies paid by clients must be held in a separate Trust Account which cannot be released to our company until the tour has been provided (all card payments are automatically routed direct to this Trust Account held at Barclays Bank, Wimborne, Dorset). We also operate as a fully registered Limited company and as such our accounts are open to inspection by any person (upon payment of a small fee to Companies House). We are also fully insured in accordance with these regulations (especially Tour Liability insurance).

Deposit
If we are more than 56 days away from the tour then a deposit of £80 per person or 20% of the total tour cost, whichever is the greater, is all I need for now to secure a booking. The balance will be due eight weeks ahead of departure, at which time I will forward all guide material, directions etc. You can of course pay in full now regardless, in which case I will have everything in the post to you within the next few days by first class mail.

If we are less than 56 days away from the tour then it will be necessary to pay in full, but subject to our cancellation/refund policy as detailed below:

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<th>Period before departure within which notice of cancellation is received by us</th>
<th>The cancellation charge which will apply (i.e the cost you will forfeit)</th>
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<tr>
<td>More than 56 days</td>
<td>tour deposit</td>
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<td>56 - 28 days</td>
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<td>27 - 8 days</td>
<td>70% of tour cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 days or less</td>
<td>100% of tour cost</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Debit or credit Card
Though we are fully registered and authorised to accept both debit and credit cards, we would be most grateful if payment could be made by debit card if at all possible please due to the high charges we incur with credit cards (though credit card option remains, especially for those not resident in the UK).

To ensure absolute 100% security we do not offer an online payment option, neither do we retain any card details on any storage retrieval system (such as our computers). We have been accepting credit cards for the past eleven years and during this time have had not a single case of fraud. Should you wish to pay be debit or credit card we therefore ask that you phone us (or for us to phone you) to pass details.

I hope I’ve covered everything here and in reply to your email but do please let me know if I can answer any queries you may have or be of any further help.

Very best wishes
James Power
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James Power is a member of
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