

## PROPOSED BATTLEFIELD TRIP TO FRANCE & BELGIUM 2015

### GENERAL

It has been proposed that we conduct a battlefield tour of various sites on the Western Front during 2015 as part of the Great War Commemorations. The tour would concentrate on the actions of the Dorsetshire Regiment but there would flexibility to include sites of personal pilgrimage, if practical.

### INDICATIVE PROGRAMME

Day one: Travel to the Eurotunnel,(178 miles) aiming for a 1300 crossing; Drive to Arras (69 miles) spend evening and overnight in Arras

Day two: visit Somme battlefields; Leipzig redoubt, 1 Dorset's action 1st July 1916; Thiepval Memorial and visitor Centre; Mouquet Farm, 5 Dorset's action 27 Sep 1916; Lochnagar Crater; preserved trenches at Newfoundland Memorial Park, Beaumont Hamel. Evening and overnight in Arras

Day three: drive to Ypres, (55 miles) visiting en route the Canadian memorial, preserved trenches and tunnels at Vimy Ridge; visit the Flanders Field Museum in the Cloth Hall, Ypres. Evening and overnight in Ypres.

Day four: visit Ypres Salient battlefields; Hill 60, 1 Dorset's action, 1 May 1915; Hill 62 Museum & trenches; Tyne Cott cemetery, Passchendaele; in the evening attend the Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate; overnight in Ypres

Day Five: drive to Calais,(58 miles) visiting the Toc H Talbot House rest centre and exhibition in Poperinghe en route; Eurotunnel crossing around 1800; arrive Bere Regis (178 miles) approx 2100

The visits will be conducted by Philip Ventham, an amateur military historian who has recently completed an MA in First World War Studies at Birmingham University and is a member of the Western Front Association and the Guild of Battlefield Guides. He has experience of conducting tours around the battlefields of France and Flanders and an interest in the actions of the Dorsetshire Regiment in the Great War.

### DATES

We are looking at a five day, four night trip avoiding weekends and school holidays to reduce overall costs. Accommodation in the battlefield areas is at a premium over the next five years of commemorations especially during school holidays. We would need to book accommodation shortly to guarantee success

We are looking at the following dates:

**Mon 8 June to Fri 12 June**

### TRANSPORT

We have met a problem in organising the transport for this planned trip to the battlefields in 2015. With the numbers who have shown some interest, currently around 12 'possibles', we were planning to hire a minibus. However, EU regulations now require the driver of a minibus (ie a vehicle with seating for 9-16 people not including the driver) to have a driving licence covering the D1 category for minibuses. For this licence to be legal in the EU, it has to have been obtained by passing the appropriate minibus driving test, not by virtue of holding a UK licence since before 1 January 1997 which grants an exemption to drive a minibus in the UK on an ordinary car license. None of the potential drivers can meet this new EU requirement for driving a minibus on the continent.

We suggest therefore that if anyone is interested in going on this trip, they make their own travel arrangements for the trip ( indicative costs for ferries and fuel are shown below) but that all other aspects of the tour are arranged centrally ie booking of accommodation, conduct of the visits to battlefields, cemeteries and memorials.

## ACCOMMODATION

We are looking at middle-range hotel accommodation in Arras and Ypres on a bed and breakfast basis, with lunch and evening meals being purchased locally. Both cities have a wide range of restaurants. The recommended accommodation, if available, is the Ibis Arras [www.ibis.com/Arras](http://www.ibis.com/Arras) and the Novotel Ypres .. [www.novotel.com/Ypres](http://www.novotel.com/Ypres) . Both provide double/twin rooms with an additional couch. Prices are quoted for double occupancy. If you want single occupancy, I'm afraid you will have to pay the double rate.

## PRICES

Indicative prices, based on the above dates, but at 2014 prices, are as follows:

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|---|------|
| Eurotunnel , per car inc passengers, return | £120 |
| Fuel, estimated 600miles,                   | £120 |
| Accommodation, B&B, double/twin room        |      |
| Arras £52/night/room x 2 nights             | £104 |
| Ypres £86/night/room x 2 nights             | £172 |
| Extras, museums, etc , say                  | £25  |

ie, for 2 people, sharing car and accommodation, approx £285/person. Obviously, sharing the travel expenses between 3 or 4 people will reduce the individual cost further to around £225 per person.

## EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

If you are at all interested in this trip, could you let Phil Ventham know as we need to make provisional bookings for accommodation as soon as possible.

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