

Australia's relationship with Belgium during the Great War has long been overshadowed by the Gallipoli campaign and the Battle of the Somme. Yet, the Australian connection to the relatively small European nation during 1914-18 was close and compelling. In addition to Australian military operations on Belgian soil, including Passchendaele (the bloodiest of all the Australians' engagements during the war), the sufferings of 'Poor Little Belgium' provoked moral outrage and promoted thousands of men to enlist for service abroad. Australians were also among the most generous donors to Belgian relief funds. Come the end of the conflict, thousands of Australian diggers spent months billeted around the Entre Sambre-et-Meuse region awaiting demobilisation. Australia and Belgium had a spiritual bond born of shared suffering that endured for decades.



Poppies, Propaganda and Passchendaele: Australia, Belgium and the Great War

On 23 July 2015 the State Library of New South Wales will host a symposium exploring Australia's complex and little-known relationship with Belgium during the Great War. In the presence of the Ambassador of Belgium to Australia, H.E Jean-Luc Bodson, leading scholars well versed in the history of the Great War including **Professor Laurence Van Ypersele** (Catholic University of Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium), **Professor Peter Stanley** (UNSW Canberra) **Professor Stephen Garton** (University of Sydney) and **Professor Tom Frame** (UNSW Canberra) will deliver presentations on the conduct of the war in Belgium, the interpretation of the war in Australia and memories of the war in both countries.

Event Details

Date / Time Thursday 23 July, 2015 / 9:45am - 4:00pm

Venue: Metcalfe Auditorium, State Library of New South Wales, Macquarie Street, Sydney.

Registration: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/poppies-propaganda-and-passchendaele-australia-belgium-and-the-first-world-war-tickets-8098517885>

This is a free event, with morning and afternoon tea provided. Registration is necessary before Wednesday 22 July 2015.

