



Order of Service

Commemoration of the Battle of Fromelles and
Headstone Rededication Ceremony for Australian
soldiers killed during the Battle on 19-20 July 1916

19 July 2018

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 Australian and British 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 dead of Pheasant Wood gave their lives.

During the period of 2010 to 2014 a Joint Australian and British Identification Board identified one hundred and forty four (144) Australian soldiers by name. From 2015 to 2017 the Australian Army's Fromelles Identification Board identified a further six (6) Australian soldiers by name.

On 18 March 2018 the Fromelles Identification Board identified another nine (9) Australian soldiers who we honour here today, leaving ninety one (91) soldiers still to be identified.

Order of Service

Arrival of the Official Party

Arrival of the Flag Bearers and Official Party

Welcome

Master of Ceremonies

Colonel Scott Clingan – Australian Defence Attaché - Commemorations

Ms Jennifer Stephenson – First Secretary, Department of Veterans' Affairs

Mayor of Fromelles – Mr Jean-Gabriel Masson

Opening Prayer

Father Patrick Irwin

We are here to worship Almighty God, whose purposes are good; whose power sustains the world he has made; who loves us, though we have failed in his service; who gave Jesus Christ for the life of the world; who by his Holy Spirit leads us in his way.

As we give thanks for his great works, we remember those who have lived and died in his service and in the service of others; we pray for all who suffer through war and are in need; we ask for his help and blessing that we may do his will, and that the whole world may acknowledge him as Lord and King.

Lord, in your mercy

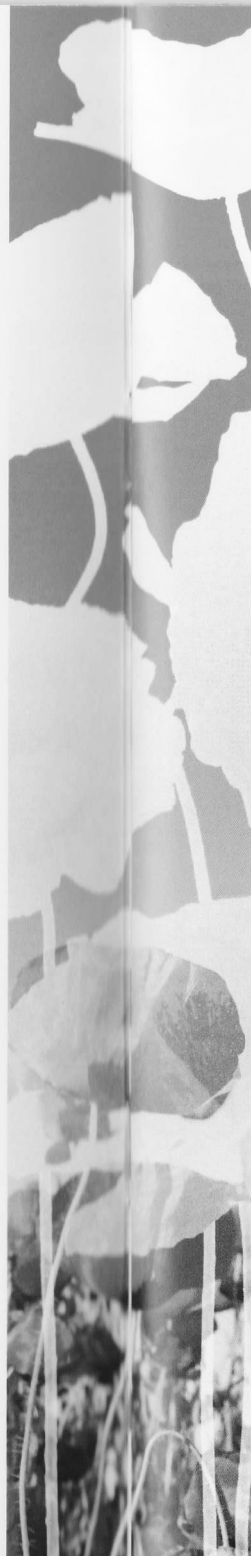
All: Hear our prayer

French Commemorative Address

Senior Representative of the French Government

Australian Commemorative Address

Senior Representative of the Australian Government



Official Wreath Laying

Headstone Rededication

- Captain Kenneth Malcolm MORTIMER, 29th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, Killed in action 20 July 1916.
- 191 Private Henry BELL, 29th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, Killed in action 19 July 1916.
- 1218 Private William Edwin BOYCE, 32nd Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, Killed in action 20 July 1916.
- 889 Private Henry GARDNER, 30th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, Killed in action 20 July 1916.
- 1011 Private Alexander McCULLOCH, 32nd Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, Killed in action 19 July 1916.
- 314 Private Stanley Richard O'DONNELL, 29th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, Killed in action 19 July 1916.
- 3983 Private James Robert SMTH, 31st Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, Killed in action 20 July 1916.
- 2825 Private Alfred THOMPSON, 55th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, Killed in action 20 July 1916.
- 795 Private Claude YEO, 30th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, Killed in action 20 July 1916.

Ode of Remembrance

In French and English

Ils ne vieilliront pas, contrairement à nous qui aurons cette chance,
Ils ne seront pas épuisés par l'âge, ni condamnés par les années,
A la tombée de la nuit et au petit matin,
Nous nous souviendrons d'eux

Réponse: Nous nous souviendrons d'eux

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

A Minute's Silence

Rouse

National Anthems

The National Anthems of France, Germany, the United Kingdom and Australia will now be played.

Final Blessing

Father Patrick Irwin

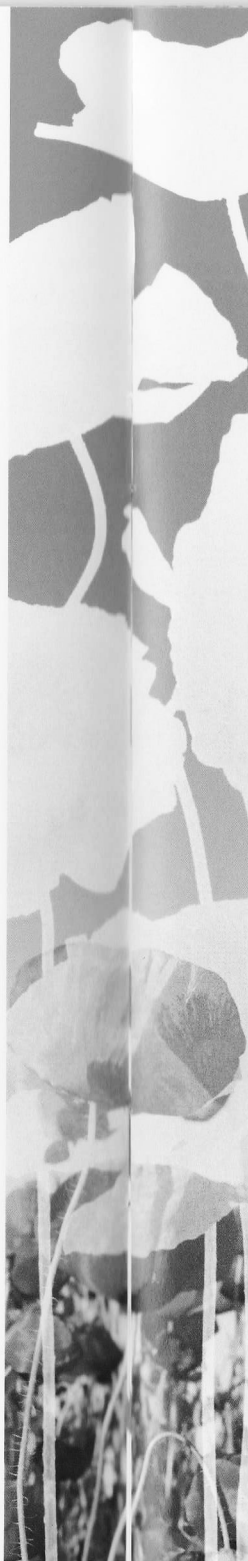
God grant to the living, grace; to the departed, rest; to the Church, the Queen, the Commonwealth, and all mankind, peace and concord; and to us and all his servants, life everlasting. And the blessing of God almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, come down upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Farewell and Conclusion

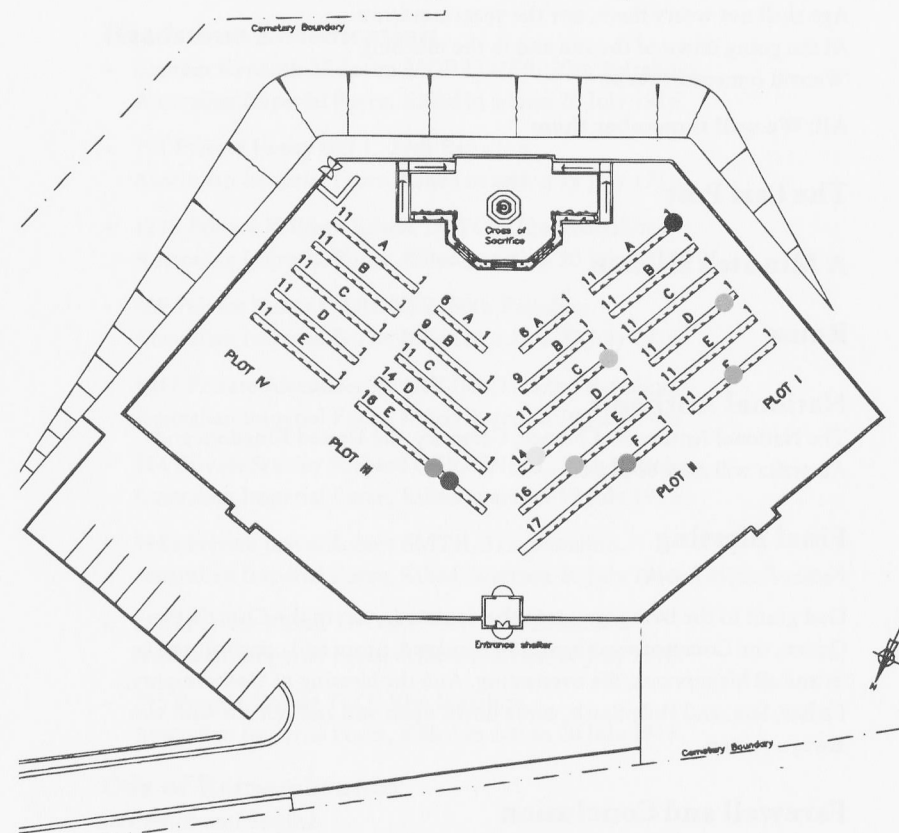
Flag Bearers Depart

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 Australian and British soldier's graves in the cemetery.



Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery



Location of the Identified Soldier

- Captain Kenneth Malcolm MORTIMER, Plot 3. Row E. Grave 5.
- 191 Private Henry BELL, Plot 1. Row A. Grave 1.
- 1218 Private William Edwin BOYCE, Plot 2. Row E. Grave 10.
- 889 Private Henry GARDNER, Plot 2. Row F. Grave 5.
- 1011 Private Alexander McCULLOCH, Plot 1. Row F. Grave 6.
- 314 Private Stanley Richard O'DONNELL, Plot 2. Row D. Grave 13.
- 3983 Private James Robert SMTH, Plot 3. Row E. Grave 4.
- 2825 Private Alfred THOMPSON, Plot 1. Row D. Grave 2.
- 795 Private Claude YEO, Plot 2. Row C. Grave 1.

On this day 102 years ago, Australia suffered its worst ever day in battle. Never before, or since, did so many courageous Australians suffer death or injury in one day. Standing here on this peaceful summer evening, it's hard to imagine the horror of 102 years ago. The fields that are now silent and peaceful, rang out with artillery shells, the cries of men and the clash weapons. Destruction and horror was all around us.

We come together today, to show that we have not forgotten what occurred 102 years ago. While we pause to remember all of the men that fought here at Fromelles, today, we especially remember 9 of the Australians who fell in this battle. Men such as Harry Bell.

Private Henry Bell enlisted in the First Australian Imperial Force on 21 July 1915 and was allocated to the 29th Infantry Battalion. Known as 'Harry' he was a 39 years old Insurance broker from Bendigo in Victoria who was married to Dorothy. Harry arrived in France at Marseilles on 23 June 1916 and less than a month later took part in the Battle of Fromelles.

After the Battle Harry was reported as Missing in Action. It is painful to imagine the agonizing months that Dorothy and other family members went through clinging to the hope that Harry was alive, and perhaps a prisoner of war. It is hard for us to imagine the anxiety and suffering they endured waiting for news, any news of his whereabouts.

It wasn't until December of 1916, five months later, that Dorothy was informed by a Red Cross Commissioner that Harry had died in action and his name had appeared on a German death list.

What a terrible blow it would have been when his death was confirmed and even worse, that the location of his remains was unknown.

Many families in this situation blocked out their suffering and never again mentioned the name of the lost soldier, but not Private Bell's family. One of Private Bell's nieces recalls that as a child Harry's sisters used to make her stop every morning and salute a picture of Harry in uniform that was proudly displayed on their wall. They never forgot their Harry and remembered him proudly. But they longed to know where he lay, his final burial place in France.

Sometimes we may question why we should continue to remember and attend commemorative ceremonies. Over 100 years after these events, what is the point?

We can say to ourselves, we won't forget. We don't need a ceremony to remember what happened. The events of the First World War were so momentous, the memory of the men who took part in it and their sacrifice cannot easily be forgotten.

But it is so easy to get distracted.

Life goes on. We are all caught up on our daily lives and we are distracted by the here and now.

We can say we will remember, but making the effort to attend this annual ceremony and gathering as a community on this important anniversary is a way of allowing ourselves the time to properly reflect. Of allowing ourselves to stop and think about the past and the meaning of these events.

In doing this, we remind ourselves, even if it is for just this one hour a year, on this anniversary day, of the deeds and sacrifice of the many young men who fought here. We remind ourselves of what can be achieved when men believe in ideals and give up so much of themselves to achieve freedom and peace. We remind ourselves of what can be achieved through working together as a nation and, as an international coalition.

These lessons are everlasting. They are timeless reminders of all that is good in the world and also of the fragility of peace. They reinvigorate our efforts towards peace.

Your presence here today, is therefore so important. Your presence affirms your commitment to the ideals and hopes of a generation and your commitment to never forgetting what they achieved.

This is the point of commemoration. To remember the lessons of the past and to not repeat the mistakes.

Private Henry 'Harry' Bell is one of the nine soldiers that are being honoured during the Service today. He becomes one of the 159 soldiers out of the 250 soldiers that lie in this cemetery that now have their identities back and their final resting places known. Harry's family always remembered him and now they know where he lies. From today nine new families now know the honoured and remembered burial place of their loved ones.

I wish to thank you for your presence here today, your commitment to remembrance and I look forward to seeing you here again next year.

Le discours de S.E Brendan Berne, Ambassadeur de l'Australie en France

Il y a de cela 102 ans, ce même jour, l'Australie vivait, dans la souffrance, le pire jour de son histoire au combat. Jamais auparavant, ou bien même depuis, un si grand nombre d'Australiens courageux n'a affronté la mort ou n'a été blessé en une seule journée. En nous tenant ici, en ce paisible soir estival, il est difficile d'imaginer l'horreur de 102 ans auparavant. Les champs, maintenant silencieux et tranquilles, résonnaient des obus de l'artillerie, du cri des hommes et du choc des armes. La destruction et l'horreur nous encerclaient.

Nous nous réunissons aujourd'hui pour montrer que nous n'avons pas oublié ce qui s'est passé 102 ans auparavant. Alors que nous prenons le temps de nous rappeler tous ces hommes qui se sont battus ici à Fromelles, aujourd'hui, nous nous rappelons en particulier 9 Australiens qui sont tombés dans cette bataille ; des hommes tels que Harry Bell.

Le soldat Henry Bell s'enrôla dans la Première Force australienne impériale le 21 juillet 1915 et fut affecté au 29^{ème} bataillon d'infanterie. Connu sous le nom de « Harry », il avait 39 ans, était assureur à Bendigo, Victoria et était marié à Dorothy. Harry arriva en France à Marseille le 23 juin 1916 et moins d'un mois plus tard, il prit part à la bataille de Fromelles.

Après la bataille, Harry fut porté disparu. Il est douloureux d'imaginer les mois de souffrance que vécurent Dorothy et les autres membres de sa famille s'attachant au maigre espoir qu'Harry était vivant ou, peut-être, fait prisonnier de guerre. Il est dur pour nous d'imaginer l'anxiété et la souffrance endurées dans l'attente de nouvelles, n'importe quelles nouvelles de sa situation.