

## Passchendaele

Haig's ambitious plan for the Flanders Offensive was to secure the Passchendaele Ridge push through to Roulers and break through the German lines to capture the ports of Ostend and Zeebrugge where German submarines and destroyers were operating from. The initial attacks were moderately successful but German counter attacks limited gains to 2 miles. The worst weather for 30 years was coincident with the attacks and along with the intense artillery barrages which smashed the drainage system turned the battlefield into a quagmire producing a thick mud that clogged up weapons and immobilised tanks. It became so deep that men and horses drowned in it and it hindered resupply.

There were a total of eight official battles culminating in the two battles at Passchendaele. Casualties during these battles have been argued over ever since as both sides calculated them differently. Richard Holmes the well known military historian estimated that the casualties were about 260,000 to each side. The Menin Gate in Ypres commemorates the missing and records 54,896 names of those Commonwealth soldiers who have no known grave, however, New Zealanders are not recorded there but are commemorated at Tyne Cot Cemetery which is the largest Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery and has 11,965 graves.

Passchendaele has passed into history as a vivid symbol of the mud, madness and the senseless slaughter of the First World War and to this day remains a controversial campaign.

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# COMMEMORATION OF 3<sup>rd</sup> BATTLE OF YPRES PASSCHENDAELE

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SUNDAY

30 JULY

2017

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10.45 at the War Memorial

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### 3<sup>rd</sup> BATTLE OF YPRES KNOWN AS PASSCHENDAELE

We are here today to commemorate the centenary of the Third Battle of Ypres more commonly known as Passchendaele. The campaign commenced on the 31<sup>st</sup> July 1917 and finished on the 10<sup>th</sup> November 1917 with the capture by the Canadians of the village of Passchendaele.

The battle had several phases and men from Marlow were involved throughout. The greatest loss of life was on the 22<sup>nd</sup> August when the Bucks Battalion Ox and Bucks Light Infantry along with the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Ox and Bucks Light Infantry supported by 8 Platoons from the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment attacked an area to the South East of St Julien in Belgium and lost 8 men. The attack was a success in that ground was captured but at a high price. Further actions took place right up to 10<sup>th</sup> November and the final cost to Marlow of this Battle was 36 fallen and the consequent affect to Marlow families. Those that fell were:

31 Jul 1917	Private H Bowles	31 Jul 1917	Rifleman AG Smith
4 Aug 1917	Private W J Loaring	9 Aug 1917	Rifleman G Thorne
10 Aug 1917	Sergeant W Lewis	10 Aug 1917	Pioneer G Verney
14 Aug 1917	Rifleman G E Dean	14 Aug 1917	Private H Clarke
16 Aug 1917	Sergeant E H W Clark	16 Aug 1917	Private J Thorne
19 Aug 1917	Corporal H T Collins	19 Aug 1917	Private J G W West
21 Aug 1917	Corporal W Higgs	22 Aug 1917	Captain H R Foster
22 Aug 1917	Lance Corporal A W Crew	22 Aug 1917	Private Burnham
22 Aug 1917	Private R W Crew	22 Aug 1917	Private W J Easden
22 Aug 1917	Private E Rackstraw	26 Aug 1917	Private N Beldon
2 Sep 1917	Private H Stevens	20 Sep 1917	Private H Bowles
20 Sep 1917	Private E Hawkins	20 Sep 1917	Private J S Lloyd
20 Sep 1917	Rifleman J P Shipton	23 Sep 1917	Driver F J Goodenough
25 Sep 1917	Private F E Rumsby	30 Sep 1917	Private R Brown
3 Oct 1917	Private W E Napper	6 Oct 1917	Corporal C W Dalton
16 Oct 1917	Captain G P S Reid <b>MC</b>	17 Oct 1917	Private R S Keates
30 Oct 1917	Private A Blinco	31 Oct 1917	Lieutenant R J Roberts
3 Nov 1917	Gunner G W Latham	6 Nov 1917	Bombadier R H Rose

#### Exhortation

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

Response **All**    *We will remember them*

#### Last post

#### One minute silence

#### Reveille

#### Wreath to be laid

#### Town Mayor

#### The Machine Gun

by Lt J C Hobson Machine Gun Corps

Killed 31 July 1917

at Canopus Trenches South West of St Julien

Come ye who may, foeman in air, or Earth!  
For my machine-gun sings for you alone,  
And in his lay to silvery death gives birth.  
Now lifts now lowers he his deadly tone.  
Here do I lie, hidden by grass and flowers,  
With my machine-gun, ghost of modern war.  
The sun floats high, the moon through deep blue hours,  
I watch with my machine-gun at Death's grim door

#### Folk Songs