

# Press release: Descendants invited to Battle of Amiens centenary commemoration

600 tickets are available for descendants to attend an event on 8 August at Amiens Cathedral, France. The event, held in partnership with the Australian, Canadian, French and U.S. governments, will tell the story of the Battle of Amiens which heralded the Hundred Days Offensive and the path to the Armistice in November 1918.

Matt Hancock, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, said:

The Battle of Amiens marked a turning point in the First World War and this anniversary gives us a chance to reflect on how the war in Europe moved from entrenched conflict to the signing of the Armistice in 1918.

We have a duty to tell the stories of those who lived and fought in the First World War and to keep their memories alive. I encourage all those with a connection to the Battle of Amiens or the war on the Western Front during the summer of 1918 to apply for tickets to the commemorations this summer.

Dan Snow, Historian and Broadcaster said:

Amiens might not be the most famous battle of the First World War, but it might be the most important. In the summer of 1918 at Amiens British, French, Commonwealth and American troops decisively defeated the mighty German Army by using a combination of new tactics and weapons that finally broke the stalemate of the trenches. This was the beginning of the end of the First World War and it the beginning of modern warfare. It is one of the most remarkable battles in British history, on the centenary we have a unique chance to commemorate it and place it where it belongs, at the heart of our national story.

Glyn Prysor, CWGC Chief Historian said:

8 August 1918 was among the most dramatic days of the First World War. The Battle of Amiens was a remarkable Allied success and a horrific ordeal for German soldiers. For the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, this anniversary is an opportunity to reflect on

the cost of victory. Our cemeteries and memorials eloquently reflect the combined efforts of people from across the world who served: whether at the sharp end of the fighting or working behind the lines to support a campaign which would eventually lead to the Armistice.

Described by German General, Erich Ludendorff as the black day of the German Army, Amiens started 8 August 1918 and lasted three days. It marked the beginning of the Hundred Days offensive that eventually won the war. The Allied forces, made up of British, Australian, Canadian, French and U.S. soldiers, advanced over seven miles on the first day of the battle, one of the greatest advances of the war.

Less known than the Battle of Passchendaele or the Battle of the Somme, Amiens marked a distinct change compared to the huge loss of life and devastation of previous battles. This is reflected in the stories of Allied troops who were there, which can be found on Lives of the First World War.

Captain Edwin Francis Trundle of the Australian Imperial Force, one of three brothers who fought and survived the war, wrote to his wife Louisa in Australia:

During the last few days we have advanced over twelve miles ... up to the present everything has gone excellently and everyone is in high spirits... I followed the attacking infantry with a team of thirty-six pack mules carrying ammunition forward ... Ever since then we have kept continually moving forward until now we are over twelve miles ahead of our starting position.

The government's four year programme of centenary events will culminate on 11 November 2018 with a series of events across the UK to mark the centenary of the Armistice. The National Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph will follow traditional lines to respect its wider purpose in remembering the fallen of all conflicts. The traditional veterans' parade will be followed by a civilian procession made up of 10,000 members of the public who wish to show their thanks to a generation who gave so much for the freedoms we enjoy today.

During the day, church and other bells will ring out as they did in 1918 to mark the end of the war. The government is supporting the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers to recruit 1,400 bell ringers – the number that were lost during the war – to create a national peal that will echo the impromptu outpouring of relief and joy that took place 100 years ago.

The commemorations will conclude with a national service of thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey in London. Similar services will also take place in Glasgow, Cardiff and Belfast. The services will reflect on the four years of war and will give thanks for the soldiers who returned and remember those who did not.

Those with an emotional connection to the Battle of Amiens or the war on the Western Front during the summer of 1918 can:

- Apply for tickets to attend the ceremony inside Amiens Cathedral on 8 August
- Research and remember their ancestors who fought in the First World War on Imperial War Museums' [Lives of the First World War](#)

## **ENDS**

To apply for tickets to the ballot visit [www.gov.uk/guidance/amiens100](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/amiens100)

The ballot closes at 12 noon on 9 April 2018.