

Turkey, France and Belgium

The Australian Battlefields of WWI

Departs
1st September, 2021

Blue Dot Travel

Go somewhere different





\$9,490 pp

Twin-share, economy class flights. Single supp \$1,280

THE AUSTRALIAN BATTLEFIELDS OF WWI

Join Major General Paul Irving (retired) as we walk in our Anzacs' footsteps on Australia's major WWI battlefields in Turkey, France and Belgium.

Blue Dot Travel is proud to present a once-in-a-lifetime tour, taking in Gallipoli and the iconic battlefields of The Western Front in France and Belgium. It also features liberal sightseeing in Istanbul and historical townships along the way. Joining the tour as expert commentator is Major General Paul Irving (retired). Paul has a deep interest in military history having commanded both the 8th Brigade (which fought in the Battle of Fromelles) and the 2nd Division that fought at Gallipoli and the Western Front. He has visited the battlefield sites at Gallipoli and the Western Front on a number of occasions.

Paul will help you explore the rich history of the Australian Digger's involvement in the Great War or "the war to end all wars", where the Anzac legend was born. With him, you will visit the places which helped form our nation's heritage, including the major sites on the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey and at Fromelles in France, where the Australians suffered what is still today, the darkest day in our military history. We'll also visit Peronne, Hamel, Pozieres and Mont St Quentin - considered by many - as Australia's greatest battle victory.

We have carefully blended the itinerary to give a "snap-shot" of Australia's military action in Gallipoli and the Western Front, focusing on our major WWI battles, while ensuring there is ample time to enjoy the incomparable delights of Istanbul and many other places of interest!





Day 1, Wednesday Sep 1
TRANSIT

Flight to Istanbul from Australia – schedule to be advised.

Day 2, Thursday Sep 2
ISTANBUL

Arrive in Istanbul in the morning. We will be met at the airport and taken to our hotel. Today is relaxed given the long flight. The day consists of a trip up the famous Bosphorus by ferry and a visit to Andaolukvai village, near the Black Sea. In the evening, we will enjoy a welcome dinner where you can meet everyone and discuss the following days in detail. *B/D*

Day 3, Friday Sep 3
ISTANBUL

Discover Istanbul – After breakfast we are taken to many of the “must see” places, which Istanbul has to offer. These include some of the Byzantine remains - Chora Church, St Sophia, The Tekfur Palace, parts of the Old City, and the Underground Cistern. You’ll also spend time at The Grand Bazaar to shop for bargains! Lunch will be provided on the way. Dinner is at a traditional Turkish restaurant. *B/L/D*

Day 4, Saturday Sep 4
ISTANBUL

Discover Istanbul. We’ll set off after breakfast for famous sites from the Ottoman Empire including the spectacular Topkapi Palace, Suleymaniye Mosque and Dolmabahce Palace. Prior to lunch we’ll visit a local family-owned sweet shop for the best baklava in town! After lunch we will explore the wonderful spice markets and surroundings. Time permitting, we will also visit the Blue Mosque before heading back to the hotel. *B/L/D*

Day 5, Sunday Sep 5
ISTANBUL - GALLIPOLI PENINSULA

After breakfast, we’ll meet at the hotel foyer for our group transfer to the Gallipoli Peninsula by air-conditioned mini-bus. Lunch is provided along the way. After a short visit to Eceabat and other places of interest on the European side of the country, we take the ferry across the Dardanelles to the lovely city of Canakkale positioned on the Asian side. On arrival at the hotel we will enjoy welcome drinks on the balcony overlooking the Dardanelles, prior to a sumptuous group dinner at a local restaurant. *B/L/D*





Day 6, Monday Sep 6 GALLIPOLI PENINSULA

After an early breakfast, today we will explore where the Australians spent their 8 month campaign. We'll visit Anzac Cove where the landings took place and the iconic battlefields – Lone Pine and the nearby trenches, the Nek, Shrapnel Gulley, Chunuk Bair and the famous associated memorials. We'll also visit the very moving Turkish memorial. Lunch today is included. We'll dine at Cannakale on our return. *B/L/D*



Day 7, Tuesday Sep 7 TROY AND ASSOS

Today is a spectacular adventure as we head south and



explore the fabled city of Troy – the centre of the Trojan Wars. Then on to Assos where we'll have an unforgettable sea-side lunch. After lunch we'll visit the surrounding areas; the Roman Amphitheatre, the

Temple of Athena, and the Acropolis before heading back to Cannakale for dinner. *B/L/D*

Day 8, Wednesday Sep 8 GALLIPOLI PENINSULA – ISTANBUL – PARIS

After breakfast and a leisurely hour or so in Cannakale, we coach back to Istanbul. Lunch is at the quaint city of Tekirdag before heading to the airport where we fly to Paris Charles de Gaulle. Arriving in Paris in the evening, we transfer to our hotel near the airport before the morning's trip to the Somme battlefields. *B/L/D*

Day 9, Thursday Sep 9 PARIS – THE SOMME REGION

We'll set off after breakfast for a full day. First stop is Villers Bretonneux - a small village liberated by the Australians in 1918. We'll visit the Australian Memorial, Victoria School and its ANZAC museum – the school was named in honour of the Victorian school children who raised money for its rebuilding after the war. On then to the nearby National Australian Memorial, site of the Western Front's Anzac Day Dawn Service. After this, we head to the Corbie battlefield and on to Hamel - where Australia's Sir John Monash conducted his famous "near perfect battle" (which he planned would take 90 minutes, but in fact took 93 minutes), the Sir John Monash Centre and possibly the Adelaide Cemetery (time permitting). Prior to dinner on the Canal in Amiens we check in to the hotel where we'll spend the next two nights. *B/D*

Day 10, Friday Sep 10 THE SOMME REGION

Today is a very full but rewarding day. After breakfast we head to the township of Peronne to see the Historical de la Grande Guerre – the Great War Museum. This is a must-visit. Then on to Mont St Quentin to visit the Australian 2nd Division memorial and see the remarkable battlefield landscape with craters still left

from the war. We visit Pozieres and the Australian First Division's memorial, the Mouquet Farm Memorial – site of the Old Windmill - before heading off to visit the inspirational Thiepval memorial, cemetery and museum. After this we next visit the Slouch Hat Memorial and the Peter Corlett bronze statue at Bullecourt, which stands on part of what was the Hindenburg line. Time permitting, we head through Albert on the way home, before having dinner back in Amiens. *B/D*

Day 11, Saturday Sep 11 THE SOMME – FLANDERS REGION

After breakfast, we'll check out of the hotel and set off northwards toward Fromelles. First stop is a visit to the Pheasant Wood Cemetery, where the recently exhumed missing diggers of Fromelles now rest. We'll visit the wonderful Fromelles Museum and then walk the battlefields, unchanged since the battle of 19/20th July 1916. Then, on to VC corner to see the famous Cobbers Memorial and pay our tribute to the 5,533 Australians who were lost in the battle of Fromelles. Time permitting, we'll have a brief afternoon tea stop in the delightful old town square of Lille. We overnight in Ypres, where we stay for two nights. *B/D*



Day 12, Sunday Sep 12 YPRES & THE FLANDERS REGION

Today we visit the Belgian battlefields with Australian significance. We drive to the Polygon Wood cemetery, the Australian 5th Division Memorial, the Buttes British cemetery and a walk through the woods to see the German pillboxes. Lunch is nearby before heading to Hill 60 (featured in the Australian movie) where the Australian Tunnelling Company



blew up a German stronghold. After this we head to the Tyne Cot Exhibition and Cemetery, the largest Commonwealth cemetery on The Western Front. In the afternoon we head back to Ypres where we'll explore Flanders Museum in the Cloth Hall and the market square prior to dinner in town. Then we will visit the Menin Gate for the moving 8pm last post ceremony, which the Last Post Association has commemorated every night since 2 July 1928. *B/D*

Day 13, Monday Sep 13 FLANDERS – PARIS

After breakfast we head back to Paris in air-conditioned comfort. Our trip ends around mid afternoon at arrival in Paris at Charles de Gaulle Airport. From here you'll depart for home or set off on your own extension itinerary. *B*

Day 14, Tuesday Sep 14 In transit. *Meals in flight*

Day 15, Wednesday Sep 15 Arrive home.



Icon indicates a day where there is **moderate physical exertion**. A basic level of fitness is required: eg. A trek over 'mostly flat' terrain or climbing several flights of steps without the support of handrails or elevators.



Icon indicates a day where there is a **particularly active section**. A good level of fitness is required: eg. A longer trek over non-groomed, uneven terrain, or ascending to reach a panorama. May also include exposure to higher altitude. **An alternate activity may be offered if you choose to sit out an active section.** Please call - we are happy to discuss each tour in more detail.