

1. Why are there war graves and memorials close to Messines?

Messines (now Mesen) was considered a strong strategic position, not only from its height above the plain below, but from the extensive system of cellars under the village.

The village was taken from the 1st Cavalry Division by the German 26th Division on 31 October-1 November 1914. An attack by French troops on 6-7 November was unsuccessful and it was not until the Battle of Messines on 7 June 1917 that it was retaken by the New Zealand Division. On 10-11 April 1918, the village fell into German hands once more after a stubborn defence by the South African Brigade but was retaken for the last time on 28-29 September 1918.

2. Where are the war graves and memorials in this area?

There are CWGC war graves and memorials at more than 20 locations in the area around Messines. There are many more cemeteries and memorials in the wider area. Study the map below to see where they are.

3. Discover where these people came from

Use the flags to discover where some of those who are buried and remembered near Messines came from.

Wytschaete Military Cemetery

1,016 war graves

From: Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, United Kingdom



Messines Ridge

New Zealand Memorial

828 names

From: Australia, Denmark, Ireland, Norway, New Zealand, Tonga, United Kingdom, Yugoslavia



Messines Ridge British Cemetery

1,536 war graves

From: Australia, Canada, Finland, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, United Kingdom



Ploegsteert Memorial

11,392 names

From: Argentina, Bermuda, Brazil, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, United Kingdom, USA



Derry House Cemetery No.2

166 war graves

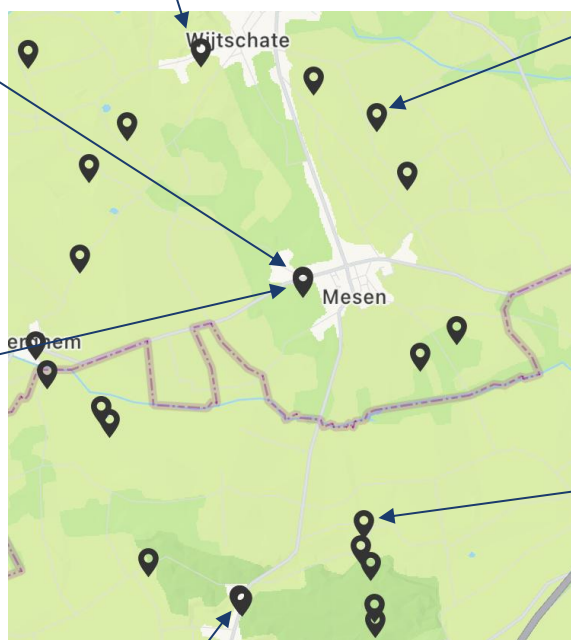
From: Australia, Ireland, United Kingdom



Prowse Point Military Cemetery

243 war graves

From: Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Ireland, New Zealand, United Kingdom



4. Discover more about the service of those buried at Messines Ridge British Cemetery

4.1 Each headstone in the cemetery tells a different story.

As you explore the cemetery see what you can learn from the headstones. See if you can find the following;

1. Who is the **youngest** soldier you can find?
2. Who is the **oldest** soldier you can find?
3. How many **different countries** did they come from, based on the information you can discover on the headstones?

4.3 As you explore the cemetery, look at the different badges on the headstones. These will give you a clue as to the role the soldier had in the army and maybe where they came from. As you find each badge, write down the name of the soldier who served with that unit in the box next to the badge.



4.2 There is just one headstone which has the badge of the Tank Corps– who was the soldier?



More than 100,000 troops, including native Māori's left New Zealand for service overseas in Samoa, Gallipoli, the Middle East, Belgium and France.



Cavalry units played an important role in 1914 and again in 1918, when the war was one of movement.



More than 320,000 Australian troops fought in Egypt, Gallipoli, in the Middle East and on the Western Front.



More than 650,000 people served in the Canadian forces in the First World War. They fought in the Middle East, in Greece and on the Western Front.



Soldiers from South Africa fought in many campaigns in East and South West Africa and on the Western Front.



The Army Cyclist Corps was formed in 1915. Only when the trench deadlock was broken in 1918 did the cyclists prove useful as mobile infantry.

Discover more at cwgc.org/stories