

Commemorative venues

's Graventafel

A New Zealand Memorial is located at 's Graventafel, marking the victory in the Battle of Broodseinde on October 4 1917. The wording on the white stone obelisk says in three languages: "In honour of the men of the New Zealand Division. The Battle of Broodseinde, 4th of October 1917. This monument marks the site of 's Graventafel, which on 4th October, 1917, was captured by the New Zealand as part of a general advance towards Passchendaele."

Tyne Cot Cemetery

Occupying part of the strategic high ground from which the Germans looked down across the Allied forces and itself an historic site from the Battle of Passchendaele, Tyne Cot is the largest Commonwealth War Cemetery in the world. It is also New Zealand's largest cemetery beyond our shores.

Within its flint walls are the graves of almost 12,000 casualties from World War One, 8,300 of them unidentified. The entire rear of the cemetery is occupied by a curved Memorial, commemorating a further 35,000 soldiers who have no known graves. In total the cemetery covers an area of 34,941 square metres.

There are 520 graves of New Zealanders, 322 unidentified. The New Zealand Apse in the Memorial commemorates a further 1,176 New Zealanders who have no known grave. In addition, there is another New Zealand Memorial to the Missing in the immediate vicinity - at Buttes, Polygon Wood, close to Zonnebeke. The third is at Messines.

The British names on the Tyne Cot Memorial are inscribed as a direct extension of the Menin Gate which records the names of the missing up to August 14, 1917. The New Zealand names on the Tyne Cot Memorial and other New Zealand Memorials to the Missing are the result of a New Zealand Government decision at the time to honour the country's dead close to the point where they fell. While Messines is the New Zealand focus on Anzac Day in Belgium, Tyne Cot is the Australian focus. The Menin Gate is the combined Anzac focus.

The name

Although the exact reason for its name is sometimes disputed, it seems to be that "Tyne Cot" was the name given by British soldiers from Tyneside to a cottage on the Passchendaele-Broodseinde road which was surrounded by German pillboxes. On Allied maps it was first written as "Tyne Cott." and later abbreviated further to Tyne Cot.

The largest of these pillboxes was captured by the 3rd Australian Division on October 4, 1917, in the Battle of Broodseinde, the advance on

Passchendaele. At the suggestion of King George V, who visited the cemetery in 1922, the Cross of Sacrifice was placed on the original large pillbox. There are three other remaining pillboxes within the grounds of the cemetery.

The large pillbox was used as an advanced (wound) dressing station and from shortly after its capture until April the following year, when re-taken by the Germans, the vicinity became a cemetery. On September 18, 1918, it was recaptured together with the village of Passchendaele by the Belgian Army.

Following the Armistice a number of graves from the surrounding area were concentrated at Tyne Cot. The original graves are those closest to the Cross of Sacrifice.

Tyne Cot has been a place of pilgrimage since the 1920s and today is visited by quarter of a million people a year, including considerable numbers of school pupils from the UK and other countries.

Access from the Zonnebeke-Passchendaele Road via two narrow lanes, limited parking and a lack of any sort of facilities led to a local initiative to construct a Visitor Centre and coach park in 2006. Now completed and mostly out of sight behind the Memorial Wall, the centre was officially opened by Her Majesty The Queen during the Passchendaele and Menin Gate Commemorations on Thursday, July 12, this year.