Anzac Day - France 2017
What to expect and how to prepare

Anzac Day Dawn Service – Australian National Memorial, Villers-Bretonneux, France

The Australian National Memorial, Villers-Bretonneux is outside the village of Villers-Bretonneux and roughly half-way between the town of Villers-Bretonneux and the towns of Corbie & Fouilloy.

The official Anzac Day Dawn Service will commence at 5.30 am on Tuesday 25 April 2017 and is broadcast live to Australia. The site will open at 1.00 am (due to the increased security, this time may change. Please keep checking for updates). A commemorative program to explore the Australian experience of the First World War will commence at 1.30 am. All visitors should be seated by 5.00 am.

Entrance to the site is via the promenade – attendees will be required to walk 300 metres uphill through the cemetery to the memorial site. The surface is grass and may be slippery if damp. Safety lighting will be installed at the entrance and through the cemetery, but visitors may wish to bring a torch to assist with visibility.

Some temporary seating will be installed at the site to cater for around 6,500 people, there will be standing room also. Reserved seating is only available for official delegates and for visitors with limited mobility – see below. If seating is full, there will be standing room on the grassed areas to the rear of the seats.

Traffic arrangements at the Australian National Memorial 24 – 25 April 2017

Traffic management is the responsibility of, and is managed by, French Authorities.

Local Authorities advise that the road between Villers-Bretonneux and Corbie & Fouilloy will be closed between 2.00 pm on 24 April and 2.00 pm on 25 April 2017.

Transport services

Visitors who make their own way from the Australian National Memorial to the Villers-Bretonneux town centre can return to Amiens by train, however the first train does not depart until 1:30 pm. Please refer to the French railway site (available in English).

Coach arrivals and departures

On arrival visitors will alight their coach and walk approximately 300 metres uphill to the seating area.

Transport service information is currently being finalised. When details have been confirmed they will be updated on the DVA website.

IMPORTANT NOTE: At the conclusion of the service up to 6,000 visitors, who arrived by coach over a three to four hour period, will be leaving the Australian National Memorial site at the same time. Visitors will make their way from the front of the Memorial to the promenade area and await pickup. The process will be conducted as safely and as quickly as possible but may take up to 90 minutes. It will be sincerely appreciated if visitors exercise patience and understanding during this time. Please keep this time-frame in mind also when making travel and other arrangements.
**Park and Walk: Visitors travelling in private vehicles**

For visitors travelling in private vehicles, there will be limited parking in Corbie & Fouilloy and Villers-Bretonneux. Designated car parks available in the towns in 2016 were at the following locations:

- Town Centre, Corbie
- Town Centre, Fouilloy
- Casino Supermarket, Fouilloy
- Railway Station, Villers-Bretonneux
- Company STDN, Villers-Bretonneux

Car park location maps and walking routes are available on the website: [www.dva.gov.au/france](http://www.dva.gov.au/france). This information will be updated closer to the day.

The walk to the Australian National Memorial from Corbie & Fouilloy is approx 2 km and 3.7 km from Villers-Bretonneux taking 30-60 mins.

**Assisted Seating**

Assistance will be available for visitors who have registered a health or mobility issue via a written application well in advance of the service period. Evidence from your General Practitioner may be required to support your application.

Those requesting assisted seating are able to have one carer with them to provide assistance. Consideration may be given to accompanying guests. Unfortunately due to seating capacity, it is not possible to extend this service to others travelling with their tour groups. Further information about the application and assessment process can be obtained by emailing france@dva.gov.au. You can also write to:

Commemorations
Western Front Section
Department of Veterans’ Affairs
GPO Box 9998
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Visitors should be able to walk 300 meters uphill through the cemetery to the memorial site (this is the approximate distance from the entrance to the assisted seating area) and a further 200 meters from the coach drop-off point to the entrance.

A small accessible van will be available to those visitors requiring assistance from the coach drop off point.

**Laying a Wreath**

Visitors may lay a wreath at the end of the Dawn Service. The Master of Ceremonies for these services will invite you to move forward to lay wreaths. Please note you may be called forward as part of a group but of course you may lay individually. Please note – DVA has no capacity to receive wreath deliveries at the Australian National Memorial and you must bring your own wreath.

**What about the weather?**

The weather in the Somme region in April can be extremely cold (close to freezing). The Australian National Memorial site is exposed to the elements and is normally very cold before and after dawn. Visitors should ensure they are appropriately equipped for cold, wet, and windy weather, and take appropriate clothing with them when they disembark from their coach. The ground surface of the Australian National Memorial is grass, so warm socks and waterproof shoes should be worn.

Visitors planning to attend later town services should note it can become quite warm during the day and layers of clothing and plenty of water are encouraged.
What should I take with me?

A small day pack or small bag may be useful containing the following:

- Wet weather jacket and pants
- Warm, thermal clothing, jacket, beanie, hat or cap, gloves, socks, scarf
- Comfortable, sturdy walking shoes
- Lighter clothing during the day

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission prohibits commercial sales on any of its sites. In this regard you are also encouraged to bring:

- Drinking water (please note that opened bottles of water may not be allowed onsite)
- Snacks
- Sunscreen
- Torch (with batteries)
- Camera (with batteries)

What facilities are available during the Dawn Service?

- Limited free coffee and croissants will be available before and after the service.
- Temporary toilets, including disabled toilets, and hand washing facilities
- First Aid Services
- Rubbish bins
- Assisted seating is available for those requiring assistance/support - applications must be made in writing to france@dva.gov.au well in advance of Anzac Day. See above

Locating graves of deceased relatives

Many visitors to the Anzac Day Dawn Service at Villers-Bretonneux are keen to locate the graves of relatives who fought on the Western Front, or their relative’s name on a memorial to the missing if they have no known grave.

There are around 1,000 Commonwealth war cemeteries on the Western Front in France and Belgium, including the cemetery at the Australian National Memorial in Villers-Bretonneux.

While some assistance will be available on site, we recommend visitors wishing to locate a particular grave or name on a memorial to the missing should consult the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website at www.cwgc.org to determine the exact location of the grave or name on a memorial to the missing prior to travelling to France or Belgium.

Villers-Bretonneux Town Service – 25 April 2017 (French service)

This service is coordinated and conducted by the townspeople of Villers-Bretonneux.

After the Anzac Day Dawn Service at the Australian National Memorial site, visitors are invited to make their way to the French Monument, Town Centre for the Villers-Bretonneux Wreath Laying Ceremony which is expected to commence at 8.45 am. Special traffic arrangements will be in place and visitors should follow the direction of the French police on the day.

The Sadlier-Stokes Scholarship Presentation and Concert at the Our Lady of Hope Church, Villers-Bretonneux will follow this service and is expected to commence at 9.15 am.
Bullecourt service – 25 April 2017 (French service)

After the town service in Villers-Bretonneux, the Anzac Day program continues with a town service in Bullecourt and later at the Australian ‘Digger’ Memorial.

The Bullecourt town service is coordinated and conducted by the townspeople of Bullecourt.

It is expected the services will commence at 2.00 pm at the Commonwealth and French Monuments in the Bullecourt village centre. Bullecourt is approximately 45-60 minutes by car from Villers-Bretonneux, and 15 minutes from Bapaume.

Due to the large crowds expected, it is likely that the road through the village of Bullecourt will be closed for local Anzac Day commemorations. Visitors may need to park outside the village and walk into the town for the service in the town centre, and to the service at the ‘Digger’ Memorial on the village outskirts. Local police and ceremony staff will be present if attendees require assistance.

Australian service at ‘Digger’ Memorial – 25 April 2017

The Australian service at the ‘Digger’ Memorial on the outskirts of Bullecourt is expected to commence at around 3.00 pm.

No public transport is available to Bullecourt – visitors should make their own arrangements.

The 2017 service will commemorate the centenary of the battles of Bullecourt.

There is no seating or shelter at the town services in Villers-Bretonneux and Bullecourt, and limited seating at the Australian Service at the ‘Digger’ Memorial.

Registration

Registration for the 2017 France Anzac Day Dawn Service is now available. All visitors planning to attend Anzac Day commemorations are encouraged to register their interest at www.franceregistration.com.

Once registered, you will receive important updates via SMS or email regarding changes to commemorations, conditions or traffic arrangements. For many this is a once-in-a-lifetime experience and it’s important to come prepared. Registration is encouraged and visitors can still attend commemorations if they have not registered, however by registering, we can better prepare for expected visitor numbers, and provide you with updates.

Visitors are also encouraged to register on the Smartraveller (DFAT) website at www.smartraveller.gov.au. Registering on the DVA France registration page does not automatically transfer information to Smartraveller. Visitors are encouraged to register on both systems.

It is important to note that just prior to Anzac Day, DVA plans to share the name and mobile phone contact details of those who have registered on DVA, with the DFAT consular team. This information will only be used by DFAT in case of an emergency.

Stay up to date!

Please check the DVA website: www.dva.gov.au/france often for up to date information. The timing of town services may change and we will update the website as soon as advice is received.
Emergency contact details

**Australian Embassy, France**
4 Rue Jean Rey, Paris 75724, Cedex 15, France  
Telephone: +33 1 4059 3300 / Fax +33 1 4059 3315

**Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – Canberra**  
R.G. Casey Building  
John McEwen Crescent  
Barton ACT 0221 Australia  
Telephone: +61 2 6261 1111 / Fax +61 2 6261 3111

**Emergency helpline**  
Consular Emergency Centre 24 hour telephone service:  
1300 555 135 within Australia (local call cost) or  
+61 2 6261 3305 from outside Australia.