



# Bullecourt Museum

## Museum history

- Original museum established by the late Jean and Denise Letaille OAM
- Artefacts collected from Bullecourt battlefields and displayed on their property in Bullecourt, France
- Existing museum was redeveloped in 2011/2012 as part of joint Australian and French Government initiative
- Re-furbished museum forms part of the Australian Remembrance Trail along the Western Front
- New museum officially opened on Anzac Day 2012

## Museum accessibility

- Located via rue d'Arras, Bullecourt
- Opening hours
  - Apr – Oct: 1400 – 1800
  - Nov – Mar: 1400 – 1700
- Audio guides in French and English
- Caters for groups including those with mobility restrictions

## Battles of Bullecourt

- The first major attacks on the Hindenburg Line – more than 10,000 Australian casualties and almost 9,000 British casualties
- First Battle fought 11 April 1917:
  - 4th and 12th Brigade of the 4<sup>th</sup> Australian Division
  - Some Australian 3,330 casualties of which 1,170 taken prisoner – largest number captured in single battle during WW1
  - 774 British casualties
- Second Battle fought 3-17 May 1917
  - 1st, 2nd and 5th Australian Divisions
  - More than 7,000 Australian casualties
  - 8,119 British casualties

## More information

- [www.ww1westernfront.gov.au](http://www.ww1westernfront.gov.au)
- [www.dva.gov.au/art.htm](http://www.dva.gov.au/art.htm)

## Background

The Jean and Denise Letaille Museum – Bullecourt 1917 (MUSEE Jean et Denise Letaille – BULLECOURT 1917) focuses on two of the bloodiest battles on the Western Front – the Battles of Bullecourt, fought during the First World War in 1917.

While some gains were made, these battles were extremely costly for Australia – 10,000 men were killed, wounded, lost or taken prisoner.

## Old museum

For more than 30 years the former Mayor of Bullecourt, Mr Jean Letaille OAM, and his wife Denise, collected weapons, machinery and other war relics left behind in nearby fields by Australian, British and German soldiers during the War.

While he was Mayor, Jean created a small museum in the Town Hall to display many of these items, before relocating them to his barn and stable in 1995.

For many years Jean and Denise warmly welcomed thousands of visitors, particularly Australians, whose ancestors fought at Bullecourt during the war. Sadly Jean passed away in March 2012 and Denise a few years earlier.

Before his death, Jean donated his unique collection and part of his property to the local community to allow for the major redevelopment of the museum in 2011-2012. At a cost of around \$A1.15 million, the project was jointly funded by both the French authority, the Conseil Régional Nord-Pas de Calais, and the Australian Government.

## New museum

The refurbished Museum retains the structural features of the original

barn and stable, however the interior has been converted to accommodate contemporary displays and modern exhibition features. The museum is arranged in two sections. The 'Battle Room' covers the history of the First World War and Battles of Bullecourt in 1917.

The 'Tribute Hall' covers the personal stories of Australians who fought in Bullecourt including images of soldiers from various nations who fought, died and went missing at Bullecourt and related artefacts and documents.

Audio guides are available in French and English – the French spoken by Jean himself. The project was carried out under the supervision of French regional authorities, and in co operation with the Australian Government.

## Australian Remembrance Trail along the Western Front

The Bullecourt Museum forms part of the Australian Remembrance Trail along the Western Front, a joint initiative of the Australian, French and Belgian governments.

The Trail will help to educate another generation about the battles that occurred across France and Belgium during the First World War and Australia's contribution. It includes sites at Ypres, Zonnebeke and Ploegsteert in Belgium, Fromelles, Bullecourt, Pozières, Mont St Quentin, Villers-Bretonneux and Le Hamel in France.

With most of the Trail near completion, the Australian Government is currently considering the potential for a major new interpretive centre to be constructed to the rear of the Australian National Memorial, Villers-Bretonneux, as a significant hub in the Trail. If progressed, the Centre will open in April 2018.