E-News – Centenary of the Battle of Villers-Bretonneux Commemorative Service – Advice to Visitors

Issue 2 – 26 February 2018

In the first edition of the E-newsletter issued in December, we provided an overview of what to expect when attending the Dawn Service at the Australian National Memorial (ANM) in France in April 2018, and gave you some suggestions about important planning things to do before leaving home.

In this second edition we outline some important logistical information, including arrival times, transport options, what to take, and details on accessible seating. We are also seeking assistance from direct descendants of veterans on the Western Front in telling their families’ stories. Also included are details about visiting arrangements for the new Sir John Monash Centre.

Key Arrival Times

Due to the large numbers of attendees this year, site opening times have been extended. Remember, seating is available on a first-in basis. We encourage you to plan your journey and arrival times carefully to ensure that you have sufficient time to progress through security and ensure you get good seats.

For your comfort complimentary tea, coffee and croissants will be provided at the Memorial site from 12:00 am and a pre-service program, including music from the Australian Defence Force Band and Voices of Birralee Choir, will be provided in the lead-up to the start of the official program at 2:00 am.

Below are key times to assist in your planning:

11:15 pm – Amiens train station shuttles commence
11:30 pm - Glisy Park and Ride opens
12:00 am - Australian National Memorial site opens
12:00 am – Pre-service presentations and information commence
2:00 am – Official program commences
3:00 am – Last scheduled Amiens train station shuttle
5:30 am – Official commemoration commences

Arriving at the commemorative service

Your journey to the ANM site may start at Amiens train station, accessing a Park and Ride system from a supermarket at Glisy, or walking from one of the nearby towns. Below are details on the three options.

Amiens Train Station Shuttle

| Site Opens: 11:00 pm | First Shuttle: 11:15 pm | Last Shuttle: 3:00 am |

A free shuttle service will be provided between the Amiens Train Station and the Glisy Park and Ride facility. You can board this service from the Amiens train station, along Rue Jules Barni. Public car
parking is available around the station. For those travelling from other cities you will need to check the train schedules.

Remember in your planning that the journey time to the Glisy Park and ride is approximately 30 minutes. You will then be security screened in the Glisy Park and Ride Shuttle process outlined below, which can take up to one hour, before boarding an event shuttle to the ANM.

**Glisy Park and Ride Shuttle**

*Site Opens: 11:30 pm  First Shuttle: 11:45 pm*

A Park and Ride system will be established in the car park at the Géant supermarket, in Glisy, a ten minute drive from the centre of Amiens. Visitors are able to access the Park and Ride site via private vehicle, taxi, tour operator coach or bicycle. To access the Park and Ride site the best approach is from the D934 and Rue Michael Strogoff.

On arrival at the Park and Ride facility you will be guided to a general information tent and Ticketek box office, where any last minute ticket collections can be made. You will then go through attendance pass scanning and security screening. You will then be issued a wristband which provides a visual verification to service officials that you have been cleared through the security screening point.

Due to the large number of visitors, please ensure you leave sufficient time to complete this process.

Event shuttles will deliver you to ANM promenade. From the drop off point you will walk approximately 300 metres up a grass incline through the Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery to the seating area. Note: the grass may be slippery when damp. Safety lighting will be installed at the entrance and through the cemetery, but you may wish to bring a torch to assist with visibility. At this point there will be no need to rush, and we encourage you to take your time and make the most of the atmosphere.

**Walk - for residents and those staying in Villers-Bretonneux, Corbie or Fouilloy**

For those who are staying in the towns of Villers-Bretonneux, Corbie or Fouilloy, there is an option to walk to the memorial site along designated pedestrian/bike paths which run parallel to the road. The walk from Villers-Bretonneux typically takes 45 minutes (3.7km) and walking from Corbie and Fouilloy takes approximately 30 minutes (2km). On arrival at the ANM you will move through airport-style security screening onto the promenade area.

Changes to parking in the towns of Villers-Bretonneux, Corbie and Fouilloy will be in place this year, with many previous options for general parking no longer available. Road closures around the town of Villers-Bretonneux will be far more extensive than in previous years due to the anticipated increased attendance at the town service.

**What to take**

Prior to arriving at the Commemoration, you should have your attendance pass and passport, (or a photocopy of their passport) readily accessible and within reach for validation as soon as you arrive at the entry scanning point.

In your preparations, you should consider that Northern France can experience very cold and sometimes wet conditions in April.
You will also need to ensure you have everything you need for the morning in a small bag, or day-pack. Your bag should not be any larger than that allowed as carry-on luggage on a plane. Professional camera and video equipment, such as long lenses, will not be allowed in general public areas.

What to pack:
- Attendance Pass and passport (or appropriate photo ID)
- Wet weather and windproof jacket and pants
- Prescription medication (if required)
- Non-perishable food and snacks
- Drinking water (opened bottles will not be allowed through security screening, however, water will be available on site)
- Sunscreen
- Compact personal camera

**Accessible Seating Services**

Seating will be provided for all visitors attending the Dawn Service either in grandstands or on individual chairs on the grassed areas. Visitors who have indicated a health or accessibility requirement at the time of registration will have access to accessible seating services and assistance. Those registered for accessible seating will receive two accessible seating passes—one for the individual and one for a carer or accompanying person. Unfortunately due to limited accessible seating, it is not possible to extend this service to others travelling with their groups.

If you have not have your accessible seating passes, you can collect them at the information tent prior to entry. On arrival at the Park & Ride facility you will need to identify yourself to event staff, before boarding shuttles to the commemorative site. Visitors registered for accessible seating will be able to access a small accessible mobility vehicle from the coach set down point and be dropped close to the accessible seating area.

**Wreath Laying**

Wreath laying by invited official representatives will occur during the services. Members of the public who wish to lay a wreath or floral tribute will have the opportunity to do so at the conclusion of the service. If you wish to lay a wreath or floral tribute, you will need to bring this with you and register your details at the information tent or by emailing the following details to overseascommemorations@dva.gov.au:
- Your attendance pass registration Application ID Number
- The name and title of the person/s laying the wreath
- The organisation/group or person/relative being represented

You will need to organise your own wreath or floral tribute. It is your responsibility to carry it with you, care for it and transport it to the Memorial. There are no facilities or arrangements for storage or transport of personal wreaths at the Memorial. Wreaths cannot be provided by the organisers.

All registrants will still need to present to the Wreath Registration Tent on the morning of 25 April at the ANM promenade to receive instructions.

**Descendants of soldiers**

The Department of Veterans’ Affairs has received requests from Australian media outlets for interviews with descendants of soldiers who served on the Western Front.
As you have registered to attend the Anzac Day service in Villers-Bretonneux on 25 April 2018, and may be a descendant of an Australian service man or woman who served on the Western Front, there may be an opportunity for you to share your family’s story.

If you would like to take part, please email COMMUNICATIONS@dva.gov.au with a brief description of your story and those travelling in your party. In addition, we require your State of residence in Australia and your contact details for the period you are in Europe, preferably a mobile number.

We will then approach some senior, responsible media reporters who will be keen to cover your story. A staff member will be at the Australian National Memorial in Villers-Bretonneux to coordinate media activities and to help you in those interviews, if you wish.

In our experience, the media will be keen to tell your story and this will be positive coverage, particularly given Australia’s centenary commemorations throughout the year.

Should you have any queries or concerns, please contact Dale Starr at dale.starr@dva.gov.au.

**Be one of the first to experience the new Sir John Monash Centre**

The Sir John Monash Centre set on the grounds of the Australian National Memorial, is a cutting edge multimedia centre that tells the full story of the Australian Western Front experience through a series of interactive media installations and immersive experiences.

The Centre experience is designed so that visitors get a better understanding of the journey of ordinary Australians—told in their own voices through letters, diaries and life-size images, creating a greater connection to the places where they fought and died.

The free Sir John Monash Centre app, downloadable to visitor’s personal mobile devices, acts as a virtual tour guide throughout the Centre and across the Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery and the Australian National Memorial.

With up to 8,000 people expected to attend the Anzac Day commemorative service, demand to visit the Centre around 25 April 2018 will be high, so bookings are essential. Your ticket to the Anzac Day service will not give you access to the Sir John Monash Centre.

If you are interested in experiencing the Centre during this time you can make a booking now via the website. Capacity is limited so bookings will be secured on a first come basis.

Entry to the SJMC is free. To find out more visit www.sjmc.gov.au

**Contact information**

If you would like further information in the lead up to the commemoration in April, please contact DVA using the following details:

**Online**
Email: overseascommemorations@dva.gov.au

**In Australia**
Department of Veterans’ Affairs
Monday to Friday: 8.30am to 5pm
Telephone: 1300 364 002
International Callers: +61 2 6191 8207