



## Missing Soldiers of Fromelles Group



### German Archives Shed New Light on Fromelles

**Fromelles was fought on the 19th/20th July 1916, 19 days after the war of attrition on the Somme which began on 1 July 1916. The Battle of the Somme is infamous, in that it led to the loss of 58,000 British troops, one third of them lost on the first day of the horrendous campaign which was launched on a 30 kilometre front. The offensive was a joint French-British attack and ran (according to [firstworldwar.com](http://firstworldwar.com)) until 18 November 1916.**

On April 21, 2014 Europe Correspondent for The Sydney Morning Herald, Nick Miller, published a story about the museum at Fromelles. Almost a century after the Australian diggers fell in a futile assault in northern France, Australia's 5th Division fallen have been honoured for their sacrifices during the First World War.

The Musee de la Bataille de Fromelles has been given a facelift in the wake of the work done by the joint Australian and British Project identification team. From what Thomas Boucknooghe, the guide of the museum told Fairfax Media, there will be extensive displays: as well as exhibitions of artefacts from the dig, and re-creations of reinforced bunkers and sapper's tunnels.

There will be an animated, projected map which depicts the ebb and flow of the battle; which will be surrounded by personal stories, items of uniforms and equipment, such as "shells, guns, shrapnel helmets and backpacks."

Fromelles was a bloodbath, according to Nick Miller. Screens will show postcards and a model incorporates pieces from the original fortifications. In addition there are many other items of interest.

Use the following link to access Nick Miller's article about the museum at Fromelles: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/new-museum-offers-lasting-memories-of-fromelles-fallen-20140420-36yu6.html>

Above the door of the museum is the following inscription: "De l'ombre a lumiere", which roughly translates to mean from the shadow into the light. Opened in July 2014, the museum commemorates the assault at Fromelles, and also provides context for new claims by respected British historian and film-maker, Peter Barton.

Described by the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts the newly released Lost Legions of Fromelles is both controversial and ground-breaking. It is the most authoritative book ever written on the feint. With access to German records, Barton dispels the myths surrounding the skirmish and reveals new information on the interrogation of Anglo-Australian prisoners by the Germans prior to the attack.

The new Battle of Fromelles Museum is located adjacent to the Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery which was opened as part of the Australian Remembrance Trail in France and Belgium. The Australian Government contributed financially to the museum, facilitated the establishment of the Australian Remembrance Trail and as previously mentioned is aware, there are 400 diggers without headstones at VC Corner Australian Cemetery and Memorial.

These unrecovered Great War soldiers died in the middle of no-man's-land between the Australian and German trenches commencing 19 July 1916. Note the link below to Australians on the Western Front 1914-1918. <http://www.ww1westernfront.gov.au/fromelles/>.

The Commonwealth Government is also funding a new \$100 million war museum at the Australian memorial in Villers Bretonneaux. This announcement was made by Prime Minister Tony Abbott April 2015. None as the Sir John Monash Centre, the new educational facility will be dedicated to all those Australians who fought on the Western Front. The Australian Remembrance Trail has been developed by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. Consisting of twelve well known military sites, the trail incorporates other significant features as well.

Well worth reading, Peter Barton: The Lost Legions of Fromelles is readily available and will probably cause the experts to re-evaluate aspects of the Battle of Fleurbaix, and hopefully enable a reinterpretation of the intelligence-gathering methods employed by the Germans during what is best described as a bloody confrontation. <http://smsa.org.au/events/event/peter-barton-the-lost-legions-of-fromelles/>

Best read for young adults and school age children is Carole Wilkinson's Fromelles: Australia's Bloodiest Day At War.

Carole relates "The first shots were fired at 11 a.m. on 19 July 1916." Fromelles: Australia's Bloodiest Day At War recounts the "story of the battle, and the men who took part in it" and also explains the weapons and tactics of WWI. <http://www.carolewilkinson.com.au/books/fromelles>