

Belgium Battlefields – Friday 24th – Sunday 26th September 2010

(In the Footsteps of Harry Patch)

When Harry Patch died on 25th July 2009 he was 111 years old and the last of the veterans who fought in the trenches of World War One.



On 16 August 1917 just north of Ypres during a British attack their Lewis gun being unusable Harry Patch and the Lewis-gun team were taking what cover they could when a German defender came at them with fixed bayonet. Harry aged only 19 years had a revolver in his hand. But the team had long since made a pact that they would not shoot to kill. He could not take the German's life. Instead, Harry brought him down with two shots to the leg, leaving him safely as a prisoner of war in British hands. Five weeks later Harry took a two-inch shard of shrapnel in the stomach, it was removed at a first aid station without anaesthetic and he was shipped back to England.

On this trip we shall visit Passchendaele and Langemarck to see where Harry fought. We will stop at the typical first aid station where Major John McCrae wrote the poem "In Flanders Fields". We'll follow Harry to Toc 'H' in Poperinge and see his personal memorial to his comrades. We will also join in the moving Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate which Harry and his mates marched through.



We'll explore some carefully reconstructed British and Belgian WWI trenches and visit Tyne Cot, a memorial to 34,959 of the missing and the largest Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery in the world, and we'll visit the new interactive visitors centre.

This will be a reflective trip at times but we'll also have fun, some fine dining and drinking and of course as well as riding our Harleys we'll have the company of some great pals.

We will leave early on Friday and travel via Euro tunnel, approx cost £50 return. At our hotel in the centre of Ypres, en-suite twin rooms are €53 to €71, (€7 discount for single occupancy), buffet breakfast included. There is secure parking, WIFI, hairdryers and irons available.