

Year 9 Trip to WWI Battlefields



Nowhere was the devastating slaughter of World War I more terrible than in the fields of France and Flanders, where the remnants of war are an inescapable part of the landscape. In ACE Week, the History Department leads all of Year 9 to the battlefields of the First World War.

The first days of the trip bring us to the deadly Ypres Salient, where British and Commonwealth forces held the line for four years. Every night the sacrifice of those who fought is commemorated in a ceremony at the Menin Gate. Students visit the trenches at Sanctuary Hill and to gain some perspective of the scale of the suffering at the British cemetery at Tyne Cot and the German cemetery at Langemark. The final days of the trip are in the Somme, where we remember the hundreds of thousands of young men from all nations who died, many of whom were never given a proper burial. The massive memorials at Thiepval and Vimy Ridge, the battlefields scarred with trenches and artillery shelling and the massive crater left by the largest underground detonation of the war at Lochnagar, bring home with eerie resonance the violence and desolation wrought by the War. Some students are able to locate the names and gravestones of relatives who died in the War.



Standing in the location where so much blood was shed provides opportunities for reflection and remembrance, and the School Chaplain always accompanies this trip. This is an excellent and meaningful experience which also has its lighter moment as students enjoy being abroad and deepening their friendships.



Learning as they go in the WWI cemeteries



Visiting Vimy Ridge, the Year 9 students had every opportunity to contemplate the importance and sacrifice of World War I