



Wood of Peace Polygon Wood



Flanders
State of the Art

AGENCY FOR
NATURE & FORESTS





Polygon Wood turned into Wood of Peace

In October 1917 the Third Battle of Ypres raged unabated. Zonnebeke, Passchendaele and Polygon Wood were to become names which would forever linger in collective memory.

In October 2017 we will not only duly commemorate the events of a century ago but we will also look ahead, envisaging a world in which there is no longer room for war. We will give expression to this ambition by planting a wood of peace on the very grounds on which the battle was waged in all its arduousness, in Polygon Wood.

By way of metaphor, we will ask the next of kin of those who are buried in the shadow of Polygon Wood to convey the hopeful message for the future.

We kindly invite all descendants of the fallen soldiers to cooperate in this project and to come forward through registration. But above all we invite each and everyone to help the Wood of Peace become what it is meant to be, viz. a place for reflection on the past indeed but even more so a place of hope for the future.

Marleen Evenepoel,
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Agency for Nature and Forests

Francis Claeys,
Secretary
Zonnebeke Municipality

Dirk Sioen,
Mayor
Zonnebeke Municipality



523 remembrance trees



The Wood of Peace '17 will be more than a wood in commemoration of the events that happened 100 years ago. Every tree in the wood will be dedicated to an identified fallen soldier who is buried in one of the two Polygon Wood cemeteries: There are 523 of them.

No distinctions will be made in ranks, social position or nationality for the layout of the wood.

The Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917 (MMP1917) will compile a personal file on each one of them. A tree will be planted for every fallen soldier on 12 October 2017, preferably by the next of kin of the 523 soldiers.



Registration of descendants of identified soldiers

From 11 November 2015 onwards the relatives of identified fallen soldiers who are buried in Buttes New British Cemetery and Polygon Wood Cemetery will have the opportunity of pre-registering with the Memorial Museum Passchendaele at <http://passchendaele2017.org/>. The applicants will receive all practical information on the planting of the trees upon confirmation. They will also have the opportunity to apply for the personal Archives file, which will be made available in PDF format.

In a second stage the public at large will be invited to actively contribute to the Wood of Peace by linking up with a fallen soldier for whom no next of kin have registered.



Location and surface area

The Wood of Peace merges seamlessly with the current Polygon Wood in the municipality of Zonnebeke. It is situated between Amontstraat and Oude Kortrijkstraat. On Christmas

1914, a short Christmas truce was held on a section of what will become the Peace Wood, in what was then no-man's land.



The Partners

The Agency for Nature and Forests

The Agency for Nature and Forests (ANB), an agency of the Government of Flanders, works every day on the preservation, protection and development of nature areas, woods and parks. The mission of the Agency for Nature and Forests is: 'More, better and together'. More info on www.natuurenbos.be

'Taking Care of Flanders Fields'

The Agency for Nature and Forests commemorates the horrors of the First World War, which held the world in its grip 100 years ago. The Agency will be doing this in an uncompromising way by focusing in particular on the relationship between war and nature. It does this by stressing how important nature is during times of war and the resilience nature has to survive war. But also, how war offers new chances to nature. The Agency for Nature and Forests commemorates 100 WWI with the project 'Taking Care of Flanders Fields'. It will be doing that by, for example, sowing fields of poppies throughout Flanders. In addition, the focus will be on 7 core domains with clear traces of WWI. Polygon Wood is one of those core domains.

Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917

The Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917 keeps the memory alive of the Battle of Passchendaele where in 1917 in one hundred days half a million casualties were counted for only 8 km's gain of ground. The museum is located in the chateau grounds of Zonnebeke and focuses on the material aspects of World War I and experience. Its research center is located in the former rectory, a modernist building by architect Huib Hoste. The center houses two large collections which preserve the heritage and history of the villages now belonging to the community of Zonnebeke. The museum collections cover a range of reference books, an extensive map collection, photos and WWI archives. Besides this, the library and archives of the Zonnebeke Heemvrienden are dedicated on local customs and folklore. It holds both general and periodical works on local history.

