

BUTTES NEW BRITISH CEMETERY AND POLYGON WOOD

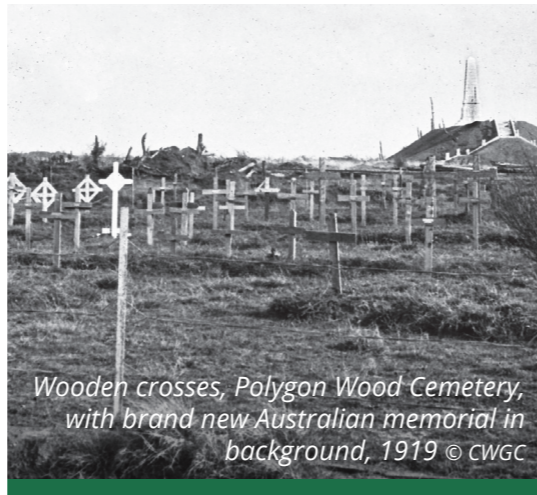
Everyone who visits the old Ypres Salient should visit Polygon Wood. The wood, a key landmark during the First World War, was taken and held by the Australians at terrible cost in September 1917. Today, two distinctive cemeteries, a memorial to the missing, and a divisional memorial are located here amongst the regrown trees. Polygon Wood Cemetery is small and intimate, made during the war, while Buttes New British Cemetery is large and dramatic, created after the 1918 armistice when the shattered wood and surrounding area were carefully searched for the dead. Few of the graves in Buttes New British Cemetery are identified but many bear the distinctive 'rising sun' headstone badge of Australian forces. Don't forget to visit the New Zealand Memorial to the Missing on the far side of the cemetery.

The two cemeteries were designed as one site by Wilfred Von Berg. Unusually, the Cross of Sacrifice and Stone of Remembrance are shared across the sites, possibly because the Australians built their Divisional memorial in the logical place for the Cross before the Commission could claim it. Have a look for yourself and see what you think.

The cemetery register and visitors' book can be found in the shelter building at the rear of Buttes New British Cemetery.



© Eric Compennolle



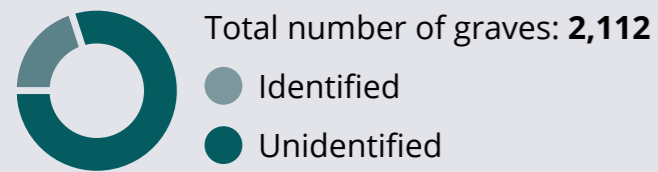
Wooden crosses, Polygon Wood Cemetery, with brand new Australian memorial in background, 1919 © CWGC



BUTTES NEW BRITISH CEMETERY & N.Z. MEMORIAL POLYGON WOOD CEMETERY

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES

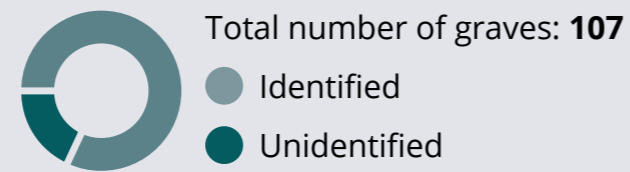
Buttes New British Cemetery



Force nationalities

- Canadian: **50**
- New Zealand: **162**
- Australian: **569**
- United Kingdom : **1,331**

Polygon Wood Cemetery



Force nationalities

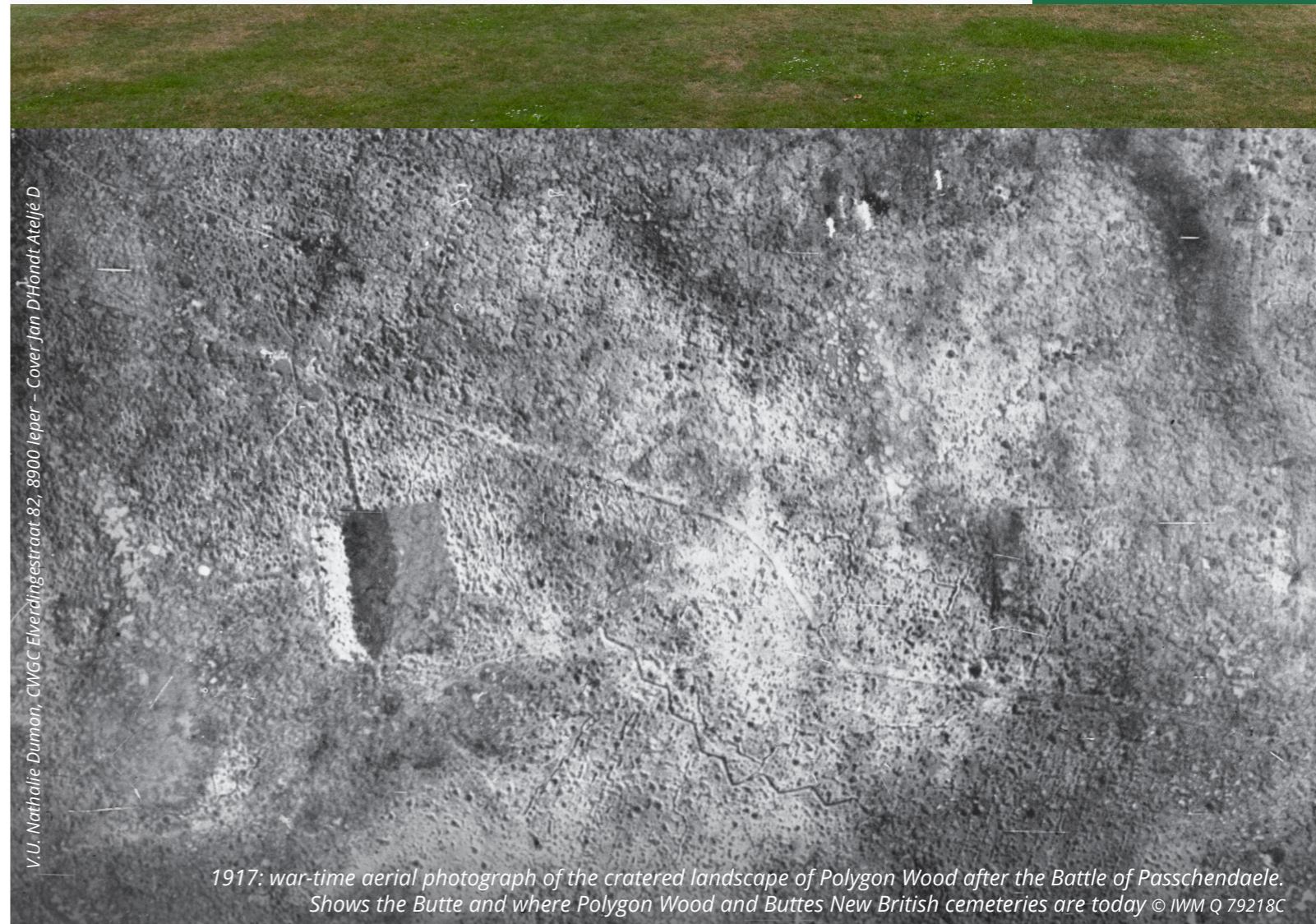
- German: **1**
- New Zealand: **60**
- United Kingdom : **46**

Buttes New British N.Z. Memorial

This memorial bears the names of **378** New Zealand servicemen who have no known grave



For more information please scan here.



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1917: war-time aerial photograph of the cratered landscape of Polygon Wood after the Battle of Passchendaele. Shows the Butte and where Polygon Wood and Buttes New British cemeteries are today © IWM Q 79218C



ONE SHOT, TWO LIVES

As dawn crept over the horizon on 1 October 1917, a battle-weary Australian battalion were delighted to see soldiers of the Manchester Regiment arriving to relieve them in the front line in Polygon Wood. The Australian's commanding officer, 27-year-old Lieutenant Colonel Alan Scott, remained behind to brief the incoming Lieutenant Colonel, 25-year-old Dudley Turnbull, on the defences his men were now taking over. A single crack rang out and both men fell, killed by the same sniper's bullet.

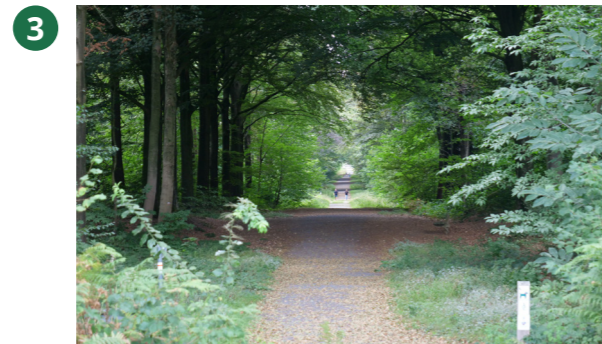
First buried near where they fell, in 1919 both men were reburied in Buttes New British Cemetery, Alan Scott in Plot II, Row A, Grave 12, and Dudley Turnbull in Plot I, Row C, Grave 9. Both plots are on the far side of the cemetery, on the right when looking at the Stone of Remembrance from the cemetery.



1



2



3

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Start in Polygon Wood Cemetery and take note of the shape of the boundary wall. Walk from the Cross of Sacrifice through the tree-engulfed pathway, towards the distant obelisk. Climb the steps and head towards the memorial.

Across the Western Front, Australian forces marked the locations of their greatest achievements with memorials. One of these obelisk memorials can be found here. It was placed here in remembrance of the 5th Australian Division who captured and held this wood in 1917 at great cost.

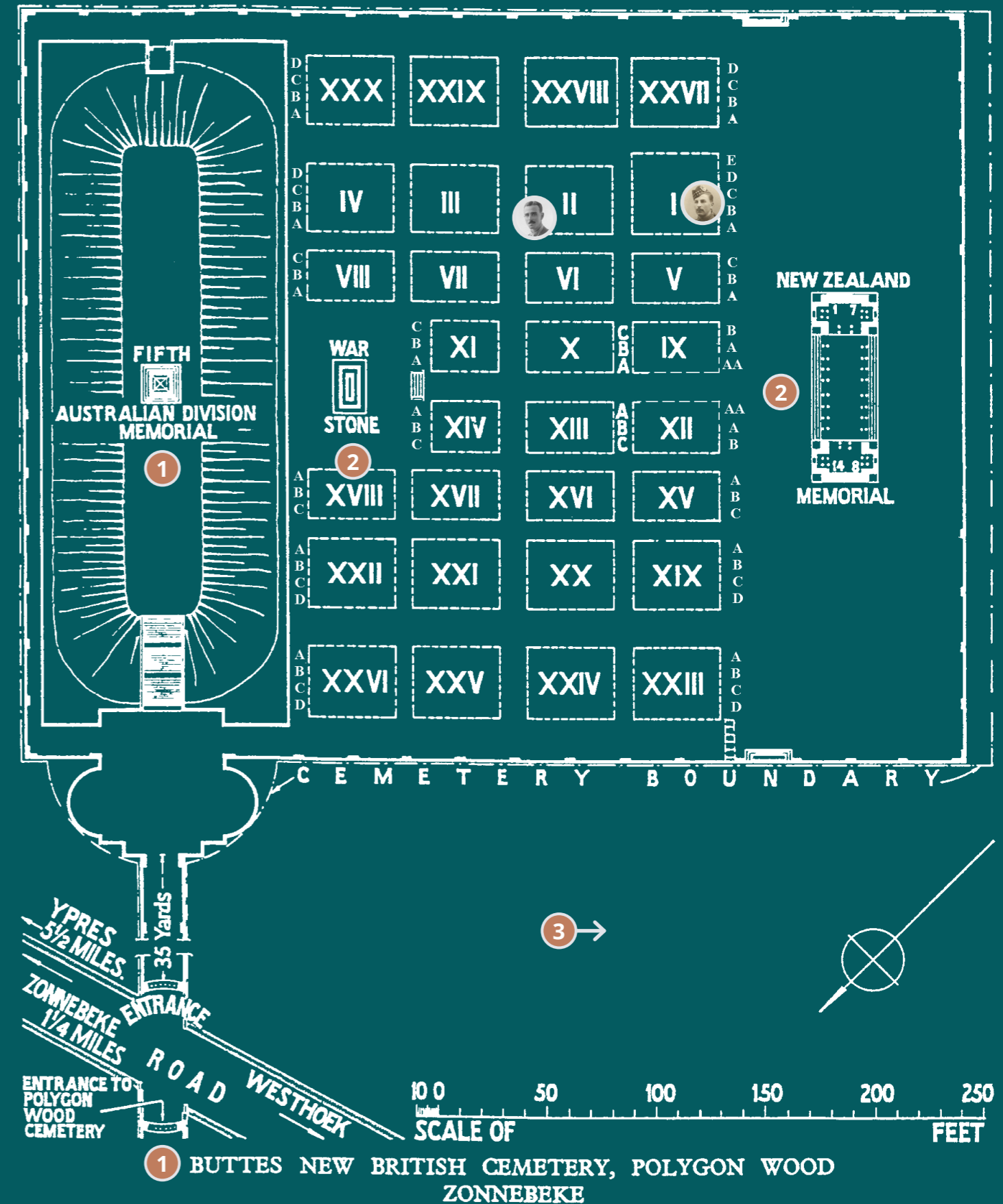
You are now standing on the Butte, from which the cemetery gets its name. Before the war the Belgian Army constructed this impressive feature in Polygon Wood and used it to hone their shooting skills.

- 2 Walk down into the cemetery. You will see many graves of Australian and New Zealand soldiers whose names are unknown.

Look out for Plot XVIII, near the Stone of Remembrance. Every headstone in this plot bears the rising sun badge of Australia. Head towards the shelter building at the back of the cemetery to visit one of three memorials in Belgium which commemorate the missing of New Zealand forces. The men named here died in the area around Polygon Wood between September 1917 and May 1918. The memorial was designed by Charles Holden.

- 3 It's well worth taking the time to wander the paths through Polygon Wood.

Every tree was smashed by artillery during the war, and today you can visit several surviving bunkers built by the Germans to provide cover in the resulting wasteland.



In the area

At the end of the road is the 'Brothers-In-Arms' Memorial Park. Polygon Wood itself has original First World War bunkers to visit and walking trails to follow. Zonnebeke town centre and the Memorial Museum Passendaele 1917 are near here and well worth a visit.



Westtoer bike routes nearby

- The Legacy
- Vredesfietsroute
- Frontroute 14-18
- Crossen door de bossen met Jaek en Nink (kid friendly cycle route)



Step free access



Good parking



Seats present in cemetery