

# RAMPARTS CEMETERY, LILLE GATE

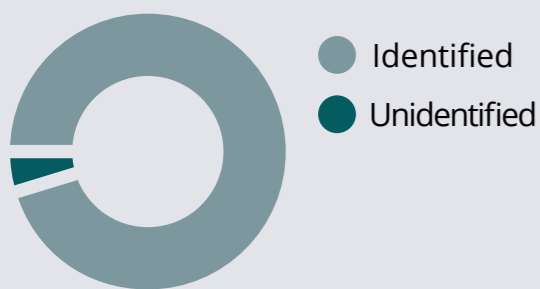
This is a remarkable little cemetery perched on the 17th century Vauban designed defensive wall of Ypres. Standing here during the First World War you would have looked out over the shell-torn battlefields of the Salient and would have witnessed columns of soldiers marching out through the Lille Gate to fight. This was an important gateway to the battlefields throughout the war, and the first burials were made here in 1914 by the French army. The British established an ambulance station and a first aid post in the dugouts beneath the walls in early 1915. The wounded arrived here from the battlefields and those who succumbed to their wounds were laid to rest by their comrades.

The cemetery was designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield and George Goldsmith. The best view of this unique burial ground is from the far side of the defensive moat. The Cross of Sacrifice stands at the highest point of the cemetery and the disordered rows of war-time graves can be seen reflected in the water of the moat on a still day.



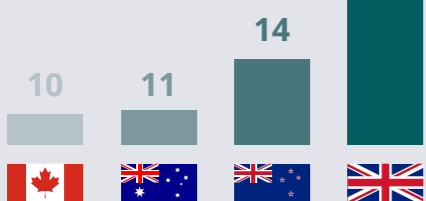
War-time Ramparts Cemetery with ruined Ypres behind © IWM Q 100666

Total number of graves: **197**



Force nationalities

- Canadian
- Australian
- New Zealand
- United Kingdom



For more information please scan here.



# RAMPARTS CEMETERY, LILLE GATE

COMMONWEALTH  
WAR GRAVES



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1918: war-time aerial photograph of the ramparts showing shell holes and razed buildings. Location of the cemetery is indicated © IWM Q 79225B

## NEW ZEALAND AND RAMPARTS

Over 2,200 Māori and nearly 460 Pacific Islanders served in the New Zealand Māori (Pioneer) Battalion during the First World War. Ten men of the battalion are buried in this cemetery. Three lie together in a single grave in Row J, while another six lie side-by-side in Row B (graves 1-6) in a corner of the cemetery. All died during the bitterly cold December of 1917 when the New Zealand Division held positions near Polygon Wood. The Māori Pioneer battalion served in Gallipoli, on the Somme and then at Ypres where they undertook vital, difficult and dangerous tasks such as building roads, digging trenches, laying cable and erecting barbed wire in no-man's land.



Māori Pioneer Battalion laying a road in Belgium, 1917 © National Library of NZ



## HIGHLIGHTS

- 1** Walk to the front of the cemetery and take in the view. Turn to face the headstones.

Find the headstone of Lieutenant Walter Welch of the Royal Field Artillery (Row I, Grave 4). His date of death is the earliest in the cemetery – 30 October 1914, just weeks into the war – but he wasn't buried here until 1956. His isolated grave was moved here from a wood near Zillebeke to ensure proper care forever.

- 2** Look now for a group of headstones at the centre of the cemetery that are closely grouped together.

If you look closely at the layout of this cemetery you will see that the graves follow no particular pattern, reflective of the ad-hoc nature of these war-time burials and the effects of shelling. You will also see that some of the headstones are grouped together. These are collective graves where more than one individual is buried in the same grave. There are five of these collective graves here, the largest being in

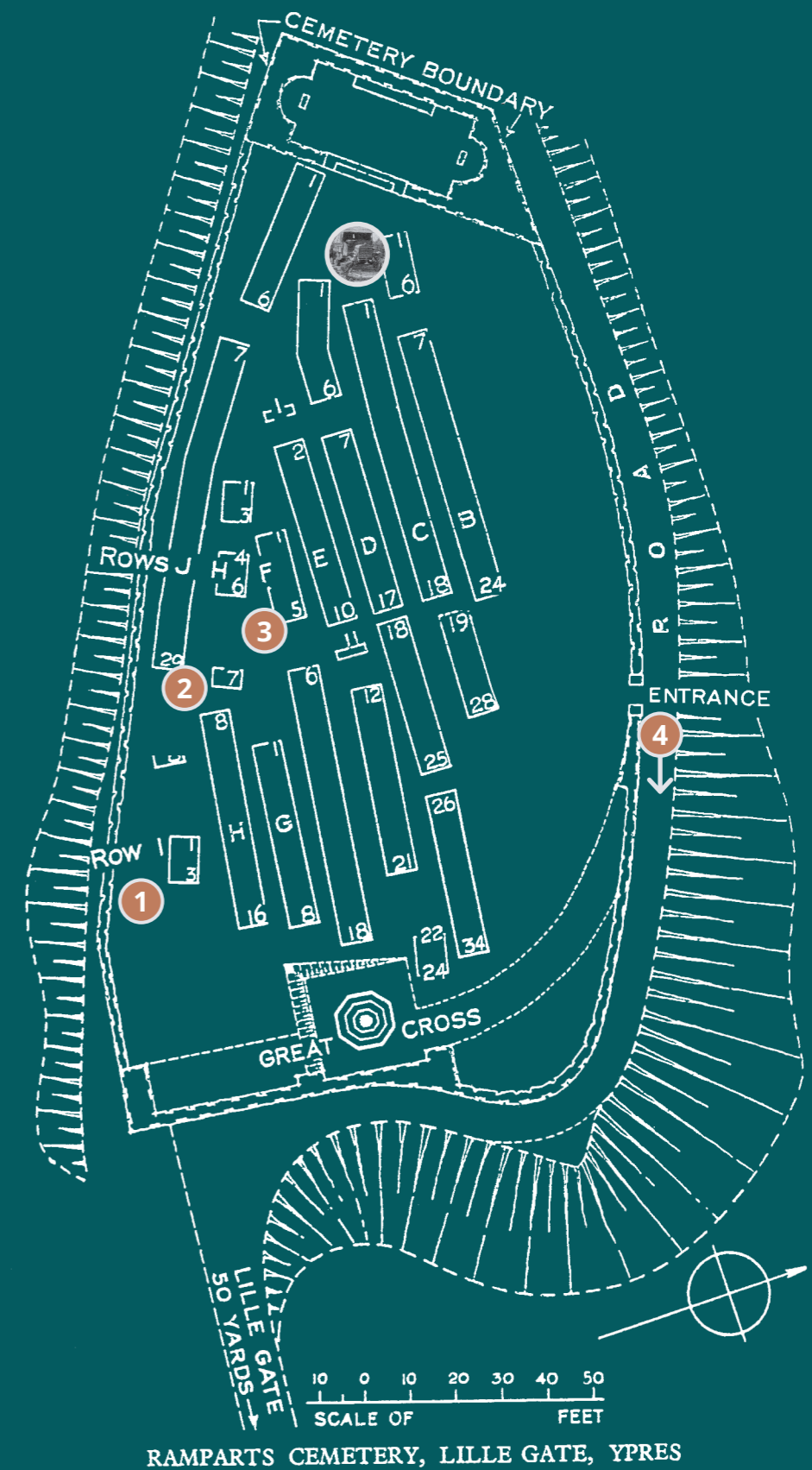
Row H, Grave 7, where eight men are buried together who died on 9 August 1915.

- 3** Almost directly behind the collective grave is your next stop.

Major George Walford of the Suffolk Regiment is the most senior officer buried here. He was commanding one of the three Brigades of the 28th Division when he was killed in action in April 1915. He was laid to rest here in Row F.

- 4** It's worth taking the time to walk round this small cemetery and visit all the graves. You will see many groups of men of the same unit who died on the same day. Then head down to the road which runs beneath Lille Gate.

Don't miss the original signs under the Lille Gate that were erected by the Imperial War Graves Commission after the First World War to help direct pilgrims to the cemeteries on the battlefields.



RAMPARTS CEMETERY, LILLE GATE, YPRES



### In the area

Don't miss the old IWGC signs underneath the Lille Gate. The Rose Coombs Memorial Walk along the city ramparts passes this cemetery. The centre of Ieper is within easy walking distance.



### Westtoer bike routes nearby

- Frontroute 14-18
- Gent-Wevelgem in Flanders Fields - 128 km
- Crossen door de bossen met Jaek en Nink (kid friendly cycle route)



### Westtoer walking routes nearby

- Stadswandelroute Ieper
- Vestingroute



Step free access



Good parking



Seats present in cemetery