

# Slide 2



# Slide 3







Oatley War memorial listing L/Sgt.
Albert John CAESAR, 2nd Bn
Grenadier Guards, and Guards
Grave, Villers Cotterets Forest, Aisne,
France, grave 34, Western Front

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Oatley War memorial listing Cpl Frederick FLETCHER and his grave in Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery, Fromelles, France, Western Front.

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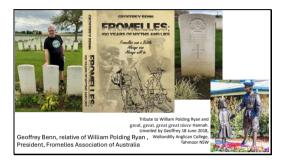


Mortdale War memorial listing for Pte Henry MAYER and his grave in Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery, Fromelles, France, Western Front





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Prof. Bruce Scates (historian), Lambis Englezos AM (Fromelles advocate), Sandra Playle (genealogist), Tim Lycette (former detective), Tim Whitford (descendant) and Jim Munro

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#### Fromelles – key questions

- 1. Why were there battles at Fromelles?
- 2. What happened in the 19/20 July 1916 Battle?
- What happened in the Follows,
   What happened after the Battle?
  (recovering the wounded, burying the dead, recording the casualties and PoWs and advising the Red Cross)
- 4. Battle Honours and Memorials.
- $\bullet$  5. The search for the "missing".
- 6. The recovery and identification of the missing.
- 7. The impact on families and Commemoration.



Schlieffen Plan of 1915 and French Options in Plan XVII (presupposes that there was a Plan 16, Plan 15, etc – indicating that war planning had been going on for many years).

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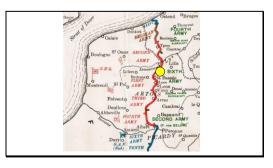
The Western Front (from a German perspective) stretched from Switzerland to the North Sea - about 500 miles – similar to Sydney to Brisbane.

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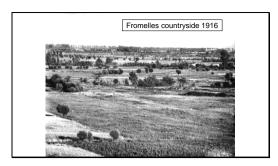


In the planning for 1916 a joint Anglo-French attack in the Somme valley was planned, but the German offensive at Verdun delayed the attack and changed it to a British attack on 1 July.

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In December 1914, the War Council in London made 2 decisions that would impact on Australia – to try to recover Lille (the 4<sup>th</sup> largest city in France) and to open up another front in the Dardanelles.



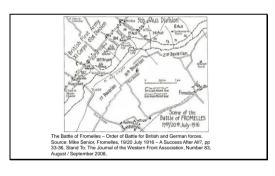
Fromelles countryside was low-lying floodplain with little high ground.

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An aerial photograph of the Fromelles battlefield from the British side taken 19 July 1916

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The Bavarian 6th Reserve Infantry Regiment had occupied its defences since March 1916 (15 months), the British 61st Division for several weeks and the Australian 5<sup>th</sup> Division for days.

- The units involved in the attack (from north east to south west):

  5th Australian Division:

  8th Brigade
  Assaulting battalions 32nd (WA) a
  Reserve battalions: 29th (Vic) and



This is THE map issued to Australian troops (arrows added to show Brigade boundaries.

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Note that the Sugar Loaf was to be attacked by the 184<sup>th</sup> Bde and needed to be captured to protect the Australian flank.

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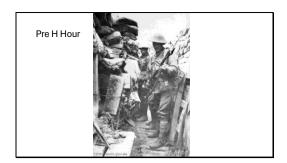


The battlefield was 400 yards at its widest point and 200 yards at its narrowest point.

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Due to the low-lying nature of the battlefield, defences were built up with breastworks for protection with troops passing through Sally-ports (exits) to move into no-man's land.

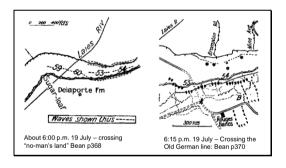


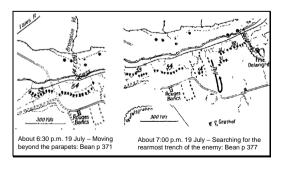
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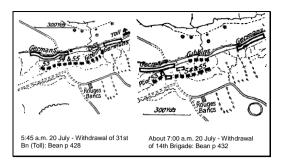


The Germans held the slightly higher ground giving a commanding view of the battlefield and of Australian preparations.

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View along the German front line where the Australians attacked and broke through – view from the Australian Memorial Park with Cobber's statue.

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#### Different views of the battle

#### RAIDS BY AUSTRALIANS. General Sir Doug

AUSTRALIANS.
General Sir Douglas
Haig reports:
"The Australians took
part in important raids
south of Armentieres
along a front of two
miles. One hundred &
forty Germans were

A German communiqué 21 July 1916 stated:
"The English attack in the region of Fromelles on Wednesday was carried out, as we have a sacertained, by two strong divisions. The brave Barvarian Division against whose front the attack was made, counted on the prought in so far 481 prisoners, together with 16 machine guns."

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The Battle of Fromelles 19-20 July 1916

Australian casualties

stralian casualties 5,5

Soldiers killed in action in preparation for, and at the Battle of Fromelles battle . 1,816 Soldiers died of wounds (includes 36 POWs) 299 Total soldiers killed and died of wounds 2,115

ldiers wounded 3,383

Australian Soldiers captured (of whom 36 died of wounds and 6 died from causes not related to their capture) 492

#### Fromelles Failures

- 1. Planning boundaries
- Australian troops were new to the location
- 3. Poor intelligence was reflected in battle objectives
- 4. Artillery had not been calibrated or used
- There were no orders to guard the Old German Lines and protect the flanks
- Australian troops were trying to prove themselves and were too adventurous
- 7. The Australian troops wanted to help their mates in trouble military discipline broke down & reserves stayed in the battle consequence was that troops ran short of ammunition.

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German photographs of the battlefield taken the following morning.

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Australian Prisoners of War assembled

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Australian Prisoners of War wounds treated and interviewed, including CAPT Charles MILLS

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Australian POW's marched through Lille

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Cobbers statue of Simon Frazer carrying in a wounded Australian soldier – wounded were brought in for 3 days.

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Cemeteries constructed – VC Corner with 410 unidentied Austrians buried and names of 1299 soldiers with no known grave listed



And memorials erected in 1919 – 5<sup>th</sup> Division Memorial at Polygon Wood listing battles of significance to the soldiers – Fromelles was their first battle

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Local, State and National War Memorials were dedicated – The Foundation Stones of the Anzac Memorial in Sydney were set on the 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battle on 19 July 1932,

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The battlefield were cleared, drained and returned to agricultural use

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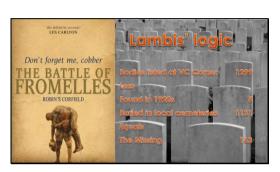


The Cobber Statue was unveiled on the old German line in 1998



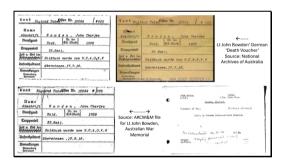
And that might have been how Fromelles was remembered in history, except for this man, retired school teacher, Lambis Englezos

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Lambis and Robin Corfield had heard the stories of an almost unknown battle and Robin wrote the first major analysis of Fromelles since Bean's Official History in 1934. Lambis visited the Fromelles battlefield and cemeteries and did some maths.

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Lambis researched the Service
Records in the National Archives for
all 1299 soldiers with no known
graves and found German
documentation on some.
The Australian Red Cross had
donated its Wounded and Missing
Enquiry Bureau files to the AWM and
had been digitised revealing more
German documentation.

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Lambis presented his case to Army with the assistance of supporters, however this was a drawn out process so in 2006 public awareness was raised

#### The GUARD investigation

- Glasgow University Archaeological Research Division
- Commissioned in early 2007 by Australian Army to confirm the presence of burial pits
- Discover as much about the site as possible without breaking the ground

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Geophys – showed little disturbacne in layers

Metal detecots – regular scattering Aerial photos showed 8 pits dug after battle – 3 of which remained open until 1918.

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## Exploration begins

Techniques included:

- geophysical survey;topographic survey;
- metal detector survey.



Geophys – showed little disturbance in layers

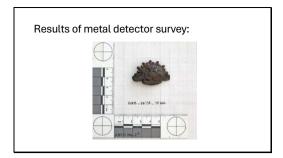
Metal detecots – regular scattering Aerial photos showed 8 pits dug after battle – 3 of which remained open until 1918.

#### Slide 52



Geophys – showed little disturbacne in layers

Metal detecots – regular scattering Aerial photos showed 8 pits dug after battle – 3 of which remained open until 1918.



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A good luck charm issued by the Shire of Alberton (VIC) was found. Only one soldier from Alberton was on the list of the "missing" with German documentation. Incredibly, it was Pte Harry WILLIS, the great uncle of Tim Whitford who had helped Lamis with his research. This was proof positive that Australian soldiers killed in the battle had been buried by the Germans in the vicinity.

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Lambis was a regular visitor to the Pheasant Wood site and said he could feel the presence of the Australian soldiers.
This photo is known as "Lambis: You will never walk alone".



Earlier non-invasive surveys and archival research suggested that soldiers were buried at the site by German Forces following the Battle of Fromelles on 19-20 July 1916.

Over the period 26 May - 13 June 2008, the Australian Army commissioned a limited excavation of the Pheasant Wood group burial site in Fromelles, France.

The limited excavation by the Glasgow University Archaeology Research Division (GUARD) confirmed the presence of WWI remains. GUARD estimated that up to 400 remains were located in the site.

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#### **GUARD** results:

- · confirmed the presence of 8 pits
- found remains in pits 1 to 5
- most of pit 6 and all of pits 7 and 8 were empty
- estimated remains of between 225 and 400 Australian and British soldiers

•the remains were well preserved in generally wet, sticky clay along with some equipment, including eyelets from German groundsheets that had been used to lower some of the bodies in the pit.

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A commemorative service marked the closing of the GUARD excavation

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The owner of the land, Madame Demassiet, offered the site to the Australian Government – "this land belongs to the soldiers"

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The Australian Army convened an Historians Roundtable of key people to establish a "working List" of the names of the soldiers who might have been buried at Pheasant Wood.

6 of these key people were members of the Families and Friends of the First AIF (FFFAIF). Prof. Bruce Scates (historian), Lambis Englezos AM (Fromelles advocate), Sandra Playle (genealogist), Tim Lycette (former

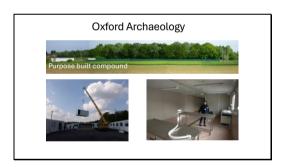
detective), Tim Whitford (descendant) and Jim Munro Others included representatives of the Australian Army, AWM, DVA, ADFA.

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The Tender for exhumation, possible identification and re-internment of soldiers remains was awarded to Oxford Archaeology.

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Richard Wright AM, Archaeologist
Emeritus Professor of Anthropology, University of Sydney
Richard Wright is an archaeologist who developed a set of statistical tools, writing
his own programs, for evaluating human remains, the programs ultimately being
grouped into the widely-used package MY-ARCH.
In 1990, Riuchard became involved as Chief Archaeologist to the International
Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and was working in Ukraine on mass
graves of the Holiocaust, and then for the UN - leading the team recovering bodies
and forensic evidence from mas graves in Bosnia, and giving testimony at war
crimes trials in The Hague.
Richard's international standings as whim invited in 2006 to be the Forensic
Anthropologist for the Fromelles Project (Pheasant Wood) for the Recovering
Overseas Australia's Missing Inc. for recovering remains of Australian soldiers from
WWI. From 2009 – 2013 Richard was Senior Forensic Archaeologist and Adviser,
Fromelles Project (Pheasant Wood), Oxford Archaeology
In 2013 Richard was Awarded the Rhys Jones Medal for Outstanding Contribution to
Australian Archaeology by the Australian Archaeological Association

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000b Hitler street Fromelles 26 Jun 1940

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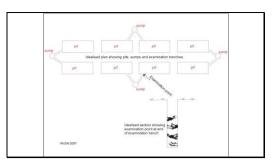


000c Hitler bunker Fromelles 26 Jun 1940

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001c How big are the graves



001d Idealised Plan & Section

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001g P1020459

Slide 72



006a 02 P1020256

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007a Visit

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007dDrainage

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040 Metal detector

Slide 76



043b DNA protection

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043b

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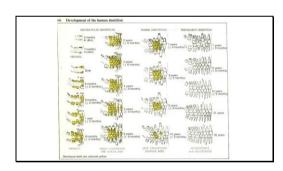
045b anthropological analysis

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045c 48.1DSC\_0267

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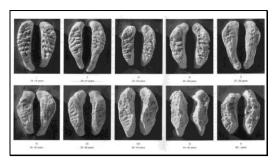


070 SchourEruption

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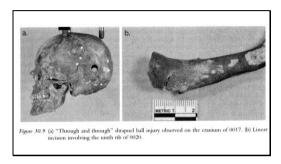


073 epiphyses femur tibia



076 Todd pubic symphysis

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081 shrapnel bayonet

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082 28DSC\_0016

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083 badges

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083a Cigarette Holder

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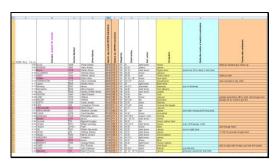


084 coins\_Kate Brady

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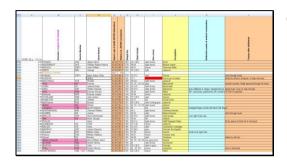


085 Iodine Ampule\_Kate Brady



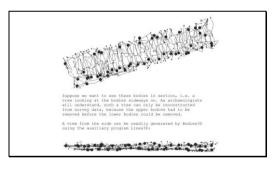
091 optimisation top

Slide 91



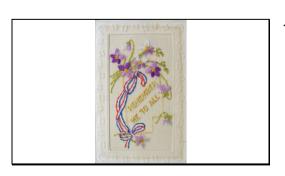
093 optimisation base

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097 rotate grave plan and section

Slide 93



116 Remember me to all - card



#### 117 Fromelles Cover

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Ultimately, it was the commitment and professionalism of everyone at Oxford Archaeology that led to the recovery of 250 soldiers and almost 6,000 individual artefacts. The meticulous manner with which Oxford Archaeology recovered these remains and artefacts resulted in the identification of the majority of the soldiers by nationality, and many of those by name. It was a monumental achievement by any measure.

On behalf of all involved in the Fromelles Project, I thank Oxford Archaeology for the significant part that it played in the recovery, identification and honouring of the missing soldiers from the Battle of Fromelles. The Australian Army will be forever grateful.

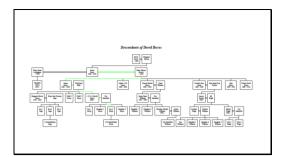
118 Chief of Army commendation

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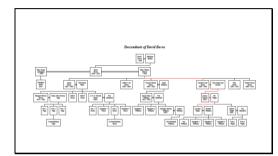


Genealogical research to locate descendants for DNA profile matching. Lt Robert Burns



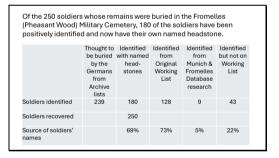
Lt Robert Burns An all-male line from the soldier's father

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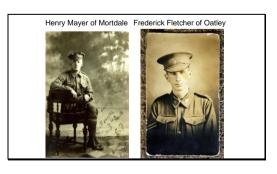
Lt Robert Burns An all-female line from the soldier's mother

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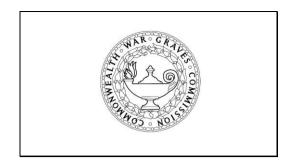


Identifications to date

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Identifications include



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The Fromelles (Pheasant Wood)
Military Cemetery was constructed
to re-inter the remains of the soldiers
recovered.

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With full military honours



Each soldier was afforded a separate funeral service.

The casket arrived in a German made Mercedes Hearse – a poignant reminder that the Germans transported the soldiers remains to the burial pits.

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Pall-bearers from the Australian and British Armies.

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A grave-side service with Australian Chaplain Catie Inches-Ogden CSC

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A military salute

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The Last Post was sounded

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Un-named headstones were installed for each soldier buried, pending the identification process being completed.

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The final military funeral was conducted on the 94<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle on 19 July 2010.



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H.R.H. Prince of Wales and H.E. the Governor-General of Australia officiated at the dedication

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Viewed from a different perspective

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Viewed from a different perspective

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The Demassiett family (land owners) with Prince Charles

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Lambis Englezos with daughter Sophie and Prince Charles

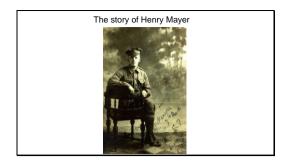
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The Australian Chief of Army, General Ken Gillespie and Governor –General Dame Quentin Bryce address relatives

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Henry Mayer's Bible was found in Stockport UK and sent to Hurstville Council as his relatives could not be located

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The Bible is kept in the Hurstville Museum

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One of Henry's relatives was found - Helen Newton



Henry's Bible was loaned by Hurstville Council to be taken to the 2010 Dedication Ceremony in Fromelles and read at Henry's grave

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Relatives of Henry Mayer at his grave

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Henry's relatives with Secretary of the Fromelles Remembrance Association and FFFAIF Member Carole Laignel (nee Mayer)

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#### Reflections on the Fromelles story => 108 years after the battle

Within 30 years, the Battle of Fromelles has been taken from relative obscurity to sit with its peer battles in Australia's military history.

More is known about the battle than almost any other battle Australians were involved in, with the exception of Monash's masterpiece at Hamel.

The battle and soldiers are commemorated annually in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Fromelles.

The battle is analysed in an increasing number of books and will have coverage in school textbooks and classes and secondary teachers will become familiar with the battle and the Fromelles story/

This is a story that we have been part of, Today we will have the opportunity to explore some aspect of the story.

#### Reflections on the Fromelles story => Fromelles is more widely recognised

- > The is a commemorative tree at the Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne
- > A replica Cobbers Statue was unveiled in Melbourne in 2008
- > Commemorative services are held annually in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane as well as in Fromelles.
- Soil from the Fromelles battlefield has been included in the 100 soils samples from significant Military sites that are set into a ring embedded in the floor of the Hall of Service in the Centenary Extensions of the Anzac Memorial in Sydney.

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#### Fromelles - key questions

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