

*2018 Battlefield Tour:*  
*The Hundred Days Offensive*



**ROSL**

**ROYAL OVER-SEAS LEAGUE**

— FOUNDED 1910 —

*Trip itinerary*

*An introduction to the battles of 1918*

ROSL's commemoration of the centenary of the First World War continues with a tour reflecting on the battles of 1918 between St Quentin and Amiens. After the stalemate of the previous years of the war, 1918 saw dramatic movements especially in the area of our study. In March the Fifth Army was forced to retreat, fighting a number of famous rearguard actions in the process before the Germans were finally checked in front of Amiens. It was from this line that the Allies began their offensive, the so-called "Hundred Days" which ended when the Germans accepted Armistice terms on 11 November.

### **FRIDAY 6 JULY**

Our study of the 1918 campaigns begins on 30 December 1917 at Welsh Ridge near Cambrai. Here the Germans launched a trial attack for their new tactics, attacking the Royal Naval Division across snow-covered ground. The counter-attack by the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Artists Rifles is the theme for "Over the Top", one of the most reproduced paintings of the war, which was painted by John Nash who took part in the action.

This area was also crucial ground when the Germans began their Spring Offensive in March 1918, which we will study as we proceed to Amiens and our hotel, the Mercure Amiens Cathedrale. Group dinner in the hotel.

### **SATURDAY 7 JULY**

We will focus on the German Spring Offensive, Operation Michael, or the *Kaiserschlacht*, between 21 March and 25 April. Among the actions we will study are Manchester Hill, where Lt Col Wilfrith Elstob won a posthumous VC and the South African Brigade's fight to the end at Marrieres Wood. This period also saw one of the last mounted cavalry charges, by the Canadians at Moreuil Wood and the first battle between tanks at Cachy. We will finish the day at Villers Bretonneux with a visit to the Australian National Memorial and the Sir John Monash Centre which will be opened in April.

### **SUNDAY 8 JULY**

On 4 July 1918 Australian and American troops made an attack at le Hamel which was taken as the model for the new combined arms tactics employed in the Hundred Days advance. So it is appropriate to begin the day at le Hamel and we will then move to the start lines for the Battle of Amiens on 8 August which was described by Ludendorff as the "Black Day of the German Army". We will follow the Canadian, Australian and British troops as they advanced on Peronne, culminating in the capture of Mont St Quentin by the Australians. The Allies pushed on to the Hindenburg Line which was attacked and breached on 29 September. We will visit the American Cemetery at Bony and Riqueval Bridge, captured by the North Midlands Division in one of the most famous actions of 1918.

### **MONDAY 9 JULY**

Our journey home takes us through the rear areas of the British Expeditionary Force, giving the opportunity to remember the vital role of the logistic and medical troops. The British Cemetery at Etaples contains the graves not only of those who died of battle wounds but also many of the victims of the 1918 Flu epidemic which, worldwide, killed many more than the war itself. Lunch will be taken at Montreuil-sur-Mer, the location of the British General Headquarters from 1916 to the end of the war. Before lunch we will visit the Chateau which was part of the headquarters complex.