



HM Government



## Announcement on plans for the commemoration of the Centenary of the Battle of the Somme 2016

The UK Government is pleased to announce that a national commemorative event to mark the centenary of the Battle of the Somme will be held at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Thiepval Memorial in Northern France on 1 July 2016. This will be led by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, on behalf of the UK Government, and the French Mission du Centenaire de la Première Guerre mondiale, on behalf of the French Government, working in partnership with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and The Royal British Legion.

This event will draw upon the fitting tribute to the sacrifice and courage of the men who participated in the Battle, which is held at the Thiepval Memorial each year and organised by the Legion and CWGC, but will be larger in scale. We anticipate there being around 10,000 attendees, with significant public attendance. As such, we are announcing our plans as early as possible to ensure that all are able to make arrangements accordingly.

Due to the site's capacity limitations, access to the event will need to be carefully managed to enable as many people as possible to attend safely. In light of the expected significant public interest in this event, and the need to be fair in the distribution of tickets, we plan to make admittance **by ticket only**. Tickets will be free of charge. Tickets for residents of the UK and Ireland will be allocated through a public ballot. The French Government are leading on the distribution of their allocation of tickets. Tickets will be allocated in pairs. The ballot will be launched on 28 September 2015. Details of the ballot can be found here: [www.somme2016.org](http://www.somme2016.org)

Those organisations which traditionally attend and contribute to the commemorative event at the memorial each year will be represented on 1 July 2016.



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We are planning to broadcast the event live to large screens in a number of towns across the Somme region, so that as many people as possible can see the event and participate in a meaningful way, including those who are not successful in the ballot.

There will be a wide programme of events taking place in the UK. Events will also take place in France to mark the 141 days of the battle. More details can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/first-world-war-centenary>

<http://centenaire.org>

We hope that you will understand the need for a different process for the centenary year in light of the increase in public interest. If you have any questions about the ballot that are not answered on the website please e-mail [Somme2016@culture.gov.uk](mailto:Somme2016@culture.gov.uk)

Details of the wider programme of events taking place in France throughout the period, as well as details of travel and accommodation can be found here: [www.somme-battlefields.com](http://www.somme-battlefields.com)

We would prefer to receive applications online, but if this is not possible you can also enter the ballot from the 28th September by requesting an entry form by writing to:

The Centenary of the Battle of the Somme,  
The First World War Centenary Team,  
The Department for Culture, Media and Sport,  
4th Floor, 100 Parliament Street,  
SW1A 2BQ



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