

Reliving the Great War around Europe

The story of the First World War is one that has been told and retold in classrooms and museums in the last century taking on different perspectives from political to social and even familial and always with a new lesson to be learnt. As the world approaches the 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War preparations are well under way for the centenary celebrations in different countries all over Europe.



However, one of the biggest players in the wars, Germany, is still yet to outline its plans and is lagging behind its counterparts with only one concrete event confirmed: a small-scale exhibition set to tell the story from the beginning of the war to the expansion of the European Union in 26 posters. Other European nations have however made major preparation and visitors can expect to have a firsthand feel of what the war was like in the various regions.

In **France** for example, the centenary celebrations will be preceded by Grande Collecte that will happen from the 9th of November to the 16th of November 2014. The centenary celebrations will start on the evening of the 10th November 2014 at Comedie Française, a prestigious theater with an artistic event that will be headed by comedians. On November 11, 2014 there will be an international scale ceremony held in Nord-Pas de Calais region to honor the memory of the fallen soldiers and will take place in Notre Dame de Lorette, a military cemetery. There will be tours in the Reims region between 2014 and 2018. There are already over 250 remembrance venues in Reims that have been identified as well as in the Vosges. There is also a planned prelude, the grand parade held on the Champs-Elysees, to the official launching of the celebrations in July 14 on the Bastille Day since the war was declared on 3 August 1914.



In the **UK** the IWM, Imperial War Museum, will lead commemorative events in a national program with new galleries being planned for the occasion. There will be national commemorations of the Battle of Jutland, the beginning of the Battle of the Somme, the declaration of war by Britain and the Armistice of November 1918. There will be a performance titled The Second Minute presented by the Nottingham

Playhouse: Trent to Trenches that will showcase the heroic, heartbreaking and comic tales of soldiers in Nottinghamshire, a Commonwealth-themed service in George Square on August 4th, an invite only Candlelit Vigil hosted in Westminster Abbey on the same day and there will be Flypasts at the location where Downtown Abbey is filmed, Highclere Castle and other stately homes like Castle Howard.

In **Belgium**, a major commemoration will take place at the Art-Deco tower built in Mons in honor of Belgium's sacrifice on August 4, 2014 with official ceremonies taking place in Mons that same afternoon. The second major ceremony that will be international and held on the same day will take place at St Symphorien Military Cemetery 2 km east of Mons. This will be followed by ceremonies in Mons on the 23rd of August that will include a sound-and-light celebration of the Angels of Mons and the opening of a Mons Memorial Museum in 2015.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina** there will be an event titled "The Sarajevo Heart of Europe" held between June 21 and June 28, 2014. The festival will offer various cultural events that will focus on the beginning of the war that was triggered by the assassination of Francis Ferdinand in Sarajevo.



In **Denmark**, which remained neutral throughout the war, there will be a commemoration held in September 2014. The Gallipoli landing will be commemorated in **Turkey** on 25th April 2015 during the official Anzac Day commemorations.

The First World War had a big impact on the world and it is not only European countries looking to mark this historical period. There are plenty of lectures planned in nations around the world and thus the lessons learned in the war will be taught to more generations showcasing different aspects of the war.

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