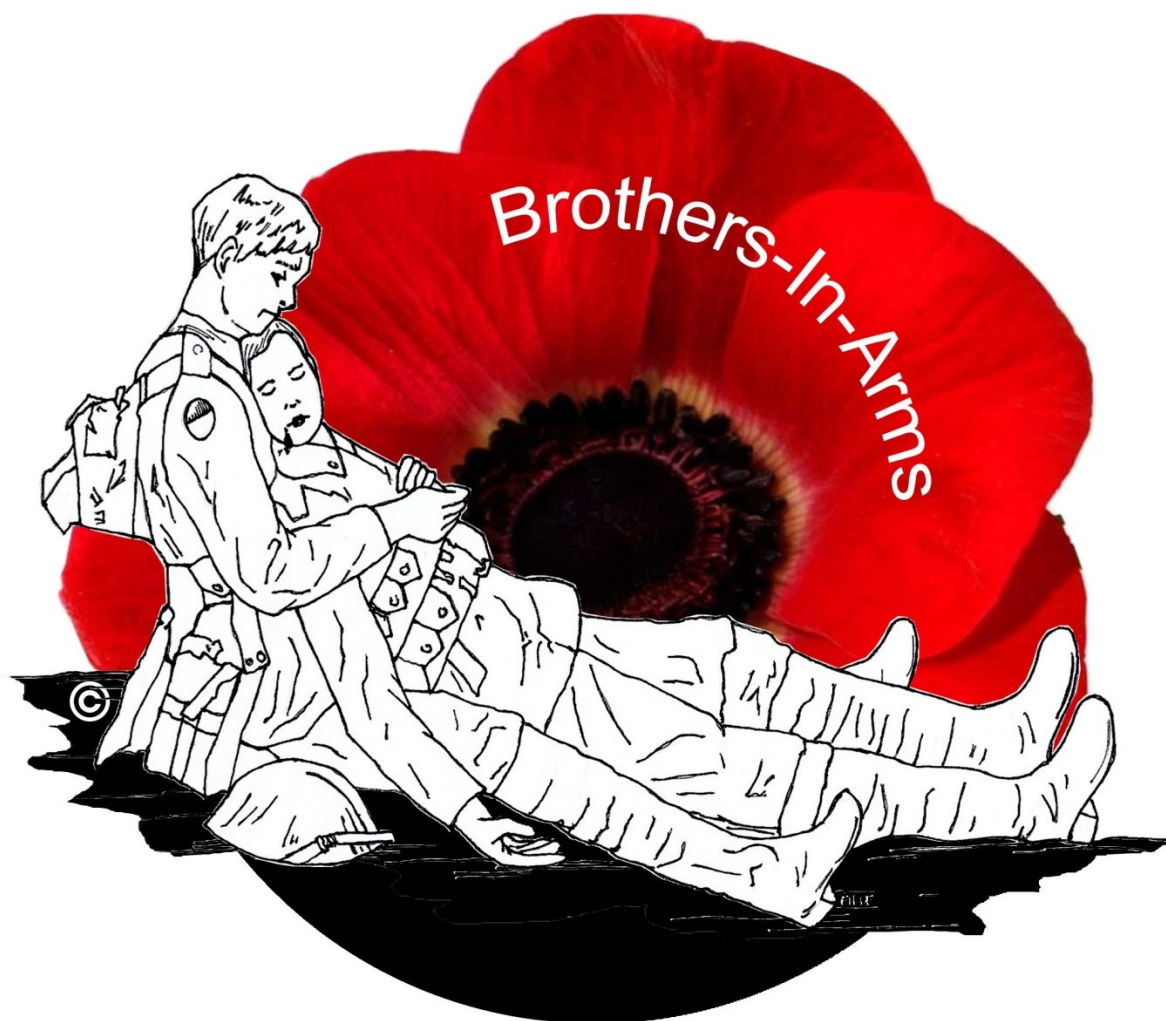


# Brothers-In-Arms Memorial Project



In Honour of All Brothers Who Served in World War I

# INTRODUCTION

*It is every parent's nightmare: losing a child. Yet it happens all too often that parents have bury their children. These sad events happened all too frequently during the First World War, when over nine million people were killed. Losing one son was terrible, but lots of families lost more than one son in the Great War.*

The Smith family from Barnard Castle lost 5 out of 6 sons in the trenches of the First World War. Torn apart by grief the father also died in 1918. The only surviving son was pulled out of the trenches by Buckingham Palace and the War Office. He would live to be 72 years old and have 5 children.

Amy Beechey from Lincoln lost 5 of her 8 sons in the war. When she was thanked by Queen Mary during a visit to Buckingham Palace, Amy replied: "It was no sacrifice at all, madam. I have never wanted them to go."

Annie Souls from Great Rissington in the Cotswolds also lost 5 of her 6 sons in the war. Her son Frederick is still missing, and until her death Annie burnt a candle by the window, hoping her son would at last find his way home.



Figure 1: the Seabrook brothers.

Of course this is not an all English story!

Canadian Charlotte Wood from Winnipeg lost 5 sons and saw 2 more return to Canada heavily wounded.

The Australian brothers Theo, George and William Seabrook from Sydney went into action for the first time in the Battle of the Menin Road on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1917. It was their only action in the Great War, as all three got killed. William was buried at Lyssenthoek Cemetery near Poperinge, the other two brothers are listed on the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing in Ypres.

The Christophers family from New Zealand lost 4 of the 5 sons in the war. Only Quentin, who was too young to volunteer, survived his parents Anthony and Juliet. Victor died aged 29 at Gallipoli (1915). Herbert, aged 27, got killed in the Battle of the Somme (1916). Julian, aged 33, died in the aftermath of the Battle of Passchendaele (1917) and the eldest brother Reginald was killed at the age of 36 in the Allied End Offensives of October 1918.

Thomas and Agnes Collins from Ireland waved goodbye to 6 sons during the war. After the campaigns in the Somme and Flanders, only 1 son would return home. 4 sons got killed, 1 went missing.

The Tocher family from Aberdeen, Scotland, also lost five sons in the Great War. All 5 brothers served with the Gordon Highlanders, but went off to war one by one. George was killed along the Menin Road near Ypres in 1915, while three of his brothers were killed in the 1916 offensive at the Somme. Peter was taken prisoner at the Battle of Le Cateau (1914) and spent the rest of the war in a prison camp in Germany. He returned home to Scotland, but died in 1923.

French couple Jules Ruellan and Marguerite du Riveau had 18 children in total. No less than 10 sons were recruited in the French army and served in the frontline trenches. Only 4 of them would return, and 1 of those 4 would die in 1930 from being gassed during the war.

US brothers Governor and Perander Rogers were recruited – one by draft, the other volunteered – in July 1917 and left home in September 1917. After training at Camp David they sailed to France and were involved in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of the Marne (near Chateau-Thierry). Both brothers were killed on 12<sup>th</sup> August 1918 when a shell burst close to them. Governor was trying to get his brother to safety as Per was wounded by sniper fire. They were buried side by side in Fimes, but their bodies were reburied at Arlington Cemetery after the war.

Also the story of the youngest German casualty on the Western front is a tale of brotherly love: Walther and Paul Mak volunteered for army service in August 1914. Paul, born on 19<sup>th</sup> July 1900, died of wounds on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1915. His brother Walter was with him when he died.

In the Gallipoli campaign 196 pairs of brothers within the Commonwealth troops got killed. Only 13 of them have a known grave. The three Legge brothers – Bertram, George and Cyril – joined the British forces together and fought side by side at Suvla Bay. Both Bertram and Cyril were killed when going over the top on August 21, 1915. George remained in the army and won a military medal for gallantry on the battlefield. He was killed in the Battle of the Selle in October 1918.

The troops of the 1st battalion Newfoundland Regiment lost 255 dead, 386 wounded and 91 missing in the Battle of Beaumont-Hamel on 1st July 1916. Among the dead were 14 pairs of brothers.

All these tragic stories tell of brothers who got actually killed together. Yet, thousands of men lost one or more brothers during the war while fighting in other units. Until now no major research has been conducted about these family tragedies that influenced so many lives, even today.

England's last veteran Harry Patch, who died at the age of 111, described it as follows: "Too many died, don't go to war!"

# FINDING THE ZONNEBEKE FIVE

This story is that typical “message in a bottle” story. Although it is all but typical. Never before did a message contain that great a story.

During road works to lay a new gas pipe line in the hamlet of Westhoek in 2006, Tom Heyman, operating the machine, suddenly stopped digging and called Johan Vandewalle, an amateur archaeologist. Tom was convinced that he had found human remains just beside the road, and immediately linked them to the battlefield that Westhoek once was. Johan rushed over and could only confirm that these remains had to be those of a World War I soldier. He contacted the police and the Mayor of Zonnebeke, and got green light from Dieter Demey and Archeo 7 to gather a team and start excavating as soon as possible.

It would be an amazing experience for all of them. After clearing the first grave, they noticed another grave just next to the first one. And then another, and another, and another. In total 5 Australian soldiers were exhumed. The last Australian body, however, was to make an everlasting impression on all who were involved. This fifth body was that of Australian private John Hunter.



In all, three of the five soldiers would be identified by DNA research.

The body of John Hunter was not thrown in the grave like the other four bodies. Clearly this man had not been buried like the others, someone had taken great care in laying John Hunter to rest. Research led to the family in Australia, who confirmed that the story in the family was that John – or Jack as he was known in the family – had been buried by his younger brother Jim.

When Johan uncovered John’s head, which was wrapped in his ground sheet, it was as if lightning struck. Johan looked straight in John eyes and with the sunlight in the right angle, Johan could clearly see the colour of John’s eyes. It was an instant moment, but it lasted long enough to be photographed. At the time only Johan experienced this awesome moment, but the photographs will certainly move generations to come.

## About Johan Vandewalle



Johan Vandewalle (°1961) grew up amid the stories of the Great War and as a child played on the former battlefields, often stumbling upon bunkers, dugouts and remains of trenches. Johan developed a passion for the so-called underground warfare, and did magnificent work as an amateur archaeologist excavating tunnels and dugouts from the First World War. He worked on television documentaries, such as *The Underground War / Zero Hour*, *Vampire Dug Out*, *Lost In Flanders* and several Belgian documentaries. Together with historians Peter Barton and Peter Doyle he wrote the book *‘Beneath Flanders Fields’* and he was involved in excavating the mass graves of Australian soldiers in Fromelles (2008). Johan Vandewalle is passionate about the history of the war and is always trying to learn more...

## About the Hunter brothers

John Hunter was the eldest of 7 sons of Henry and Emily Hunter from Nanango, Queensland. Father Henry's health was deteriorating and the boys needed to help out in the sawmill their father ran. 25-year-old Jim wanted to join the military to fight in Europe. He volunteered on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1916. As older brother (and close friend) John thought it his duty to protect his younger brother and volunteered as well two days later. John and Jim left Sydney aboard HMAT Ayrshire on 24<sup>th</sup> January 1917. They were drafted to the 49<sup>th</sup> battalion, a unit that consisted of mostly Queenslanders. They sailed to Egypt to complete their training and were taken to France nearly a year later. Jim was quickly promoted to Lance Corporal, but was satisfied with the rank of Private if he could stay with his elder brother John.



49<sup>th</sup> Battalion was sent up to the front line for the Battle of Polygon Wood. At dawn they would attack, but just before the attack started, John was sent out to investigate a piece of shiny metal in no-man's land. As John crawled out, he was thrown back by the explosion of an artillery shell and was severely wounded. He managed to crawl back to his own trenches, but died in his brother's arms. Jim had to go in for the attack, but later brought the body of his elder brother John to a temporary cemetery at Westhoek and buried him with his own hands. He lovingly and carefully covered the body with a standard Army issue ground sheet, so it would preserve the body well. Jim promised to come back after the war and take the human remains of his elder brother John back to Australia. He did indeed return in 1918, only to see that the terrain was so badly destroyed by artillery shelling that he had no idea where the graves were, and he had no idea where to start digging for the body.

Also Jim was wounded later on in the war, one of those wounds sustained in a gas attack. He managed to survive the hell, though, and returned to Australia. Back home he married Esme Margaret Bulter, with whom he had 6 children.

When a dementing Jim drew his last breath, he called out the name of his brother who lay buried in a faraway place called Flanders Fields.

The name of John Hunter was listed on the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing in 1927, but through DNA research the body was identified in 2007. It was Mollie Millis, John's niece, who provided the matching DNA. 90 years after his death John was reburied with full military honour at Buttes New British Cemetery in Polygon Wood, together with the other 4 soldiers that were exhumed by Johan Vandewalle and his team.

# THE MEMORIAL PARK

The story of the Hunter brothers made Johan think about other sets of brothers that must have experienced a similar fate. Together with a team of WW1 enthusiasts, he started digging through the history of the Great War, looking for other pairs of brothers who were killed in the war. The team soon realized there were so many...

After receiving an email from a relative of John and Jim Hunter, saying that Jim called out to his brother John with his very last breath in 1975, Johan realized that it would be an amazing thing if he and his team could reunite their souls and at the same time commemorate so many other family tragedies. The concept of the Brother-In-Arms Memorial was born...

*"... the moment he passed away he opened his eyes and called out 'Jack' as if he saw him in a vision, and was reaching out to him, like he had come to take him home."*  
(from the email by Margie Burke, dated 30 January 2015)

## About the location

The memorial will be erected on the former battlefields of the First World War, on a privately owned terrain near Polygon Wood. The terrain was part of the German second line of defence, created from 1916 onwards. The Australian troops of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Division took this German stronghold in the Battle of the Menin Road (20<sup>th</sup> September 1917) and later used it as the jumping off line for the Battle of Polygon Wood (26<sup>th</sup> September 1917). It is also very close to where John and Jim were in the frontline trenches at the start of the Battle of Polygon Wood and thus close to where John was killed. The terrain looks out over Westhoek Ridge and Ypres. It was at Westhoek Ridge that John was buried by his younger brother Jim.



Figure 2: Aerial view of the location.

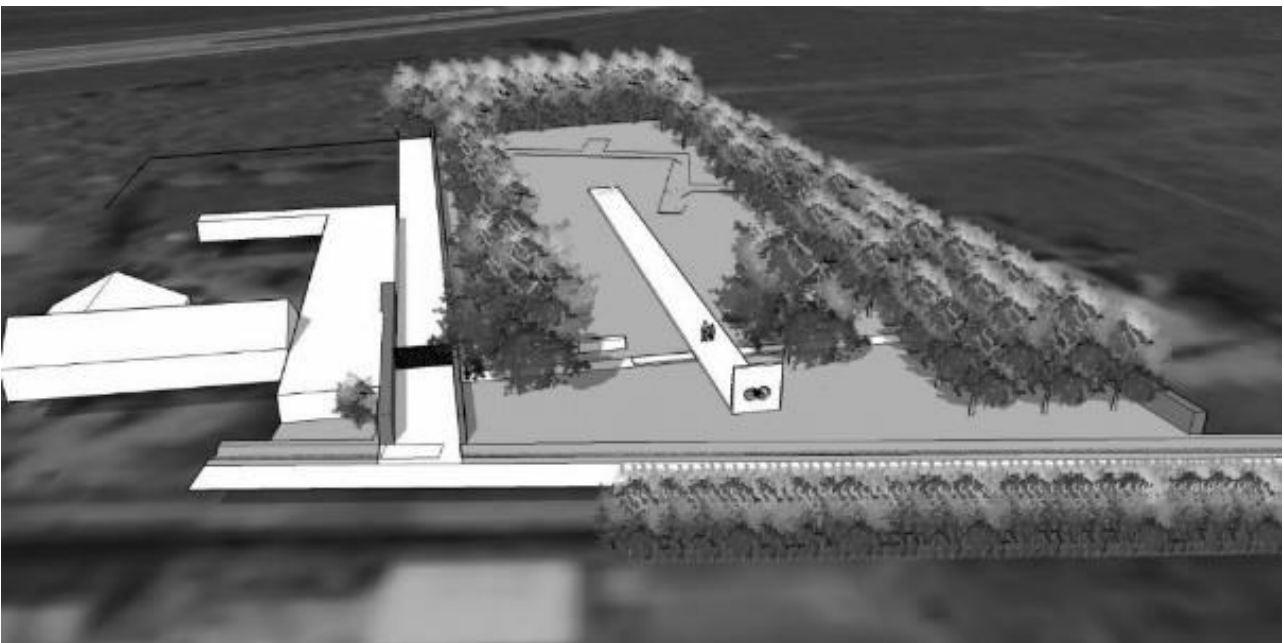
The memorial will be clearly visible from the street, but entry will be from the side through a concealed entrance gate.



*Figure 3: frontal view of the location as it was in September 2015.*

## About the design

The memorial park was designed by Andy Malengier.



*Figure 4: The memorial park as designed by Andy Malengier.*

The memorial park will present pervasive architecture which will ensure the visitor is profoundly confronted with the harsh reality. The idea is to create a universal and timeless memorial upon which future generations will muse on the effects of war on families. Architecture and landscape should find perfect harmony and create an ideal setting for a peace story.

The 40 metres long and 4 metres broad plinth symbolises the immense gap between the two fighting parties, and between war and peace. At each end of the plinth the visitor will either be confronted with the horror of war or with the battle for peace.

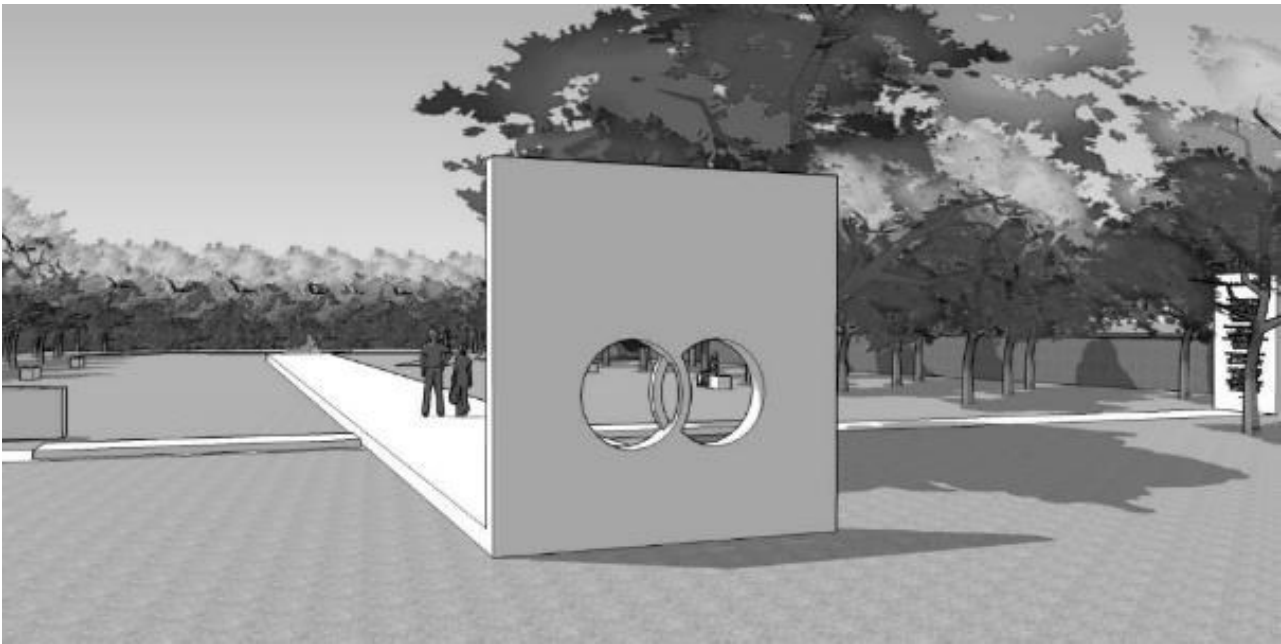


Figure 5: Frontal view of the memorial park.

At the front of the plinth there will be a piece of art, 4 by 4 metres, with a viewing window of two entwined and united circles, symbolising the unification of the two brothers so brutally ripped apart. The memorial should resemble the essence of the eternal commitment, not only between families, but also between nations, between comrades and between people world-wide. Just like the In Flanders Fields Museum in Ypres this memorial should emphasize the individual stories of the Great War and thus generate mixed emotions while personalising the small-scaled history of the Great War to every single visitor.

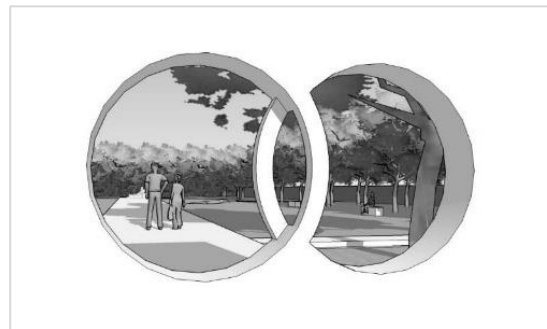


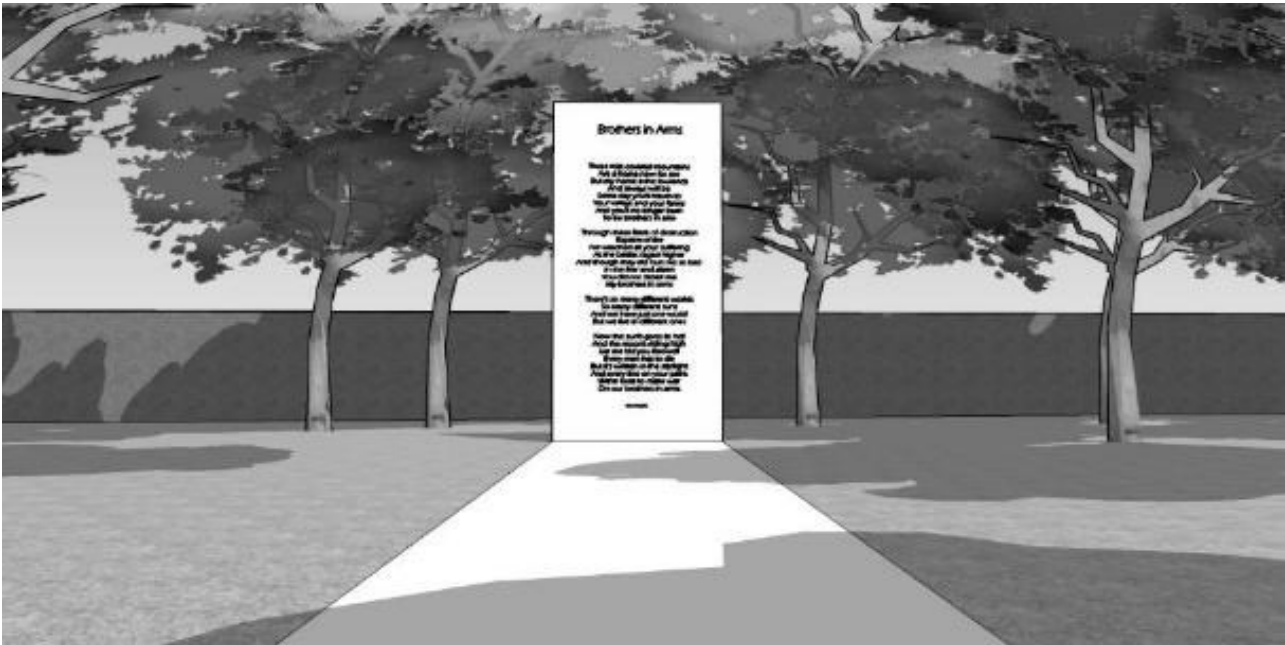
Figure 6: Entwined rings symbolise the reuniting the souls of the brothers.

The memorial park will have to be entered from the side, following a path coming from Polygon Wood. Passing a wall indicating that one is entering the Brothers-In-Arms Memorial, the visitor should understand that he/she is just a temporary spectator and is not part of the philosophy of the design.





The side entrance also provides an element of surprise. Once the memorial park has been entered a clear perspective is provided towards the sculpture symbolising a soldier dying in his brother's arms. In the extension of the entrance path, and beyond the plinth, a stone plaque will bear a poem written by Jim Hunter.



## To My Brothers-In-Arms

It is Morn – the Day breaks cold,  
And I think of the days gone by;  
Our hearts were light – we were brave and bold  
When we sailed away and left the fold,  
With our mates – with hearts as true as gold –  
And far too young to die.

And my mind goes back to the foreign lands  
Where we showed our strength and might.  
When the foeman's blood was on our hands,  
And we fought in mud and on the sands –  
We were victors – cheering crowds – brass bands –  
We had put the foe to flight.

Now I kneel and mourn for those souls reborn,  
Who are sleeping in foreign grounds.  
They marched along with a jaunty gait –  
Each head held high, each back was straight,  
And they knew not what might be their fate  
Till the final trumpet sound.

The idea is that the visitor will walk up to the statue, depicting a soldier holding his dying brother in his arms.



Figure 7: the bronze statue of the brothers in arms.

The bronze statue will be created by Australian sculpture artist Louis Laumen, in close consultation with Peter Corlett, the Australian bronze sculpture artist responsible for *Cobbers* and other moving sculptures on the Western Front.

The design of the sculpture was thought of by Johan Vandewalle, upon returning from his trip to Australia and after meeting the relatives of John and Jim Hunter. Johan made a sketch of his ideas, as he was having trouble trying to sleep in the plane on the way back home. It was also at that moment that Johan came up with the title for his project. By pure coincidence the song by Dire Straits was playing.

The official sketch of the two brothers was made by Soren Hawkes, who produced the image as a postcard that can be bought. All revenue received from the selling of these postcards is entirely donated to the Brothers-In-Arms Memorial Project.



Figure 8: the postcard by Soren Hawkes (© Soren Hawkes, Brothers-In-Arms Memorial).

The quiet and natural surroundings of the memorial will create a museological context for the artwork. It is only normal that a sculpture, depicting a far from everyday scene about a dying soldier held in his brother's arms, is set in the most beautiful landscape surroundings. The visitor should experience a transcendental atmosphere. The deep and silent emotion should stick to the bones and never ever be forgotten.

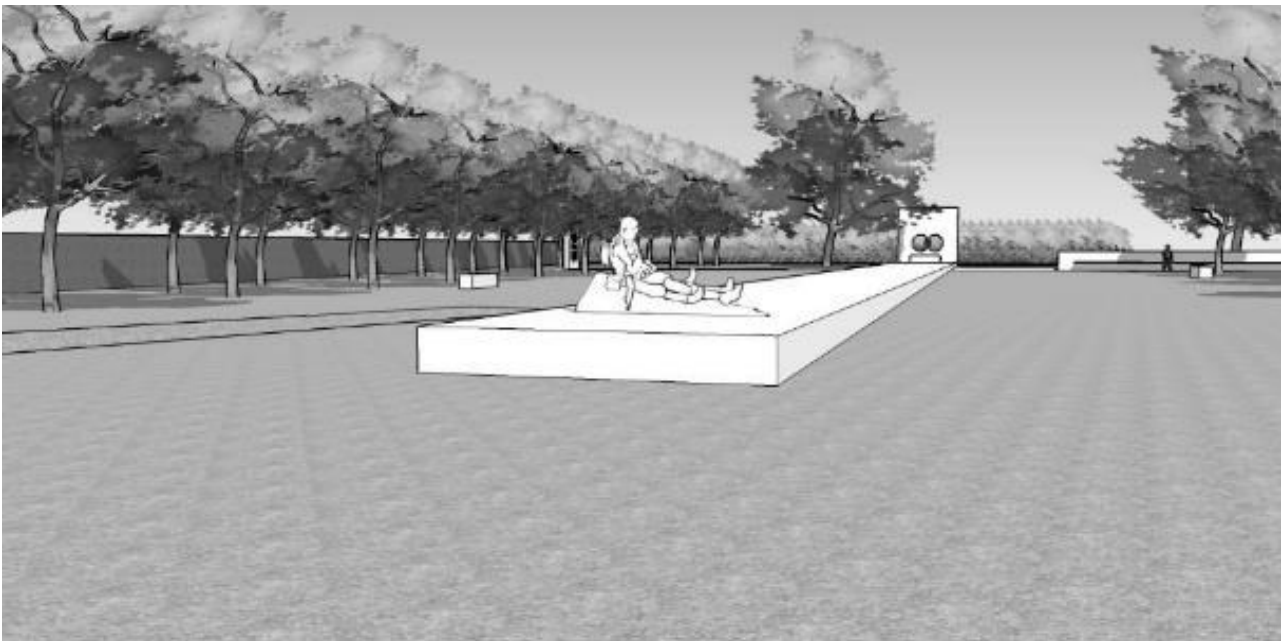


Figure 9: The Memorial Park as seen from the rear.

## About Andy Malengier

Andy Malengier (°1971, Ieper) is a renowned landscape architect based in Wervik. He is well-known for his designs of cemeteries and remembrance sites. His philosophy is simple and clear: Andy wants his designs to have a positive effect on the well-being of people and the further redevelopment of the outdoor space.

As a child Andy loved the outdoors, playing in nature and drawing scenes from it on paper. At the age of 15 Andy took up lessons in St Luke's Artistic College in Ghent. There he was confronted with more than just drawing: architecture, painting, design, art history and so much more was suddenly his everyday life. This training proved to be the perfect step to start studies in biosciences and landscape architecture at the Ghent University.

After finishing his studies, Andy immediately chose to get more experience in landscape architecture and started working for landscaping companies. In the meantime he took a course on Monument & Landscape Preservation at the Art Academy in Antwerp. He did not finish these studies though, as he was appointed Head of the Urban Parks Department in Wervik. Three years later he started his own company.

Andy Malengier is active on very different fronts: he designs private gardens, public spaces, business areas and funerary art. He won the International Funeral Award in 1999 with a design for the new cemetery in Wervik. He also won IFA awards for funerary art in 2004 and 2007. With his design for the village centre of Oostnieuwkerke he was again awarded top price in a prestigious competition.

## About Louis Laumen

Louis Laumen (°1958) is a Melbourne based bronze sculpture artist. Having moved from the Netherlands to Australia at the age of 2, Louis Laumen really can be described as Australian. He studied at the Victorian College of Arts and graduated in 1984 with distinction as Graduate of Fine Art (Sculpture). He became sculpture instructor for the National Gallery Society Summer School and started lecturing in sculpture at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. Since 1995 Louis Laumen has been a full time professional artist.

His range of various sculptures is quite impressive: the Sir Thomas More statue (Speaker's Garden, Sydney), the Barry Davis portrait bust (Essendon Football Club Hall of Fame), the Pastor Sir Douglas and Lady Gladys Nichols Memorial (Parliament Gardens, Melbourne) and the 'Pompey' Elliott statue (Sturt St. Ballarat) are among his latest work. At the moment he is also working on a series of horsemen for the Boer War Memorial in Canberra.

# THE COST OF THE MEMORIAL PARK

The Brothers-In-Arms Memorial Project team have no doubt at all about the philosophy of the project: we want to spread a universal peace message to the world. That's why the memorial should be created with durable materials. The memorial should be a monument in itself: everlasting and providing the same atmosphere for many generations to come.

The sculpture of the two brothers will be created in bronze. The plinth will be a concrete base covered with hard natural stone. The same goes for the viewing window and the Brothers In Arms plaque. The natural Belgian blue hardstone will create a heavenly atmosphere in contrast with the typical Ypres clay, that was turned into mud during the Great War and emphasizes the horror and pain of the war.

Of course, all these durable materials are quite expensive. To realize our project we will need the support of as many sponsors as possible. We are appealing to both local and international governments, companies and organisations to help raise the amount of money we need to accomplish the dream.

The total cost for the memorial park has been estimated at € 312,000.00 in full.

## The cost in detail

These costs are based on the official quotes of specialists.

Cost description	Amount
▪ Bronze statue by Louis Laument	€ 115,000.00
▪ Concrete plinth and memorials	€ 35,000.00
▪ Seating area	€ 4,000.00
▪ Natural Belgian blue hardstone	€ 32,000.00
▪ Earthworks	€ 95,000.00
▪ Landscaping	€ 24,000.00
▪ Lights	€ 4,500.00
▪ Administrative and extra costs	€ 2,500.00

These costs are the costs for the realization of the memorial park. The continuing costs of maintenance have not been included.

*In the war a total of 9,721,937 troops were killed. If € 0.05 for every dead soldier could be raised, the total sum of € 486,096.85 would be received and the memorial would be guaranteed. We sincerely hope we will be able to make this happen!*

## How can we raise this amount of money?

Johan and his friends started fundraising for this memorial park in 2010, selling hats, polo shirts, sweaters, pins and medallions, and have collected about € 25,000 from visitors world-wide. This fundraising through merchandising and gifts will be continued by the Brothers-In-Arms Memorial Project team in the years to come.

*Any support from individuals is of course still very welcome. If you want to donate, please go to our website [www.brothersinarmsmemorial.org](http://www.brothersinarmsmemorial.org).*

We also have appealed to local and international authorities and have been granted the total sum of € 75,000.00 so far. Other appeals are still under consideration.

Other fundraising activities that will be organized are:

1. Foot, bike and car rally (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) in support of the Brothers In Arms Memorial Project: 24<sup>th</sup> April – 11<sup>th</sup> September 2016.
2. Brothers-In-Arms Memorial Project Festival with more than 20 different artists and music groups: 25<sup>th</sup> June 2016.
3. Brothers-In-Arms Memorial Walk, a guided walking tour visiting the most important sites linked to the story of the Hunter brothers: 25<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

For detailed information about these activities, please visit our website [www.brothersinarmsmemorial.org](http://www.brothersinarmsmemorial.org).

Other fundraising will be organised by visiting service clubs, companies and organisations worldwide. A trip to Australia has been scheduled for 26<sup>th</sup> April 2016 in order to present the project to several organisations and local authorities.

# THE BROTHERS-IN-ARMS MEMORIAL PROJECT TEAM

What was once one man's dream became a whole group's passion!

The story of the brothers (in arms) John and Jim Hunter did not only move Johan Vandewalle and his excavation team. A group of World War I enthusiasts, consisting of battlefield guides, (amateur) historians and military history writers, were so inspired by the story that they decided to create a non-profit organisation to help build the dream.

The Brothers-In-Arms Memorial team consist of:

- Johan Vandewalle, amateur archaeologist and battlefield guide (project coordinator)
- Wouter Feys, battlefield guide and lecturer (chairman)
- Peter Vansteenkiste, battlefield guide (vice-chairman)
- Bert Degrauwe, battlefield guide (secretary)
- Alexander Reynaert, World War I collector (treasurer)
  
- Geert Brouckaert, World War I collector
- Donald Buyze, amateur historian and WW I author
- Stephane Debevere, military
- Koen Descheemaeker
- Luc Dutoit (international relations officer)
- Filip Landuyt, amateur historian
- Jozef Vantomme, legal advisor
- Bart Vermeulen, amateur historian and story-teller



# INTERESTING WEBSITE LINKS

Please use these websites to gather more information about the project and the people behind it.

- [www.brothersinarmsmemorial.org](http://www.brothersinarmsmemorial.org)
- [www.petercorlett.com](http://www.petercorlett.com)
- [www.louislaumen.com](http://www.louislaumen.com)
- [www.andymalengier.be](http://www.andymalengier.be)

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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- Bert Degrauwe, secretary: [bert@brothersinarmsmemorial.org](mailto:bert@brothersinarmsmemorial.org)
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