



‘Footballers of the Great War’

A Battlefield Tour on the Somme

18th – 20th May 2012

I am inviting you to no picnic. It is no easy game against a second-rate team. It is a game of games against one of the finest teams in the world’.



Recruitment Poster (Imperial War Museum, PST 12186)

Rt. Hon Joynson-Hicks MP addressing recruits for the Footballers’ Battalion.



This tour to Northern France pays tribute to the football icons of the Great War. The tour is led by Andrew Riddoch, author of *When the Whistle Blows: the Story of the Footballers’ Battalion in the Great War*, and Graeme Cooper, an experienced Great War guide. We follow in the footsteps of the Footballers’ Battalion, whose ranks were made up of fans and professional footballers with connections to over seventy modern-day Premiership and Football League clubs, from **Arsenal**, **Norwich**, and **Liverpool** to **Plymouth Argyle**, **Millwall** and **Nottingham Forest**. We also visit several other Great War sites forever associated with our national game. On the battlefields where the footballers fought, we explore their privations and fears during those momentous years of trench life, and discover what happened to the players who answered the call of King and Country during the Great War.

Friday 18th May: Our first stop is on Vimy Ridge where we look at the respective armies on the Western Front and explore what life was like in the trenches. We move on to Arras and visit Faubourg British Military Cemetery, where almost 35,000 ‘missing’ servicemen from the UK, South Africa and New Zealand, who lost their lives around Arras, are commemorated, including Sandy Turnbull (**Manchester City and Manchester Utd**) who scored the first ever goal at Old Trafford; Bob ‘Pom-Pom’ Whiting (**Chelsea and Brighton & Hove Albion**), the goalkeeper, reputedly able to clear the opposition crossbar with his goal kicks; and the inspirational Walter Tull (**Spurs and Northampton Town**), one of the first black men to play in the Football League. After dinner in Arras, we take a leisurely stroll around this historic Roman city, exploring its Great War history.



The Memorial to the Footballers’ Battalions

Saturday 19th May: We start our day on the Somme, near Carnoy, where the 8th East Surreys dribbled footballs across No Man's Land on 1 July 1916, the bloodiest day in the history of the British Army. Moving on to La Boisselle, we learn how Donald Simpson Bell (**Newcastle Utd, Crystal Palace and Bradford Park Avenue**) won the Victoria Cross, visiting his grave in Gordon Dump Cemetery and his memorial at Contalmaison. We also visit the memorial to the 16th Royal Scots, a battalion which contained several **Heart of Midlothian** footballers. At Longueval, we learn about the Footballers' Battalion in Delville Wood in July 1916 when the battalion was involved in heavy fighting for the first time. We find out what happened when the Footballers' Battalion went into action again at Guillemont on 8 August 1916. We then pay our respects at the Footballers' Battalions Memorial, unveiled in October 2010 by Greg Clarke, chairman of the Football League.



The Footballers' Battalion team in autumn 1917

Sunday 20th May: We visit Couin Military Cemetery and hear the stories of Richard McFadden (**Clapton Orient**), 'a hero in peace and war' and Sid Wheelhouse (**Grimsby Town**), 'one of the most popular players who ever donned the Town's colours'. We then go to the Redan Ridge where the Footballers' Battalion went 'over the top' playing mouth organs on 13 November 1916. We finish our tour with a visit to the Thiepval Visitor Centre and the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme, where several footballers, including one of the game's first 'celebrities', are commemorated on its panels.

Tour price per person sharing £485 - Deposit £85 – Single Supplement £120
Deposits by 18 March. 16 places remain. (Tour Ref: CWT Football 12)

Included in the price of the Tour will be:

- 3-Star Hotel Bed & Breakfast in Arras
- 2 Dinners (including wine)
- Luxury Coach
- Qualified Guide, Guild of Battlefield Guides
- Tour Brochure

Excluded from the price of the Tour will be:

- Hotel extra services (telephone, bar, business facilities etc)
- All Lunches and Beverages
- Insurance

For booking and further details please contact:

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