

## Passchendaele

The Battle of Passchendaele, also known as the Third Battle of Ypres was one of the major battles of World War I, fought by British, ANZAC, Canadian and South African soldiers against the German Army. The battle was fought for control of the village of Passendale (Passchendaele on maps of that time) near the Belgian town of Ypres (now Ieper).

The plan was to drive a hole in the German lines and advance to the Belgian coast and capture the German submarine bases there.



British forces shelled the area heavily for several days before the attack, but it was not effective as the German positions and barbed wire remained pretty much unaffected. Soldiers faced heavy German machine-gun fire from both the front and flanks. They were unable to get through uncut barbed wire, the New Zealanders were pinned down in shell craters.

On two days in October 1917 New Zealand suffered two of its greatest tragedies. On 4 October **490** New Zealander's were killed. Eight days later on 12 October during the failed attack, there was an even greater loss. Of 3000 casualties on that day, over **840** New Zealanders lay dead or dying in the mud and uncut wire before the village of Passchendaele.

By the time they were finally withdrawn from the Ypres front line in February 1918, the New Zealanders had suffered more than 18,000 casualties — including around 5000 deaths — and won three Victoria Crosses for bravery.

