

lochnagar crater

overview

The Lochnagar Crater is one of the original 1 July 1916 Somme craters, created when British soldiers detonated two charges of ammonal (of 24,000lb and 30,000lb) which they had planted under the German lines.

It was blown along with 16 others at 07.28 on the morning of 1 July 1916: two minutes before the start of the Somme offensive - creating the largest man-made explosion in History at that time.

Debris from the explosion rose 1,200 metres into the air (more than three times the height of the Empire State Building). The mine created a crater 100 metres across and 70 ft (21 metres) deep.

This sector of the Somme battlefield was the bloodiest of the entire 20km stretch. Many of the German soldiers in the trenches around the mine were vapourised. Many more still lie buried under the crater, which is therefore a mass grave. On the other side, 2,267 of the British soldiers who then stormed the German positions were slaughtered – 85% of whom have no known graves.

Q. Why were the mines detonated 2 minutes before the troops were ordered “over the top” rather than at the same time?

Q. The picture shown here is of the Hawthorn Ridge mine, detonated 8 minutes earlier than the others, at 7.20am. Your teacher will tell you why: write the answer here.

Main Task

You will be divided into teams to explore the site. In particular, there are 20 panels which tell the story of July 1916 (see image above) and a number of individual memorials. Choose ONE panel, and ONE memorial, that you find particularly interesting and take a photograph of it ready to share in class when we return.

