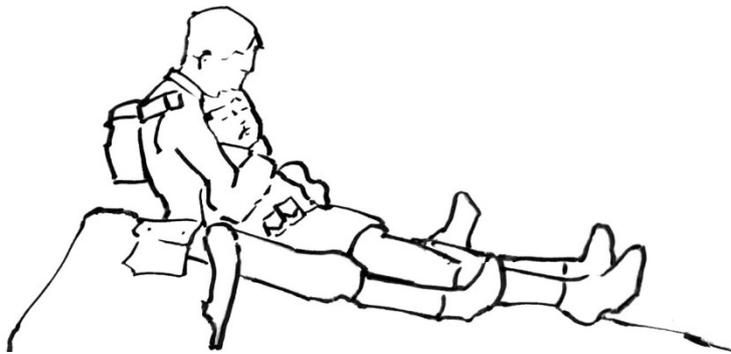


# Brothers-In-Arms Memorial



“In Honour of all the Brothers who Served in World War One”

An initiative of the working group

VZW ‘Brothers -In- Arms Memorial Project’

Lange Dreve 16, 8980 Zonnebeke

Amy Beechey, who had an exceptional family of 14 children, lost her husband in 1912.

During the horror of the Great War, Amy would lose as many as five of her eight sons at the front. The other sons emigrated to Australia to take part in the disastrous landings at Gallipoli. One of them survived being shot by a sniper and lived on, virtually paralysed.

Amy would never see five of her sons again. One by one they are brought down in that tragic war. In April 1918, Amy was invited to see King George V who expressed his sincere sympathy for the loss of her five sons.

Many other families were never to see their sons again. Uncountable youngsters would experience a younger or older brother fall in battle, or die at their side and having to leave them behind on the battlefield. It is impossible to assess these awful tragedies. Even documents cannot describe them - it is necessary to 'sense' them. Those involved in the conflict did not want to talk about it. Harry Patch, the last Great War veteran who died at the age of 111, phrased it as follows:

*“Too many died, don't go to war”*



The two brothers Jim en John Hunter

# The Discovery of John Hunter



21 august 1889 - 26 september 1917

The discovery and excavation of John Hunter was undertaken by Johan Vandewalle having been given permission for 'justifiable archeology' by an organisation known as 'Archeo 7' under the guidance of Dieter Demey.

Johan Vandewalle was born in 1961 and grew up amidst war stories. He is a First World War amateur archeologist and is specially known for his pioneering work in discovering and excavating dug-outs. He is the co-author of the book 'Beneath Flanders Fields' and has appeared in several documentaries including The Underground War, Vampire Dug-Out, Lost in Flanders, etc. [www.polygonwood.com](http://www.polygonwood.com)

The discovery of John Hunter describes the abomination of the war through the look in his eyes when seeing the sunlight. His face is clearly reflecting the bitterness and horror of the last hours of his life.





Top photo: Johan Vandewalle and members of the team are excavating the body of John Hunter.

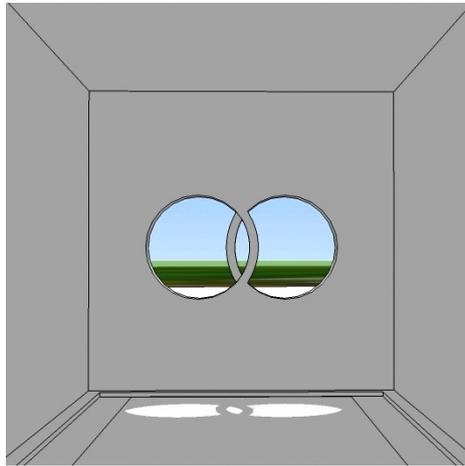
Middle photo: Johan at work during this tough and emotional task.

Lower photo: Johan and the most overwhelming discovery.

# Symbol of Peace

-

## The Eternal Fellowship



The two brothers, Jim and John, are the symbol of eternal fellowship. The Brothers-in-Arms Memorial would be a memorial to honour all brothers, of all nations, who served in the Great War.

The idea to raise a memorial is crucial in representing to people of all ages the essence of eternal fellowship. The unique concept must emphasise the peace message and be a powerful symbol of reconciliation. The Anglo-Saxon way of remembering, 'remembrance', is completely different from the West Flanders way. Whereas the Anglo-Saxon countries emphasise the patriotic aspiration, the intention of the museums in West Flanders is to focus on individual people at war and their absurd suffering. Slowly but surely, other people are starting to give preference to this way of remembering.

The principle of personalisation has already been modelled by the splendid and award-winning In Flanders Fields Museum in Ypres and at Talbot House in Poperinge. At Dixmuide, the Ijzertoren Museum follows the same pattern with its explanation of the Ijzer Front.

Mission - to expose the horror of the war and the insanity of violence by showing personalised examples. We focus on two moving stories and extract from them a positive message of love and an open desire for peace. Through this small-scale concept and with the emphasis on individual stories, we aim to put people in contact with the Ypres battles in a personalised way.

# Brothers-In-Arms Memorial



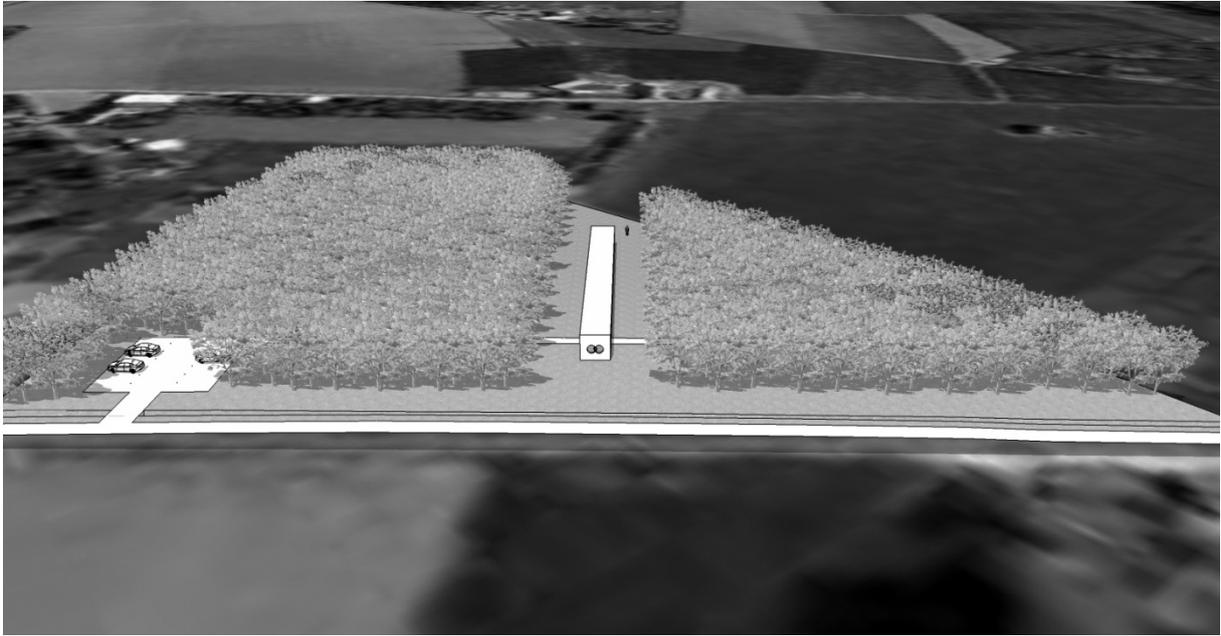
The site targeted for the memorial is a high position, slowly sloping and recently forested woodland in Zonnebeke. This woodland was chosen for its central role during the Third Battle of Ypres (in particular Westhoek Ridge, Broodseinde Ridge and Polygon Wood). At this site you are positioned in the centre of the battle. On the eastern side it looks out onto the fields where the battle for Polygon Wood raged on 26<sup>th</sup> September 1917 and where the drama of the two brothers who were involved in this attack took place. John died in the arms of his brother Jim and was left behind because Jim had to take part in the attack. Having survived the battle he went back to find his brother and take him with him, due west, and on the way back he had to bury him.



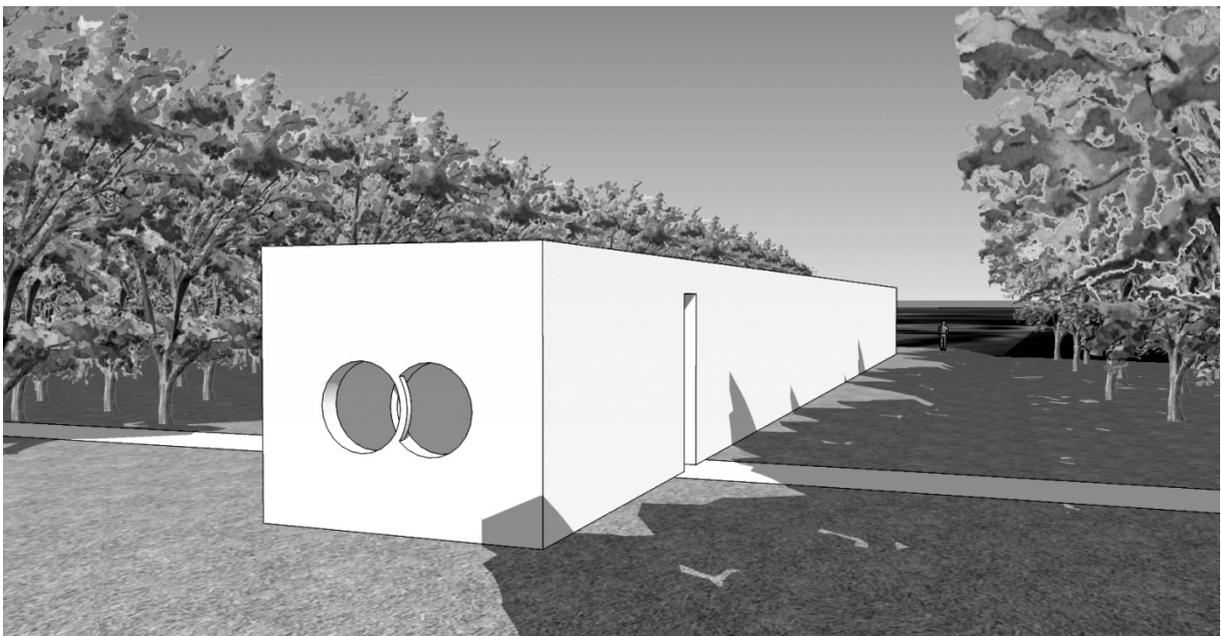
Top photo: location of the woodland.

Bottom photo: photo of the woodland where John Hunter fell in battle and where the memorial could be built.

For the memorial to be erected, only a minor area needs to be de-forested to allow for a small parking area and a strip of land for the memorial. The plantation here is only one metre high so this would not be a problem. The open space, surrounded by high trees, would emphasise the perspective of the former battlefield. The memorial, together with the building and surroundings, were designed by the landscape architect Andy Malengier. Andy, born in Ypres in 1971, is a landscape architect from Wervik and is especially known for his designs of burial grounds. [www.andymalengier.be](http://www.andymalengier.be)

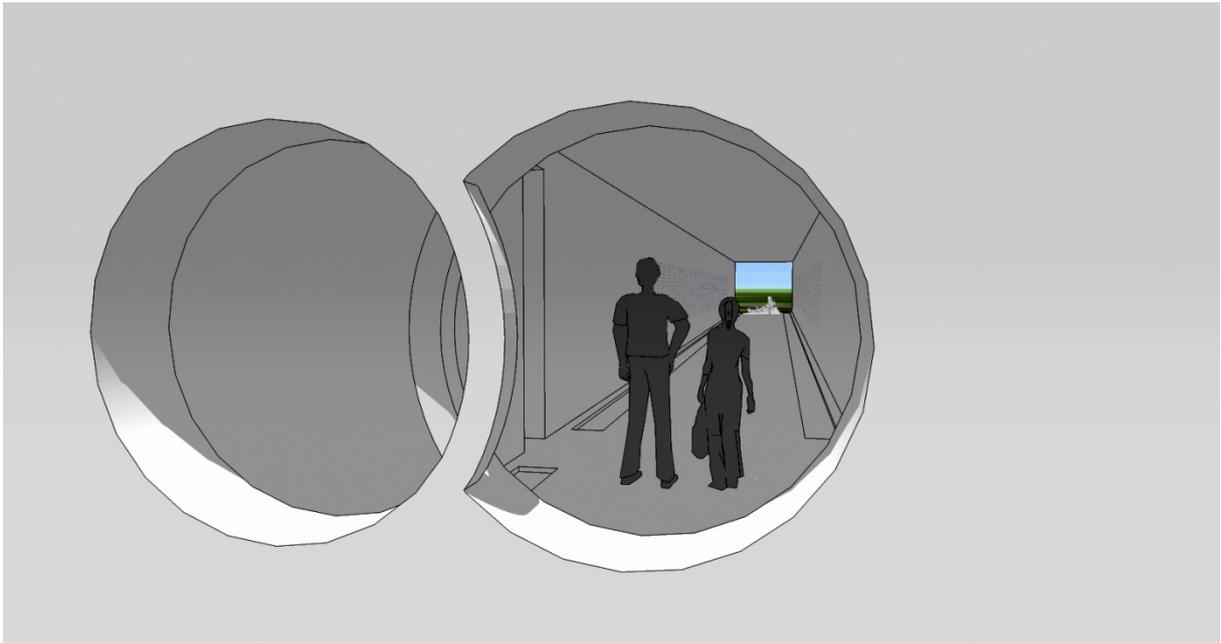


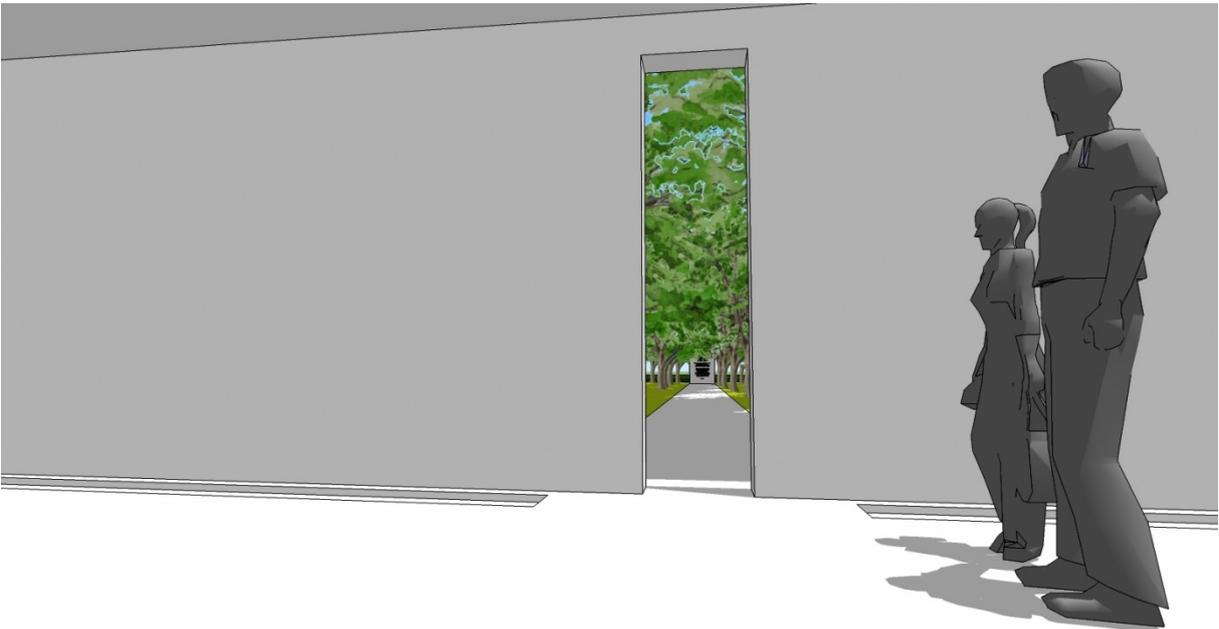
The Memorial presents an overwhelming architectural work which will strongly draw visitors to the bitter reality of war. It is designed to be an extremely durable and universal monument. The long shape of 4 metres wide and 40 metres long symbolises a chasm between the two worlds of the fighting nations and between war and peace. The horrors of war, and the battles for peace are to be experienced at the far end of the memorial.





The memorial will be visible from the nearby road, but from the road, the visitors' entry will not be seen. Only a 'window' of two entangled, united circles can be seen from the front, symbolising the reunion of the two tragically separated brothers. The front wall is 4 metres wide and 4 metres high. On getting closer to the memorial, the visitor will have a wonderful perspective of a group of figures and the landscape behind them can be seen through the symbolic opening.

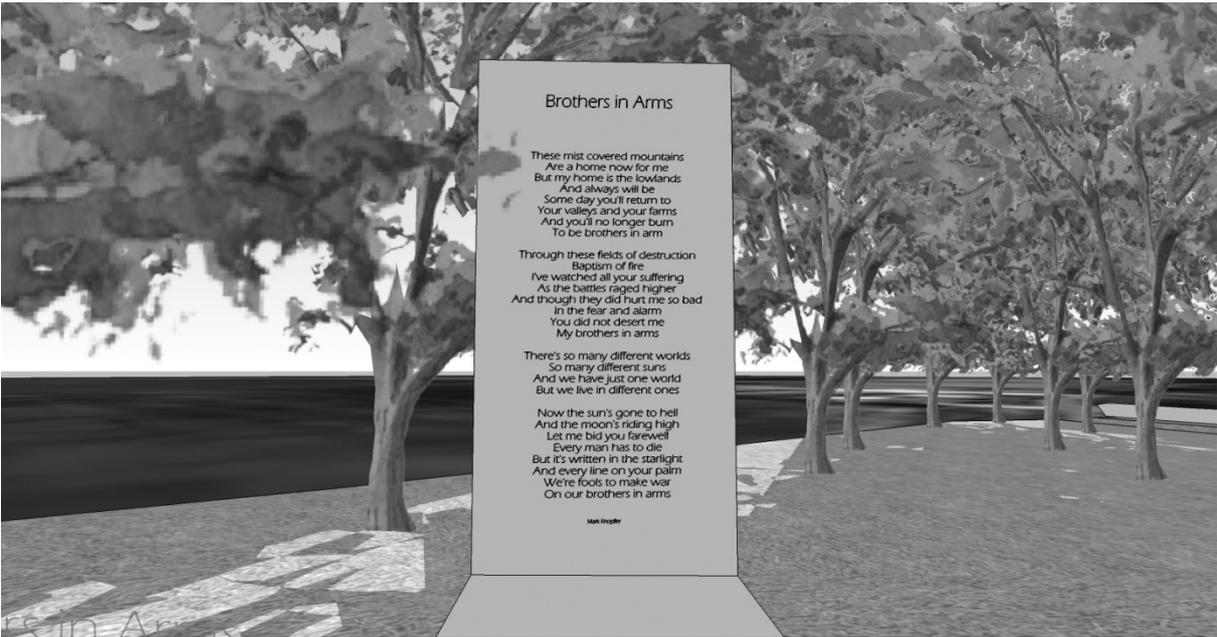




The memorial is entered from the side by means of a path leading the visitor from the parking area. This enables the visitor to be temporarily outside the philosophy of the concept and, on reaching the entrance, becomes part of it.



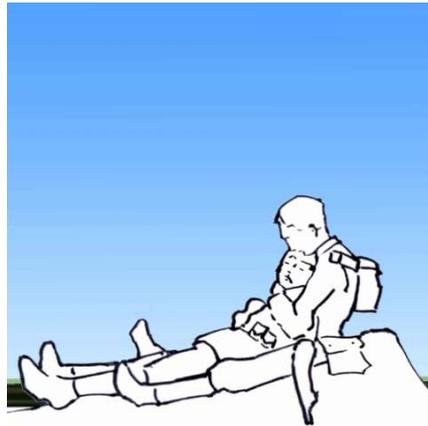
Using the approach, the surprise is completed when the all-embracing perspective is arrived at showing the group of figures of the two brothers in agony. The entrance path continues its way further into the forest, where a natural stone tablet forms the final point. On this tablet is engraved the text of 'Brothers-in-Arms' by Mark Knopfler.



## ‘Brothers In Arms’

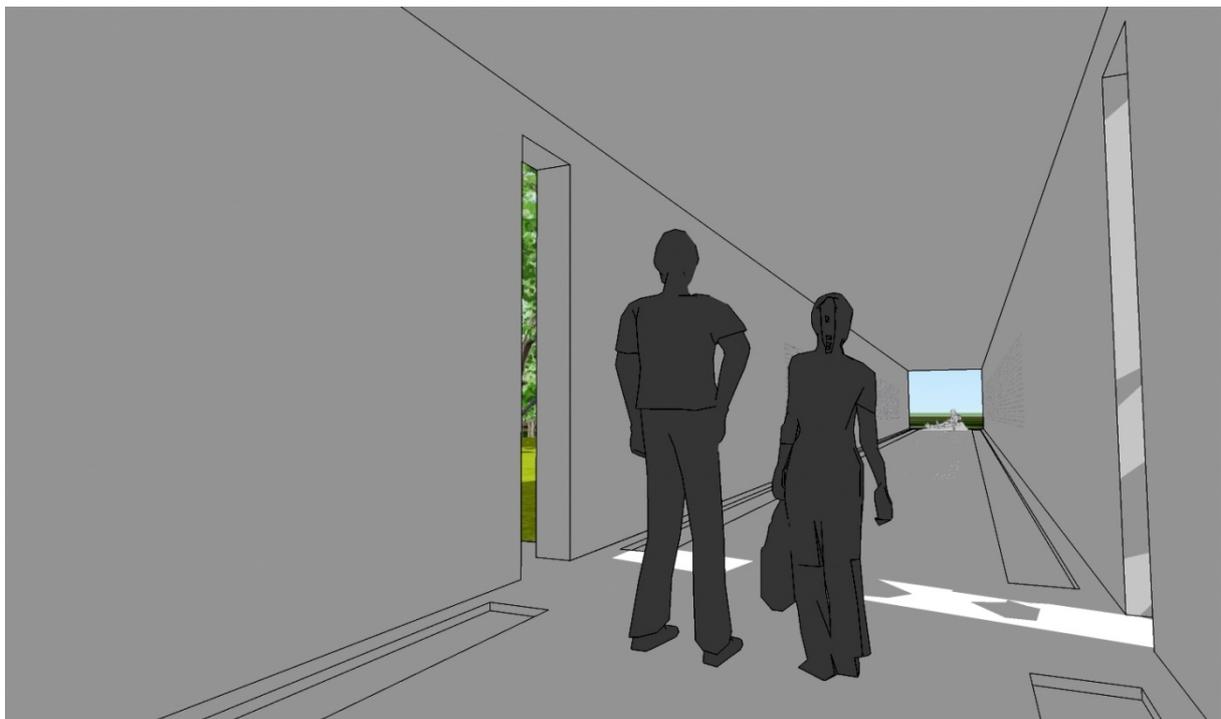


These mist covered mountains  
Are a home now for me  
But my home is the lowlands  
And always will be  
Some day you`ll return to  
Your valleys and your farms  
And you`ll no longer burn  
To be brothers in arms  
Through these fields of destruction  
Baptism of fire  
I`ve watched all your suffering  
As the battles raged higher  
And though they did hurt me so bad  
In the fear and alarm  
You did not desert me  
My brothers in arms  
There`s so many different worlds  
So many different suns  
And we have just one world  
But we live in different ones  
Now the sun`s gone to hell  
And the moon`s riding high  
Let me bid you farewell  
Every man has to die  
But it`s written in the starlight  
And every line on your palm  
We`re fools to make war  
On our brothers in arms



Once in the actual memorial, the visitor experiences the enormous perspective of the group of figures, positioned before an open window and showing the landscape where the enemy lines were facing each other. On the walls either side suitable inscriptions could be carved. An example could be the text 'In honour of all the brothers who served in World War One'. In a slightly deepened grove in the side walls, candles or flowers could be deposited.

The inside of the memorial, with such an unusually touching sculpture of a soldier holding his dying brother in his arms must surely be put in the most beautiful possible surroundings. It is intended that the visitor should be given some kind of transcendental experience so that they will forever remember the sacrifices made. The sculpture would be made by Peter Corlett. Peter was born in 1944 and is an Australian from Melbourne. He is famous for his figurative bronze sculptures and for his memorials, particularly on the Western Front. [www.petercorlett.com](http://www.petercorlett.com)



The draft design of Soren Hawkes is based on the story that Johan Vandewalle discovered when exhumating John Hunter and the story which would be hidden from John. On his pilgrimage visit to Nanango, eastern Australia, where both brothers grew up, Johan has felt and sensed the story. The story was left behind by Jim before he would die.

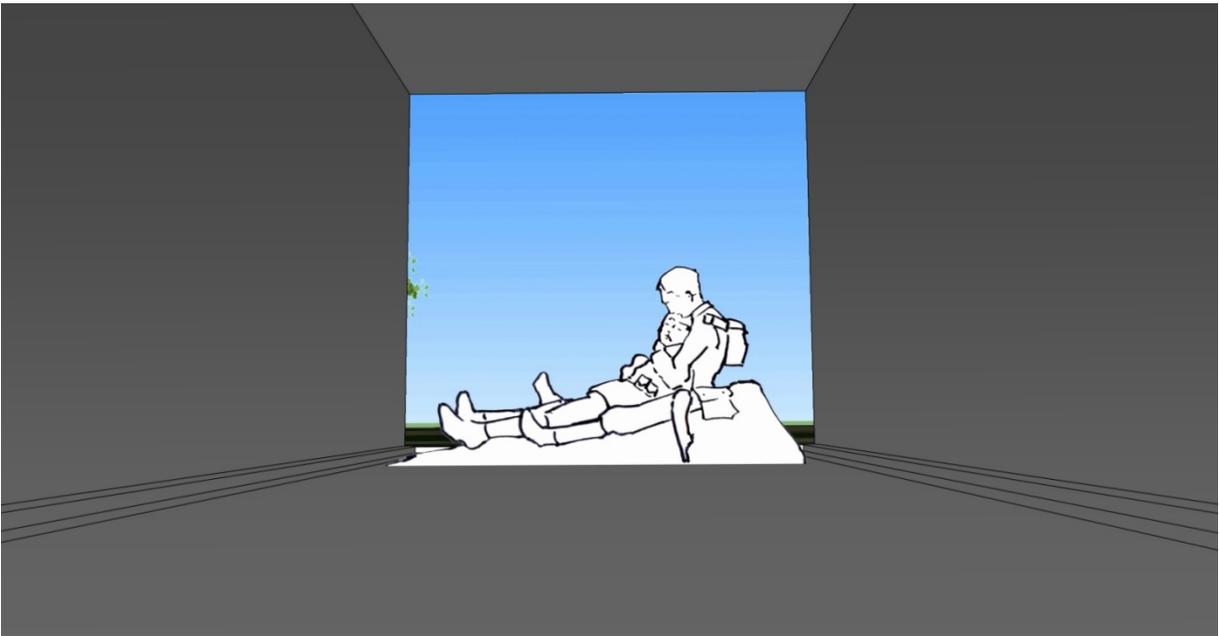
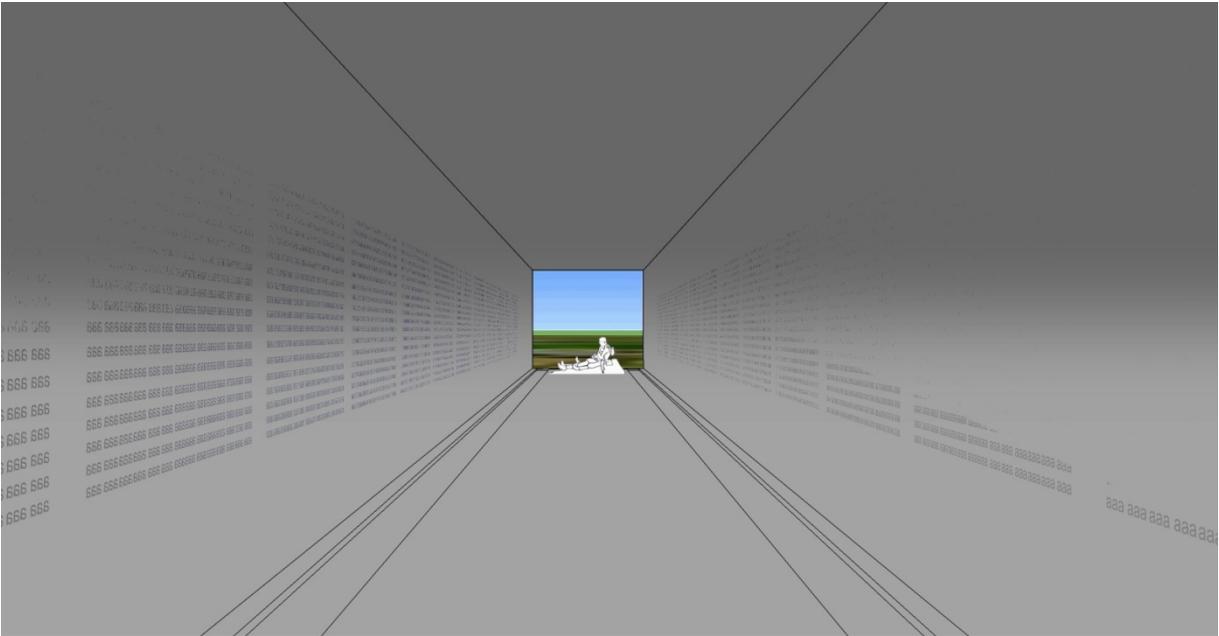
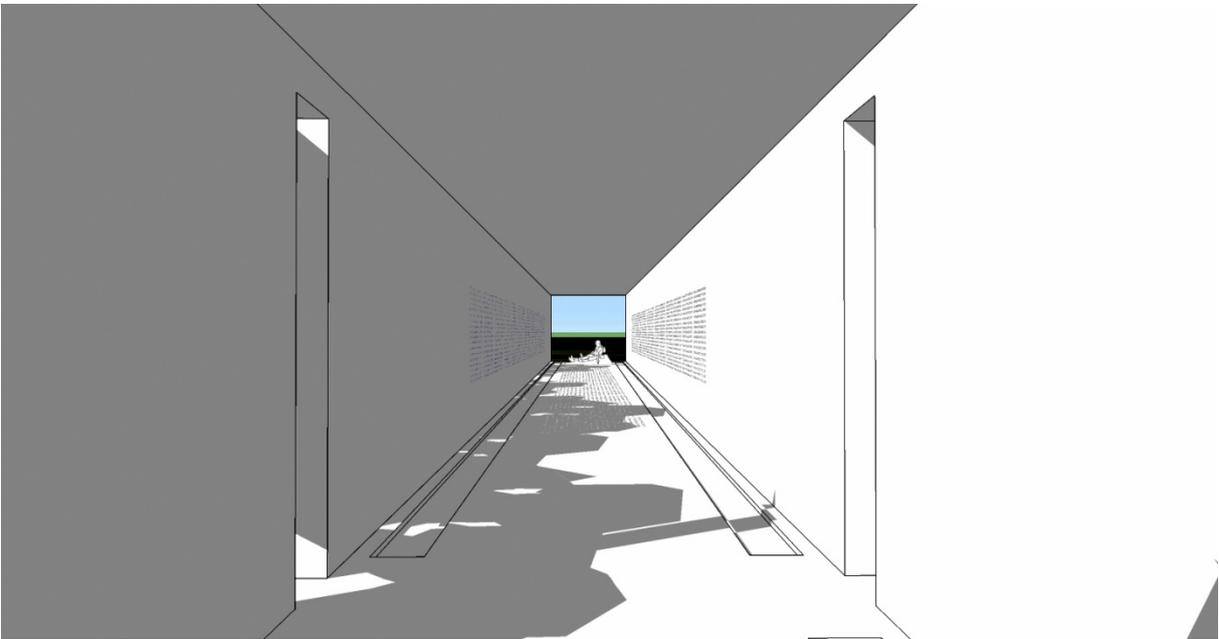


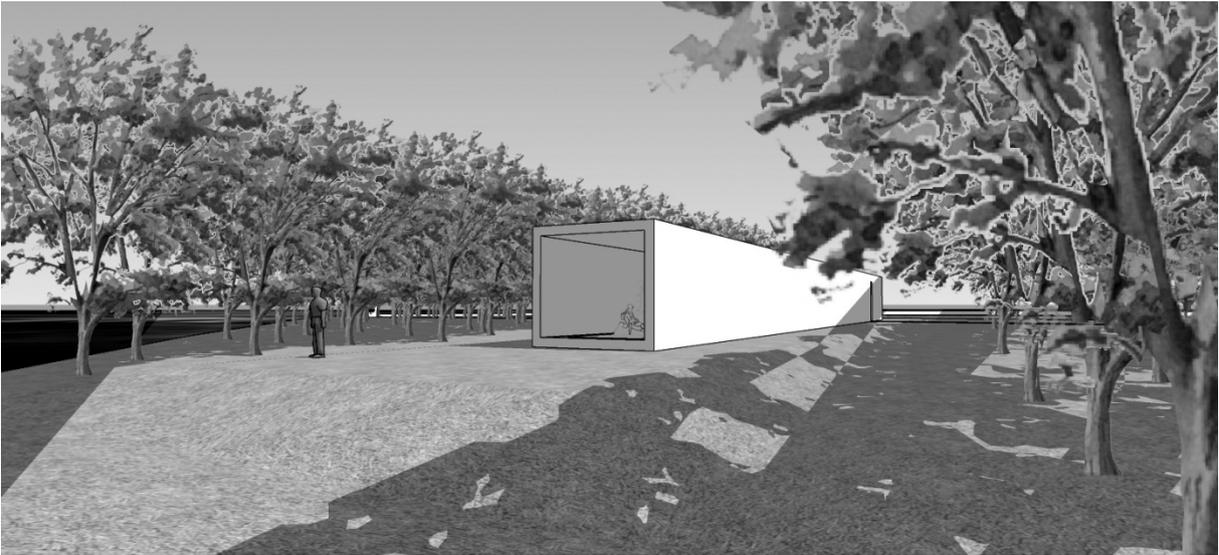
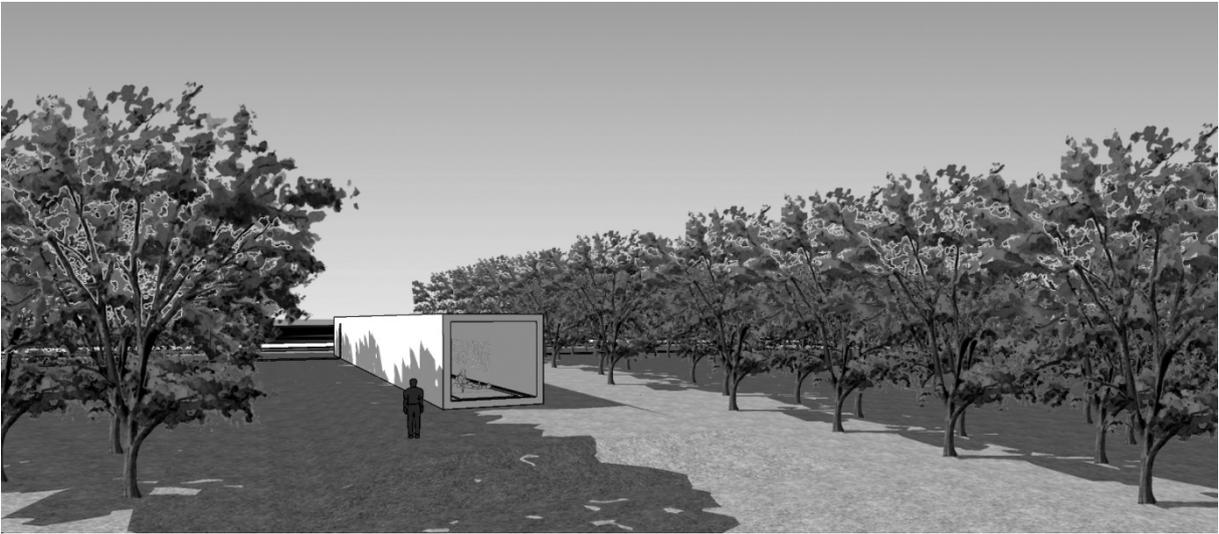
“In Honour of all the Brothers who Served in World War One”

Postcard designed to donate to the ‘Brothers-In-Arms Memorial Project’ please visit

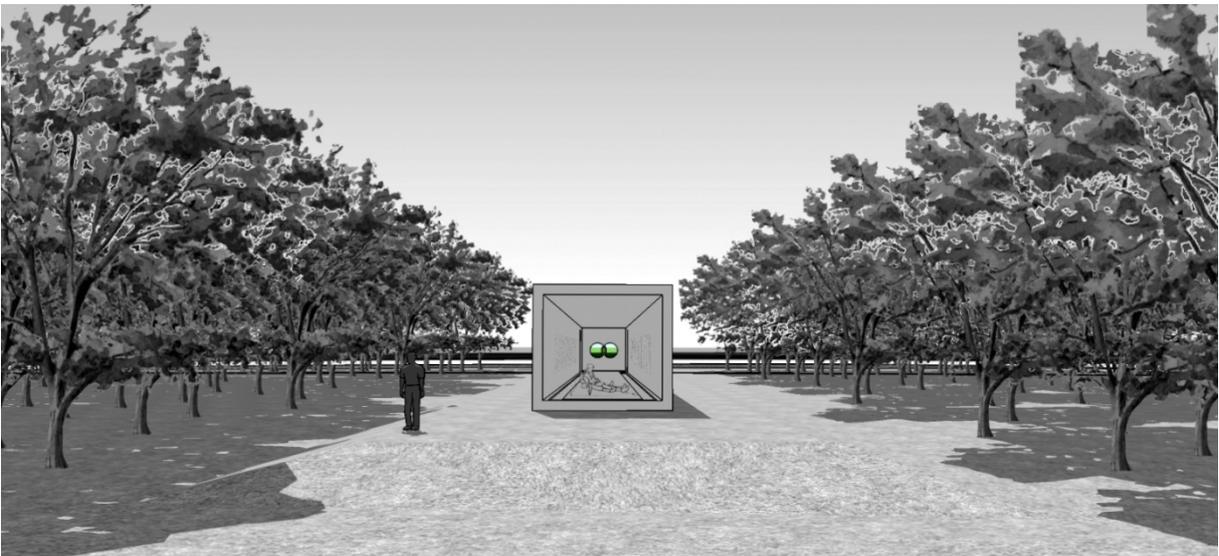
[www.polygonwood.com](http://www.polygonwood.com)

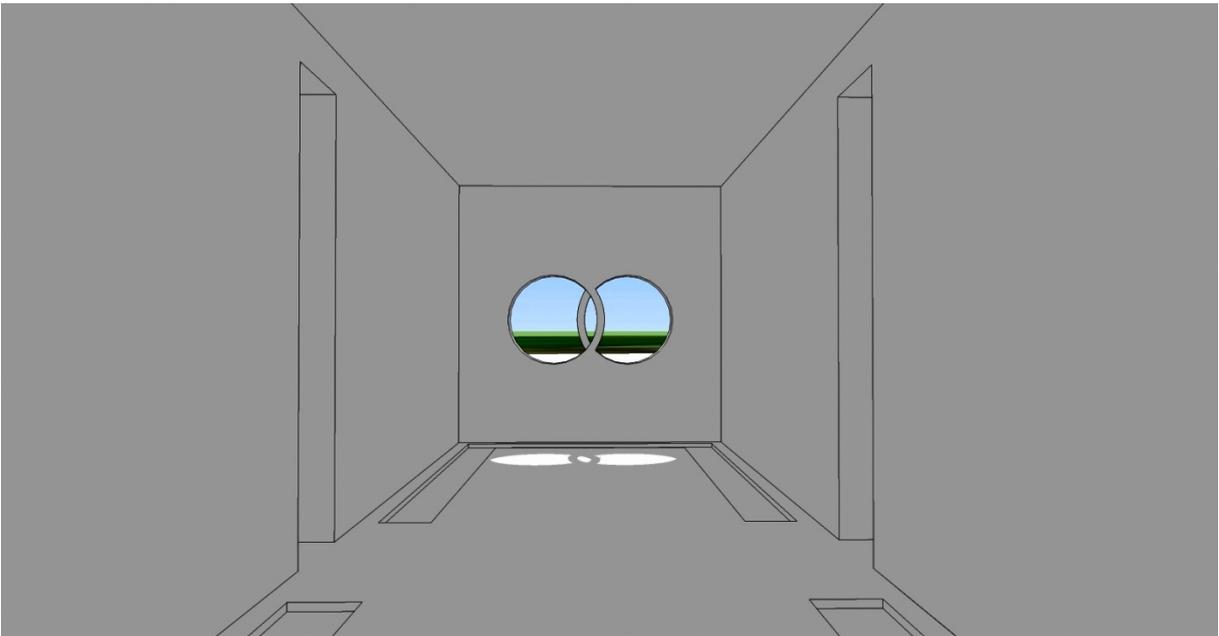
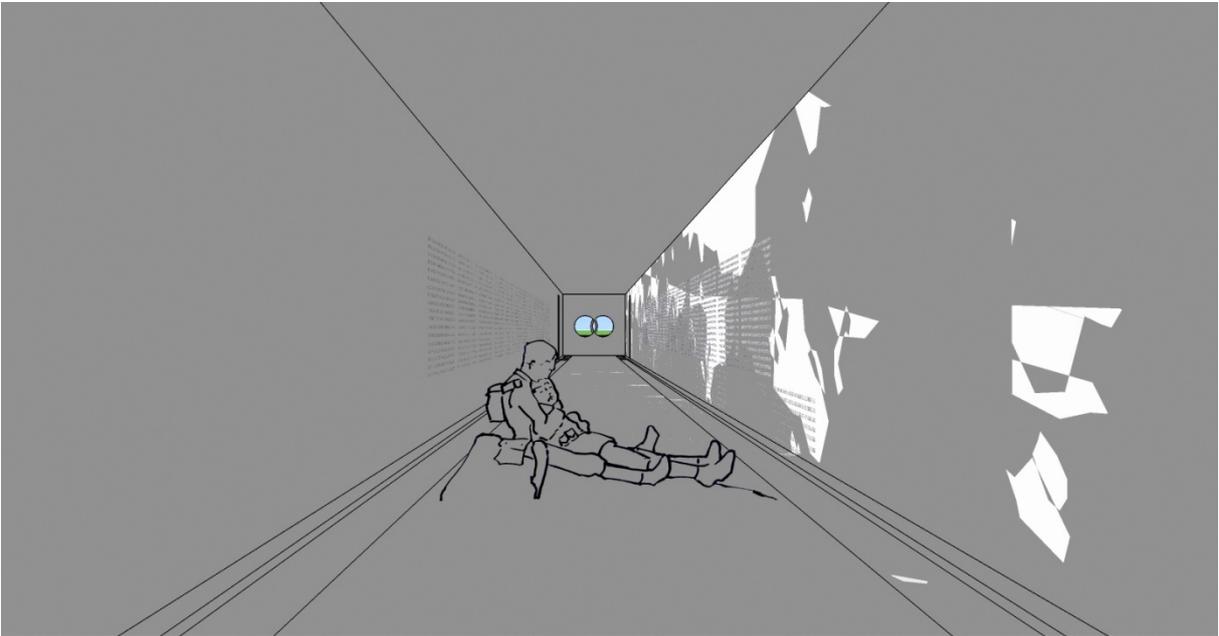
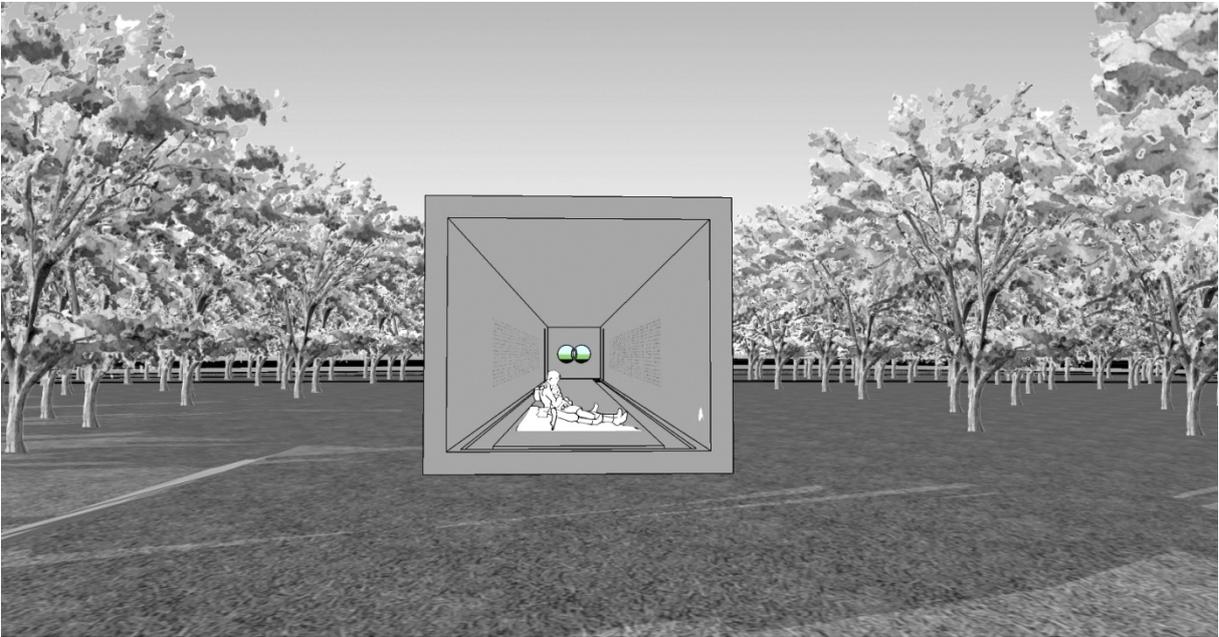
This image is copyright Soren/Brothers-In-Arms





The visitor can walk in a peaceful landscape park and will have a clear view of the ridge which had to be conquered by the Allied soldiers. Looking in the direction of the Allied lines, the visitor can see the memorial with the sculpture of the two suffering brothers. At the other side, two round and united holes are to be seen. This unification is facing the mythical west, the Elysium.





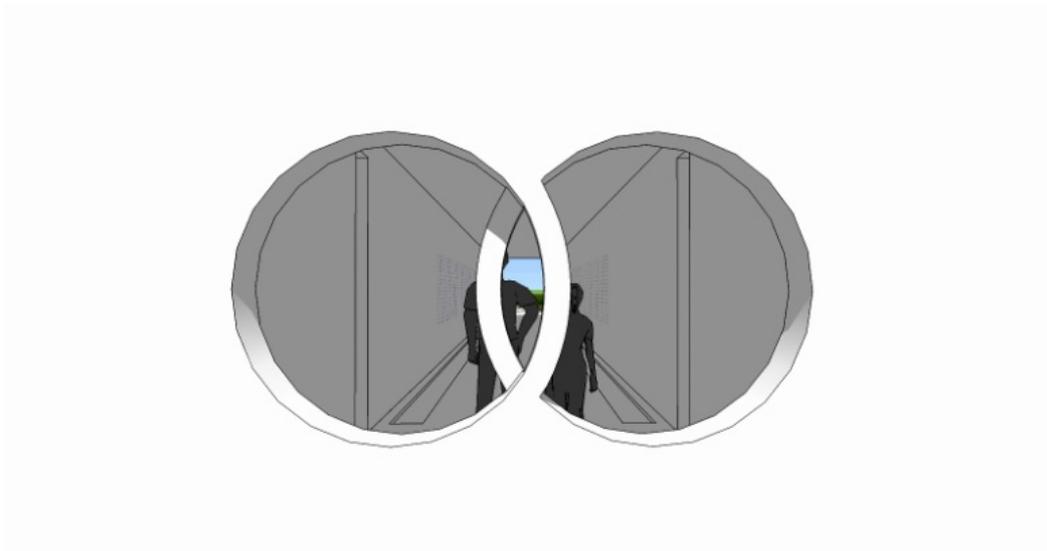
## Realisation

The proposal of the memorial is connected with the conviction that it should eventually become a monument, built to last, which can send a universal message of peace to the world. It should be everlasting, meaning that many generations to come can experience the dreadful division which occurred when brothers lost each other on the battlefield. This means that the memorial must be built using lasting material which is naturally expensive.

For the exterior, bricks and flint stone could be used. Bricks would blend in with the clay on which the memorial would be built and with the clay in which the soldiers fought. The interior walls could be covered with a natural stone of a blue/grey colour which would create a heavenly or transcendent atmosphere which would contrast with the exterior. Inscriptions could be engraved in the natural stone slabs and the same stone should be used for the flooring and continue jointless in the wall panels which lead up to the memorial. In this way, a perfect harmony between architecture and landscape can be created.

Our first estimates for the cost show a total figure of 925620 € (including Euro VAT) is needed. The breakdown of this figure can be provided. An appeal will be made to the Flemish authorities and to as many as possible of the different authorities of all the countries involved.

The amount of money expected to be raised is comparable to the number of soldiers killed and missing in the Great War, 9721937 men. Giving 0,1 € for each soldier lost in the war would raise a grand total of 972193 €.



# Letter to Jim,



Jim, after your horrible experience at the Western Front, your struggle for life has turned into a story.

The story of both your lives - a story of freedom of two brothers, offered to the world.

We will always be extremely grateful for it.

Your story will become a story of heavenly beauty but now it is a story of worldly truth. But the 'fine truth' of this world will try to convince you and 'things will wear off' will often be heard.

Well it will not 'wear off'. These worldly speakers of the 'truth' do not realise a very painful hole has been carved in your heart. This hole can never heal, because it needs to be there, however dreadful the pain may be, to store these splendid memories and give a place to your brother, in your heart, in your life.

Because it will not wear away Jim, so do not lean on that sort of insensitive and painful ignorance.

Try to find comfort in the freedom he gained at last and listen to the story of his life. Let your heart suffer the pain all of your life. Because only then you will know your brother is not forgotten, that it will not wear off. However unbelievably difficult, he somewhat keeps alive the pain in your heart. This hole will never heal . . . because it needs to be there. Because one day . . .

## One day

The hole will be reunited and entangled, casting a glance on your home.

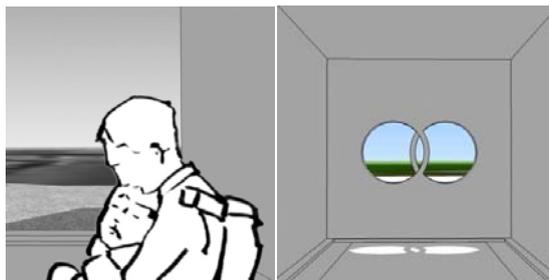
Your life stories will be united and it will live again into a great story of peace.

An ordinary man will find your well-loved brother and come to see your family.

Artists will represent your last moments together, give it a place and united forever.

All suffering brothers will be remembered here.

I hope you find the eternal reunion with John in a memorable story of peace.



Story and discovery of John Hunter by Johan Vandewalle.

Design for group of sculptures by Johan Vandewalle and Soren Hawkes.

Memorial design by Andy Malengier.

Text by Johan Vandewalle and Andy Malengier.

Translation by Jacques Haemers.

Photographs by Rob Troubleyn, Johan Vandewalle and Archive Familie Hunter.

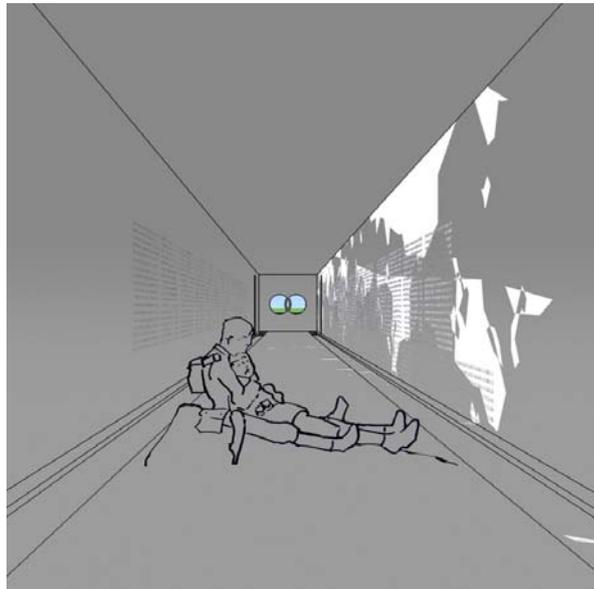
Layout for this presentation by Andy Malengier.

An initiative of the working group

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