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The Battle for the Scheldt Estuary



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Tour 1: Battle of Groningen ▼

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⌚ **Duration:** FULL DAY

📍 **Location:** Middelburg, Bergen op Zoom Vlissingen [**Book Now!**](#)

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By the last months of 1944 the Allies desperately needed a large harbour to supply their troops. They had captured Antwerp with its ports intact in September, but they could not use the port while the German troops held the banks of the Scheldt Estuary. This meant that the Allies had to capture Zeeland. In the heavy battle for the Scheldt Estuary many

lives were lost and enormous damage was done to the province by floods and fighting



The battle for the Scheldt Estuary

The plan for opening the estuary involved four main operations. The first was to clear the area north of Antwerp and close the South Beveland isthmus. The second was to clear the Breskens "pocket" behind the Leopold Canal, and the third was the reduction of the Beveland peninsula. The final phase would be the capture of Walcheren Island.



Men of the 4th Special Service Brigade wade ashore from landing craft near Flushing to complete the occupation of Walcheren.

Accordingly, at the beginning of October 1944, the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division began its advance north of Antwerp to close the eastern end of the South Beveland isthmus. It made good

progress to the isthmus itself where enemy paratroopers barred the way. Casualties were heavy as troops of the Canadian Army attacked over open flooded ground, but by October 16, they had seized Woensdrecht at the entrance to South Beveland. At this



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point, Field-Marshal Montgomery ordered a regrouping of all his forces to concentrate upon the opening of the Scheldt estuary.



Operation Veritable - Reichswald

🕒 FULL DAY

The British Second Army attacked westwards to clear the Netherlands south of the Maas and seal off the Scheldt region, while General Simonds concentrated on the area north of the Beveland isthmus. The 4th Canadian Armoured Division was moved north of the Scheldt and drove hard for Bergen-op-Zoom. By October 24 the isthmus was sealed off, and by October 31 the peninsula had fallen.



Operation Amherst - Drenthe

🕒 FULL DAY

Meanwhile, there was equally fierce fighting along the Scheldt's southern shore. Here the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division encountered tenacious German resistance as they fought to cross the Leopold Canal and clear the Breskens pocket. The attack began on October 6 against fierce opposition and for three days a slender bridgehead was in constant danger of elimination. Then on October 9 an amphibious assault broke the enemy hold on the canal and the bridgehead was deepened. Troops and tanks crossed the canal and the Germans withdrew into concrete emplacements along the coast. More fighting followed, but by November 3 the south shore of the Scheldt was free.



The 82nd Airborne Division - Operation Market Garden

🕒 FULL DAY

The island of Walcheren remained the one great obstacle to the use of the port of Antwerp. Its defences were extremely strong and the only land approach was the long narrow causeway from South



British assault troops landed on Walcheren at dawn on 1 November 1944.

Beveland. To make matters worse, the flats that surrounded this causeway were too saturated for movement on foot while at the same time there was not enough water for an assault in storm boats. The attack was to be made from three directions: across the causeway from the east; across the Scheldt from the south;

and from the sea. To hamper German defence the island's dykes were breached by heavy RAF bombing to inundate the central area and thus permit the use of amphibians.

The Canadians attacked the causeway on October 31 and after a grim struggle established a precarious foothold. Then, in conjunction with the waterborne attacks, the 52nd British Division continued the advance. On November 6 Middleburg, the island's capital fell and by November 8 all resistance ended. The channel was cleared of mines and on November 28 the first convoy entered the port of Antwerp.

Battlefield Tours offers battlefield tours about the battle for the Scheldt Estuary for both private and mixed groups in Zeeland and surroundings. Battlefield Tours can provide specific programs for larger groups, schools and scouting groups. In Zeeland we offer tours to different areas around the province of Zeeland. The Battlefield Tours in Zeeland and surroundings require motorized transport because of distance and tour length. Battlefield Tours can provide transport for groups up to 8 persons. But if you feel more comfortable in your own car, you can follow us using your car also. Groups larger than 8 persons will have to provide for (additional) transport themselves. The tour in Zeeland and surroundings takes a full day or several days.

Tour highlights*



German bunkers Zeeland

- Canadian War Cemetery Adegem
- Canadian War Cemetery Bergen op Zoom
- Leopold canal with Baily Bridge
- **For Freedom Museum Knokke Heist**
- German bunkers Groede

- Memorial Royal Engineers and Royal Canadian Army Service Corps IJzendijke
- Fighting around the Isabellasluis and Biervliet
- 'Black Friday' Woensdrecht
- Battle of the Sloedam
- [Liberation Museum Zeeland](#)
- Liberty bridge Westkapelle
- [Polderhuis museum Westkapelle](#)
- German bunkers Koudekerke
- Uncle Beach Vlissingen
- Phoenix-caisson Rammekens / Ritthem

*Depends on which tour you choose

Duration

The tours in Zeeland and surroundings takes a full day or several days. Combination with other tours into a multiple day tour is possible.

Possible tour days

Our private tours can be booked all year round and all week to availability.

Price, bookings and payment

Different prices for a private tour may apply depending on group size. Prices, terms and conditions can be found [here](#). You can easily book the tour via the booking form on this [page](#), or by contacting us directly. By submitting a booking you agree to our terms and conditions. After receipt of your booking request we will verify availability on the tour date(s) requested. If needed we will contact you to discuss details or other options. Presuming a requested tour date is possible we will send you a confirmation email containing an invoice stating the total amount due and the deposit amount (if applicable) needed to complete your booking. Full payment is due 10 days prior to the start date of the tour.

Transport and pick up location

This is a bus tour. We can start the Battlefield Tour from the central train station in Middelburg. If you arrive by plane, you will probably fly to Schiphol, Amsterdam's airport. The easiest way to get to Middelburg is by train. There is a train from Schiphol to Middelburg, which leaves every hour. You can plan your train trip using the [journey planner](#) of the Dutch railways. You should select Schiphol as your departure station and Middelburg as your destination. Overnight accommodation is possible in the province

of Zeeland or Middelburg. Book overnight accommodation via this [website](#).

British Army Newsreel about the Battle for Walcheren

Battle For Walcheren



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