**SOMME 100**

Summer 2016 will see the world remember the centenary of The Battle of the Somme, the most infamous battle of the First World War which resulted in over 420,000 British casualties between 1 July and 18November 1916.   There will be an international commemorative service on 1 July at the Thiepval memorial in France, preceded by an overnight vigil the night before.  The UK government’s Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), along with the French government’s Veteran’s Ministry, has taken exclusive responsibility for the delivery of this event and thus it will not be Legion-run as it is normally.  The Legion will still have representatives in attendance from our National Officers, Board of Trustees and our local Somme Branch, in addition  to a number of  Standard Bearers who will be participating in the event.

All other Legion staff, members and supporters will have to enter an online ballot should they wish to attend.   Tickets will be limited to 8,000; 2,000 of these have been committed to the French.  A site for registering interest in attending the Thiepval event was launched by DCMS on 1 July 2015 and the online ballot opens on the 28September.  Further information can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/register-your-interest-in-the-2016-somme-centenary-ballot>

 The Legion will retain an advisory role for the Thiepval event and in helping with peripheral events in France on 1 July.   It will also be involved with simultaneous events in the UK, which will include an event in a prominent northern city, an event at the NMA and a whole range of smaller events in communities throughout the nation.  Furthermore, the Legion will commemorate each of the 141 Days that the Somme battle raged on, both in the delivery of a daily service at the Thiepval Memorial and by facilitating community events around the UK.  More information about how to get involved in the daily event at Thiepval and the UK community events will be made available in the coming months.