

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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Taoiseach announces Joint Island of Ireland War Memorial at Messines in Belgium.

The Taoiseach, Mr Bertie Ahern T.D., announced this evening that "following a meeting I had last week with members of the Journey of Reconciliation Trust, including Mr Glen Barr and Mr Paddy Harte, the Government have agreed to provide £150,000 for the Soldiers' and Sailors' Trust to support the erection of an Island of Ireland First World War Memorial in Messines in Belgium, commemorating the sacrifices of the 36th Ulster Division and the 16th Irish Division in June 1917. I warmly commend the Trust on their initiative.

The intention is to build over the next 10 months a round tower and a park, symbolising four provinces. The sunlight will enter the tower on the model of Newgrange at 11am on 11th November (Armistice Day). Details of the project are attached.

The memorial will not only remember the sacrifices of those from all parts of Ireland and from all political and religious traditions who fought and fell in the war, it will also serve as a powerful symbol of reconciliation in the present day. I hope it will attract the visits of many groups from all parts of Ireland. The memorial with its fitting symbolism will be a further step that builds on the restoration of the fine War Memorial Park in Inchicore in Dublin.

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