

Travel the Benelux

Climb Lion's Mound for panoramic battlefield views

by **Tim Clark**

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The site of one of history's best-known battles, Waterloo has come to mean decisive and complete defeat. The Battle of Waterloo, fought just half an hour south of Brussels, ended Napoleon Bonaparte's political and military career, ushering in almost 500 years of peace in Europe.

June 18, 1815, more than 300,000 soldiers fought there with 10,000 men dead and 30,000 wounded in just a few hours. The Allied (Brit-

ish, Dutch, Belgian, German and Prussians) victory led to Napoleon's abdication four days later.

The Lion's Mound, or Butte du Lion in French, was ordered constructed in 1820 by King William I of the Netherlands on the spot where his son, the Prince of Orange, later King William II, was hit in the shoulder with a musket ball and knocked from his horse. The monument was completed in 1826.

The more than 120-foot artificial hill, topped by a 28-ton cast-iron lion, is dedicated to the soldiers who died that day on the field of battle. A lion was chosen because it symbolizes bravery and courage. Climbing 226 stairs will lead to the top, which offers a panoramic view of the battlefield.

To celebrate the bicentennial, a major re-enactment of the battle will take place in two parts June 19 and 20. If you don't have a ticket, you are out of luck because the 200,000 tickets are sold out. However, it's worth making the trip to Waterloo to climb to the top of Lion's Mound and to visit the museums.



The Lion's Mound rises above the battlefield in Waterloo, Belgium. (U.S. Army photo by Tim Clark)

For your GPS:
Route du Lion 252
Braine-l' Alleud 1420
From:
Mons: 55 km
Brussels: 24 km
Schinnen: 120 km

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