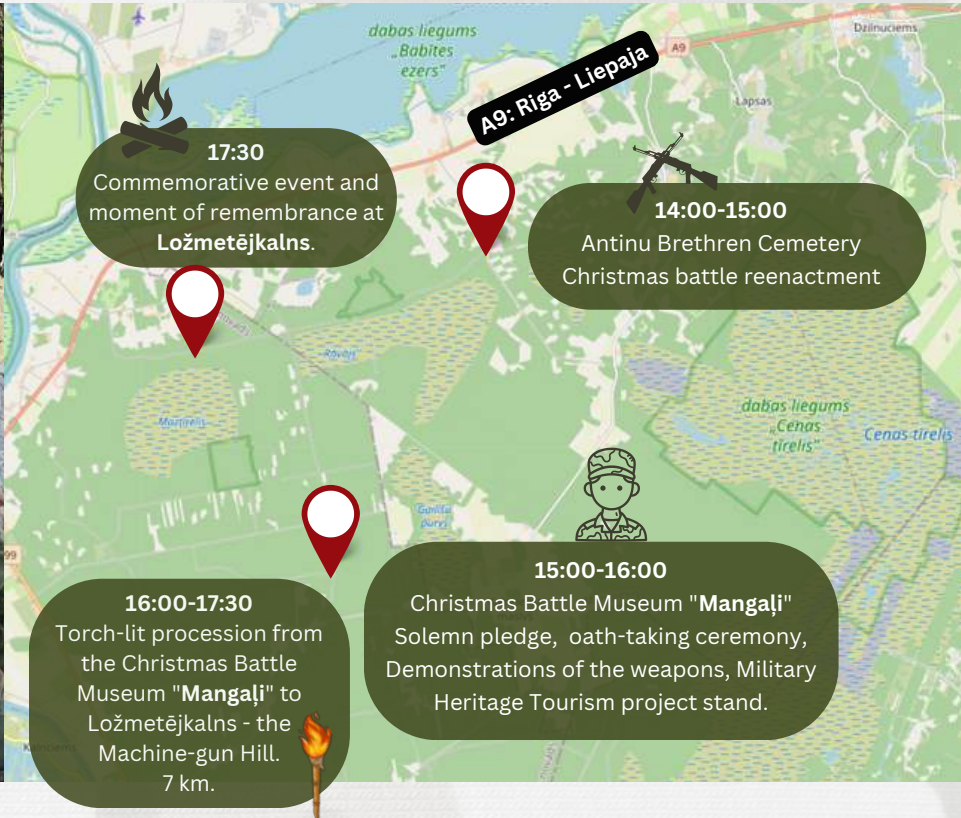


Strong Yesterday, Free Today.



Christmas Battle Commemoration Event

The Christmas Battles of the First World War are etched in Latvian history as a tragic yet heroic tale. According to the old style, or Julian calendar, the attack on the German Imperial Army began on 23rd December 1916, on the eve of Christmas. These battles, in which all Latvian rifleman regiments participated for the first time, became known as the "Christmas Battles". The Christmas Battles and the subsequent January Battles were the most tragic yet also one of the most heroic chapters in the history of the Latvian riflemen. The Latvian riflemen achieved what no Russian unit had managed on the Riga front – breaking through the German defences and capturing an area of approximately 30 square kilometres. During the Christmas Battles, both Russian and Latvian forces suffered heavy losses, with the Latvian losses measured in the thousands. These significant casualties severely undermined the loyalty of the Latvians to the Russian Empire's authorities and marked a turning point in both the history of the riflemen and Latvia.



The riflemen's fight is depicted in Aleksandrs Grīns' novel and the 2019 film adaptation, Blizzard of Souls ("Dvēseļu putenis").



For more information about the Christmas Battles, visit the Military Heritage Tourism website: militaryheritagetourism.info/en/military/topics/view/81

N.B.! Event participants should wear very warm clothing, footwear, gloves, and hats. Sparks may fly from the bonfire and torches, so suitable clothing must be chosen.



Christmas Battle Commemoration Event Program

<p>14:00</p>	<p>Meeting at the <u>Antiņu Cemetery</u>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christmas battle reenactment with First World War soldier uniforms, weapons, and equipment; • Visit to the bunkers and trenches.
<p>15:00</p>	<p>Gathering at the <u>Christmas Battle Museum "Mangaļi"</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solemn pledge by the Youth Guard; • Oath-taking ceremony of the 52nd Combat Support Battalion of the National Guard; • Demonstrations of the National Armed Forces' weapons and equipment; • Military Heritage Tourism project Military Heritage 2 tent and stand – Baltic States' military heritage tourism map; • Meeting with the Military Heritage 2 project team from Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania; • Bonfire with hot tea and pies.
<p>16:00</p>	<p>Torch-lit procession from the Christmas Battle Museum "Mangaļi" to Ložmetējkalns - the Machine-gun Hill.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance – approximately 7 km; • Duration – about one and a half hours.
<p>17:30</p>	<p>Commemorative event and moment of remembrance at <u>Ložmetējkalns</u>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speeches by state officials, representatives of the National Armed Forces, National Guard, Jelgava district municipality; • Meeting with scouts at the tent camp; • Arrival of the torch-lit procession; • Orchestra and music; • Army field kitchen (warm porridge and tea); • Singing and music.



Strong Yesterday, Free Today.



More information:

www.celotajs.lv

facebook.com/militaryheritagetourism