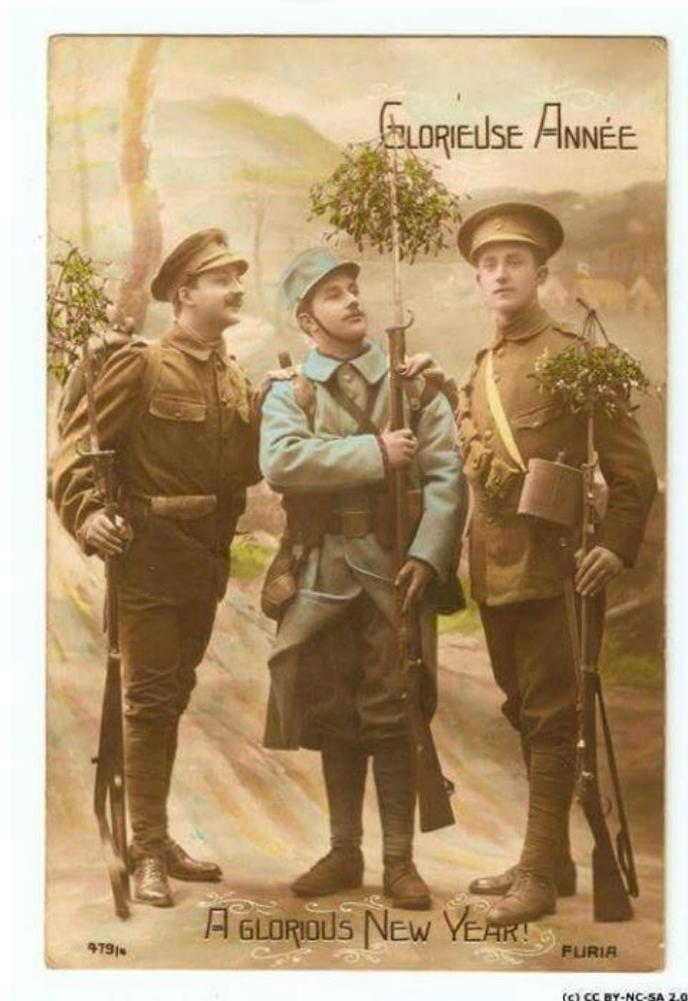


NEW ZEALAND COMMUNICATION TRENCH

*Newsletter of the New Zealand Branch,
Western Front Association*

1914-1918
REMEMBERING

No 49 - February 2017



Many thanks to Tim Keenan for contributing the above very appropriate postcard to the first newsletter of 2017

Notes from the editor

A big welcome to two new members:

Mary Vidal was for many years the secretary of the Somerset Branch of the WFA. Mary has an interest in the New Zealand Division and we have been in close contact over many years and I had the pleasure of meeting Mary in London in 2012. She reviewed the book *Blindfold and Alone* by Cathryn Corns and John Hughes-Wilson in the June 2002 *New Zealand Communication Trench* and wrote an article about Jack Braithwaite for the February 2003 issue and the WFA website. Mary provided support and information to Geoff McMillan when he campaigned for a stake for Jack Braithwaite to be included in the Shot at Dawn Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, UK (see Richard Pursehouse's article on p13).

Heather Wellington met Delysse Storey on a trip to the New Zealand commemorations on the Somme in September 2016. Heather, who lives in Whangarei, attended the branch meeting in October 2016 and joined on the day.

Subscriptions for 2017: Subs renewal notices were sent out a couple of weeks ago and many thanks to those who have been right on the ball and sent your subs in nice and pronto. We hope that you all wish to renew your subs and just make a little request: could you please pay your subs to me as soon as possible. Thank you! If you don't wish to renew then that is fine – if you let me know (I promise, no pressure), I can cross your name off the membership list and won't bother you again.

Thank you to all who have contributed to this issue of the *New Zealand Communication Trench*: Your interesting and informative contributions have made this another very special newsletter. Keep up the good work everyone! My file for the June issue needs replenishing! Give it a go, you never know, you just might decide that you like recording and sharing your research and family military history interests.

*Articles, poems, book reviews, snippets etc are needed for the June 2017 issue (deadline early May)
Thinking caps on everyone ... fingers to the keyboard!*

A big thank you also to Marion for again organising the end of year lunch at Waipuna Lodge in November. It was an ideal location for a very pleasant afternoon of good food and good company, and a time for us all to have a "catch up" before the end of the year.



The New Zealand Pilgrimage Trust: In June 2016, the trust was founded, a non-profit organisation set up in Belgium, to assist New Zealand schools, groups and individuals with planning and researching for their visits to the Western Front. It aims to ensure that New Zealanders visiting the region can maximise their experience at sites specific to New Zealand and family interests, in addition to more general places.

Its members are also involved in working with the New Zealand, French and Belgian authorities regarding the planning and execution of commemorative events, as well as preparing and compiling exhibitions in both Belgium and New Zealand. There are three members of the board including Martin O'Connor a New Zealander who has been involved in Flanders for a number of years. Each of the three board members have had more than 12 years' experience in matters relating to the Western Front. The trust can be contacted by email newzealandpilgrimage@gmail.com. They can be found on Facebook and will be launching a website (not sure when).

Education Centre at Pukeahu National War Memorial Park: An education centre at Pukeahu National War Memorial Park in Wellington was officially opened in August last year in the former Home of Compassion crèche. It was chosen as the gift from New Zealand to the Queen to mark her 90th birthday and is named the Queen Elizabeth II Pukeahu Education Centre. The centre is staffed by two educators who work closely with the Great War Exhibition in the nearby Dominion Building, and will give school students and visitors a place to learn more about Pukeahu and New Zealand's military history, peace keeping and commemoration.

Also in the Grade 1 listed Home of Compassion building, built in 1914, is a small display honouring Mother Aubert and the Sisters of Compassion.

The Somme Cup: One of the first international military rugby trophies, the Somme Cup, has been held in a private collection in New Zealand since the end of the First World War, but was on display at the National Army Museum in Waiouru early last year. I was not able to go to the museum at the time of the trophy's display – if anyone hears of it being displayed anywhere else in the coming years, could you please let me know.



The cup is a cast bronze sculpture of a French grenadier by French artist Georges Chauvel. It was brought to the attention of the New Zealand Defence Force when the Defence Blacks rugby team played a replica commemorative game against the French military's Pacific XV in Paris in late 2015.

Over the winter of 1916-1917, the top rugby players of the New Zealand Division had a break from the trenches and played a series of games against other service teams. One of the games was in Paris on 8 April 1917 against the French military team. The New Zealand Division rugby team, or Trench Blacks as they were later known, won the final game 40-0 in front of a crowd estimated by contemporaries to number 60,000 spectators. While it was reported as a great victory in French and New Zealand newspapers at the time, the Somme Cup subsequently disappeared from public consciousness.

The trophy was formally known as *Le Lanceur de Grenades* ("A French Soldier Throwing a Grenade") but the Kiwis and French dubbed it the *Coupe de la Somme* and the name, Somme Cup, remains until today.

The Somme Cup

Photo courtesy National Army Museum NZ

The creator, Georges Chauvel, was a soldier in the French Army who continued to sculpt during the war. After he was demobilised in 1919, Chauvel was commissioned by French towns to design war memorials. After the Second World War, he devoted himself to the restoration of monuments and statues.

Source of information about the cup is from the National Army Museum e-newsletter March 2016.

Imprisoned conscientious objectors, 1916-1920: A table has been prepared by the NZHistory team at the Ministry for Culture and Heritage showing a list of 286 conscientious objectors who were imprisoned for rejecting military service during the First World War. The spreadsheet lists the dates they were balloted, sentenced and released, and provides other biographical and procedural information. It also records their reasons for rejecting military service, where this information is available.

While most New Zealanders supported their country's participation in the First World War, a small but significant group opposed it on religious, political, philosophical or personal grounds. Sending New Zealand soldiers to serve in faraway war zones was accepted by most people so long as the men went voluntarily, but the introduction of conscription – which sent some men against their will – threatened to shatter this broad consensus. Members of pacifist religious sects refused to take up arms, while militant socialists refused to fight for a capitalist system which, in their view, oppressed them. Irish nationalists had no desire to support the British government which occupied their homeland, and other people resisted war for reasons of their own.

New Zealand's leaders, committed to maintaining the flow of soldiers to the front, moved to shut down resistance and punish those who, as they saw it, were taking an unpatriotic and disruptive stance at a time of national crisis. The government used special wartime legislation to punish and imprison those who tried to provoke organised resistance to the war effort, and to make examples of those who refused to "do their duty".

About 600 men declared conscientious objections, of whom around 286 were ultimately imprisoned in New Zealand as an example to other would-be objectors (others accepted non-combatant service or were exempt). Fourteen imprisoned objectors were forcibly dispatched overseas in July 1917, with some ultimately transported to the Western Front and subjected to military punishments and incarceration. The table and much more information is available on nzhistory.govt.nz and search for conscientious objectors.

New Zealand garden at Zonnebeke: Cathy Challinor, a New Zealand landscape artist with the Boffa Miskell design practice, has prepared plans for a New Zealand memorial garden to be installed at the Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917 at Zonnebeke. The project to have a New Zealand garden at the museum has been run by the Passchendaele Society and Cathy's design was the winning entry in a design competition.

The garden, being constructed in New Zealand, will be shipped to Belgium and completed in time for the Passchendaele centenary in October 2016. The garden is in the shape of a poppy consisting of three little gardens, and will be one of seven gardens in the form of a poppy in the museum grounds. The theme of remembrance underlies the project that features plants, visual art and words and verses, which pay tribute to the fallen and remind visiting New Zealanders of their homeland. To anyone visiting Passchendaele this year for the 100th anniversary commemorations (or any year), don't miss the gardens when you visit the museum.

The Earth Remembers - a memorial at the Wellington Quarry Museum in Arras, France: The New Zealand soldiers who dug a network of tunnels beneath Arras in the run-up to the Allies' spring offensive in 1917 in France are to be honoured with the unveiling of a new memorial this year.

The Earth Remembers, a bronze sculpture three meters high, outlining the figure of a New Zealander wearing a characteristic "lemon squeezer" hat, will be inaugurated at a dawn ceremony on 9 April 2017, the centenary of the start of the Battle of Arras. The "dug out" shape of the lone tunneller represents a soldier who is no longer there.

Designed and made by Marian Fountain, a New Zealand artist based in Paris, it will stand near the entrance to the Carrière Wellington, the subterranean museum in Arras. New Zealand has contributed a New Zealand Lottery Grant of \$181,000 towards the project, in recognition of the continuing contribution made by the people of Arras to the memory of the New Zealand troops and as a "thank you" to the museum.

In the run-up to the Battle of Arras in 1917, British and New Zealand forces dug an extensive network of tunnels beneath the town, linking quarries dating back to the Middle Ages to create vast shelters below ground. The aim was to concentrate thousands of troops close to the front line in readiness for the April offensive, without alerting the Germans. Part of the system was named Wellington Quarry, after the New Zealand capital. After years of excavations, it was re-opened as a museum, La Carrière Wellington, in 2008. The New Zealand Tunnelling Company was among more than 30 British and Dominion tunnelling units serving in France by the end of 1916.

Surveyors from Otago's National School of Surveying along with counterparts from the École Supérieure des Géomètres et Topographes (ESGT Le Mans, France) are working together using 3D laser scanning to document, honour and preserve the story and incredible work of the men from New Zealand. The 3D record of tunnels and caves will provide a stunning virtual world to be explored from the safety of a website. Go to www.otago.ac.nz/lidarras to view two videos: one of the young men carrying out the work and the other shows some of their results.

Elizabeth

**The Myriad Faces of War: 1917 and
its Legacy Symposium
25 to 28 April 2017 at The Museum of
New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa**

Registration is now open
Information, including details of all the speakers, is on myriadfaces.org

If anyone is attending the symposium, please let Elizabeth know.
We may be able to arrange a brief get-together.

Branch meetings in recess

Elizabeth Morey

A few months ago, I sent out a request to all the Auckland members for a volunteer to take on the role of meeting co-ordinator, a role that could be shared by two or more people. After 16 years, due to family and other commitments, I am not able to continue in this role.

At the last meeting held on Sunday 16 October, Herb Farrant chaired the meeting and advised those present that nobody had put their hand up to take on the co-ordinator's role. Unfortunately, that means that there will be no further meetings for the foreseeable future.

However, if anyone has had second thoughts and would like to take on the job, please do get in touch – it is not too late! If you can't find the information I sent and/or would like some further details, I am happy to send the information again or have a chat about what is involved.

This does not affect the newsletter and it will still be produced three times a year: February, June and October.

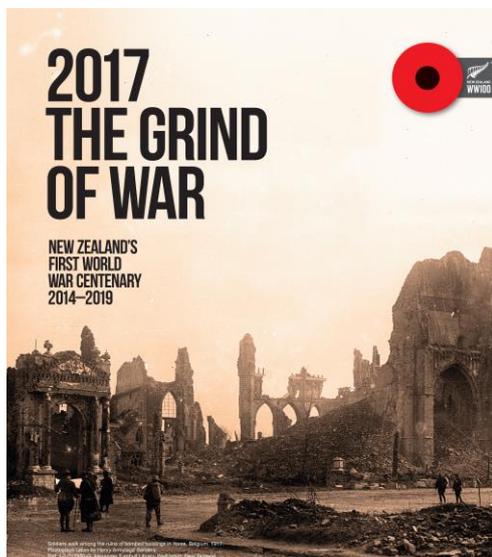
At the meeting, Herb also advised that the New Zealand Military Historical Society are hoping to reinstate their meetings and/or bus trips to local places of military history interest. Herb has now been in touch again to advise that at a committee meeting of the NZMHS towards the end of last year, a member was appointed to arrange meetings and events. The NZMHS have kindly agreed that the WFA could come under the umbrella of the NZMHS (but remain as an independent group) and that members are welcome to take part in any NZMHS events (meetings, bus trips etc).

Herb is also in discussions with staff at the Auckland War Memorial Museum in an effort to improve communications with the AWMM and military history groups in Auckland. It is intended that a "notice board" will be set up on the AWMM's website so that groups such as ours are kept abreast of military history events being organised by the AWMM or other local groups. In the past, we have often only found out about lectures that would be of much interest to our members (both the NZMHS and WFA members) by "accident" and often with very little notice. Herb is still working on the concept and will keep us informed of progress.

The First World War Centenary Programme for 2017

Clare Fraser

WW100's 2017 centenary theme, **The Grind of War**, will reflect on the centenaries of the Battles of Messines, Beersheba and Passchendaele, which included New Zealand's darkest day. We will also explore how the shortage of labour, conscription woes, the rising cost of living and industrial unrest heightened the tension at home, as well as the aid that New Zealand communities provided to Belgian refugees.



As part of the centenary programme, **national commemorations will be held in Wellington** for the centenaries of the Battles of Messines (7 June 2017), Passchendaele (12 October 2017) and Beersheba (31 October 2017). The following **national commemorations will be held overseas**. Access to these commemoration services is not balloted – they are open to anyone wishing to commemorate New Zealand's military service during the First World War.

The Battle of Messines, New Zealand Memorial Park, Nieuwzeelandersstraat, Messines, 7 June 2017: Messines refers to a ridge south of the town of Ypres captured by New Zealand forces. Thanks to careful planning, the capture of Messines Ridge was a great success and paved the way for the main attack later in the summer, by removing German forces from the dominating ground on the southern face of the Ypres Salient. New Zealand suffered 3,000 casualties and 700 deaths at Messines.

Battle of Passchendaele, Zonnebeke, Belgium, 12 October 2017: The 12 October 1917 attack by New Zealand forces on Bellevue Spur near Passchendaele was poorly prepared, partly because of the extreme weather conditions. The New Zealanders were exposed to German machine-gun fire along with being held back by barbed wire. Within the first few hours the New Zealand Division suffered 2,700 casualties, of which 845 were fatalities. These casualties amounted to six percent of New Zealand's total casualties in the entire First World War.

Battle of Beersheba, Beersheba, Israel, 31 October 2017: Beersheba a southern town on the edge of the Negev Desert, 75km south-west of Jerusalem was considered the key to taking Gaza, due its strategically vital water wells. Allied divisions attacked the main Ottoman defences on the western and south-western outskirts of Beersheba on 31 October 1917. The New Zealand Mounted Rifles played a vital role in the Battle of Beersheba, aiding the Australian forces in their role of capturing the town and the eventual capture of Gaza from Ottoman forces.

More information about these commemorations can be found at ww100.govt.nz/national-ceremonies.

If you are interested in keeping up-to-date with WW100, sign up to their e-newsletter on ww100.govt.nz (scroll to the bottom of the home page to sign up). You can read archived e-newsletters at ww100.govt.nz/ww100-programme-office-updates. WW100 is also active on social media, follow them on Facebook and Twitter.

Lijssenthoek, Belgium

Delysse Storey

Edited by Elizabeth Morey

Lijssenthoek Evacuation Hospital, 291 New Zealand Burials

Near the town of Poperinghe in the Salient of Ypres, Belgium, in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery there is evidence of the number of soldiers whose short lives ended in the Lijssenthoek Evacuation Hospital during the First World War. Four Allied casualty clearing stations were located at Lijssenthoek by 1917, and together they eventually accommodated some 4,000 hospital beds and formed the biggest evacuation hospital in the Ypres Salient. The cemetery is the second largest Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery in Belgium.

This sight was a place suffused by a duration of darkness and suffering, and either through injury or disease, the patients' chances of survival diminished. In my transparency I felt it was evident for all to see, and I found this experience was indeed unexpected and more powerful than the feeling experienced at other cemeteries. The factual nature was verified with my understanding that in reality the soldier's affliction, pain, distress and grief stopped here. He was not killed in action, he suffered, and his endurance was here, restoratively for whatever period of time.

Did soldiers dare dream or believe in restored health or their survival to return home? Who were these men: sons, brothers, husbands, and fathers? What happened to their anxious families within households who lived, waited and lost?

A wall of crimson red, aflame with 1,400 small portraits, represented a portion of those who had been laid to rest, a modern art work on a barren wall featured within the Lijssenthoek Visitor Centre. Who loved these men, who cared for these soldiers, some diseased of body and mind. Did the doctors and nurses suffer the same fate afflicted by contagious illnesses?

The lingering protracted state of some injuries often led to secondary problems of disease contracted while in the hospital and could be worse than being in a direct line of fire. Every soldier wanted to survive, but suffering at length, with death a daily occurrence, could have given rise to a determination to live, or live in a state of indifference. One can read between the lines under the glass cases of exhibits carefully displayed. Stories heard when one's ear was pressed hard up against the audio wall were extraordinarily powerful, a documentation of declared rhetoric marking the time and experiences of those who cared for the soldiers, and of those never realised.

My introduction to the Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery has fixed deeply and firmly to me, as part of a seed which has grown and become rooted and connected.

Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Belgium: The boys

Enveloped in security away from the battle zone, words alone could not signify any detailed account of the internal workings within the hospital, which must have had its limitations. With the arrival of challenging cases daily, a strenuously stretched over-worked medical team had no freedom of will from restraint; much was learned through circumstantial surgery during the Great War.

If nothing else was absolute, it was to me the confirmation of a very clear message within the cemetery. Row upon row of numbers and names, soldiers belonging to an order of national unity form continuous lines reunited in death fighting in the Great War. The suffering from the Battle of Passchendaele attack on 12 October 1917 was evident. Died of wounds. Died of wounds. Died of wounds. Died of wounds. Merge them together and you would sink under the weight of the unspeakable number.

Mystically united, the thread of torment and battle ascribed as sacrifice, is forever present between the rows and rows in the now peaceful surroundings.

38115 Rifleman Albert Bolton, New Zealand Rifle Brigade

Died of wounds 15 October 1917, three days after the 12 October attack on Passchendaele.

30214 Private C W Hatten, Otago Regiment

Died of wounds 14 October 1917, two days after the 12 October attack on Passchendaele.

21730 Private G Pearce, Canterbury Regiment

Died of wounds 15 October 1917, age 20, three days after 12 October attack on Passchendaele.

18516 Private E L Warren, Canterbury Regiment

Died of wounds 14 October 1917, age 24, two days after the 12 October attack on Passchendaele.

26471 Sapper J A Spencer, New Zealand Engineers

Died of wounds 15 October 1917, three days after the 12 October attack on Passchendaele.

6/2597 Lance Corporal L W Derret, Canterbury Regiment, Mentioned in Dispatches.

Died of wounds, 14 October, age 22, two days after the 12 October attack on Passchendaele.

3/507 Corporal W C Porter, New Zealand Medical Corps

Died of wounds 14 October 1917, two days after the 12 October attack on Passchendaele.

26/1193 Lance Sergeant C Hall, New Zealand Rifle Brigade

Died of wounds 19 October 1917, Age 22, seven days after the 12 October attack on Passchendaele.

6/1713 Private S Shirley, Canterbury Regiment

Died of wounds 21 October 1917, nine days after the 12 October attack on Passchendaele.

3/2744 Private Colin Buxton Black, New Zealand Medical Corps

Died of wounds 15 October 1917, age 17, three days after the 12 October attack on Passchendaele.

These names and numbers were never ending there, never to be erased.

Private Colin Buxton, a young medic of only 17 years of age, lost his life accompanying and attending the bravest. A boy throbbing for action, lying under the turf at the Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery would have scored ten worldly years of fast learning in his expedient young life.

All New Zealand headstones in all cemeteries carry the New Zealand insignia; all are equal under the embellishment of the silver fern. A mixture of chords and discord will always continue in regard to the loss of life of a generation of New Zealand's finest and fittest young men. The loss of sons, brothers, husbands and friends from a young nation separated people from patriotic feelings, driving New Zealand towards a separate existence as a nation.

We were no longer Colonials; these young men showed us they had fought for New Zealand. They had earned our freedom for us to become proud New Zealanders.

It was at the Battle of Passchendaele Commemoration 99th Anniversary service at 11am on Wednesday 12 October 2016 in the First World War Hall of Memories at the Auckland War Memorial Museum, that Elizabeth Morey and myself, as members of the public, laid flowers with the names of some of our boys who died after the Battle of Passchendaele and who are buried at Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery. Lest we Forget.

Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, 16 September 2016

16 September 1917 - A corner turned on each page of the year in a calendar at the Lijssenthoek Visitor Centre tells the story related to the day.

This day was my son Edward's birthday, this story earmarked for that date was that of ...

5475 Robert Hartley Roach, born Moonta, South Australia, enlisted in January 1915.

He arrived in France with his Battalion a year and a half later.

Robert was punished for leaving his unit without leave on 6 October 1916 and he was sentenced to 72 hours hard labour.

Two months later, Robert was admitted to hospital with influenza.

He returned to his battalion on 25 January 1917: 6th Battalion, Australian Infantry.

He again reported sick barely ten days later. Robert had caught a venereal disease.

He was evacuated to a specialist hospital in France by ambulance train.

After 50 days treatment, he was certified healed and on 10 April he rejoined his unit.

On 16 September, Robert's battalion set up camp in the proximity of Chateau Segard, near Dickebusch.

The camp came under fire. Robert was shot in the buttocks. The wounds work their way up as far as the chest.

He was transferred to No 3 Canadian Evacuation Hospital in Lijssenthoek.

Robert died on 16 September 1917, age 26. Resting place: Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery.

***The Grieving Parents* by Kathe Kollwitz**

Memories by Delysse Storey

Additional information by Elizabeth Morey

Before a recent trip to the Western Front, I asked my dear friend, Sister Rozanne in Ypres, for information about *The Grieving Parents* sculpture by Kathe Kollwitz which stands on the edge of the Vladslo German War Cemetery, located near Dixmude (now spelt Diksmuide) in Belgium. The cemetery holds the remains of 25,644 German soldiers and because of the density of burials it is almost a mass grave. In contrast to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemeteries in France and Belgium, the German soldiers are commemorated with dark stones and multiple names per marker, and there is a sense of great sorrow.

Over lunch, Rozanne, full of wonder, gave me a history lesson and outlined the history of Vladslo and its historical importance. On this visit, said Rozanne, one of the places I will take you to, is a place you will remember the most. But first, she said, it is important that you understand the contribution made by the famous sculptor, Kathe Kollwitz, a remarkable woman, and *The Grieving Parents* - a mother's pain - displayed within the cemetery.

This was the first German cemetery we would visit, armed with the information Rozanne had produced regarding the Vladslo German War Cemetery.

Rozanne said: "Like Mother Mary, her life was mapped out for her and her suffering was every mother's suffering, she worked for the poor, widows, orphans, survivors, homeless, and the unemployed. She expressed social injustice within her work. Kathe Kollwitz was a committed socialist, living with her doctor husband, Karl, in a working class area of Berlin. You will say, what has this to do with the war in Flanders, Kathe Kollwitz was German. She was born Kathe Schmidt in Konigsberg, East Prussia, in 1867."

The moment Rozanne spoke about Konigsberg, a shiver went down my spine. It was the guilt I had felt as a child having German heritage, and having to deny it all those years. In silence, I was recognising my German roots - I had always claimed my French connection but not my German. Konigsberg was where my great-grandfather was born, about the same period as Kathe Schmidt. Konigsberg is now Kaliningrad in Russia.

Rozanne looking at me and said, "Delysse you look like you have seen a ghost." I replied, "I think I have, this visit has just become even more significant to me."

Two boys were born to Kathe and Karl. She used her youngest son, little Peter, to create one of the most consuming artworks ever: an etching compiled in 1903, *Woman with Dead Child*. Her etching is likened to Mary, mourning the loss of Jesus. Mary has Jesus lying limp in her arms. The features of the mother are almost hidden by the child's body, as she clutches the boy between her thighs and arms. The emotional sorrow in her body is a living testimony to her pain. It is piercing sorrow and a true reflection of the pain she would endure when her little Peter was killed near Esen soon after the war began in 1914. Peter was 19 years old when he was killed, but only seven years old when his mother compiled the etching.

We ask, "Was she preparing herself for the pain to come?"



*The Grieving Parents by Kathe Kollwitz
Valdslo German War Cemetery
Photo: Wikipedia*

Valdslo German War Cemetery contains a pair of statues, *The Grieving Parents*, made by Kathe. After the death of her youngest son, Peter, on 22 October 1914, Kathe suffered from depression and the loss of her son contributed towards her socialist and pacifist political sympathies. By the end of the year she had made drawings for a monument to Peter and his fallen comrades, which she destroyed in 1919 and returned to in 1924. She settled on two simple figures, a mother and father with the features of Kathe and her husband Karl, who would kneel in mourning before the graves.

The memorial was finally completed and placed in the Belgian cemetery of Roggevelde in 1932, where Peter was initially buried, adjacent to Peter's grave. In 1956, when Peter's grave was moved to the nearby Valdslo German War Cemetery, the statues were also moved. *The Grieving Parents* are kneeling before the graves at the back of the cemetery. The father clasps himself tightly while the mother hangs her head in grief. The eyes on the father-figure gaze on the ninth stone before him, on which his son's name is written.

Of their last visit to Peter's grave and the statues, Kathe wrote:

We went from the figures to Peter's grave, and everything was alive and wholly felt. I stood before the woman, looked at her – my own face – and I wept and stroked her cheeks. Karl stood close behind me – I did not even realize it. I heard him whisper, 'Yes, yes'. How close we were to one another then!

Kathe went on to become the first women ever to be elected to the Prussian Academy of Arts, but due to Hitler coming to power in 1933, she was expelled from the Academy. In 1936 she was barred by the Nazis from exhibiting, her art was classified as "degenerate" and her works were removed from galleries.

The New Zealand Poppy Places Trust

Joseph Bolton, Project Manager



[In the October 2016 *New Zealand Communication Trench*, Joe introduced us to the work of the Poppy Places Trust and has now kindly supplied us with an update of more good work done by the Trust.]

The Poppy Places project has made steady progress over recent months and we now have 104 “poppy places” in 16 towns and cities.

Invercargill has now registered its first five streets three of which recognise the service of our Royal New Zealand Air Force. The streets are Mepal Place, Lancaster Street and Checketts Place. Mepal was the location in England where Lancaster Bombers were based and the Invercargill land developer was attached to New Zealand 75th Squadron at Mepal and flew Lancasters from 1943-1945. Checketts Place is named after Wing Commander John Milne “Johnny” Checketts DSO DFC who was born in Invercargill and went to school and worked there.

The other two places are Hinton Court named after John Daniel “Jack” Hinton VC who came from Colac Bay in Southland and Russell Square. This park was developed by returned servicemen from the First World War. Their wages were subsidised by the RSA who asked that the park be named Russell Square as that was where the New Zealand Club was in London, which had accommodation and recreational facilities for New Zealand servicemen.



J M Checketts in November 1943, when he commanded the Air-to-Air Combat Squadron of the Central Gunnery School at Sutton Bridge, Lincolnshire, England



Sergeant John Hinton, October 1941

Another interesting ceremony was conducted in Palmerston North on 11 November 2016, where nine streets were launched in a tribute to soldiers of the 28th Maori Battalion. As part of the process of subdivision and naming streets, Brigadier George Dittmer was contacted in late 1964 to give his thoughts on the naming of streets after 28th Māori Battalion soldiers as a commemoration of their service to their country. Dittmer provided a comprehensive list of soldiers who had served under him which was later utilised by the Council to adopt further street names in the Awatapu subdivision. After consultation and further correspondence with the Palmerston North City Council, it was decided that Awatapu Avenue would be renamed Dittmer Drive in honour of him. The resolution was passed by Council on 22 November 1965 and took effect from 1 February 1966. The streets involved are in the suburbs of West End and Awapuni. The streets that now have poppies are Wikiriwhi Crescent, Pitama Road, Ruha Street, Henare Street, Katene Street, Dittmer Drive, Huata Street, Anaru Place and Te Punga Place.



Padre Wi Tetau Huata leading members of the Māori Battalion in a song, while waiting in Alexandria, Egypt, to embark for Italy, 23 October 1943.

*Photo: Alexander Turnbull Library, War History Collection
(photographer: M D Elias), reference # DA-08835-F*

The Royal New Zealand Navy was also commemorated recently with a series of streets being adorned with poppies in the suburb of Mayfair in Hastings. Hastings Borough Council had a policy in the early 1900s of naming new streets after English generals or admirals. Following on from this, related names were sometimes chosen in the 1940's and 1950's after the Second World War.

About 7,000 New Zealand officers and ratings served with the Royal Navy for varying periods during the Second World War. The peak was reached in September 1944, when the total strength of the Royal New Zealand Navy was 10,635, of whom 1242 officers and 3,659 ratings, a total of 4,901, were serving overseas in ships and establishments of the Royal Navy. New Zealanders saw active service in ships of every type from battleships and aircraft-carriers to submarines, motor-launches, and landing craft and in every sea from Spitzbergen in the Arctic to Cape Horn and from Iceland to the shores of Japan. They took part in every major naval engagement or operation and in countless minor actions, as well as in the ceaseless patrols and sea drudgery that make up so great a part of naval warfare.

It was thus appropriate that several new streets being developed just after the First World War, and added to after the Second World War, were named after important naval leaders and ships.

The names for Jellicoe Street, Beatty Street and Hood Street had already been decided in 1916, although Hood Street wasn't developed until later. The names Cunningham, Sussex, Norfolk and Anson were added to the new streets developed after the Second World War. These were all naval names, for ships or admirals. Admiral Cunningham (nicknamed ABC) was in charge of the naval defence forces. The surrender of the Japanese forces in Singapore was accepted aboard the HMS *Sussex*. HMS *Norfolk* was one of the battleships that sank the *Bismarck*. HMS *Anson* was to have been named HMS *Jellicoe*, and was one of the important battleships in the defence of the Commonwealth. It was also one of the battleships assigned to the Pacific Fleet. New Zealanders served on all these ships.

To mark the cluster of poppy places streets in Mayfair (Haig, Jellicoe, Anson, Beatty, Hood, Cunningham, Sussex and Norfolk), the poppy places signs were put up on Friday 16 December 2016 and a ceremony was held at the intersection of Anson Street and Jellicoe Street.



*Mayfair School students Calais, Hollie, Tristan and Noah, who helped research and write the stories for Anson Street and Jellicoe Street spoke at the ceremony, with Hastings District Council's Deputy Mayor Sandra Hazlehurst and Hastings District Council's Ambassador Cr. Henare O'Keefe
Photos: Poppy Places Trust*



The ceremony was also attended by members of the public, representatives of Hastings District Returned Services Association (RSA) Jackie Wells, Gerald Tuarau and John Sturgess, Hastings Mayor Lawrence Yule, Minister of Veterans' Affairs Hon Craig Foss and Poppy Places Trust representative Joe Bolton.

From Hastings and Palmerston North we have learnt that placing the poppy on street signs in these groups certainly creates "civic pride" within the area.

The Poppy Places Trust is always keen to hear from anyone who is interested in assisting with the project as we endeavour to: identify possible places, assign the confirmed place to the appropriate Council, co-ordinate the writing of the story, share the information on our website and mark the place with a poppy. More detail is available on our website: www.poppyplaces.nz or email the Trust at info@poppyplaces.nz.

Ceremony for additional three stakes at the Shot at Dawn Memorial

Richard Pursehouse

On Saturday 29 October 2016, a bracing Autumnal morning, and with a light drizzle threatening, three additional stakes were added to the Shot at Dawn Memorial (created by Birmingham artist Andy DeComyn) at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) in Staffordshire, England.

The date had been suggested to Andy by Lee Dent and Richard Pursehouse of the Chase Project military research group and members of the Wolverhampton Branch of the Western Front Association. They explained that two of the three “mutineers” that were pardoned in 2006 (six years after the memorial was finished) had been executed on that date *exactly* a century ago (the third mutineer being executed in 1917).

Andy checked the information provided by Lee and Richard and WFA New Zealand member Geoff McMillan, who on a visit in 2015 had first asked why the three men had seemingly been “omitted” (see an article by Geoff in the *New Zealand Communication Trench* February 2016 and an update in the June 2016 issue).

Andy explained that originally the campaign for the soldiers to be pardoned did not include those executed for mutiny, as it was not felt that they would be granted a pardon. However, when the pardons were finally granted six years after the installation of the memorial, it also included the mutineers. Andy felt that if the Government had pardoned the three mutineers, then they ought to be added to the memorial and he therefore added the extra posts himself and organised the dedication.

Andy set about seeking permission to alter his memorial from the National Memorial Arboretum, and he received a quick and positive response to his request. This left the tricky issue of tracking down the relatives of the three “mutineers” and to invite them to the ceremony.



David Braithwaite and Geoff McMillan

Geoff had meanwhile discovered that ten years ago, New Zealander David Braithwaite (the nephew of Jack Braithwaite) had similarly enquired while visiting the NMA why his relative (Jack Braithwaite of the New Zealand Otago Regiment) was not included on the memorial, and fully supported Geoff. Geoff met with David and subsequently contacted Lee and Richard, whom he had met in 2015. Lee and Richard focussed on finding the relatives of the remaining two mutineers, Gunner William Lewis from Edinburgh and Jesse Robert Short from Newcastle upon Tyne (Short had been in the “Tyneside Irish” Brigade, although he had been born in Wales).

The Scottish newspaper *The Sunday Mail* was contacted and ran a short article on Gunner Lewis that featured an interview with his great nephew Bryan Ritchie, who knew nothing about his relative, yet alone what had happened to him. The newspaper forwarded the contact details for Bryan who was kept updated on plans and accepted the invitation to attend the ceremony. Jesse Robert Short’s relatives were tracked down by genealogist and author Claudia Joseph who had been recommended to Lee and Richard by military historian Peter Barton. Claudia passed on the contact details for Neil Graham and his half-brother, both grandsons of Jesse Short, both of whom accepted the

invitation to attend. In June 2016, Lee and Richard (on a “working holiday” with Staffordshire County Archaeologist Steve Dean) had placed a wreath on Jesse Short’s grave in France.



Jesse Robert Short’s grave in France

Lee and Richard had also contacted WFA Leicestershire chairman John Sutton for assistance and additional information. John gives talks on the subject of Shot at Dawn (often tweaked to incorporate a local interest where possible) and his knowledge, input and enthusiasm assisted in the planning of the ceremony.

While the story rolled out in various local and national newspapers (as well as the WFA *Bulletin* magazine in March 2016, the WFA’s website and WFA New Zealand Branch newsletter), Andy DeComyn began working on the additional stakes to add to the 306 already at the memorial, as well as the three new name plaques for the stakes (each of which represents an executed soldier), and sprucing up the statue at the memorial.

The day before the ceremony, Lee and Richard met John Sutton, David Braithwaite and his wife Rae, in nearby Lichfield. They handed over copies of articles just published in the local *Express and Star*, *Otago Daily Times* and *New Zealand Herald*, and also explained that Radio New Zealand had transmitted an interview with Geoff McMillan (Richard and David participating) and local BBC Radio stations were to transmit interviews the next morning.

The following morning Lee and his sister Shelley made their way to the National Memorial Arboretum to meet Brigadier Evan Williams of the NZDF, Richard collected Bryan Ritchie and his wife Marilyn at Birmingham airport, and Neil Graham, his brother and their wives followed John’s car, which contained Rae and David, to the National Memorial Arboretum.

The parties met at the recently re-opened and expanded Remembrance Centre (made possible with a major fundraising campaign supported by numerous individuals and organisations, including the Heritage Lottery Fund and Staffordshire County Council), and met with Mary Vidal who had written an article for the WFA on the subject several years ago, and Brigadier Evan Williams. NMA volunteers handed out Shot at Dawn badges to everyone.

Richard and Lee spoke briefly with the TV news reporters from Forces TV (Alex Iszatt) and TVNZ (Emma Keeling), advising them that the relatives may be available for interviews after the event, but not before. Both reporters understood and respected the delicacy of the situation and made their way to the Shot at Dawn memorial to record additional “filler” footage. Those not up to the ten minute stroll were ferried to the location by buggies laid on by the Arboretum.

After Rev Vic Van Den Bergh’s welcome and the Reading (Psalm 139), prayers were said. Bugler Steve Taylor’s evocative, note-perfect rendition of *The Last Post* preceded the two minutes’ silence and those gathered in this secluded sector of the Arboretum reflected on the memorial and those it represented.



Former Staffords Regiment bugler Steve Taylor plays the Last Post

Steve's *Reveille* was followed by a short wreath-laying ceremony with Brigadier Williams being the first to lay a wreath on behalf of the people of New Zealand, and a further four wreaths from the relatives. A wrought iron wreath incorporating a horse shoe worn by one of the horses that pulled the gun carriage for the Unknown Warrior was laid by Berni Wilkins of the Cannock Chase Branch of the Riders for the Royal British Legion.

Andy DeComyn played a lament on his bagpipes, having joined bugler Steve Taylor to the rear of the memorial. Former Staffords Regiment soldier Steve later explained why he had taken up this position - he could not countenance turning his back on the stakes. The haunting notes from both instruments provided a poignant, fitting coda for the ceremony.



Riders for the Royal British legion wrought iron wreath



David Braithwaite and Brigadier Evan Williams place Dolores Crosses behind the name plaque for Jack Braithwaite

A short ceremony for a replacement bench at the memorial, dedicated to the memory of John Hipkins who had persevered in the pardons for those represented by the stakes, then took place.

Kristin, who had accompanied Brigadier Evan Williams to the ceremony from the New Zealand High Commission, handed to him Dolores Crosses (dolorescrossproject.org), created by Dolores Ho, the Archivist at the National Army Museum in New Zealand. The crosses, handcrafted since 2008 from Harakeke (flax) plants, combined with an RSA poppy, were placed behind the name plaque for Jack Braithwaite by Evan and David (Lee and Richard placed a further four crosses behind the name plaques of the other four New Zealanders at the memorial).

David was interviewed by Forces TV, TVNZ and local newspaper the *Express and Star*, which had run two articles on the story before the event and has also published two afterwards. David used a word unfamiliar to English ears to describe Jack - "larrikin" - which piqued the interest of Lee and Richard (an antipodean word meaning roughly "bit of a lad"). The two TV stations ran the story that night (both nearly three minutes) and then uploaded the film and information to their websites. The story reached number three in the "most read" articles on Forces TV's website.

As a gentle drizzle began to envelope the stragglers that remained, Bryan Ritchie and Neil Graham were also interviewed, and all of the relatives spoke of the ceremony being a fitting, emotional "closure" for them. Rev Van Den Bergh, Andy DeComyn and Richard were also interviewed.

Back at the new Remembrance Centre of the National Memorial Arboretum the guests relaxed in an area of the restaurant set aside for them. As Lee and Richard left, there was a sobering moment when Bryan Ritchie and David Braithwaite said goodbye to each other - two relatives of men who had been executed within five minutes of each other exactly one hundred years ago. Their only connection? The same firing squad.

The Chase Project would like to thank everyone for their positive involvement, especially Andy DeComyn, John Sutton, Vic Van Den Bergh, Brigadier Evan Williams NZDF and Kristin, Geoff McMillan from Waikanae Beach (there in spirit), Forces TV and TVNZ, and the volunteers at the National Memorial Arboretum, headed by Peter Orgill.

Lee and Richard met Evan and Kristin the following day at the Staffordshire County Council Great War Hut and discussed further Anglo-Kiwi projects, but that, as they say, is another story ...



Wreaths placed at the foot of the statue based on Private Herbert Burden, aged 17, who was executed in 1915

All photos courtesy of The Chase Project

For videos of the dedication ceremony:

www.forces.tv/96301140

www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/kiwi-soldier-executed-century-ago-finally-acknowledged?autoplay=5190320332001

www.expressandstar.com/picture-galleries/news-video/2016/11/01/poignant-ceremony-held-to-honour-servicemen-at-national-memorial-arboretum-watch/



A south coast visit

Tim Keenan

Back in the UK summer of 2016, I had the pleasure of entertaining two of my long time Kiwi friends from the Bay of Plenty at my home in east Kent. I had in mind to take them on a visit to several First World War sites on the south coast of Kent.

Tunnels and sound mirrors

The first visited was the newly opened Second World War tunnels on the famous White Cliffs of Dover and their First World War Sound Mirrors. Although I had done my homework, and even obtained a leaflet on the Fan Bay Tunnels which overlook the English Channel, we had not realised that much serious walking along these cliffs was to be undertaken from Langdon Bay not far from Dover Castle to this site. My pal, who I who I first met in Thanet in the 1950's during our school days, quite often used to cycle from Margate to these cliffs and explore the huge tunnels and gun emplacements which abound this area, great days which are fondly remembered.

We arrived at the Second World War tunnel entrance, which were only opened about a year ago after much work by volunteers and others, involving removing tons upon tons of rubble and spoil. Winston Churchill, in early 1940, when he was Prime Minister, visited these cliffs and fortifications. When being shown around, he asked one of the men who were manning the guns, in place at the time, "what are those vessels over the way, near the French coast". The reply was that well they are German, Churchill said loose of a shot immediately, a repost came back well our guns do not have anywhere near the range to hit them. Within a few days he gave instructions that new bigger guns were to be installed at various places on the cliffs, as soon as possible, the quicker the better.

The Fan Bay Tunnels were built for the men who operated these guns, to protect them when the Germans raided this coast, which was on a frequent basis during the early part of the Second World War.

After being shown through these tunnels, we emerged in the Kentish sunlight at the site of two First World War sound mirrors, which had been set into the cliff. One was set in the vertical plane and the other was tilted back from the vertical a few degrees. Both these dished concrete structures measure about 15 feet across. When new, they were fitted in their centres with a type of sound listening apparatus, referred to as an acoustic sound collecting, with a trumpet and a stethoscope worn by the listener to pick up sounds, who was based in a wooden hut nearby with the apparatus. It is said they could pick up the sounds of German aircraft and Zeppelin engines over some distance; of course they were set or fixed into position so they were pointing northwards up into the North Sea where many of the Hun coastal raiders came from. The men who operated these top secret devices were billeted nearby on the White Cliffs and in the town of Dover. The whole district area of the cliffs on both sides of this town was a strictly controlled military area and a special pass was required with a passport photo inserted into it to allow the bearer to enter. It was the same in in the Second World War. I have one of these booklets issued to a steam traction engine driver in the First World War, who worked for a local firm, allowing him to enter the Dover district for the express purpose of steam road haulage.



By the mid-1920s they were really obsolete, and certainly out of use in the next decade. There were many of these sound mirrors on the south coast of the UK and further up the east coast. The biggest set of these structures can be found not far in the west of the town of Hythe on the Romney Marsh in Kent and are well worth a visit, though they were constructed in the 1920's. The two at Fan Bay and another type of sound disc with a smooth concrete mirror at its rear operated during the First World War at what was then known as Joss Gap, now Joss Bay, near Broadstairs. This one sadly does not now exist.

*One of the 15 foot diameter sound mirrors at Fan Bay near Dover
Photo: Tim Keenan*

Step Short and Folkestone

Later in the day, after refreshments at the Langdon Bay cliffs café, with its fine views over Dover Harbour with its many comings and goings of the ferries leaving Blighty for La Belle France and Belgium, we took the road down to the coast to Folkestone. A town without doubt steeped in First World War history and well known to the ANZAC other Dominion troops. As well of course British Tommies.

It was from this south Kent port that the majority of troops left in varying vessels to the port of Boulogne in France and thence to the battlefields of Flanders, Picardy and other locations in Europe. There are many photographs showing these vessels tied up alongside the harbour arm (mole) with troops boarding. Some time before the centenary of the start of the First World War in 1914, a new charity based in Folkestone was formed to raise the awareness of the impact of the war on the town and the nation and commemorate those who were involved. This charity took the name Step Short, which is believed to be a military order perhaps shouted at the troops marching down to the harbour, from the very many camps around this Folkestone district and beyond.

It is estimated over nine million soldiers marched along the Leas Promenade and down Slope Road to the port during the First World War. This order was given to “Step Short”, ie a slow pace so the soldiers would not slip on the road going down this steep incline. As we know, they wore hobnail boots at this time, and it would make things a bit tricky on the road, especially in the wet. When the lads arrived on the harbour arm, they could obtain a cuppa, a sandwich and a piece of cake or two from a small tea bar run by three lady local residents - at their own expense I would add!

They were two sisters Margaret and Flora Jeffery and Mrs Napier. It should be noted that during the war there were many such establishments in major railway stations in London and other places, to provide sustenance to the troops. In Folkestone the ladies often asked the soldiers to write comments in their visitor book. These tea bars were by no means unique in Blighty during the First World War. The *London Daily Telegraph* reported on 12 August 1916, that there were free buffets at major railway stations in London and, for instance, in the Belfast docks in northern Ireland, as well as others in France and Flanders, most run on a voluntary basis by ladies of class. After the war, a number were awarded a CBE or MBE for this vital work.

Today, the famous Mole Café on the harbour arm - also known as the mole, being a single arm structure - is open each weekend for refreshments, run by volunteers of the Step Short charity. It should be noted, in recent times the famous Folkestone Marine Station on the mole was in a very bad state of repair and was due to be demolished. This caused some concern to the enlightened locals in the town and elsewhere, and a pressure group was formed to stop this work. Fortunately the demolition did not happen and money was found to repair the station and it is ongoing. There are now a number of boutique shops along the mole and also eateries.

What is remarkable, it is believed between nine and ten million soldiers used the Folkestone Marine Station in the First World War to go to Europe. Many, of course, returned wounded and were taken by ambulance trains to the main London stations, mainly Victoria and then distributed to many hospitals country wide. Later in the war, the route from Rouen to Southampton was the main crossing used. There were always two big steam locomotives on each train, one at the front and one at the rear to assist the train to climb out of the Folkestone Marine Station, and up the hill onto the main line, owing to the heavy load. This line cuts through the centre of Folkestone town and was a delight for small boys as the trains pulled up this hill. This continued until the station was closed, about 20 years ago with the demise of the ferry services to the Continent. Today, the station is not in operation but still exists, there is an idea that it will be made operational soon as part of a new town tramway system - we shall see if this happens in the future. In the 1920/30s this line was used for the many people who wished to visit the Great War battlefields in search of their loved ones. Rich tourists also used this route during this time to go over to France to visit such places as Monte Carlo, Cannes, Nice and other places on the Cote d'Azur in their fine cars, but of course that is another story entirely!



The Mole Cafe on the harbour wall with the ladies who ran this refreshment bar for the troops. Photo courtesy of Step Short charity.



*The Mole Cafe today
Photo: Tim Keenan*

Early in 2014, the Step Short charity completed a painstaking project to transcribe and uploaded the names and other details of 43,500 people who signed one of the eight visitors' books which were kept in the canteen set up on this harbour arm. These books are now available to view on line and include the names of Winston Churchill, field marshals, generals, staff officers and many others from the highest to the lowest Tommy. The visitors' books were found in the local library archives at Folkestone where they had rested for many a year. Step Short were also instrumental in installing a magnificent stainless arch at the top of this road now renamed Road of Remembrance. The arch is fitted with LED lights, and at night gives the area a lovely warm glow. This Step Short Centenary Arch, dedicated by HRH Prince Henry of Wales on 4 August 2014, is in the centre of a piazza, with seating alcoves that also have have speakers which start when people are seated, giving stories about the soldiers who used this walk to the

harbour. Not far from the arch, further along this Victorian promenade, a square of grass has a section laid out with 19,240 pebbles, that represent the lads who fell on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, 1 July 1916. Also on the ground under the memorial arch, is a compass, carved in the stone showing all the Allies who fought in this conflict. Naturally New Zealand, Australian and Canadian names are most prominent. At the back of the seats there are stone plaques with captions.

On Armistice Day, 11 November 1918, the bells of St Mary and St Eanswythe Church rang out over Slope Road, where the order step short was given. I should mention the town war memorial which was erected in the early 1920's at the top of Slope Road is a fine memorial with the bronze statue of Victory atop. It has many bronze plaques with all the names of the Folkestone lads cast on them. One relates to Private Frederic Butcher of the East Kent Regiment who refused to go over the top and was tried by Court Martial. Sadly, he was shot on 27 August 1918 by a firing squad. Probably his mother never realised how he died. It may not have been unique for a disgraced soldier to be included on a memorial, but it is very rare. As we know today, these wronged men have now been given a full pardon and their names are recognised alongside those of their comrades.

On one of the bronze plaques, attached to the lovely Folkestone War Memorial there are a short few words which I have not come across previously by the renowned English Poet Alfred Lord Tennyson, from *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*, which reads: "Not once or twice in our rough island-story, The path of duty was the way to glory."

Finally the Step Short Arch, is dedicated to "The Undying Memory of the many million officers and other ranks, both men and women from the naval, military, air and Red Cross services of the King's Imperial and Colonial Forces who crossed the seas in 1914-19 to defend THE FREEDOM OF THE WORLD". This quotation is taken from the harbour canteen book which visitors are asked to sign today after one has purchased a cuppa and piece of cake, as a Remembrance of all the soldiers of all Allied nations who passed through the Port of Folkestone – a very nice touch, I thought.

For more on the Step Short charity: www.stepsshort.co.uk

Further reading on the sound mirrors:

Mirrors by the Sea by Richard N Scarth, publ 1995, ISBN 1 900101 00 9.

Echoes from the Sky by Richard N Scarth, first publ 1999 ISBN 1 900101 30 0, updated and republished 2014.

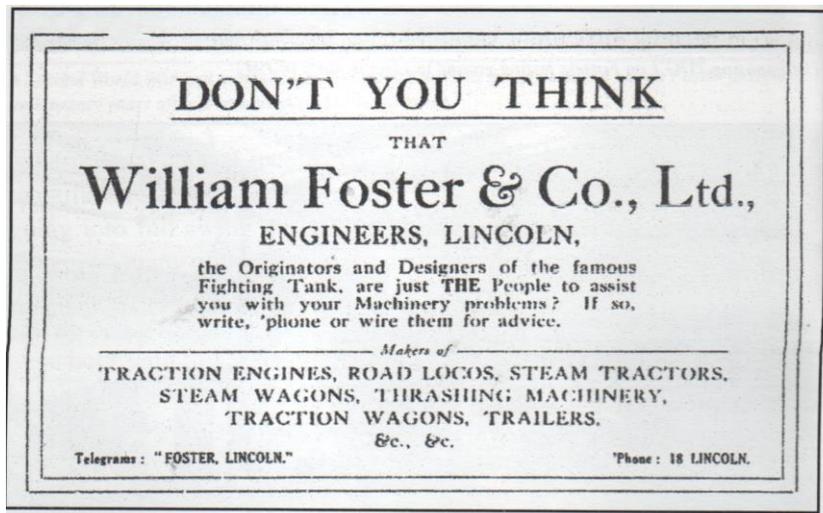
The arrival of a tank in the 1920's

Tim Keenan

As I write this article in mid-September 2016, the anniversary of the first use of the machine we now referred to as the tank on the Somme battlefield has just passed. On Thursday 21 September 1916, the *London Telegraph* ran a report submitted by one of their reporters at the British Headquarters in France giving their battlefield achievements in some detail.

What is not often recognised or mentioned is the firm who manufactured the first tank. They were the well-known Lincolnshire engineering firm of William Foster and Co Ltd of the Wellington Works at Firth Road, Lincoln. Before the Great War they were one of the many firms in and around this city and Lincolnshire making many types of agricultural machinery.

William Foster and Co Ltd has several claims to fame. They designed and built the world's first military tanks in 1915, and their highly regarded Wellington five-ton tractor, a small traction engine. Many were supplied to the War Department in the Great War. Also, they designed and built huge Daimler petrol-engined tractors for hauling the big 15in howitzers on the battlefields. The firm's director was William Tritton a very accomplished engineer who was given a knighthood in February 1917 for his work on the tank project. Many other notable people were also involved but space does not allow me to mention them all, not least the workers at the Wellington Works, many of whom were women.



An early 1920s William Foster and Co Ltd business card used by their travelling salesmen, extolling their involvement in the "Fighting Tanks"

It was over forty years ago when I first paid a visit to the First World War tank at St Georges Square, Ashford, Kent. In those days it sat on its original concrete plinth where it was placed on 1 August 1919. I had been asked by my long-time friend who was the technical engineering librarian at the firm of Ruston, Hornsby and Co Ltd, Lincoln, to photograph it extensively for his records. This I did and sent him the film, without having it developed. I waited for some time for his comments when he had the film processed. Not having heard from him I phoned, he told me the film and other items which were to be sent to a processing lab had been stolen from the works reception, it was thought it was a case of industrial sabotage. If this was so, they would have been somewhat puzzled when the film was developed, trying to work out what this famous engineering firm was working on! He made his sincere apologies and asked if, when time permitted, could I go again to photograph it. This I did a while later, but kept the film in my file and just sent the photos. At the time one could gain access to the inner compartment, which over the years was used by the local Ashford Electricity Company as a substation housing a transformer.

In the *Tuesday Express* (the local newspaper) of 22 July 1919, an announcement appeared declaring "reception arrangements" were in hand to receive this tank. It was a Mark IV Female fitted with machine guns, one of over 1,220 both male and female manufactured during the war. It is believed to be one of eight that today survive in England and certainly the only such machine in the UK standing visible to the public. It was to be presented to the town of Ashford by the Army Council, in recognition of the splendid and patriotic response by the town and district to various War Loans.

The route it would take, after being unloaded at the South Eastern and Chatham Railway Station at about 6.30am, was to proceed by way of Station Road, the whole length of the High Street to the position on a specially laid concrete plinth in St Georges Square. Major Rigg, OBE, JP, DL was to make the official presentation, although a report in the *Tuesday Express* of 5 August 1919 states it was actually the commander of the tank who made the presentation, Captain Farrar MC together with his crew. Research indicates that it was this captain and his crew who delivered many of these tanks to a host of towns and cities in Blighty during the period after the Great War, to be sited as permanent war memorials. Regrettably many were cut up for scrap at the start of the Second World War.

Major Rigg also gave a speech as did several other dignitaries. There were many veterans who attended this presentation and they were acknowledged on that day. There was as a huge crowd of on lookers. I would add the tank was preceded by a military band, a contingent of Scouts and twelve veterans of the Great War who provided the guard of honour.

After the event, the officers and men of the tank, official agents of the Urban District Council, workers who had an involvement with the various War Saving Committees and several War Loans weeks operatives, were invited to a dinner. This was followed by a smoking concert, tickets having been offered for this event at five shillings each. Interestingly, War Saving Certificates were still being sold at this time and one could, once the tank was in situ, purchase one which entitled the buyer to inspect the interior of the tank.



Tank 245 arrives in Ashford in 1919

In August 2016, I paid another visit to this tank in Ashford, now sitting under a specially designed covered building. I was pleased to see it was in reasonable order, having in 2005 been refurbished by the Army. I would add, although William Foster and Co Ltd was the first to build the tank, many other well-known engineering concerns in the UK were also involved in constructing them, amongst them Metropolitan Carriage and Wagon Company of Birmingham being the biggest supplier. Manchester companies, Metropolitan Vickers of Trafford Park and Mirrlees, Bickerton and Day of Stockport, manufactured engines and quite a number of other British engineering companies manufactured smaller components for the tanks. All now long forgotten. The well-known firm of Aveling and Porter at Rochester, on the north banks of the Medway River, famous for their steam rollers, also manufactured gears for the first tanks, under conditions of great secrecy, although they were not told what they were for at the time. The engineering drawings held little of that detail. After the Great War, all machinery manufactured by William Foster and Co Ltd carried the logo of the tank, in particular their steam traction engines on the smokebox door name ring at the front of the engine as an acknowledgement of their efforts in the Great War.

Specifications of the Ashford Tank British Mark IV Female Tank build no 245:

Weight: 26 tons

Length: 26ft 5ins

Width: 10ft 6ins

Height: 8ft 10ins

Road speed: 3.7 mph

Fuel capacity: 70 gallons – petrol

Engine: 105 bhp Daimler-Foster 6 cylinder sleeve valve configuration others were also manufactured in the 150bhp size to deliver more power

Crew: 8 (commander, driver, 2 gearsmen, 4 gunners)

Gears: 4 forward, 2 reverse

Armament: five 303in Lewis Machine Guns

Radius of Action: 35 miles on a full tank

Five hundred and ninety five female and 420 male tanks were built and 205 tank tenders. Tanks were extensively used in mid-1917 at the battle of Messines Ridge, Belgium. The female version of the Mark IV was armed with five Lewis machine guns, while the male versions were armed with two large six pounder guns. No 245 was deactivated when placed in situ by the removal of her rear drive sprockets, the engine's two six cylinder magnetos and twin carburettors. In 1929 the engine was removed to allow the installation of an electricity substation to be installed, which was in use until 1985, and is certainly the reason why it survived to the present day. The protective canopy was built over this tank in 1987, and today it is registered as a war memorial. On 2 February 1924, a letter was published

in the *Kentish Express* newspaper from “One of the Boys” and he was indicating his concern that the Ashford tank could possibly be sent for scrap. However, as we know today this did not take place. It will be noted William Foster and Co Ltd also designed and built smaller tanks, known as the Whippet and Hornet, which were considered quite successful. I have been unable to find out who manufactured Tank 245 which now is on display at Ashford.



Tank 245 today



*The William Foster and Co Ltd smokebox door ring showing the tank logo as fitted to one of their 1920's Fairground Showman's engine
Photos: Tim Keenan*

Sources:

Kentish Express

Ashford Extra

The Story of the Wellington Foundry: A history of W Foster and Co. Ltd by M.R. Lane, Publ 1997

The Landships of Lincoln by R Pullen, Publ 2003

Freda: The respected and admired NZRB regimental mascot

Richard Pursehouse

In late September 1917, prior to its move from Tidworth Pennings near Salisbury to Brocton Camp on Cannock Chase in Staffordshire, the 3rd New Zealand Rifle Brigade was reviewed by its founder, The Duke of Connaught (King George V's uncle). His visit was reported in the *Chronicles of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force*; the article also mentioned the Brigade Mascot Freda, whose remains lie buried in "H" lines on Cannock Chase:

"Freda" our Great Dane mascot, is fit and flourishing, likewise the second generation thereof.
Chronicles of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, 5 September 1917)



"Freda," the Regimental Mascot

Freda, the Great Dane mascot of the NZRB

The only known photograph of Freda shows what appears to be a "Harlequin" Great Dane. Although some have erroneously described Freda as a Dalmatian, enquiries with the Great Dane Club of Great Britain have reinforced the *Chronicles of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force* comment that she was a Great Dane. The breed in the early 20th Century had smaller ears and a more pointed face. The Club also pointed out the drooping tail, which is not synonymous with Dalmatians. Dolores Ho, Archivist at the National Army Museum in Waiouru, has provided measurements of Freda's collar, which confirms her neck was as thick as a modern day Great Dane. Richard compared the measurement with the neck of his Weimaraner dog Parker (aka "Trenchfinder") who had rediscovered the Messines model on Cannock Chase – Freda's neck was thicker than Parker's.



*Freda's collar in the National Army Museum
Photo courtesy National Army Museum NZ
Ref 1978.1511*

There are stories that Freda was from a local family, or from a local racehorse breeder who was the friend of King George V. The King is credited with ensuring the breed did not die out in the country during the Great War, for a dog the size of a Great Dane would have needed a lot of feeding in a time of shortages (rationing began in 1918 in the UK).

Not much is known of Freda's time on Cannock Chase. A "second generation" is referred to in the *Chronicles of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force* of 5 September 1917 quoted earlier, but nothing is known about a litter of puppies. There are various stories of her "inspecting" the troops on the parade ground and being seen at the head of route marches of New Zealand troops across the Chase, and she may have been officially added to the ration list at the camp. She did accompany the NZRB and its band to at least one local "Tank Bank" (at Wolverhampton, at the head of the column, naturally) which were organised to raise funds for the sale of War Bonds.

It is believed Freda had two handlers: a Sergeant Ashby and the subsequently the camp adjutant Captain Magnay, a 48 year old officer originally from Edinburgh. Captain Christopher Robert Alexander Magnay MBE was living in New Zealand when the Great War began, had seen action in the South African War and had volunteered for active service. There are references to Freda in letters home to New Zealand about her always being by his side as he conducted his duties across the camp. If Magnay was busy in his office she would lie patiently, guarding the threshold and her master.

A report in the *Chronicles of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force 1916-1919*, Vol 5, No 61, 24 January 1919, declared:

IN MEMORIAM
Freda, Regimental Mascot

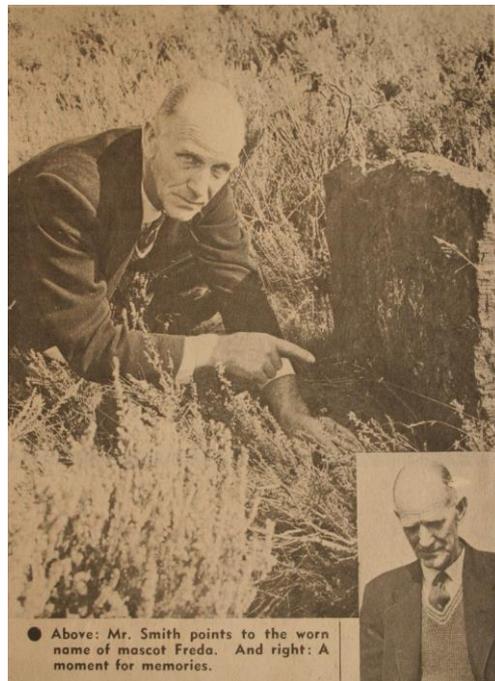
Everyone in Brocton knew Freda. For the matter of that, Freda had a host of friends and admirers outside Cannock Chase. Freda was the adjutant's dog, and belonged to the "Dinks". Nor did she ever fail to maintain the dignity and importance of her exalted position. Not by any means a pet dog, she, nevertheless, managed to earn the respect and admiration of all ranks.

As the mascot of the regiment she carried out her office with all due dignity. Freda was a past master on Battalion drill and guard mounting, and no ceremonial parade which did not meet her approval was ever worth the name. But Freda is no more. A cruel disease cut short her career on the fourteenth day of December 1918, a sad link in the story of the NZRB at Brocton. Never more will her lean, lank form grace the parade ground or saluting-base, or adorn the portals of her master's sanctum. A little green mound and a humble monument on the Stafford hills shall henceforth proclaim the earthly virtues of Freda.

Freda's first and second headstones after her death in 1918

Such was the affection for Freda that the position of her grave and, initially, a wooden marker was between the Sergeant's Mess and the Commanding Officer's office, within sight of the parade ground. The wooden marker was replaced some time later by a stone one. After the war, her handler, Captain Magnay, remained in the area, befriending the widowed manageress of the Barley Mow at Milford, an oft frequented hostelry for the troops during the war (there is a story of NZ troops conducting a mock trial and "hanging" of one landlord for watering down the beer). When Magnay applied for his war medals in 1921 he gave his address as 50 Lichfield Road, Stafford. He was invited to several events after the war, including the donation of a captured German field artillery piece by the NZRB to the people of Stafford, and the presentation of the Perpetual Shield for Musketry by the people of Stafford to the NZRB – but those are other stories.

One story about Freda from the 1960s refers to a visit by a British soldier who had been at the nearby Rugeley Camp and was upset to see the poor state of Freda's neglected headstone, which had replaced the original wooden one from 1918.



*Fred Smith at Freda's grave and second headstone
Photo courtesy Staffordshire Advertiser, 1 October 1964*

Mr Fred Smith had been based at Rugeley Camp as part of the 13th Battalion of the North Staffordshire Regiment, and had emigrated to New Zealand in 1924. In 1964, Fred decided to visit his two sisters, who lived in Great Haywood near Stafford. He and his wife Ethel had spent nearly 40 years sheep farming near Hawkes Bay. When he told friends, Bob McDonald and Harry Bainbridge, who had been in the New Zealand Rifle Brigade when it had been at Brocton, about his intended trip to England, they had asked him to pay their respects to Freda. Initially he struggled to find the grave and eventually found it half sunk in the ground and weather-worn.



*Fred Smith (centre) and his friends with spades at Freda's second headstone that has been "cleaned up" and possibly a temporary handwritten plaque or board placed in front of the headstone
Photo courtesy Express and Star 15 February 1965*

Freda's third and fourth headstones 1960s and 1970

In February 1965, the *Express and Star* ran a feature and photograph of Fred Smith and his two friends, which stated:

Scores of Cannock Chase animal lovers have been stirred by the story of Freda, the dog mascot of the New Zealand Rifle Brigade during the First World War. Since 1918 the remains of the animal have lain in a lonely corner of the Chase near Brocton Quarry. And recently, the dog's grave, which was slowly sinking into the soft earth, was visited by a former Cannock Chase man, Mr Fred Smith, now living in Hawkes Bay, New Zealand.

A group of old infantrymen in New Zealand who befriended Mr Smith when he was serving in the North Staffs Regiment during the war had not forgotten their "old friend" and asked him to locate the grave.

Fred had contacted the Council, who stated that they were not interested in restoring the headstone. His two sisters suggested he contact the local Royal British Legion. They were able to help organise a replacement headstone and utilised the original headstone as a support behind the new one. This was replaced by a fourth headstone six years later in 1970 provided by the Friends of Cannock Chase, the wording in black raised relief and Freda's name in brass letters.



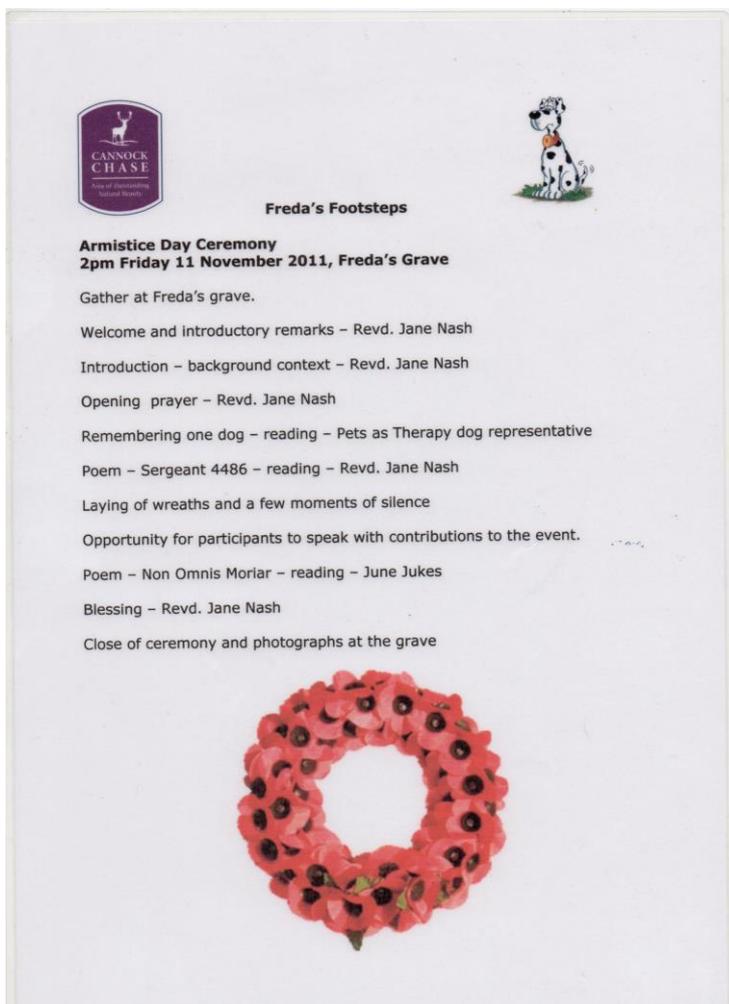
*Freda's fourth headstone provided by the Friends of Cannock Chase in 1970
Photo courtesy Cannock Library*

Freda's fifth and final magnificent headstone 2001

The harsh weather conditions over Cannock Chase led 31 years later to a magnificent granite stone headstone being provided, again with the help of the Friends of Cannock Chase, at a cost of £350. The inauguration of the new headstone was intended to coincide with the annual ANZAC ceremony in April 2001 - however, the country-wide foot and mouth outbreak had shut down the Chase, and the dedication was delayed until October 2001. It was led by the Reverend Carol Hathorne from Willenhall, and was attended by over 70 people, some of whom brought their pets. Goodwill messages were sent from Doctor Tony Wright the then MP for Cannock, as well as from Brigadier Rick Ottaway at the New Zealand High Commission in London. The grave has become a focal point for animals in war and their loyal service, with an Armistice Day event taking place in November each year since 2011. Freda even has her own Facebook page, extolling the virtues of good conduct for dogs and owners over Cannock Chase.



*Reverend Carol Hathorne at the inauguration of the fifth and final headstone in October 2001
Photo probably courtesy Cannock Library*



*Poster advertising Freda's Armistice Day ceremony 2011
Photo courtesy Phil Mills*

The Friends of Cannock Chase removed the fourth (1970) headstone and it was kept in storage until the Staffordshire County Council opened the Great War Hut at Marquis Drive Visitors' Centre in June 2007. The headstone was donated for exhibition in the hut. In April 2011, Dolores Ho, Archivist at the National Army Museum, on a personal visit to England, was asked to place the Western Front Association wreath at the annual ANZAC ceremony that has taken place at Cannock Chase War Cemetery every April since 1918. Her visit was to see the place where her first ever Dolores Cross had been placed on a New Zealand grave in 2008.

During her stay with fellow members of The Chase Project, she was invited to the Great War Hut, where a discussion took place with Ian Wykes from Staffordshire County Council about Freda's fourth (1970) Friends of Cannock Chase headstone.



*Dolores Ho with Ian Wykes in the Great War Hut 2011
Photo: The Chase Project*

It was casually suggested that a more relevant home for the headstone would be with her collar in New Zealand's National Army Museum. The suggestion for the headstone to join Freda's collar was followed up by Stephen Dean, the Principal Archaeologist for the county, who was instrumental in ensuring the headstone was cleaned, weighed, measured, packed securely and safely and transported to RAF Brize Norton, where it was placed on a flight to New Zealand and is now in storage at the National Army Museum.

Dolores has also been helping Lee and Richard in their research about the cement mortar Messines terrain model on Cannock Chase, built by the New Zealand Rifle Brigade in early 1918, which was excavated in 2013 (overseen by Stephen Dean). Freda's grave is a few hundred metres from the Messines model area, which was built on part of the parade ground over which Freda presided - it would be nice to think that she has been keeping guard over the model and parade ground and patrolling the area since 1918.

After the Shot at Dawn ceremony on 29 October 2016 (see article "Ceremony for additional three stakes at the Shot at Dawn Memorial" in this newsletter), Lee and Richard met with Brigadier Evan Williams from the NZDF and Kristin (who had attended the Shot at Dawn ceremony) to discuss other ideas concerning commemorating the time the "Dinks" had been on Cannock Chase. One idea that appealed to Brigadier Williams was for Freda to be made an honorary Sergeant for her contributions towards the morale of the troops, an idea fully supported by the outgoing High Commissioner, Sir Lockwood Smith. Freda would then be honoured in a similar manner to that of Watchman V, the Staffordshire Bull Terrier who parades with the 3rd Battalion (Staffords) Mercian Regiment, and was last year was promoted to Sergeant (and who, incidentally, won the public vote in the prestigious Westminster Dog of the Year competition in 2016.)

Brigadier Evan Williams, the Chase Project and Stephen Dean are working on plans for the next few years which also include their contact at Messines, Steven Reynaert.



*In 2012, Richard and Lee placed a small information board about Freda to the left of the headstone for the benefit of visitors to the site, along with one of Dolores' hand-crafted poppies
Photo: The Chase Project*



*Freda's final headstone (the second from Friends of Cannock Chase) with wreaths and flowers possibly placed to commemorate World Animal Day in October 2016
Photo: Taken January 2017 The Chase Project*

[Military mascots are animals kept by the armed forces for ceremonial purposes, as emblems of particular units or simply for companionship. Many New Zealand military units, especially during the First and Second World Wars, acquired unofficial mascots through various means. Dogs were the most common companions, but cats, donkeys, monkeys, lizards, pigs, goats and birds were also adopted as mascots.

Although some animals went to war with their owners, most mascots were strays that were picked up along the way. Many were only temporary companions, but some served through entire campaigns. A few, such as the First World War dog Caesar (4th Battalion NZRB), combined their mascot roles with other duties. Dogs were especially useful for helping stretcher-bearers find wounded soldiers in no man's land at night, a role Caesar performed during the Battle of the Somme in 1916 (see the delightful children's book *Caesar: The ANZAC Dog* by Patricia Stroud, 2003). Check www.nzhistory.govt.nz/war/mascots for much more information on New Zealand military mascots, including a list of all the known New Zealand mascots.

For further information on the Dolores Cross Project, see www.dolorescrossproject.org. In early December 2016, Dolores and her project to honour thousands of fallen New Zealand soldiers, was featured as a "Good Sort" on TV1 News. Go to www.tvnz.co.nz, click on News, and search for Dolores Ho.]



Emailed newsletters: With the more frequent use of photos in the newsletter, if you would like to have your newsletter emailed to you so that you can see the photos in colour, please let me know. I am happy to either a) email the newsletter to you; or b) email *and* post it to you. Your choice – just let me know (elizabeth6@xtra.co.nz). If you want to stay with the status quo (remaining on the posting list only), then you don't need to do anything.

To join the New Zealand Branch of the Western Front Association, please contact Elizabeth Morey (address details below). The current subscription for membership is \$15.00 per year per household (January to December). All new members are very welcome – you certainly don't have to be an "expert".

The views expressed in articles in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect or represent those of the editor or members of the New Zealand Branch of the Western Front Association.

All contributions to the next newsletter would be very welcome: The next newsletter is due for publication in June 2017. Articles, snippets of information, poetry, book reviews etc etc. Please post to Elizabeth Morey, 89/1381 Dominion Road, Mt Roskill, Auckland 1041, or email to elizabeth6@xtra.co.nz.