

The War to End All Wars

In recognition of its 30th birthday, the Army Museum Waiouru is set to open its biggest exhibition in many years.

“The Last 100 Days - Victory & Home” opens on October 20 and chronicles the dramatic last days of World War One and the troops’ return home after four gruelling years of war.

Museum Director, Colonel (Rtd) Ray Seymour, says he is excited about this special exhibition, established to coincide with the 90th Anniversary of the end of World War One- the war that was meant to end all wars.

“Visitors should be prepared to have their senses stimulated as they walk through a World War One trench complete with the smell of mustard gas, out onto a cobble stoned French street straight from 1918.”

“The introduction of this simulated mustard gas, a gas that adversely affected so many of our brave soldiers of that war, is an exciting new innovation that will provide visitors with an experience never before utilised in the Army Museum.”

The exhibition includes the remarkable tale of the New Zealanders’ capture of the town Le Quesnoy only seven days before the end of World War One.

Ninety years after 13,000 New Zealanders died on World War One’s Western Front the Army Museum Waiouru is paying tribute to their memory with this new exhibition.

ENDS

For more information about the Museum please see www.armymuseum.co.nz or contact Nicola Bennett, Marketing Manager on 06 387 6911 or 021 495 178.

Note to Editor: Background on Le Quesnoy

A defiant German commander refused to surrender and the New Zealanders stormed the medieval fortress of Le Quesnoy by climbing the 60 foot high outer walls with a single ladder. The Kiwis overcame a series of barricades until the besieged town was forced to surrender. The *New Zealand Herald* of Friday 8 November 1918 described it as, “one of the most outstanding feats in the war.”

As a result of the liberation of Le Quesnoy one New Zealander, Lawrence Morris ‘Curly’ Blyth, was awarded France’s highest military decoration, the Legion of Honour. In 2000, Blyth also had a street in the village of Beaudignies, near Le Quesnoy, named after him.

By way of thanks the French town of Le Quesnoy presented the New Zealand Rifle Brigade a special banner along with an autographed letter of gratitude for the deliverance of their town. This banner, housed within the Army Museum’s collection, will be on display for the first time since its restoration as part of this new exhibition.