



## **MEDIA RELEASE - Central District**

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31 August, 2011

### **Arrest in military medal theft case**

A 57-year-old man is appearing in court this afternoon accused of the theft of more than 800 military medals from the Waiouru National Army Museum.

His arrest follows an investigation by Central District Police for over a year. This included extensive enquiries in New Zealand and overseas and the execution of warrants in Australia in July with the assistance of the Australian Federal Police.

The man who lives in Queensland was spoken to by Police in Australia in July and he voluntarily flew to New Zealand this afternoon. He has been arrested at Wellington Airport and transported to Wellington District Court for an appearance this afternoon.

The man is charged with the theft of 395 medal groups comprising 843 individual medals, obtaining property by deception, false accounting and unlawfully exporting New Zealand antiquities. To date 300 individual medals have been recovered including service medals, campaign medals and some gallantry medals. The estimated value of the 843 medals stolen is \$256,000.

Police are unable to comment on the identity of the man or the detail of the thefts, as to do so would prejudice the court case. Detective Senior Sergeant Keith Borrell, who led the investigation, said: "I can confirm that the investigation extended beyond the original complaint of theft that was received in June last year. The thefts are believed to have taken place between 1995 and 2002, they are not linked to previous incidents of theft at the museum and do not involve anyone currently employed by the museum.

"I would like to express my gratitude to the New Zealand Army and the Australian Federal Police for the support and cooperation they have provided throughout the investigation."

**Media enquiries should be referred to Communications Manager Kim Perks on 027 234 8256.**