



New Zealand
Memorial Museum Trust
– Le Quesnoy, France
PO Box 90345
Auckland 1143
New Zealand

1 April 2021

Long Term Plan Submissions
Ashburton District Council
PO Box 94
ASHBURTON 7740

Submitter: New Zealand Memorial Museum Trust – Le Quesnoy
Contact: Rt Hon Sir Don McKinnon ONZ GCVO
Chairman
Email: info@nzwmm.org.nz

SUBMISSION TO LONG TERM PLAN 2021-2031

REQUEST FOR FUNDING SUPPORT FOR NEW ZEALAND MEMORIAL MUSEUM & VISITOR CENTRE, LE QUESNOY, FRANCE

Background

In the closing days of the First World War, our soldiers on the Western Front, exhausted survivors of battles on the Somme, Messines, Passchendaele and from halting the 1918 Spring Offensive, had one last wall to climb – literally.

The small town of Le Quesnoy in northern France had been under German occupation since August 1914 and this was November 1918. Surrounded by a moat and a 17th century wall complete with ramparts, the medieval town was like a fortress that had survived many an invasion in the preceding centuries. It had one more force to reckon with. The New Zealand Division had arrived to liberate the town from the German occupiers, who continued to defend the ramparts using howitzers, machine guns and rifles. Orders had been given to the New Zealand troops not to shell the town, to avoid any casualties among the 1600 civilian inhabitants.

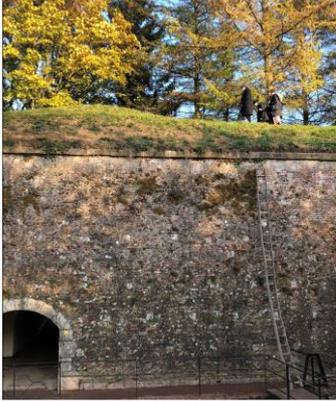
Instead, some 300 flaming oil drums were fired onto the ramparts to create a smoke screen obscuring the assault by New Zealand infantry using long ladders to scale the outer walls and inner ramparts. The liberation of the town was completed with the capture of over 700 German soldiers, against just on 500 New Zealand casualties including 142 dead - the liberation was achieved without

LE QUESNOY

FRANCE

PATRON Rt. Hon. Helen Clark ONZ SSI PC
TRUSTEES Rt. Hon. Sir Donald McKinnon ONZ GCVO PC (Chair), Maj. (Ret.) Mark Hall,
Britson (Buddy) Mikaere., Rt. Hon. Sir Lockwood Smith KNZM, Jude Dobson

Charities Commission No: CC54965 | info@nzwmm.org.nz | www.nzwmm.org.nz



the loss of a single civilian life. This is an achievement which the town and its people have never forgotten, even today - over 100 years later - which is now beyond living memory. They speak of the liberation with awe, still amazed that men would come from the far side of the world to free their town and citizens, to rescue them in their darkest hour.

The liberation of the historic walled town by the New Zealand Rifle Brigade just one week before the end of the Great War was a demonstration of Kiwi ingenuity and an act of courage. The story of Le Quesnoy is different from that of many other World War One sites – the town was liberated without being destroyed, and the residents were not displaced, and in that respect, it is a story of hope. The town was preserved intact and stands as a place where memories are lived and relived to tell the story to all who will listen; of the price that was paid for freedom in a war that stole much from our world.

The Project

The NZ Memorial Museum Trust - Le Quesnoy (a non-profit charitable trust) believes it is time to build a permanent memorial to our soldiers who perished on the fields of Flanders and France in the “war to end all wars”. Indeed, it did not end all wars and many more New Zealanders lost their lives on European soil in the Second World War. Over 12,400 New Zealanders are buried in France and Belgium. It is appropriate that the sacrifice of a significant number of New Zealanders, who will remain forever in a place far from home, is acknowledged and remembered.



The Trust has had the opportunity to purchase a heritage property, the former Mayor’s residence and Gendarmerie (military police headquarters), in Le Quesnoy, which is directly connected to New Zealand’s World War One experience in Europe.

The Trust is working towards the vision of creating “a Kiwi place in France where memory and relationships are alive”. We are working towards this goal through the establishment of a Museum and Visitor Centre in Le Quesnoy where our story will be told across multiple platforms – through artefacts, interactive activities, movies, audio stations, an app and other media.



PATRON Rt. Hon. Helen Clark ONZ SSI PC
TRUSTEES Rt. Hon. Sir Donald McKinnon *ONZ GCMG PC* (Chair), Maj. (Ret.) Mark Hall,
Britson (Buddy) Mikaere., Rt. Hon. Sir Lockwood Smith *KNZM*, Jude Dobson

Charities Commission No: CC54965 | info@nzwmm.org.nz | www.nzwmm.org.nz

The museum itself will include space for exhibitions and interactive activities, both digital and manual, designed to encounter and explore the stories of New Zealand's liberation of Le Quesnoy, New Zealand's contributions to the war in Europe, the history of the town of Le Quesnoy, an introduction to New Zealand's culture and heritage to Europeans, and the unique relationship that has developed between New Zealand and the French in Le Quesnoy.

Our Objective

Through this project we seek to celebrate:

Freedom – which inspired our people to go to war

Friendship – the unique bonds which developed between the people of Le Quesnoy and New Zealand which are still strong 100 years on

Future – the opportunity to create a better future with a focus on how to avoid war

Our Partners

To fully realise the link between past, present and future, we have engaged New Zealand's most respected professional museum experts to help shape and guide the concept through strategic planning and interpretative masterplanning. We have recently approved the Internal Experience Design Brief for the Museum and Visitor Centre prepared by museum experts Lily Frederikse, Tim Walker and Karl Johnstone. The Feasibility Study prepared by French company, Lamaya, was signed off last year and our Māori Advisory Group has provided a Māori cultural framework to inform the overall visitor experience.

We are in discussions with the French government about a potential partnership. They are very supportive of the project.

We have raised \$8M to date towards the \$15M total. Most of this has come from private individuals and businesses, who are on board with the vision of establishing "a Kiwi place in France where memory and relationships are alive". This is not just a project about remembering the past but focuses on the future, developing an experience which is cross-cultural, connecting across nations, through educational experiences and exchanges, offering an opportunity to reflect and learn from the past as we step into the future. As it is so beautifully expressed in Te Reo:

Ka mua, ka muri

We walk backwards into the future.

Our Request

We have previously presented to your Mayor at the Regional and Provincial Council Sector meeting. We wish to request that you consider a funding commitment to this project as part of your Long-Term Plan.

PATRON Rt. Hon. Helen Clark ONZ SSI PC
TRUSTEES Rt. Hon. Sir Donald McKinnon ONZ GCMG PC (Chair), Maj. (Ret.) Mark Hall,
Britson (Buddy) Mikaere., Rt. Hon. Sir Lockwood Smith KNZM, Jude Dobson

Charities Commission No: CC54965 | info@nzwmm.org.nz | www.nzwmm.org.nz



Our submission is to request that Ashburton District Council supports the project to build a Museum and Visitor Centre in Le Quesnoy with a donation equivalent to \$1 per resident of your district, to remember those who gave their lives in the World Wars to give us freedom.

The funds are not required immediately and can be paid over the next three years. We are seeking a commitment from you towards the project at this point in time.

Soldiers came from this town and district as evidenced by your War Memorials. Their names stand in perpetuity here in our country. Their descendants live here and maybe even sit in this Council Chamber. New Zealand soldiers came from cities, towns and villages across New Zealand, not knowing what they were going to face on the other side of the world but stepping forward with a courage and belief in what was right and just and good for our country and our world. They went with a belief that tyranny and injustice threatened the very essence of our lives, threatened the freedom, friendship and future which, because of their sacrifice, generations that came after them have been able to enjoy.

In this day and time, we cannot even imagination what they must have faced on the battle grounds of Europe, but we can remember and honour them.

The NZ Memorial Museum Trust asks that you do just that through support of our project.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission which we hope will be favourably considered.



Rt Hon Sir Don McKinnon ONZ GCVO
Chairman
New Zealand Memorial Museum Trust



PATRON Rt. Hon. Helen Clark ONZ SSI PC
TRUSTEES Rt. Hon. Sir Donald McKinnon ONZ GCVO PC (Chair), Maj. (Ret.) Mark Hall,
Britson (Buddy) Mikaere., Rt. Hon. Sir Lockwood Smith KNZM, Jude Dobson

Charities Commission No: CC54965 | info@nzwmm.org.nz | www.nzwmm.org.nz