

A EUROPEAN HOME FOR NEW ZEALAND

By Greg Moyle

On November 4, 100 years ago, soldiers from the NZ Division liberated the 17th century fortified town of Le Quesnoy in northern France.

Despite the loss of 142 New Zealand lives, no French civilian died, and the town was not destroyed. The soldiers from the NZ Rifle Brigade were able to gain entry to the town by using a 25-foot ladder. Two thousand German soldiers were captured inside the town.

To tell the story of the 70,000 New Zealand service men and women who served in Belgium and France between 1916 and 1918, the NZ Memorial Museum Trust – Le Quesnoy, France, has purchased the former mayor's residence, a three-storey mansion on a 2.5-acre property within the town's ramparts, which will be converted into

a New Zealand Memorial Museum and Visitors' centre.

A unique feature of this property is that it comes with nine brick-and-tile maisonnettes built by the Gendamerie (French military police), who occupied the site up until September last year.

The renovation of the mansion, the upgrade of the maisonnettes to provide staff and visitor accommodation, and the construction of a new building onsite to provide further museum space is projected to cost \$15 million.

Fundraising for the project is well underway, with individuals and organisations contributing to provide the first and only permanent place for New Zealanders travelling to Europe to understand the contribution played by

New Zealand service personnel in both WWI and WWII.

At long last, New Zealand will have our place in Europe to call home. In this, we follow Australia with their Sir John Monash War Memorial Museum at Villers Brettonneux, Canada with Vimy Ridge, UK at Thiepval and South Africa at Delville Wood.

To learn more about this important project and how you can support it, visit www.nzwmm.org.nz.



Late addition to Armistice Centenary feature

The above story from New Zealand was intended to run as part of our special Armistice Centenary feature in last month's issue of *Rotary Down Under*. Unfortunately the story was received too late as we had already gone to print.



Greg Moyle at the Le Quesnoy ramparts.