

## **New Zealand Memorial, 's Graventafel**

1 The translation of 's Graventafel is 'Count's table' and refers to the contour of the land.

2 The New Zealand Memorial at 's Graventafel is one of four New Zealand battlefield memorials on the Western Front. The others are at Messines, Longueval and Le Quesnoy.

3 The memorials at 's Graventafel, Messines, and Longueval are obelisks of Nebrasina stone from Italy. Designed by Christchurch architect S Hurst Seager, they all have the words 'From the Uttermost Ends of the Earth' on a plinth at their base. They also feature a badge designed by New Zealand sculptor A R Fraser, which incorporates a fern leaf superimposed on crossed taiaha with a frame of Maori carving.

4 The 's Graventafel Memorial was unveiled by the New Zealand High Commissioner in London, Sir James Allen, on 2 August 1924. It is associated in particular with the New Zealand operations at Passchendaele in 1917, and its inscription refers specifically to the New Zealand contribution to the Battle of Broodseinde on 4 October 1917.

5 The Commonwealth War Graves Commission maintains the memorial on behalf of the New Zealand government.

## **Tyne Cot Cemetery**

6 Tyne Cot Cemetery is the largest Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery on the Western Front. It contains the graves of 11,908 soldiers, 70 percent of whom are unidentified. There are 520 New Zealand graves, of which 322 are unidentified.

7 The cemetery is built on the site of a German strongpoint captured by the Australians on 4 October 1917. It was during this attack (known officially as the Battle of Broodseinde) that the neighbouring New Zealand Division captured the 's Graventafel Spur. Five German blockhouses can still be seen within its confines. The Great Cross, unveiled in 1921, is built on top of a blockhouse.

8 The cemetery is the site of a New Zealand Memorial to the Missing for Passchendaele, one of three in Belgium. (The others are at Messines Ridge Cemetery and Buttes New British Cemetery.) This memorial in the New Zealand Apse contains a panel inscribed: "Here are recorded the names of officers and men of New Zealand who fell in the Battle of Broodseinde and the First Battle of Passchendaele, October, 1917, and whose graves are known

only to God". There are 1,176 names on the flanking panels. They include at least five sets of two brothers and one set of three brothers.

9 This memorial to the missing at Tyne Cot is unusual in that it is incorporated into a memorial to the missing of the forces containing the names of 34,857 missing soldiers. The New Zealand government took the view that New Zealand's unknown soldiers should be commemorated near where they fell. For this reason, New Zealand soldiers are not commemorated on the memorials in the Menin Gate or at Thiepval. Instead, there are New Zealand Memorials to the Missing at various places in France and Belgium, including Tyne Cot because of its proximity to the area where the New Zealanders operated at Passchendaele.

## **Signing of the New Zealand-Flanders shared memories arrangement**

10 The Flanders region has particular significance for New Zealand and links between our country and this region are very close. New Zealand's participation in the Battle of Passchendaele throughout 1917 is remembered and honoured with respect by the people of Flanders, and is the focus for your visit on 4 October.

11 The towns of Featherston and Messines (Mesen) celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their twinning relationship in 2005, while Waimakariri and Zonnebeke announced their twinning relationship in 2007. In April this year the Mayor of Ieper, Luc Deheane, and the Chairman of the Last Post Association, Benoit Mottrie, visited New Zealand to participate in ANZAC Day commemorations.

12 The signing of a shared memories arrangement is aimed at providing a closer and more official link between the New Zealand and Flemish regional governments, recognising the unique nature of the relationship between these two parties in the context of our shared history. It constitutes a formal commitment to cooperate on keeping shared wartime memories alive within a coherent shared memories policy framework; in order to build deeper ties in the future, particularly through the involvement of young generations of New Zealanders and Belgians

13 Under the Belgian constitution the Flemish regional government has delegated authority to sign international agreements. It has exclusive competence over areas of relevance to this arrangement, such as education, culture, tourism, research and the media.

14 The arrangement will be signed in advance of a similar shared memories arrangement with the Belgian federal government, which is in the final stages of drafting.

15 The New Zealand-Flanders shared memories arrangement is based on the arrangement New Zealand signed with the French government in 2004. The arrangement requires the parties to seek to:

- increase understanding and recognition of the shared history of the world wars of the twentieth century;
- educate younger generations about the history of the wars, including disseminating information to schools;
- honour the war dead and facilitate the preservation and interpretation of, and access to, historic and commemorative sites, and promote tourism to such sites; and
- conserve, maintain and interpret shared war heritage material.

16 The arrangement does not legally bind parties to commit to particular actions or projects. It notes that financing of commitments and projects will be made in the context of available funds of each party.

17 In practical terms, the New Zealand-Flanders shared memories arrangement will involve collaboration between partner governments within the framework of shared memory policy. The Ministry for Culture and Heritage and the Flemish Department of Foreign Affairs are the lead agencies responsible for implementing the arrangement and working on joint projects dealing with shared war history, education, and commemorations.

18 New Zealand is currently fulfilling a number of aspects of the arrangement as part of the core business of government agencies or other institutions, particularly around commemorations of the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Passchendaele this year. These include:

- The temporary exhibition 'Descent into Hell', on loan from the New Zealand Army Memorial Museum in Waiouru and redesigned for the occasion of the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Passchendaele.
- The preparation of historical and archival material for permanent display in the Tyne Cot Visitor Centre, and an interactive, multilingual touch screen exhibition about New Zealand's involvement in Belgium during the First World War.
- The temporary installation in the Tyne Cot Visitors' Centre of a series of film clips of New Zealanders in Belgium during the First World War.
- An exhibition at Messines of New Zealand Victoria Cross winners from Belgium.
- The installation of a plaque at the British Messines Ridge Cemetery honoring VC winner Samuel Frickeleton.

- A New Zealand artist-in-residence (Kingsley Baird) at the 'In Flanders Fields Museum'.
- A series of battlefield walks 'In the footsteps of the New Zealanders'.
- The 'Poppy Partners' initiative, as part of the 2007 Rugby World Cup tour.
- Full (and official) participation in the events in Messines and Passchendaele in June, July and October 2007, including the presence of veterans at the October events.

19 Beyond this, the centenary of World War 1 presents a major focal point for commemoration planning. The Ministry for Culture and Heritage is working on a major feature (including resources for teachers and students) about New Zealand's involvement in Belgium during the First World War, on the Ministry's history website [www.nzhistory.net.nz](http://www.nzhistory.net.nz).

### **Australian reinterment ceremony, Polygon Wood Cemetery**

20 The five Australian soldiers who will be reinterred during the ceremony were uncovered during gasoline excavation work at nearby Westhoek in 2006. DNA testing has allowed two of the soldiers to be identified: Sergeant George Calder of Gladstone, Victoria, and Private John Hunter of Nanango, Queensland. Both lost their lives in the Battle of Polygon Wood on 26 September 1917, and were buried in a temporary cemetery near the battlefield. Representatives of both identified soldier's families will attend the reinterment ceremony. DNA testing is continuing on the other three remains.

21 Polygon Wood Cemetery is the last resting place of fifty-seven New Zealand soldiers. An unusual feature of this cemetery is that it contains the grave of a German soldier.

22 The New Zealanders buried here fell during the New Zealand Division's operations in this area during the winter of 1917–18.

23 Adjacent to Polygon Wood Cemetery is Buttes New British Cemetery, which is of particular interest to New Zealand because it contains one of the three New Zealand memorials to the missing in Belgium. (The others are at Tyne Cot Cemetery and Messines Ridge Cemetery.) Designed by Charles Holden, this beautiful memorial commemorates 383 men lost in the period September 1917 to May 1918 and who have no known grave. There are 167 New Zealand graves in the cemetery, including sixty-seven of unknown soldiers.

## **Visit to New Zealand Memorial at Messines (Mesen)**

24 Messines is an important Belgian partner for New Zealand, and has been twinned with the town of Featherston for 32 years. It is officially the smallest commune in Belgium, and a recent study has found that it is also one of the poorest. Less than 20% of the population has an annual household income of over €25,000, and only one third of the population was assessed as 'living in comfort'. Only 14% of households have internet access. Despite this, Messines remains an active and willing partner for New Zealand, and is always forthcoming with assistance for commemorative events.

25 The New Zealand Memorial at Messines is one of four New Zealand battlefield memorials on the Western Front. The others are at 's Graventafel, Longueval and Le Quesnoy.

26 The memorials at Messines, Longueval and 's Graventafel are obelisks of Nebrasina stone from Italy. Designed by Christchurch architect S Hurst Seager, they all have the words "From the Uttermost Ends of the Earth" on a plinth at their base. They also feature a badge designed by New Zealand sculptor A R Fraser, which incorporates a fern leaf superimposed on crossed taiaha with a frame of Maori carving.

27 The Messines Memorial was unveiled by King Albert I of Belgium on 1 August 1924. It is inscribed with the words "In honour of the Men of The New Zealand Division The Battle of Messines 7th to 14th of June 1917".

28 A Memorial to this Missing records the names of the dead of the New Zealand Division whose graves are not known. It is immediately within the entrance of Messines Ridge British cemetery, a little further north. It consists of a circular rubble wall, nearly two metres high, built around a mound on which the cross of sacrifice stands. The names of 828 soldiers of the New Zealand Expeditionary force who fell in or near Messines in 1917 and 1918 are recorded on the Portland stone panels let into the circular wall. 128 New Zealand casualties are buried in the cemetery.

29 The Messines memorial to the New Zealand VC winner, Samuel Frickeleton, was inaugurated by the Hon Annette King on 7 June 2007, following the commemorative service marking the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Messines. Frickeleton's actions played an important part in the success of the Battle, and saw him capture two German machine gun posts.