

# Honouring Tuhoe who died in WW1

A RECENT WW1 pilgrimage was a once in a lifetime experience for Tuhoe/Ruapani woman and descendant Jennifer Takuta-Moses of Waikaremoana.

A group of 30 Tuhoe descendants travelled to France and Belgium in memory of fallen soldiers in WW1 to celebrate more than a 100 years since the signing of the Armistice which ended WW1.

Called Te Hokowhitu a Tumatauenga, the tour group visited the graves of Tuhoe soldiers.

They wore their medals, visited the battle grounds and saw underground tunnels from those campaigns.

It proved both a stirring and daunting experience.

Before the trip Mrs Takuta-Moses said it was going to be terrific.

"I am honoured to be chosen to do this pilgrimage to celebrate their tour of duty in WW1 from 1914-1918."

In 2017 a delegation from the WW1 Cemetery Commission came to New Zealand from Belgium to acknowledge these soldiers and their sacrifice.

"They visited some of our marae in Ruatoki and the Eastern Bay of Plenty.

"Hemana Waaka a film producer and war veteran himself co-ordinated and hosted their tour and at the end of their visit they invited their Tuhoe hosts to go to France and Belgium to commemorate the WW1 Centenary for Armistice 2018/19.



□ The beginning of a journey back to the battlegrounds of WW1 for Tuhoe descendants of soldiers from the Waikaremoana, Te Urewera and Eastern Bay of Plenty, Jennifer Takuta-Moses is 11th from left, back row.

"It has taken this long to fundraise and get our people sponsorship for this pilgrimage."

Before leaving she said it would be very sad as some of these soldiers who died in battle had never been visited by their extended whanau and descendants.

"For the soldiers who came home, their whanau can traverse the battle grounds and hear those stories of bravery."

The tour party represented 60 WW1 soldiers within Te Urewera who were connected to Waikaremoana, Ruatahuna, Waiohau, Ruatoki, Waimana and Taneatua and they departed on

September 26.

Mrs Takuta-Moses was one of 30 Tuhoe descendants invited to visit France and Belgium and she wore the medals for her two tipuna Foki Whenuanui and Wiremu Tahakawa who were both from Waikaremoana.

Whenuanui was born in 1890 and Tahakawa was born in 1891.

They were each awarded the 1914-15 Star and British War and Victory medals and they fought in the 2nd Maori contingent.

Replica medals for these WW1 soldiers were ordered for the special journey.

Mrs Takuta-Moses said the highest ranking officer from the Tuhoe contingent decorated for fighting at Passendale Ridge in Belgium was Pa Te Amo from Ruatoki and his descendants wore his medals.

The tour party attended commemorations at the Somme in Amiens in the north of France.

During the tour Mrs Takuta-Moses visited war graves at Longueval Underhill and the Somme where some of the soldiers were buried, and the town of Le Quesnoy, liberated by the New Zealand Division soldiers on November 4, 1918.

The group attended commemorative services at Messines at Menin Gate and at the Passchendaele Cenotaph.

In Paris the group were hosted by the NZ Ambassador to France, Charles Kingston.

In Belgium they were hosted by Greg Andrews at an Embassy luncheon and their final official occasion was at the Ambassador's residence on October 8 before they flew home.

Other highlights included a guided coach tour of France, visiting the Eiffel Tower and dining on the river Seine.

In Belgium they attended a luncheon and dinner in the main square in Brussels.

"The buildings and cathedrals were magnificent.

"Our hosts and tour guides looked after us really well and we enjoyed their hospitality and beautiful food. It was a journey we will never forget!"



□ Marines at Mahia members Gerald Nairn and Paul Jordan attend the memorial day and...

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