



Westland's Roll – remembering those who served

***A project coordinated by Hokitika Museum
and supported by
Hokitika RSA, Westland District Library & Heritage Hokitika***

Vision

To develop a database of all Westland people who served during World War 1 and make it publicly available to enable the making of personal connections, the sharing of information and to support the commemoration of Westland's role in the War.

Background

The First World War (1914–1918) was one of the most significant events of the 20th Century and had a seismic impact on New Zealand society. The legacy of the war, the growing attendance at Anzac Day ceremonies in New Zealand, and the steady increase in the number of visitors to battlefields in Turkey and Europe demonstrate a continuing interest in its significance.

Westland and the First World War

More than 1,000 people from Westland served in World War 1, plus nurses (two of whom died when the Marquette was torpedoed in the Aegean Sea in 1915) and other non-combatants. At least 29 West Coast men were in the New Zealand Tunnelling Company, a unit which specialised in sapping and mining and who were engaged in a 'secret war'-digging long tunnels towards the enemy front line with the aim of destroying infrastructure from below.

Memorials to those who fell are found throughout Westland but many know little about the experiences of those who fought, of the lives of those left behind and of their own personal connections to the stories.

Westland's War 100 database – a project coordinated by Hokitika Museum

The project consists of developing a database of all Westland people who served during World War 1. This will be made publicly available to enable the sharing of information and to support the commemoration of World War 1 by Hokitika Museum, community groups and individuals. The database project aims to collate known information, add new material and make connections between names and memorials and real stories, photographs and medals. This work will mean that stories can be expanded and shared enabling people to make meaningful connections with individuals and their stories.



How will it work?

The Hokitika RSA's enrolment list has already been entered onto a database and this list will become the nucleus of a database which lists all of those connected to Westland who served during World War 1.

The community will be invited to add information and research individuals. Essentially any group or individual that has an interest in supporting the project will be welcome to share their ideas and participate in the project. Hokitika Museum staff will add in details of relevant items from the Museum collection and provide a co-ordination service. The project will run until 2019 but the information would be available in perpetuity.

Who can be involved?

Anyone who is interested is welcome to participate and it is hoped that genealogists will volunteer their skills while others develop them while tracing members of their families. Local school pupils or classes may also choose individuals to research.

How will the information be used?

The core focus of the project will be the gathering and linking of information and the creation of biographical files. The resulting information will be held at Hokitika Museum on behalf of the wider community. Importantly the information will also be shared with Auckland War Memorial Museum's Cenotaph project which will ensure the recognition of the role of Westland people and help place their service in a national context.

The information will also be used by Hokitika Museum in exhibitions and other information sharing projects and will be publicly available.



For further information please contact Hokitika Museum

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