

Zonnebeke delegation remembers

A delegation from Zonnebeke, in the West Flanders region of Belgium, will be visiting the Waimakariri District until the end of April to further the 'twinning' arrangement established by the two districts in 2007 to commemorate their shared historical bond.

The delegation comprises Zonnebeke's Mayor, Dirk Cardoen, Mayoress Rita Ghekiere, Councillor Ingrid Vandepitte and Freddy Declerck from the Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917. They will be officially welcomed with a powhiri at the Rangiora Service Centre on Tuesday 21 April at 10 a.m. followed by lunch and a performance from the Rangiora High School Kapahaka group.

Later in the afternoon the group, who will be joined by Freddy Declerck from the Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917, will visit the Canterbury Museum and the Henry Nicholas statue at the Bridge of Remembrance in Christchurch before attending the official opening of the exhibition, 'Passchendaele – The Belgians Have Not Forgotten' at 5.30pm at Our City O-Tautahi. The exhibition, which has been developed by the Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917, features photos, images

and artefacts highlighting the memories of the devastating battles of the Western Front.

Passchendaele 1917 was one of the bloodiest battles of the First World War during which hundreds of soldiers from the Canterbury region were killed.

On Wednesday 22 April, the delegation will take a conducted tour of the district, visiting Oxford, the Ashley Gorge, Loburn, Kaiapoi and Waikuku. In the evening they will be hosted to dinner by the Ambassador at the Belgian Beer Café in Christchurch. They then spend the following two days touring in the Canterbury region before returning to attend the Kaiapoi and Rangiora RSA Services on Anzac Day.

The twinning of the Waimakariri and Zonnebeke districts recognises the courage and dedication of the Waimakariri people who gave their lives. In the space of one hundred days, from July 12th until November 10th, 1917 more than half a million people including soldiers from New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Australia, South Africa and Canada, were killed in battle.

For more information contact:

Kevin Lamb
Administration Manager

Phone: 03 313 6136 or 03 327 6834