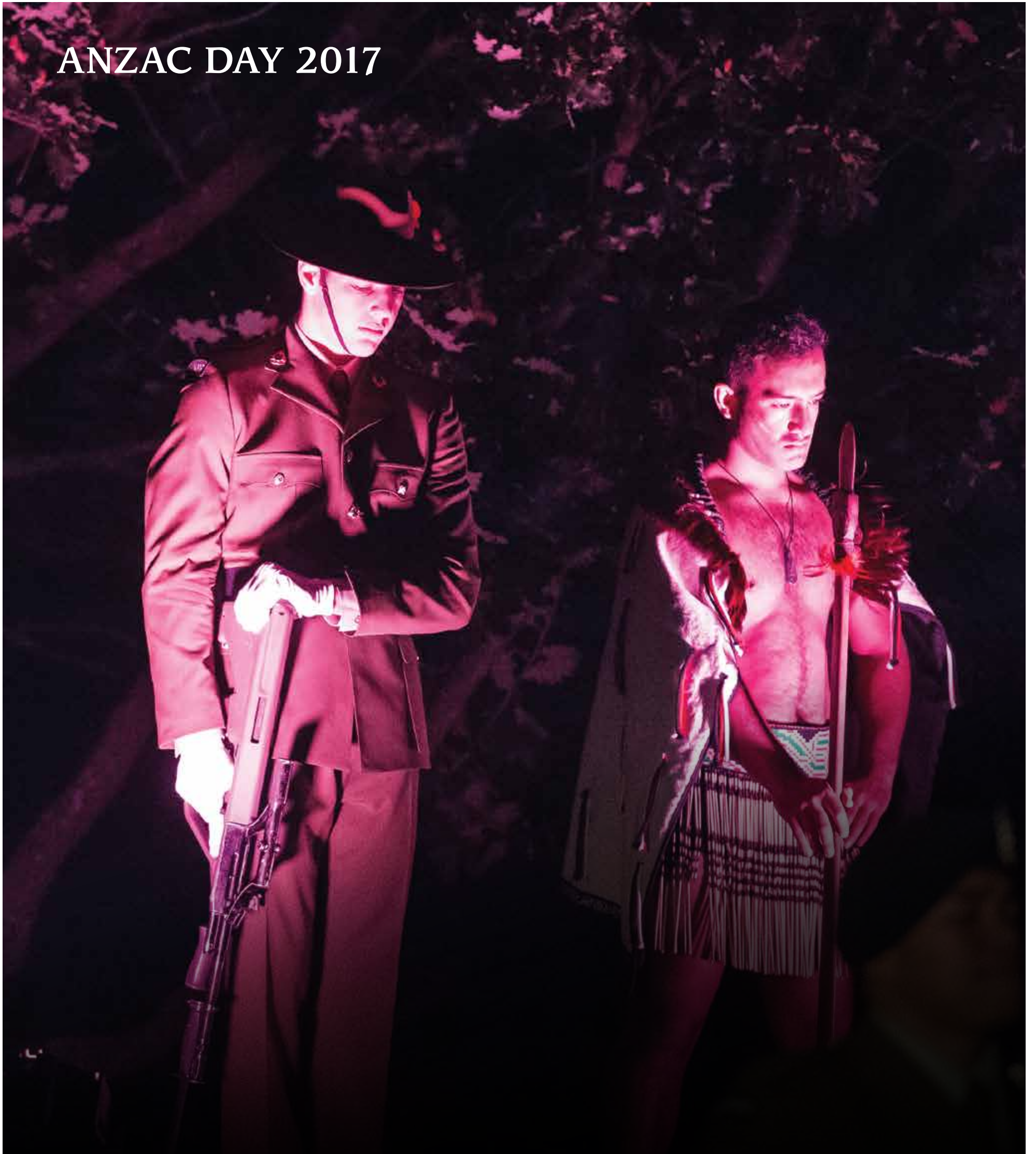


## ANZAC DAY 2017



**They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.**



## FIRST WORLD WAR CENTENARY

**As the almost inky darkness began to disappear, crowds squeezed in around war memorials throughout New Zealand as Anzac Day was commemorated in dawn services throughout the country on Tuesday 25 April.**

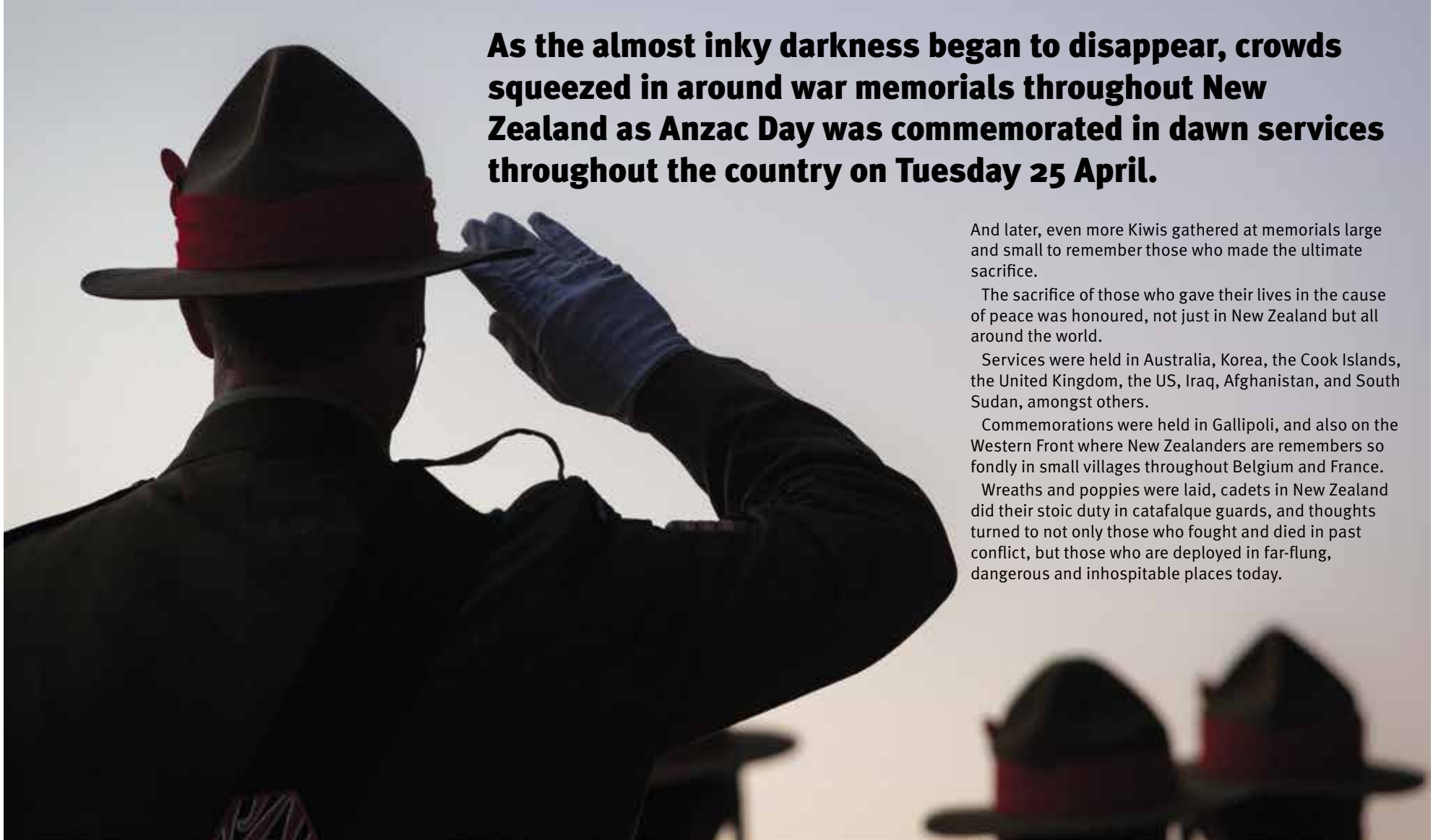
And later, even more Kiwis gathered at memorials large and small to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

The sacrifice of those who gave their lives in the cause of peace was honoured, not just in New Zealand but all around the world.

Services were held in Australia, Korea, the Cook Islands, the United Kingdom, the US, Iraq, Afghanistan, and South Sudan, amongst others.

Commemorations were held in Gallipoli, and also on the Western Front where New Zealanders are remembered so fondly in small villages throughout Belgium and France.

Wreaths and poppies were laid, cadets in New Zealand did their stoic duty in catafalque guards, and thoughts turned to not only those who fought and died in past conflict, but those who are deployed in far-flung, dangerous and inhospitable places today.







Major Tim Laurin, Australian Army, salutes

# REMEMBERING THE FIGHTERS AND FALLEN ON THE WESTERN FRONT

**It was on the blood-soaked battle fields of France and Belgium where New Zealand lost 12,500 men.**



Many of them still lie with no known grave, just a few feet under the gently undulating land, the peaceful countenance of which belies the carnage that took place 100 years ago.

Brown ploughed fields were once seas of boot sucking mud that paralysed troops for months at a time are now fields of arable crops.

The team of 26 personnel from all three services travelled to France and Belgium to lead and take part in Anzac Day memorial services were given tours of the battlefields where the men they had come to honour had fought and died.

The Anzac Day commemorations were made up of 11 services across four days in two countries and included Last Post services at Menin Gate, remembering the game changing work of the tunnellers in Arras, dawn services in Le Quesnoy and Zonnebeke, national memorial services in Longueval and Messines and other services in Comines Warnton.

Two services were conducted at Les Quesnoy (*see page 8*), a town that was held by the Germans from August 2014 until it was liberated by the New Zealand Division on November 4.

This was the most successful day of the New Zealand Division's campaign on the Western Front. It advanced ten kilometres and captured 2000 German soldiers and 60 field guns.

The last one hundred days of the First World War took a massive toll on the New Zealand Division as the Allied commanders sensed victory and ordered a general advance. While the German main body retreated, rear guards maintained machine gun posts and artillery positions to delay the Allied advance.

The Liberation of Le Quesnoy was an extraordinary feat of arms at the end of costly advance. The attack cost the lives of around 90 New Zealand soldiers.

The bonds formed as a result of this action between the town of Le Quesnoy and New Zealand are evident today with the town's street names reflecting its relationship with New Zealand.

In the dark the crowd started to gather for the Dawn Service around headstones illuminated by tea lights. The chill early spring morning wasn't going to keep people away from remembering the brave and valiant effort of the men that fought and died to regain the town and free its inhabitants from German occupation.

As the dawn broke the sun's weak rays cast a golden glow over the catafalque guard standing stoic in the half light. The gold braid and deep carmine red and azure blue of

the banners held by the French flag bearers of the Anciens Combattants made a stunning backdrop.

Catafalque guard member Corporal Katie Emmett said she felt incredibly proud to be part of the event.

"It's a very humbling feeling being part of the guard, fully understanding what you are there to do and having the occasion wash over you."

Chief of Army Major General Peter Kelly spent some reflective time after the service walking among the headstones and quietly paying his respects to those who lay there.

Later in the day the people of Les Quesnoy lead a parade including flag bearers and band along the ramparts of the town to conduct a short but poignant ceremony at the

New Zealand Memorial.

The small service site is packed with people, with many standing on the other side of the stream that separates the ramparts giving them a bird's eye view of the service.

As the Last Post rang out recreational walkers using the track paused in reflection to remember and pay tribute to those who had freed their town and who had paid the ultimate price.

After the service the procession continues on to the town with banners waving and band playing.

In 2018 the Battle of Les Quesnoy will be commemorated in its 100th anniversary.



CPL Tainui Woodmass places a poppy on a grave.



## FIRST WORLD WAR CENTENARY



The Chief of Army, Major General Peter Kelly pays his respects in a Commonwealth cemetery on the Western Front.



NZDF personnel take part in Anzac Day commemorations in France.



## A liberator of Le Quesnoy

By Judith Martin

"It wasn't easy but it was something that had to be done, and we did it with aplomb – it was a job well done," says centenarian Curly Blyth of the history making task he helped complete in a small French town in 1918. Blyth, then a 4th (NZ) Battalion Lieutenant Colonel, scrambled over ramparts under heavy German artillery fire and, along with the rest of his rifle brigade, liberated the fortress town of Le Quesnoy on November 4, 1918.

Curly Blyth arrived at Le Quesnoy, which had been under German control since the beginning of the war in 1914, under strict instructions to neither harm civilians nor damage the town. C Company entered the fortress through a railway line, losing two men to German gunfire, and many more as the Company began to dig in.

"They (bullets) appeared from our right – we were being enfiladed, counter-attacked by about 150 Germans on our flank. We put a block on the railway line and engaged them. We were in trenches but they had no cover; they were walking along the line. They eventually surrendered, and we marched them back to the POW compounds behind the lines. It wasn't long before the wall was breached and the town was taken. After all those years we were able to march into the square of Le Quesnoy and liberate the town."

Armistice Day came a week later but it was no great celebration for the young Blyth and his troops. "There was no jubilation, no throwing of hats in the air. When we heard of the armistice I was busy teaching my blokes to salute by numbers, and we just carried on as normal. In the Army you do as you're told, don't you, and that's what we did. The orders were that I had to drill my company, and that's what I did. I couldn't say, 'Well boys, bugger off

and have a good time.' It was routine."

When the armistice was signed Blyth had ideas of a quick return to New Zealand, but his hopes were dashed. "We were told we were to be part of the Army of Occupation, and we soon got used to the idea. We had to march through to Germany – there was no transport for us – and the thing that annoyed us was seeing lorry-loads of German soldiers being taken back to their country while we were marching on our flat feet."

The men were treated as heroes, however, by the villagers along the way, who cheered and gave them food and wine. They marched on through Mons and Namur and into Cologne, across the Rhine and eventually into Bensburg, a dormitory town of Cologne, where they were housed in barracks formerly used by German officers.

The troops eventually returned to New Zealand, and Blyth worked in Christchurch and Wellington, before moving to Auckland and opening a menswear business in Karangahape Rd, which he owned for 51 years, retiring from it when he was 88. Married for 60 years, his wife died in 1984.

Curly Blyth travelled back to Le Quesnoy three times, once for a month-long stay as a guest of the French government.

"The people of Le Quesnoy are so grateful for what the New Zealanders did," he says. "There is a great bond between the village and New Zealand. I don't think they will ever forget."

*This story first appeared in NZ Defence Quarterly in 1996. LTCOL Blyth died in 2001.*







Warrior, PTE Christian Hohepa



CA, MAJGEN Kelly greets one of the local dignitaries in France



Soldiers honour those who went before them in the Arras tunnels.



The bugler



## RNZIR supports the RSA at Super Rugby Game in Napier

Soldiers from 5/7 RNZIR supported the New Zealand Rugby Football Union at the Hurricanes versus Brumbies just before Anzac Day. Their efforts were to acknowledge Anzac Day, and also to help out with the Poppy Day collection.

The Anzac ceremony acknowledgement took seven minutes of live Sky TV air time but it took three weeks of planning and liaising with different civilian agencies to achieve.

CSM for the East Coast Coy, 5/7 RNZIR, Staff Sergeant Billy Te Hiko said it was a great way to support Poppy Day and help the NZRFU acknowledge Anzac Day.



LTCOL Mike Duncan, who is on deployment in Korea, points out a name to visitors on Anzac Day in Seoul.



Wreathes laid in the Arras tunnels