



Media Release

Hi-tech Touchtable Wairoa WWI Memorial DEDICATION

This country's first digital World War One Memorial will be unveiled and dedicated on two multi-media 65 inch Touchtables, **Saturday 21 July** at Wairoa's War Memorial Hall.

"The Touchtables impress with enticing story-telling wizardry," claims project manager Dennis Munro.

"A Touchtable is like a giant i-pad, the same size as a 65 inch television screen and can be operated simultaneously by one to eight people. Information is accessed by the touch of a finger."

The spotlight will be on the unique, state-of-the-art Touchtable technology chosen by SALUTE Wairoa and Wairoa RSA, to honour and showcase the contribution of our 900 Wairoa Veterans, who served overseas.

"We began with a hazy knowledge of who served and what happened to them. Marae memorial boards, school rolls, cemeteries and Archways and Papers Past research resulted in the known numbers tripling to 900 Veterans - including 220 Maori Pioneers and 10 Nurses.

The numbers of those killed in action or died of wounds and disease, doubled to 122. Now we have a truer record of Wairoa's "lost" veterans and contribution, we wish to do them justice by bringing all names together for the first time into the one district Memorial," says Dennis Munro.

A military record summary and attestation for every Veteran with their medals, is on the Touchtable. Personal stories are revealed through soldier diaries, letters and family memories, using visuals.

SALUTE Wairoa researchers wrote 90 in-depth profile features after interviewing many of the sons and daughters of WWI troops.

"There were 60 Wairoa families with their first generation descendants alive to tell their stories when we began this project five years ago. We have lost some since, but many sons and daughters and other direct descendants are attending the Dedication ceremony. Some families lent hundreds of war photos."

The TouchTable software, created from scratch, contains maps, diaries, letters from the battlefields, films, and two interactive timelines – a general timeline and Maori Pioneer timeline making for a unique high-tech experience.

4 Maori researchers contributed 30 feature stories of Maori Pioneer Veterans.

Military author and local historian, Sherayl McNabb was amazed to discover 10 "unknown" Wairoa nurses and 4 Wairoa doctors.

The SALUTE Wairoa Touchtable based in the local library will also be part of a School Outreach programme, an initiative of the library staff. The second Touchtable is to be on permanent display at our Wairoa Museum.

Community consultation conducted by the museum some years ago, requested interactive technology for youth to understand local stories. "We believe this project goes a long way towards meeting that special request- a simple way to prepare our children for the new digital world we are now living in."

"This remembrance project will engage and inform our community of all ages by delving more deeply into their personal war stories, so we can appreciate their sacrifices made for our freedom today."

"Touchtable technology is innovative - bringing new ways of learning and understanding to Wairoa. It's untrodden, it revolutionizes and respects our history," claims co-editor Liz Greenslade.

"Our whole team had to learn new ways of processing information."

Finally everything is in its right place: the stories, the flow, the pictures, the people and the teamwork have all come together beautifully. We are really grateful to the SALUTE Wairoa research team who worked hard to bring this to the community," says Sue Wilson, SALUTE Wairoa committee member.

Generous Help and Support:

"SALUTE Wairoa and Wairoa RSA is a very successful collaboration and we are delighted with the end product benefitting our community", says Selywn Lilley, Wairoa RSA President. The Wairoa RSA have just recently celebrated 100 years of service.

The Wairoa Community including Wairoa District Council, local Maori incorporations, local businesses, service clubs, veteran's families and members of the public contributed \$100,000, while Lottery World War One Commemorations Fund, Eastern Central Community Trust, First Light Foundation, Kingdom Foundation contributed \$135,000.

Mayor Craig Little acknowledges Salute Wairoa's contribution of the Touchtables and Curve Technology's input into these initiatives as well.

"There are hundreds of untold wartime stories or many that have long been forgotten, and utilising this technology to bring these stories to light, will ensure they remain alive," Mr Little says.

"Wairoa played an important part in the First World War and we need to acknowledge that and the impact this had on the district and local families."

Mr Little's grandfather is one of the 90 features on the TouchTables.

"I can't wait to see the memorial collection myself, and I know these touchtables will be great assets for our community to use and enjoy."

Adding extra value to the SALUTE Wairoa project, Touchtables are now being assembled by local company, Curve Technology Ltd, for RSA's, museums and not-for-Profit organisations. The bespoke software is not only ideal for World War One, but also earlier and later major wars this country has contributed to.

After the Dedication ceremony on 21 July, the SALUTE Wairoa and Curve Technology teams will bring some Veteran stories alive especially for those families of service people who have contributed stories and memories.

The Wairoa Museum's new Touchtable will receive a Karakia (blessing) at 8am, and will make its debut for the Wairoa Community at 10.30-4pm – be in for the first opportunity to uncover what Grandad did in the war - and other SALUTE Wairoa Touchtable stories!

(ends)

Saturday 21 July 2018

8am: Karakia of SALUTE Wairoa TouchTable at Wairoa Museum

9 - 10 am: SALUTE Wairoa WWI Memorial Dedication at War Memorial Hall

10.30 - 4pm: Public viewing at Wairoa Museum

For further information on SALUTE Wairoa WWIOO Project:

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