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## Dr Monty Soutar involved in French WW1 memorial

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**Foremost Maori military historian in NZ is part of a six-member delegation headed to France.**

GISBORNE'S Dr Monty Soutar is part of a six-member delegation going to France taking a role in creating a French memorial to be erected in Pukeahu Memorial Park in Wellington.

Dr Soutar is a senior historian with the Ministry for Culture and Heritage and is regarded as the foremost Maori military historian in New Zealand.

“When I heard I was to be part of the group I thought it was a huge privilege,” he said.

The French government announced the gift of the memorial on the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I, at the invitation of the New Zealand Government.

### Strong bonds between France and New Zealand

“The memorial will mark the strong bonds forged between France and New Zealand on the WWI battlefields,” a project spokesman said. Dr Soutar was in France last month on a research trip around those battlefields.

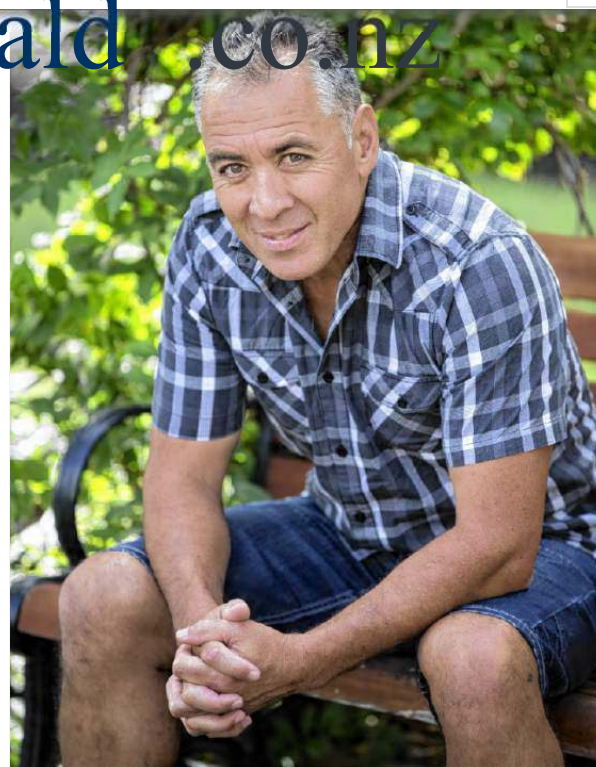
“I was hugely moved by the cemeteries there that include thousands of Commonwealth service

Some 12,500 Kiwis are buried in French and Belgian soil so we will always have a strong connection with that part of the world," Dr Soutar said.

"The project team will discuss a general design brief that will feed into an architectural competition for the memorial," the project spokesman said.

The French embassy in New Zealand is planning to organise that competition next year and the memorial will be erected in 2018. Chief of the New Zealand Army Lieutenant General Rhys Jones will lead the New Zealand delegation.

The other members are playwright, newspaper columnist and museum writer and concept developer Dave Armstrong, Studio Pacific director Stephen McDougall, author Elizabeth Knox and film producer Robin Laing.



NEW MEMORIAL: Doctor Monty Soutar from Gisborne is part of a Kiwi delegation leaving for France this weekend to discuss design and planning for a new WW1 memorial the French government is giving to new Zealand. Picture by Brett Phibbs

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