For publication on 6th October.

# Mansfield’s brother’s death a century on.

Today marks 100 years since the death of Leslie Heron Beauchamp, or ‘Chummie’ to his family.

For many New Zealanders, Leslie may be better known through one of his five sisters, national icon and New Zealand author, Katherine Mansfield.

Ngā Tapuwae New Zealand First World War Trails brings Beauchamp’s story to life in its Western Front trail, which includes narrated letters from Beauchamp to his sister and condolence letters from Beauchamp’s comrades.

Beauchamp left New Zealand for the United Kingdom in December 1914, and enlisted in the British Army, securing an officer’s commission in the eighth Service Battalion, South Lancashire Regiment.

During his training, Beauchamp would often stay with his sister and her partner John Murray, at their home in London.

In late September 1915, Beauchamp’s battalion departed for the Western Front. Soon after landing he wrote a letter to his sister, Katherine.

“Dearest Katie, no time for a letter am frightfully fit and full of beans! The trenches are beastly wet owing to the big bombardment going on. So far have remained scathless so that’s all right!”

This would be his last letter. The following day, on the 6th of October, Beauchamp was killed during a training accident in Ploegsteert Wood, Belgium. He was conducting a grenade-throwing demonstration when the ‘bomb’ he was holding exploded prematurely, mortally wounding him.

The loss of her much-loved younger brother devastated Mansfield, who soon after penned the following poem in his memory:

Last night for the first time since you were dead   
I walked with you, my brother, in a dream.   
We were at home again beside the stream   
Fringed with tall berry bushes, white and red.   
“Don't touch them: they are poisonous,” I said.   
But your hand hovered, and I saw a beam   
Of strange, bright laughter flying round your head   
And as you stooped I saw the berries gleam.   
“Don't you remember? We called them Dead Man's Bread!”   
I woke and heard the wind moan and the roar   
Of the dark water tumbling on the shore.   
Where – where is the path of my dream for my eager feet?   
By the remembered stream my brother stands   
Waiting for me with berries in his hands...  
“These are my body. Sister, take and eat.”

Leslie Beauchamp is one of several thousand New Zealanders who served in other forces during the First World War.

**ENDS**

**About Nga Tapuwae New Zealand First World War Trails**

Ngā Tapuwae New Zealand First World War Trails is a WW100 legacy project where New Zealand’s story at Gallipoli and on the Western Front is brought to life through captivating audio guides, soldiers' personal stories and historical insights.

Ngā Tapuwae Western Front will be available in mid-October and guides you through ten trails located in France, Belgium and the United Kingdom. The five trails in Belgium focus on the battlefields at Passchendaele and Messines, the four trails in France explore the famous Arras tunnels and Somme battlefields, and the trail in the United Kingdom lets you discover the former hospital grounds at Brockenhurst.

Visit, [www.ngatapuwae.nz](http://www.ngatapuwae.nz).

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