**Te Papa Chief Executive to become Special Adviser on Military Heritage**

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The Ministry for Culture and Heritage is very pleased to announce that Michael Houlihan has been appointed to the position of Special Adviser on Military Heritage, for the next twelve months.

Michael Houlihan has held the position of Keeper of the Department of Permanent Exhibitions and Head of Exhibitions Research at the Imperial War Museum, in London. He has published widely on military history and is a leading international authority on military history with a specialist focus on the Western Front, 1914–18. As the first Chief Executive of National Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland, Houlihan undertook the merger of Northern Ireland’s three government-funded museums. In 2003, he became Director General of AmgueddfaCymru – National Museum Wales, a single entity including seven museums illustrating the national story of Wales.

“His experience in military history and in delivering significant projects with many partners, will play an important part in the lead up to the 2015 ANZAC Commemorations,” says Lewis Holden, Chief Executive of the Ministry for Culture and Heritage. “Given the significance of the 2015 Commemorations to New Zealanders, it is important that the Government takes a coordinated approach to the events.”

Recognised as one of the leading museum directors and curators in New Zealand, Mr Houlihan has been Chief Executive and Director of Te Papa since August 2010. Te Papa Board Chairman, Evan Williams, acknowledged the outstanding role Michael has played over the last four years.  “Michael’s visionary leadership and museological contribution has been exemplary and we thank him for it.  He has made a significant contribution leading TePapa’s new vision and restructure to create a solid platform for the future of Te Papa, developing the new direction of art, and building the Museum’s international and cultural diplomacy profile, with China in particular. He will continue to advise on TePapa’s World War I commemoration programme, including the ANZAC exhibition that will open in 2015.” The Te Papa Board will appoint an Acting Chief Executive for Te Papa, while an international search for a new Chief Executive is undertaken.

Mr Houlihan starts his new role at the Ministry for Culture and Heritage in May. “New Zealand’s history of military engagement is about more than distant theatres of war,” says Michael Houlihan.  “War has been the anvil upon which the Nation’s identity has been shaped. The richness of the experiences and stories of New Zealand from both the battlefield and home tell us so much about who we are today.”

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