



THE BULLETIN

DECEMBER 2019

**Newsletter of the Wellington
Returned & Services Association Inc
Established 1916**



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



We have very recently enjoyed a very nice Xmas luncheon at the James Cook Hotel, and as we approach the festive season I would like to express my gratitude to one of our long serving staff and to also use this opportunity to acknowledge the passing of two of my executive.

Firstly, as is customary, I want to thank our staff; Zenetta Ganic (Office Administrator), Charlotte Bergman (out-going Support Advisor), Michelle Tebbutt (incoming Support Advisor) and Kay Poynton (Visitor). Without their efforts we would not have an efficient office and effective welfare support structure.

A lot has happened this year, which I will summarise in chronological date order. This will give you a sense of what your RSA has been doing:

Poppy Day collection was held on 12 April and was another successful day with \$ 51,470 collected on the day. By the time other donations came in from businesses, schools and the NZDF, the final total raised was \$61,199.78. In addition, the WRSA in conjunction with 'The Breeze' radio station and Thorndon New World raised \$12,000 from CRANZAC biscuit sales for a young Trentham based military family with a child with significant health needs.

It was pleasing to observe that the ANZAC Day services in our catchment area were well attended by the public, starting with the National Dawn Service at Pukeahu, followed by the Citizens Service at the Wellington Cenotaph and community services held in Karori, Brooklyn and Makara.

The 103rd WRSA AGM was held at the Karori RSA clubrooms on 25 May and attended by over 40 of our members. Your executive was re-elected with only one change, that of long serving member Marie Byrne being replaced by Glenda Ramsay. I thank Marie for her many years of commitment, particularly her tireless work in the welfare area.

I reported in my Presidents Report that we continue to be in a sound financial position and as is our remit we play a key role in ensuring ANZAC Day commemorations in our catchment area are well organised. Our biggest challenge going forward continues to be turning around the decline in membership. I request all members promote joining the WRSA to family and friends. You are all our biggest advocates. On our website www.wrsa.org.nz/ there is a page (Benefits of joining the RSA) that outlines the benefits of joining an RSA.

In early July, we moved our office from Level 2 Crowe Horwath House, 57 Willis St, to Level 9 Technology House, 86 Victoria St, following a decision by the building owners (The Police Association) to sell the floor we have tenanted for a number of years. I'm pleased to report we have secured a 5 year lease on favourable terms. We now have an office we can be very proud of. I encourage members to drop in to see Zenetta between 10AM and 3PM Mondays to Thursdays.

In August we farewelled Charlotte at the monthly luncheon. Charlotte has worked for the WRSA for almost 17 years and I want to formally acknowledge her work in the welfare support area, assisting our members and in many cases people who were not members. At District and National level, Charlotte passed on her expertise by training other support advisors and she also helped to write the current RSA support manual. We wish Charlotte all the best for her well-deserved retirement. I'm really pleased that Charlotte has retained her connection to us by becoming a member.

With Charlotte's departure we welcome Michelle Tebbutt as the new WRSA Support Advisor. Michelle is a qualified social worker and she introduced herself to members in early September when she sent out a welfare survey. In this bulletin, Michelle will summarise the key findings from her survey and she will also provide you with an update on initiatives she is currently working on in the welfare area.

I want to acknowledge the passing of two members of the Wellington RSA committee in Deputy President Matt Beattie and John Mills. At the time of his passing in September, Matt was the Colonel Commandant of the Royal Regiment of New Zealand Artillery and Chairman of the QEII Army Museum Management Board. Like Matt, John rose to Lieutenant Colonel in the New Zealand Army and involved himself in welfare issues on our executive. Both were wise counsels at our meetings and will be sadly missed. Mike Millar has kindly agreed to take on the role of acting Deputy President until an election is held at next year's AGM.

Three of the executive attended the National RSA Conference in late October. It was pleasing to participate in a united conference that passed all the remits, in particular those that help to clarify and cement the position of our national President – BJ Clark, in particular his relationship with the RSA Board.

In summary, I am pleased to report that we continue to farewell our comrades in the appropriate manner, we have an active social program and we continue to look after our members and other veterans who need the support of our services.

Theo Kuper



The WRSA Patron - AVM (retd) Robin Klitscher (left) and President Theo Kuper present Charlotte Bergman with an RSA Certificate



The late Lt Col Matt Beattie and Lt Col John Mills

LAST POST

Since the last Bulletin was published, the following Wellington and Karori RSA members have either passed on or were not noted in the previous newsletter.

- Robert (Rob) Houston Mayo, Returned Member, died 16 April 2018 aged 66
- Christina (Chris) MacKenzie Spiers, Returned Widow, died 14 November 2018, aged 87
- Doris Rita Smith, Hon Karori Life Member, died 18 December 2018, aged 97
- Jessie Elva Coates, Returned Widow, died 5 January 2019, aged 92
- Cynthia Marjorie Hedges, Returned Member, died 9 January 2019 aged 96
- Alan James Heap, Service Member, died 22 January 2019, aged 84
- Les Arnold Mills, Service Member, died 28 February 2019, aged 94
- Richard Michael Mansor, Returned Member, died 4 March 2019 aged 97
- Terence (Terry) Edward Webb, Service Member, died 8 March 2019, aged 76
- Ian Lachlan Gordon Stewart CMG, Returned Member, died 22 April 2019, aged 96
- Lois Pearson, Associate Member, died 20 May 2019 aged 93
- Bettina (Betty) Mary Lampard, Hon Karori Life Member, died 4 June 2019, aged 95
- Len Fergusson Kenna, Service Member, died 11 July 2019, aged 97
- Matthew David Beattie, Returned Member, died 9 September 2019, aged 64
- Gladys Winifred McGrath, Returned Widow, died 14 September 2019, aged 98
- David Desmond Bennett, Returned Member, died 11 October 2019, aged 83
- Kenneth (Ken) Orm Rigalsford, Returned Member, died 28 October 2019, aged 95
- John Francis Mills, Returned Member, died 25 November 2019, aged 80

LOOKING BACK



As the younger brother of a Duntroon graduate and later Chief of Army, it was perhaps inevitable that Cam McIver should also enter the services. But, as the Bulletin Editor Carey Clements found out, this Dargaville High School student turned Vietnam veteran soon became an officer in his own right before retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel after a lengthy 29 years of service.

Q: Aside from being in your secondary school cadet unit, when did your time in the military begin?

A: I joined up in 1961 and after several years as a Regular Force cadet, I went over to the infantry. However in 1963, I was still only 18 and therefore still short by a year to deploy overseas, so stayed behind as a young Junior NCO with the National Service Training Unit in Burnham and later Waiouru.

Q: What leadership style did you have at this stage in your early military life?

A: It's hard to say really. It was probably cautious as I was training young soldiers that went onto Malaysia and later Borneo. As you can imagine some were hard men and some already had a lot of experience in life.

Q: What happened after your time at the unit?

A: I was selected to undertake Officer training at Portsea in Australia. This was in 1965 and although I was only 20, I had already had four years inside the Army, which was a lot more than the other officer cadets. By this stage I had honed in my military skills and therefore fitted in well during the training. I was commissioned at the end of the year and was posted to 21 Supply Company in Waiouru as being IC for a transport park for a year, before going to 3 Transport Company in Burnham. This had all come about after I had chosen transport as my corps of choice as I was interested in terms of what it had to offer. As it turned out it was a good choice.

Q: You were posted to Vietnam in 1970. What was your role there?

A: I was appointed Amenities Officer inside the HQ of 1 Australian Taskforce. This meant I looked after the soldiers when they returned from the field such as providing movies. It was not a grand job but was important from a morale point of view. I also used to look after touring entertainment groups that came to Nui Dat. They were mostly Australian groups and it somehow had built up a myth over the years that New Zealand groups came as well. That was never in my time although sometimes there were New Zealanders in the Australian groups.

Q: Did you ever get outside the base?

A: Yes for example I would occasionally get in a two man Sioux helicopter as an observer during air strikes. It was not part of my role, but something I wanted to do.

Q: When did your Vietnam Tour of Duty end?

A: April 1971. From there I went back to my old stamping ground at the Waiouru School of Transport and was promoted to Captain as 2IC.

Q: Where was your next posting?

A: I moved down to Wellington to work at Defence HQ and later in Trentham. I was promoted to Major and went back to Waiouru as the Chief Instructor before being posted to Singapore. By this stage I had been married for a short time, and our daughter was born there. It was a great country to bring up a family.

We managed a fleet of RL Bedfords and buses in support of NZ Force, South East Asia. The only drawback with the old British Bedfords was that they suffered in the tropical environment. The driving over there at times was dangerous, especially in Malaysia where there was a lot of traffic.

Q: After coming back from Singapore, did you go on any more overseas postings?

A: Yes. I had several long courses in Australia before coming back to New Zealand and later leaving the Army after 29 years in 1990.

I then went into Civvy Street and was appointed to a job as CEO of the New Zealand Red Cross, before working for the New Zealand Institute of Architects and then becoming Chief Executive of the New Zealand Medical Association for over twelve years. I doubt very much had I not been in a leadership role in the Army that I could have managed these leadership jobs and for that I will always be grateful for my time in the Army.



WORLD WAR TWO COMMEMORATIONS

On September 9, the Karori RSA held a commemoration evening to mark 80 years since Great Britain, New Zealand and Australia declared war on Germany.

The evening began when Lt Col (Retired) John Mills read out NZ Prime Minister Michael Savage's famous 'where she goes, we go' speech, before the *Bulletin* editor and Karori RSA Historian Carey Clements, showed the names of 310 Karori, Makara and Northland residents who served in the New Zealand Army during WWII. Their names were scrolled on a film screen in front of those that came along, while declaration speeches from Prime Ministers Neville Chamberlain (Great Britain) and Robert Menzies (Australia) along with the NZ Deputy PM Peter Fraser and 2nd NZEF Commander, Lt Gen Sir Bernard Freyberg VC, were also heard as the names came up. A 7 minute 1940 film was also shown depicting the first troops leaving for overseas, from Wellington in early 1940.

After the presentation, several of the gathered made their own recollections from this period, including Joyce Foster, who recalled being a child refugee, who was sent away from her England home during the time when German bombing raids became more frequent.

As neither the RNZ Navy nor Air Force have got nominal rolls from those that served in WWII, Carey is now trying to find the names from the other two armed services and would welcome anyone to contact him on 021 073 4133.



LOOKING BACK



Since first joining the New Zealand Army 30 years ago, Captain Jeremy Seed has been both a Regular and Territorial Force soldier and Officer. A man with a sharp observational eye around the way the Army and its personnel is forever changing, he spoke to the *Bulletin* Editor Carey Clements, about some memorable moments along with the harrowing ordeal he faced when he contracted multiple sclerosis a decade ago.

Q: Do you come from a military family?

A: Very much so. My maternal grandfather was at Gallipoli, a great uncle was in WW2 and Korea, and my late father Brian Seed was in for 20 years, which culminated in him finishing as Chief Clerk of 3 Infantry Brigade Workshops as a WO1.

Q: I guess because of your father you moved around quite a bit as a youngster?

A: Not really. Growing up in the 1970's there were no overseas postings once the New Zealand troops got back from Vietnam. Initially I went to school at Burnham before Dad got out in 1976 and we moved to Wellington. We then lived in Aro Valley for 14 years and I went to several schools, before undertaking my secondary education at Wellington College. It was there I first began to attend Anzac Day assemblies at school. I remember one year there was a kid from the orchestra who was responsible for playing the Last Post. He made a real hash of it and the people in the audience responded by giggling, while the Headmaster was furious. It took me a while to understand why this was so. The Headmaster thought he was being disrespectful towards those that had served, whereas I thought the kid was just playing a poor rendition, which is a different interpretation.

Dad like many of his generation came out with not much recognition. He was very proud to make a WO1, but when he was a civilian again that did not count for anything. He however started to make peace with himself and in the last few years attended Anzac Day services again.

My theory is that when you join up, the system strips you down into the model they want, but when you get discharged no matter how long you have served, they do not de-institutionalise you. So as a result you remain essentially institutionalised.

Q: When did you first get out of the Regular Force?

A: 1994 and it was a big thing too as I entered university. At the time I was 24 and was a Lance Corporal. I was poorly advised at the time when asked my age by my OC to stay in, as he felt as it would take around six years before I finished my degree, I would be better off to stay in the Army. There was no encouragement of me wanting to gain a higher education because at the time few in the Army had degrees. It was not until years later that I also discovered others in my Unit also got out and got degrees. Nowadays every Regular Officer is expected to have one and because of that the Army is now rich in qualifications.

Q: Why did you originally chose to be clerk as your chosen trade?

A: It was something my father advised me even though I had been a rifleman in the TF and had enjoyed it. Being a clerk meant you could work indoors without fear of what the weather would bring.

Q: Am I correct you went from the TF into the RF, to the TF and then finally back to the RF where you are currently situated?

A: Yes. There were reasons for this. One was that I failed my Required Fitness Level test in the RF and as a result I joined the TF. I did two years with them before completing an RF basic in Waiouru in 1990. After being a clerk for a couple of years in the RF I got out in 1994, went to university, but transferred to the TF. I left the TF in 1997 and worked in public relations for the next nine years.

I re-enlisted in the TF in 2005. It came about when I watched a 7 Battalion, RNZIR Charter Parade one day. I was asked by then Major Brian Ralph what I was doing, now that I was no longer in the Army and in Public Relations. Brian felt the Army needed PR and one thing led to another and soon I met up with Colonel Sean Trengrove, who wanted a small group of personnel that were either experienced in the media or in PR and who could deploy. He felt it would be similar to the Australian PR Corps, which excited me. Col Trengrove put a paper up that I got a specialised Commission in a PR role.

At the time there was a lot of opposition, but the paper was approved when the then Chief of Army, Maj Gen Jerry Mateparae agreed after Col Trengrove told him if we got a PR professional it would cost \$120 an hour, whereas if we got Jeremy Seed commissioned it would only cost around \$100 a day.

Q: Since you have been in PR, can you single out any particular major highlights?

A: When I worked at the Minister of Defence, I was Phil Goff's Press Secretary. It was during this period that I announced to the public that Cpl Willie Apiata, NZSAS was being awarded a Victoria Cross. This was by far my absolute highlight in PR. From the age of 14 I had gained an interest around medals and decorations and knowing that it had been more than 50 years since it was last awarded to a New Zealander, the staff knew the announcement had to be done carefully and managed well, as we were not sure how it was going to be received. But as it proved, it did become a big thing and people did care.

Q: Since then have you had any other major achievements?

A: Working in East Timor was an unforgettable experience for many reasons. One of the most surreal things I ever saw came one night when I was at the base in Dili. Next door to where a big screen had been set up was a room that had around 30 to 50 Australian soldiers on their laptops and all playing computer simulated war games.

In 2009 I was deployed to Samoa after the tsunami and given less than 24 hours notification. Within 48 hours of getting back I developed my first MS symptoms. However on the positive side I went to Gallipoli in 2015 to mark the centenary of the landings there. As I had a late grandfather who went there, I put my name down in the ballot to go and was lucky to then have my name drawn out.

Q: Can you tell me about your health issue with multiple sclerosis?

A: As mentioned I had my first symptom in 2009 but it was not until 2011 that I was diagnosed with it. At first I was paranoid about telling anyone in knowing it would probably be the end of my Army career as I could not do things like Required Fitness Level tests anymore. When I was offered my contract I told my careers manager about it and he told me not to worry about it as the regulations had changed whereas I or anyone else with any form of neurological condition could continue to serve, as long as it did not affect you mentally.

Q: Is MS something you may have been born with and did not know you had it until it manifested inside your body?

A: That's one of the theories. Another one is that it is a virus and something can trigger off inside you without any warning signs.

Since the diagnosis, I have been interested to learn that some British soldiers have contracted MS after working in third world conditions. I am not saying necessarily that is what also happened to me, but as I served in Timor, I wonder whether it may have aggravated whatever I had in my system at the time.

Q: Earlier this year you joined the Karori RSA. Was it done purely through welfare reasons?

A: On Anzac Day I attended the Karori service and met the President Bruce Johnston. Bruce recognised my Education Corps collar dogs and asked me if I was Brian's boy. When I told him yes, I was so grateful to talk to someone that knew and served alongside Dad. I have also been impressed that the RSA has modern veterans as well.

The one thing that needs to be emphasised more on from the RSA around welfare issues. Veteran Affairs has also helped me with my MS, such as helping provide people to clean my house or cut my lawns. I will be finishing up in the Army in February 2020, so after that time I would like to get more involved with the RSA on welfare. It is an important area that really needs to be honed in on both current and recently retired people that have done time in the services.

INTRODUCING THE NEW RSA SUPPORTING ADVISOR: MICHELLE TEBBUTT



I took over the position of the Support Advisor in late August and since that time I have been familiarizing myself with policy and procedures and generally trying to learn all the things Charlotte did so well. I have enjoyed meeting many of you at the monthly lunches, Christmas lunch and when I have been out visiting.

I hope that most of you would have received the introduction letter and survey I sent out in September from which I received 50 responses. Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete it.

There were two people who returned a paper copy wanting assistance however no name was put on the paper. Please feel free to contact me if you have not heard from me regarding your feedback. The key findings were:

- From those that had used either the support services or visitor service in the last twelve months all were very happy and satisfied with the service they were provided with. The only complaint that was voiced on several occasions was frustration with veterans' affairs, regarding the time it took to make decisions and contact people.

- All members that responded to the survey stated they have or would recommend the RSA for others to join.

- Of those eligible for the medical scheme, under half had claimed in the last twelve months.

- I asked if there was anything else the WRSA could offer, other than a newsletter there were no suggestions.

- Most people were in favour of newsletter either monthly or bimonthly, with a few requesting it quarterly and two not interested at all in any forms of communication. Some suggestions to be included in the newsletter were, gardening tips and recipes, information about other support services in the region, national RSA events, upcoming reunions and life tips.

In the new year I will send out a bi-monthly newsletter detailing some of what has been mentioned above. If you do not wish to receive this, please let the office know. Where possible I will send it via Email.

I have been spending time with Kay (visitor) and have had the privilege to meet some of our wonderful members. Kay does a fantastic job and I would like to thank her for the time an effort she puts into her role.

In October I was able to attend an older persons Expo at the Petone Club, this was chance to promote the Wellington RSA as well as a great opportunity to network and see what other services/organisations are available in the Wellington area.

On that note if anyone is a member of another group/organisation and would like to know about the RSA and services etc we provide, I am also happy to come and talk and provide a brief presentation. In my work to promote the Wellington RSA, I have been visiting and leaving pamphlets at local GP's and Community Groups in the area. Next year I will also be the point of contact for Wellington RSA branch at the Trentham Army Camp. This will involve me spending some time out there every fortnight to assist serving Defence staff (both serving and the former servicemen) to access Poppy Trust Funds, liaising with VANZ and with other government departments.

I am currently in talks with a local business in Wellington who is interested in providing support to our RSA members. I am hoping the New Year this will provide another opportunity to socialise and meet with other members from other RSA's in the wider Wellington area. More information will follow next year.

Lastly if you do need any advice or assistance with any welfare matters please contact me. Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,

Michelle

EXCLUSIVE RSA CLUB CARD MEMBER DEALS



As an RSA member you are given a Club Card, with this you are entitled to a number of member benefits including amazing retail deals. To redeem these member benefits, simply show proof of your RSA membership at the following retailers to receive amazing deals.

If interested in obtaining a card, please contact the WRSA Office Administrator Zenetta Ganic on 385 1191 or email zenetta@wrsa.org.nz

RESENE PAINTS – up to 15% off paint/wallpaper

VERO INSURANCE – Free quote

PORTERS SKI AREA – 50% day passes

THRIFTY CAR RENTALS – Various discounts

PUBLIC TRUST – \$50 discount per will

HEARTLAND BANK – \$150 discount

TROOPER WINE – Supports local RSA's

BIO SHIELD – 10% off products

AVIS RENT A CAR – Discounts to members

CIGNA TRAVEL INSURANCE – 40% off

BABICH WINES – 20% off purchases

SENIOR MOVE MANAGERS – 10% off

CHAMPIONS OF THE WORLD – 10% off

ORETI VILLAGE RESORT – 10% off

MAGNOLIA – \$100 off

BREADEN MCCARDLE CONVEYANCING – Various Discounts

FLAGMAKERS – 20% off products

IMAGES FROM THE 2019 KARORI ANZAC DAY SERVICE

Due to overwhelming numbers in recent years inside their clubrooms, the Karori RSA moved its mid-morning Anzac Day service to Karori Normal School this year. Ironically in the early days of the RSA, the school had been used as the venue to give another example of history repeating itself.

One person in attendance during the service was Wellington City Councillor and Karori RSA member Andy Foster. A former Navy reservist, he was elected Mayor of Wellington six months later.





World War Two WAAF and Karori RSA Life Member Pat Tie arrives before the Karori Anzac Day service



Karori RSA Treasurer, Cdr (Retired) Simon Stephens lowers the NZ flag during the Last Post



WRSA KEY CONTACT NUMBERS

- President: Theo Kuper, 476 9777, 027 499 6618
- Deputy President: Mike Millar, 021 2443 128
- Office Administrator: Zenetta Ganic, 385 1191
- Support Advisor: Michelle Tebbutt, 385 1191
- Karori RSA President: Bruce Johnston, 977 6007
- Bulletin Editor: Carey Clements, 021 073 4133

OFFICE CLOSURE

The office of the Wellington RSA will be closed between 25 December to 12 January 2020. We wish you a great festive season.



WELLINGTON RSA'S NEW OFFICE

During July 2019, the Wellington RSA shifted its Willis St offices to level 9, Technology One House, 86 Victoria St, near Manners St. As you would expect by being on the ninth floor, the office has a stunning view. We encourage you to check it out.

SALE OF 2015 ANZAC UNCIRCULATED COIN SETS



The 2015 uncirculated sets are now available for sale. Only 223 sets have been produced. The set contains the six 2015 coins, \$2, \$1, 50c (ordinary), 50c (ANZAC Centenary Commemorative), 20c and 10c. They are contained within a folder. The cost is \$30 a set.

Orders can be obtained by emailing Clint Libby, Karori RSA at cjlibby@xtra.co.nz or by telephoning him on (04) 476-8576.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Annual subscriptions for 2020 are now due and \$35.00 can either be paid online, cheque or by going into the office to pay by cash – Please contact Zenetta for more information