



THE BULLETIN DECEMBER 2023

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



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

2023 has been another busy year for the Wellington Returned and Services Association.

Since our last newsletter, I attended remembrance for the Vietnam War



Anniversary and Korean War Armistice Anniversary. Both events recognised New Zealand's part in the Vietnam War and the Korean War, which has yet to finish with a peace treaty. These events were a good chance for veterans to catch up with people that they have served with and catch up on the news.

The WRSA and KRSA's major activity has been the work to complete the Ben Burn Park Boer War Memorial in the First New Zealand Mounted Rifles Contingent to deploy to the second Boer War in South Africa in 1899. The ceremony to unveil the new memorial was conducted at Ben Burn Park in Karori on 26 November and will be covered in more detail later in this newsletter.

Michelle and Kay have continued to provide welfare and visit support to our Veterans. Michelle has also been working at the Trentham Hub to provide welfare support and advice to serving NZDF personnel. In addition, Michelle has taken on work for the RSA National Office for a new initiative, which helps services personnel leaving the NZDF, to find employment. support is effective.

This initiative is a one year pilot funded by the Ministry for Social Development to see if this advice and support is effective. Hopefully, the pilot will be successful and will receive funding in out years.

In the last four months we have provided sponsorship to the NZDF rugby team for their 12 nation Defence Force Tournament in France. The competition was held in tandem with the Rugby World Cup and our NZDF rugby side came fourth. We have in addition provided financial support to the Wellington New Zealand Cadet Forces to replace prizes lost due to a fire some time ago.

The Wellington RSA Past President, Theo Kuper, and I attended RSA National Council AGM on 25 November. The AGM only had one notice of motion, which was that the RNZRSA establish an advisory group for the amendment of the VSA 2024 to remove the discriminatory nature of the Act and ensure that all veterans are supported equally. Basically, the RSA wants the definition of a veteran to cover all service personnel who have been attested.

The main RSA National Council will be held on 24 February 2024 in Wellington. This meeting will consider RSA 2030 and changes to the RNZRSA constitution. Changes to the RNZRSA constitution will then impact on the WRSA constitution rewrite next year.

Lastly, I would like to wish all our members a Merry Christmas a Happy New Year.

Regards, Kevin Arlidge

LAST POST



- Jennifer Leslie Mawson (pictured above), Service member, died 4 September 2023 aged 94
- Marjorie Hilda Lee, Service member, died 1 September 2023 aged 101
- Geoffrey William Boxall, Service member, died 11 September 2023 aged 88
- Nancye Ruth Cooper Returned Widow, died 25 October 2023 aged 90

MICHELLE'S MESSAGE



As another year comes to an end, it is hard to believe we are already in December. It was nice to finish the year with a festive lunch at the Pines complete with musical entertainment. I enjoyed catching up with so many of you.

I am still working at the Trentham Army camp once a fortnight to assist any NZDF staff. This is also a great way to promote the services of the RSA and the support that it can offer.

As well as this, I continue in my part time role within the RNZRSA as a Veteran employment advisor, assisting veterans (including their immediate family), who are or have stepped out of uniform to find employment in civilian positions.

This has been a successful pilot programme thus far, with the programme placing over 40 veterans and their families into employment.

With covid on the rise again, remember you will most likely be eligible for a booster: If you are aged 30 and over, you can have a booster regardless of the number of boosters you have already had.

To get a booster:

- You must have had at least your first 2 COVID-19 vaccinations.
- It's recommended you wait at least 6 months since your last COVID-19 vaccine.
- It's recommended you wait at least 6 months if you have had a COVID-19 infection.

Boosters are especially recommended for:

- All people over 65 years old
- Māori and Pacific people aged 50 and over
- Pregnant people with health conditions that put them at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19
- People with disability with significant or complex health needs
- People with serious mental health conditions
- Young people aged 12 to 15 who have a medical condition that increases the risk of severe illness from COVID-19 (talk to your usual doctor, nurse, or healthcare provider about whether this is recommended and how to get a prescription).

MICHELLE'S MESSAGE (CONTINUED)

Please also contact me if you have any questions about welfare matters, medical claims or need assistance with Veteran Affairs or any other Government departments. Since the 1st of July, you are eligible to claim a rates rebate for the 2023-24 year. Lastly, on behalf of myself, Kay and Zenetta, I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year.

Michelle Tebbutt
Support Advisor

BEN BURN PARK SOUTH AFRICAN WAR MEMORIAL OPENING

After three years of planning and fundraising, a memorial to commemorate the 1899 – 1902 South African (which used to be known as the Boer) War was unveiled at Karori's Ben Burn Park on 26 November.

The idea came about after the Karori Residents Association Chair, Andrea Skews, had gone for a walk with some of her members in 2020, and noticed a plaque on a wall leading up to the park. As she told the *Independent Herald*, it was the first time in eleven years of walking around the area, that she noticed the plaque.

‘Upon reading it I was even more astonished that something so significant, marking both a crucial part of Karori and national history, was in such an inconspicuous position’.

Knowing no other Karori parks had memorials, Andrea then began to make inquiries and soon found out through a fellow Rotarian Brigadier (Retired) Mark Wheeler and then the Karori RSA Secretary Clint Libby, that they also showed interest in the project.

It was then on to the Wellington City Council for support and together also with support from the Wellington RSA, the relocation of the plaque onto a plinth, became a reality, while the Karori Lions Club and Karori and Wellington RSA's also ensured two seats side by side to the plinth would be in place along with the planting of a dozen Aki Aki trees.

Originally on land that was once part of and known as Campbell's farm, the area was used as a training camp for recruits who would go on and serve in the South African War.

This almost forgotten conflict was New Zealand's first action overseas. The first contingent was commanded by Major Alf Robbin of the Otago Mounted Rifles who later became the first New Zealand Army Chief of Staff in 1906. At the outbreak of World War One, Major General Robin was appointed commandant of the New Zealand military forces within New Zealand. He died in 1935 and is buried at Karori Cemetery, just 1.6km away from Campbell's Farm, which became known as Ben Burn Park after the 1915-20 former Karori borough Mayor, Ben Burn.

The New Zealand contingent that left Karori comprised of 204 men in two companies with no 1 Company being mainly from the North Island, number 2 mainly from the South Island. By the time the war ended in 1902, ten contingent of New Zealand volunteers totalling more than 6500 Officers and soldiers along with 8000 horses had sailed for South Africa along with doctors, nurses, and veterinary surgeons. The last New Zealand survivor of the conflict George Tuck died in July 1981, aged 97.

The memorial is the first one dedicated to the South African War in Wellington, which Skews believes will be a 'fitting backdrop' for dawn parades and remembrance occasions. The ceremony was also attended by the Queen's Alexandra's Memorial Rifles, whose origins go back to the Mounted Rifles. Two Light Armoured Vehicles (LAV's) were parked outside the ground, while also in attendance were six South African Army veterans, including David de Miranda of the Karori RSA.



Above: Images from 1899 showing the first contingent at Campbell's Farm, now Ben Burn Park.



Today's equivalent! Members of the QAMR with one of their LAV's line up after the ceremony at Ben Burn Park. The memorial can be seen to the left of the flagpole.



Past President of the Wellington RSA, Colonel (Retired) Trevor McComish (in green beret) inspect soldiers of the Wellington East Coast Squadron of the QAMR at Ben Burn Park in his role as Regimental Colonel, while carrying the sword is the Squadron Officer Commanding Major Wutts.



Three Retired Colonels and three past or present Wellington RSA Presidents (from left) Colonel Trevor McComish, Kevin Arlidge and Theo Kuper discuss the events ahead of the Ben Burn Park ceremony.



As Chaplain Class 3 Brendon Drew goes into prayer, South African veterans (from second top) Pieter Alnertyn, Richard Hurt, Ian Patterson and Mike Coetzee lower their berets out of respect.



The moment of the unveiling: (from left) Conel Trevor McComish, Chaplain Class 3 Brendon Drew and David de Miranda reveal the new memorial.



The next job was to lay wreaths, starting off with one from the Wellington RSA and then by the QAMR.



Next to the South African War memorial are two seats. One has been donated by the Karori Lions Club and the other can be seen above.

KARORI RSA CHRISTMAS PARTY PHOTOS



For the first time the Karori RSA opted to hold its annual Christmas party not at the Time Cinema, but inside its own clubrooms this year. A big turnout came to the event on November 18 where great food and musical entertainment was on offer.



The oldest attendee at the Karori party was 98 year WWII WAAF Pat Tie (left).



Karori RSA member, Major (Retired) Tony Williams kept everyone entertained with both his original and traditional songs on guitar along with Brian Hayes on the piano accordion. A week later Tony did the same thing at the Wellington RSA Christmas party.

WELLINGTON RSA CHRISTMAS PARTY



Looking like Mr Claus himself, Kit Withers got into the spirit of the party early on.



The two Geoffrey's meet: Geoff Lee (left) meets his namesake, 98 year old WWII RNZ Navy veteran Geoffrey Moss, at the Wellington RSA Christmas party.



Wellington RSA President Kevin Arlidge starts the party with a look back on 2023.



K Force veterans (from left) Gordon Sutherland, Phil Wallace, Bruce Diggle and Chris Nevill line up during an impromptu gathering. Both Phil and Chris are Life Members of the Wellington RSA.

CONGRATULATIONS



goes out to Captain Todd Skilton on being awarded the NZDF Volunteer of the Year award recently.

Todd is one of the few current serving servicemen/women that are members of either the Karori or Wellington RSA's. A committee member of the Karori club, Todd has also been active on other committees: Operational support firefighter, Order Librarian with the Order of St John, New Zealand branch of the Orders and Medals Research Society, as well as being a Justice of Peace and busy father to two young children.

90 TIMES FOUR



It seems 1933 was a lucky year as far as the Karori RSA goes. In addition to its members (from left) Murray Sherlock, Bruce Johnston, and Joyce Foster all turning 90, this year so too was the Karori RSA in May



WELLINGTON RETURNED SOLDIERS' ASSOCIATION, KARORI, MAKARA, AND NORTHLAND.

A MEETING of Returned Soldiers residing in Karori, Makara, and Northland will be held at the Parish Hall, Mai Road, Karori, at 8 p.m. on WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 1933.

BUSINESS:

- To elect a Karori Auxiliary Committee of the Wellington Returned Soldiers Association.
- General.
 - Chairman: Colonel A. Cowles (Pres.), Wellington R.S.A.
 - J. SPENCE, Secretary, Wellington R.S.A.
 - C. T. DUCK, Secretary (pro tem), Karori Auxiliary Committee of the Wellington R.S.A.

OTHER RSA MEMBERS DURING THE BEN BURN PARK CEREMONY



From top: RSA members Jane Campbell (seen proudly wearing the medals of her late father, Lt Col Denver Fountaine), Les Coutts, AVM (Retired) Robin Klitscher, and Karori RSA Treasurer, Carey Clements, pictured during the South African War Memorial unveiling. Like Todd Skilton, Carey (who is also the Editor of this Bulletin), is also involved in other community groups and was awarded a Life Membership of the Wellington Rugby League earlier this year to go with his LM of the New Zealand Universities Rugby League. Robin Klitscher is also a Life Member of two bodies: the Royal New Zealand Returned Services Association and the Royal New Zealand Air Force Assn.

WHAT'S THE JOKE?



During the Ben Burn Park ceremony, there was some time for humour and in the front row of the VIP's section, this Simon Woolf photograph captured that precise light moment, including laughter from newly elected Member of Parliament and Karori RSA Andy Foster, who can be seen to the right of the pole.

WRSA KEY CONTACTS

President:
Kevin Arlidge 029 268 3509

Office Administrator:
Zenetta Ganic 04 385 1191

Support Advisor:
Michelle Tebbutt: 021 1936 261

Karori RSA President:
Bruce Johnston 04 977 6007

Bulletin Editor:
Carey Clements 021 073 4133

WELLINGTON RSA Office closed over xmas and New Year 22 December 2023 to 14 January 2024

KARORI RSA

27a Campbell St, Karori

Open Fridays 7.30pm – 10.00pm

Movie nights are held on the last Friday of each month