



THE BULLETIN

AUGUST 2025

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



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The last six months have been quite busy for our Wellington RSA. A good deal of time has been taken up with interacting with the RSA National Office and National Council over the RNZRSA v118 Constitution and the RSA Associations Model Constitution. The RNZRSA Constitution was approved at the RSA Special General Meeting on 12 April 2025. The new Wellington RSA Constitution was approved by our AGM on 28 June 2025. The RSA National Office has approved our new Constitution and the Registrar of Incorporated Societies has approved our Constitution and re-registered the Wellington RSA.



Poppy Day was successful again this year and \$55,000 was collected which is \$5,000 above what we budgeted for 2025. This money will go towards funding our welfare support programme and the WRSA Medical Scheme. The CRANZAC biscuit project was also successful, raising \$10,386. The CRANZAC biscuit money went to a NZDF family with a child with Cystic Fibrosis.

The ANZAC Day Dawn Service at Pukeahu National Memorial Park was well attended again this year and the weather was kinder than last year. Phill Wallace carried the Wellington RSA Flag for the last time after 25 years performing this service. I thank Phil for his service and dedication. The Civic Service at the Wellington Cenotaph was well supported and 57 wreaths were laid which is a record for recent times.

Michelle Tebbutt's Support Advisor role has been expanded. On 8 March 2025 I put a proposal to the WWCT District Southern Hub meeting at the Upper Hutt RSA to club fund a WWCT Southern Hub Support Advisor. The proposal was supported by RSAs and the RSA National Office. Wellington RSA is funding half of the position with several RSAs and RSA National Office funding the second half of Michelle's remuneration. The funding will need to be done year by year but is considered very important because of the need to support an increasing number of Veterans requiring help. Michelle will expand on what the role involves later in this newsletter.

I have initiated a project team of John O'Reilly, Ange Coyle and Shaun Fogarty to develop an action plan for increasing membership and revamping our communications capabilities. The WRSA Executive's aim is to increase our RSA's membership and have a communications strategy that reaches our post 1990 Veterans. The RSA must evolve to cater for a changing demographic and the way they live and socialise. If we do not make this transition, then the RSA's days are probably numbered. The working group has established a Facebook and Instagram page to keep members updated on our activities. The trust of this communication will be to connect Veterans.

I would like to thank members for their continued support, and I look forward to seeing you at our monthly lunches.

Regards,

Kevin Arlidge

LAST POST

- **Joyce Margaret Foster**, Associate member, died 31 August 2024, aged 91
- **Raymond Robert Wright**, Returned member, died 1 September 2024 aged 97
Margaret Ann Home, Returned Widow member, died 15 September 2024 aged 88
- **Brian Laurence Murphy**, Returned member, died 23 August 2024 aged 79
- **Gorden Stewart Sutherland**, Returned member, died 14 December 2024 aged 97
- **Muriel Maud Dunster**, Service member, died 14 Feb 2025 aged 104
- **Cassius (Cass) Leroy Shavez**, Returned member, died 13 February 2025 aged 56.
- **Murray Bartholemew Sherlock**, Service member, died 15 March 2025 aged 90 (see obituary pages 7-8)
- **Noeline Gordon Ritson**, Service member, died 15 May 2025 aged 107 (see obituary pages 2-4)
- **Kenneth James Ramsay**, Returned member, died 12 June 2025 aged 73.
- **Anthony Samuel Harris**, Service member, died 29 June 2025 aged 59
- **Peter John Heaven**, Returned member, died 10 July 2025 aged 94.
- **Gillian Kathleen Price**, Returned Widow, died 9 August 2025 aged 84



(Left): The late Joyce Foster, mother of former Wellington Mayor and current Member of Parliament Andy Foster. The late Gordon Sutherland along with the WRSA Patron and former National RSA President, AVM (Retired) Robin Klitscher CBE, DFC, AFC (right) during a 2021 luncheon.

OBITUARY – NOELINE RITSON

It is sad, but inevitable the passing of the 107-year-old Noeline Ritson on 15 May marks the end of the era for the Karori RSA, in losing its last World War Two veteran.

With time being the true enemy, only the 99-year-old Royal New Zealand Navy Officer Geoffrey Moss, remains as a member of either the Wellington or Karori RSA, of the many that volunteered to serve for King and Country between 1939 and 1945.

Noeline's story like so many service veterans is one of humble beginnings. Born Noeline McLeod in Auckland as the daughter of a World War One Army engineer who came from Tuatapere in Southland. She grew up in a farming area in Papatoetoe before attending Otahuhu High School (later college) as a foundation student when it opened in 1931.

The year after she was born on Boxing Day 1917, saw the influenza epidemic sweep through New Zealand and although none of her family perished, she did recall in an interview 97 years later, her mother telling her that a cart would come at night to pick up bodies from homes.

After her father became invalided from heavy work, he changed trades to run a grocery for a while. Noeline said he never had a business head as he kept allowing customers to put their goods on the slate. After boarding at Otahuhu High School for three years, Noeline then shifted to Frankton for a while before moving in with relations in Auckland. It was during her time at school she joined the St John's ambulance as a cadet and on Saturday afternoons would don a gray hat and dress to join a more qualified medic around the various sports fields.

This medical training gave her the enthusiasm to then join the VAD (Volunteer Aid Division) at Auckland Hospital in the hope of eventually becoming a nurse.

Despite wanting to enter this vocation since the age of 12, she was advised by her mother not to enter it as Noeline recalled in the interview.

"You will be at everybody's beck and call and one of your main jobs will be to cut old people's toenails."

In early 1940, around 20 to 30 New Zealand women went to Egypt in later becoming known as the Tuis.

The 22 year old Noeline was also keen to be part of the action and picked up an application form before returning home.

“Mum was in tears and Dad was grumpy and walked around the house after I told them,” she recalled.

Two months later, the Women’s Auxiliary Air Force was formed and still sensing a want to do her bit, she officially enlisted in the second wave on January 12 1942 as W2475 Noeline McLeod.

She recalled that before she was accepted, she was interviewed and doubted by a formidable Scottish Matron Watt, who told her “I don’t think you’ll stand up my girl”.

“I told her “I may be small, but I am wiry,” which made her laugh and accepted me,” she recalled.

As a shift worker at Auckland Hospital, Noeline took in very few military activities such as learning to march or salute. Instead, she went through the different wards and saw some sights that she never forgot.

“In August 1943 a Consolidated C-87 American Liberator transport aircraft crashed soon after taking off from the Whenuapai Airfield. For many years this was kept secret because of the censorship at the time. I can recall that one of the passengers that was brought in had skin literally hanging off his hands after being severely burnt. Naturally this horrible sight meant I had to remember my training and do the job I was meant to do rather than think too much about it.”



After 18 months at the Auckland Hospital and then later at Whenuapai Air Force Base as well as at Hobsonville’s No 1 Hospital, Noeline was transferred to Seagrove Station, near Papakura.

It was on an old farm with the hospital about a mile away. For their 6am start, they got a lift up the hill from the transport men.

“When the Matron heard about this, she said, ‘you are’ not to waste petrol. You will walk.”

And walk she did every day at a time when the station was considered secret to the public. Besides treating illnesses and diseases such as influenza, Noeline also treated many pilots for serious injuries, following many Tiger Moth accidents.

During her time with the Air Force, Noeline met her future husband Keith, who also worked in the medical unit before later becoming a physiotherapist. After living in Dunedin for several years to allow Keith to gain his qualification in peacetime, the couple moved into Firth Terrace in Karori. Over time Noeline bore two daughters and a son as well as becoming a grandmother and great grandmother.

After Keith died in 1970 at the age of just 49, Noeline kept her independence by staying in the suburb where she kept up a variety of interests, including tending to her own vegetable garden, driving (before later giving up at the age of 100), knitting, dancing, bowling and becoming a member of the Karori RSA.

Known for her dry wit, ready smile, welcoming nature plus a willingness to help with Poppy Day collecting every year. Even a month before she died, she still collected for an hour at the age of 107 in the foyer of her now residence at Malvina Major Home. Asked frequently about what she put her old age down to she always replied simply, ‘luck’.



During the Wellington RSA Centennial luncheon at the James Cook Hotel in 2016, the 98-year-old Noeline met up with two fellow WWII veterans in 97 year old Hector Hopkins (left) and the 100 year old Bruce Cunningham.

Below photos: Also during 2016, the Karori RSA held a function which was attended by it's remaining WWII veterans (top row from left): Harry Lavington and Gerard Lowe as well as (front row from left) Noeline, her great friend Pat Tie and Alan Duncan. Cutting the cake for yet another birthday.



Still playing indoor bowls once a week at the age of 106 even though her failing eyesight was starting to trouble her. Manning a Poppy Day stand in 2024.

During her final Poppy Day stand less than a month before her passing, the 107 year old Noeline was happy to pose with fellow collector Karori RSA member Carey Clements and daughter Alison in the foyer of the Malvina Major Home. The other photo shows Noeline accepting a donation from the Home Manager, Albie Calope.



THE YOUNG REMEMBER THE PAST

Each year before Anzac Day, Poppies and Rosemary are laid inside both the Karori and Makara servicemen and women's cemeteries. This year, a full contingent of Brownies and Scouts came out to support the Karori RSA at Makara along with their parents, despite the freezing conditions.



MICHELLE'S MESSAGE



Kay and I continue to support many of our members with welfare needs, including home and rest home visits, help with transport to appointments, advocacy, and practical assistance such as setting up the disability allowances, total mobility or submitting Veterans' Affairs claims. If you think I can help—no matter how big or small the issue—please don't hesitate to reach out.

I'm also continuing fortnightly visits to Trentham Camp. Sadly, we're seeing more situations where NZDF is no longer providing adequate health or education support to serving personnel, and we've stepped in to assist several individuals this past year.

The Veteran Employment Service, which I was involved with since it began in April 2023, officially closed on 31 December 2024 due to financial constraints. I believe this was a missed opportunity, especially as the RSA works to connect with younger veterans. However, I am proud the work that we did achieve while the program was running, helping over 100 Veterans into employment or training opportunities.

To help address the growing needs across our region, several Wellington RSAs, extending as far as Ōtaki have come together to fund a new Southern Hub Support Advisor role. This position is designed to provide advanced support, focusing on complex and long-term case management. It also aims to strengthen the RSA's presence in the community, support local Support Advisors in managing more challenging cases, and lead advocacy efforts on behalf of the veteran community. I'm pleased to take on this role alongside my current responsibilities as your Local Support Advisor and look forward to the opportunity it presents.

Reminder: From 1 July, you may be eligible to apply for a Rates Rebate. If you have questions about this, welfare matters, or medical claims, feel free to contact me:

michelle@wrsa.org.nz

- 📞 04 385 1191
- 📠 021 193 6261

Zenetta is also available in the office Monday to Thursday, 10:00 am–2:30 pm and can help with enquiries and claims.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our next monthly members' luncheon.

HARDHAM VC, REMEMBERED



On 10 May 2025 the New Zealand Remembrance Army (NZRA) presented the Petone Rugby Club with Farrier Sergeant William James Hardham's Victoria Cross Miniature set of medals and an oil painting by former 2004-15 NZ Army artist, Matt Gauldie.

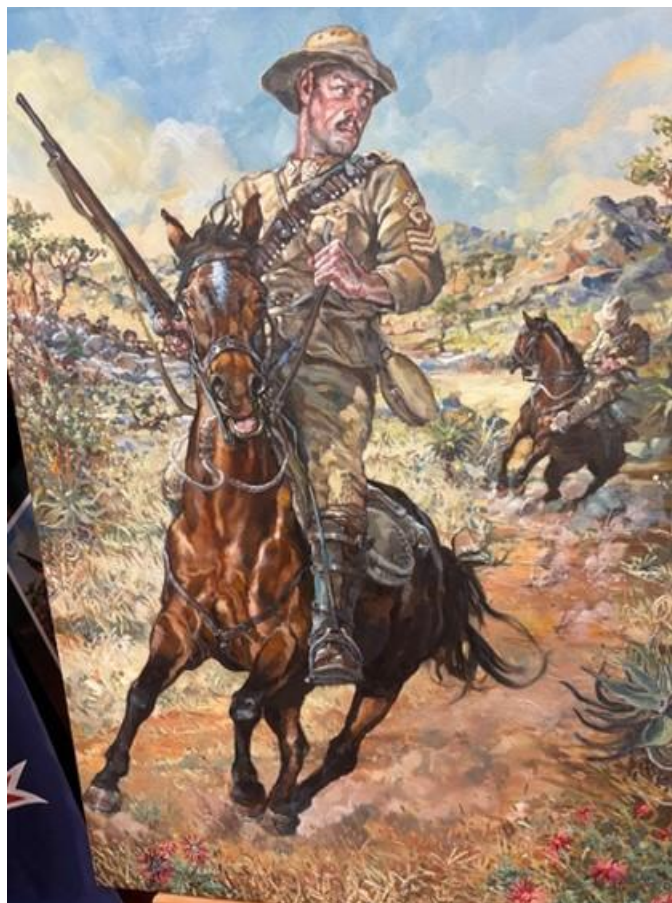
The painting depicts Farrier Sergeant Hardham in action at the time he won his VC in the Boer War. This follows a 1901 watercolour of Hardham by the English painter Stanley Berkeley, which shows him rescuing a fellow soldier under heavy fire, also at the time that led to him being awarded the highest honour.

William Hardham was a member of the Petone Rugby Club and was in the team which won the Ranfurly Shield in 1904. He represented Wellington continuously between 1897 to 1910 taking the rugby field 56 times. The Hardham VC Cup was instituted in 1939 and is played for by senior rugby grade teams in Wellington.

William Hardham was a member of the 4th New Zealand Mounted Rifles Contingent (Rough Riders) to the Boer War. On 28th January 1901 Hardham was with a 12 man patrol in the Naauport area of South Africa when the patrol came under intense fire from about 20 Boers on a kopje. The patrol was withdrawing when Trooper McRae was wounded and his horse killed. Hardham went back under intense fire and put McRae on his horse and running alongside it, he got both men into safety.



Berkeley's 1901 watercolour

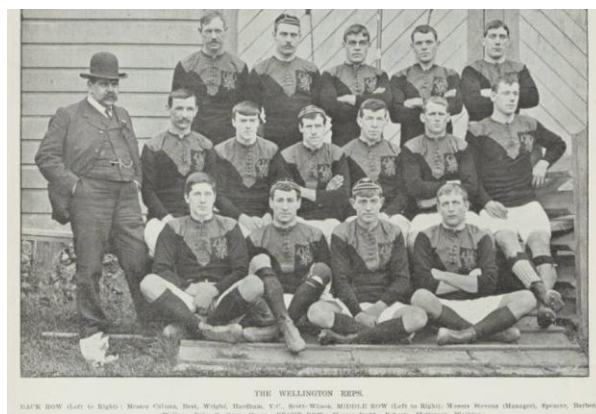
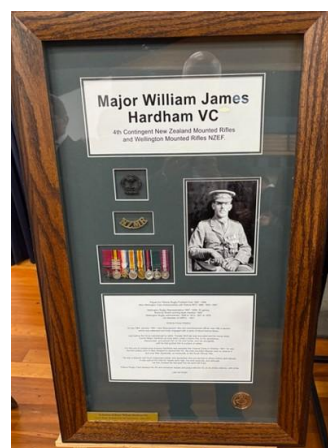


Gauldie's oil painting on canvas of Hardham

For this action, William Hardham was awarded the Victoria Cross. He returned to South Africa in 1902 with the 9th New Zealand Mounted Rifles Contingent in the rank of Lieutenant. Hardham went from South Africa to Great Britain to attend the Coronation of King Edward VII who on 1st July 1902 personally awarded him his Victoria Cross. Harding went on to serve in the Wellington Mounted Rifles as a Captain in the First World War and was wounded at Gallipoli on 30 May 1915, before being evacuated to hospital in Alexandria and later England.

He recovered from his wounds and returned to active service in 1918 as a major with his old Wellington Mounted Rifles squadron in Palestine. Hardham's Gallipoli wounds meant he could not continue in combat, and he instead took over command of the Desert Corps Rest Camp at Cairo. He also commanded the Queen Margaret Military Hospital at Hamner on his return to New Zealand.

From 1920 to 1922 William Hardham was the Manager of the Wellington RSA Club. He died at Wellington on 13 April 1928 at age 51. William Hardham was buried with full military honours at Karori Cemetery.



Hardham (back row, second right) in the 1904 Wellington rugby side including New Zealand representatives Billy Wallace (middle row wearing a cap) and Tom 'Angry' Cross (middle row far right), who later also played league for New Zealand. All three are buried at Karori cemetery.

2025 KARORI ANZAC DAY SERVICE

Due to the ever-growing numbers, the Karori RSA moved its mid-morning Anzac Day service for the first time ever to the Karori West Normal School. Held in beautiful, warm conditions, the service was again well supported by the community.



WELLINGTON RSA STANDARD BEARER PHIL CALLS TIME



After serving as the Wellington RSA standard bearer at the National Dawn Service since 2005, the WRSA Life Member and K Force Veteran Phil Wallace, called time on his role after this year's Anzac Day. As well as being a WRSA member for more than 50 years, Phil has delivered RSA tributes at funerals for more than 25 years as well as being a Poppy Day collector for more than half a century. We thank him for a job well done.

OBITUARY – MURRAY SHERLOCK

For more than 30 years, Murray Sherlock showed willingness to muck in and help volunteer community organisations. His quiet unexpected passing at the age of 90 in mid-March, was not remembered by as many as those that once knew him.

His achievements nevertheless are still important to note, as one that gave much of his precious spare time in the hope that those organisations, he was with would benefit and hopefully further flourish.

Although well known as a Karori identity, Murray was in fact a born and bred Hutt Valley man by spending the first five years of his life in Petone, before the family then shifted in 1939 to Waiwhetu, close to the Woburn Train Station. The youngest of three children, Murray's middle name of Bartholomew was in honouring his father's brother, who to Murray was known simply as Uncle Bart.

During his time at Marist Hutt Valley School, Murray a love of both cricket and rugby, which continued when he attended St Pat's Silverstream. After leaving at the age of 16, Murray took up a plumbing trade and within a couple of years was called to undertake CMT – Compulsory Military Training, over the next three years. During his CMT days, Murray was based at Linton Camp in the Royal New Zealand Engineers and developed an interest in rifle shooting. This soon became a passion which resulted in him joining the Petone Central club, where he won several Champion of Champions titles as a master shot while using .22 rifles. His CMT days also saw him helped to build bailey bridges at Waikanae, Featherston and Waiohuru.

In 1957, he married a Karori girl Yvonne Waddell, with the wedding reception being held inside the Karori RSA clubrooms. After renting two houses, the young couple saved up enough to buy their first home on Ranelagh Street in Karori in 1959. One of his earlier plumbing jobs came when he assisted Mick Wiffin and Bill Tarpley on the building of the club pavilion and changing rooms which still stands.

By this stage Murray had transferred his cricket days from the Petone United to the Karori club. During his time with Petone United he was in a winning side which won the 1952-53 and 1954-55 Hutt third grade championship, before then going up several grades and being a team member of the winning 1957-58 senior side. Work and a young family meant that he played a solitary senior game for Karori in the 1962-63 season. Despite this, he was still a regular player in the lower grade up until the club's centenary in 1980-81.

His devotion to the KCC was never better illustrated when he did the plumbing at no cost for the new pavilion alongside builders Mick Wiffin and Bill Tarpley. Years later, Murray recalled that part of his job involved getting the necessary pipes and other materials at a cheap cost before installing them inside the pavilion which opened in December 1967.

In 1968, Murray led the rugby team's batting as well as taking 49 wickets at a startling average of 9.8, including taking a hat-trick, while the following year he had an even better season with 69 wickets at an average of just 9.4.

By this stage Murray was now on the KCC committee and over time became the Club Captain who organised practice nights and started up a women's team at the club before later being bestowed with a Vice Presidency title. This honorary title was bestowed on Murray a second time later after he had served on the Wellington Cricket Association (now Cricket Wellington) management committee from 1973-74 to the early 1980's.

During the winter Murray played lower grade rugby for the Karori Rugby Club, before dropping the sport to favour golf at the Karori Golf Club, which he and Yvonne had become foundation members from the time it opened in 1971. A solid golfer who almost got down to a single figure handicap, Murray also got the KGC committee over time and during the club's tenth anniversary year, he was the club captain. Yvonne meantime had become a very good golfer in the women's section of the club and picked up a few club titles. At her suggestion to be nearer to the golf course, she and Murray moved to Makara in 1984.

In the meantime, Murray had joined the Karori RSA at the suggestion of club members Tom Davy and Norman Ridgeway, who knew him through his work and cricket respectively. Like practically every other organised he joined, Murray went on the Karori RSA committee, culminating in his being elected the club President in 1995 after being head hunted by stalwarts like Cliff Smith, Jim Tait and Keith Bartlett. One innovation Murray did to the Karori RSA was insisting that everyone took a turn to say the ode at 9 o'clock instead of just being delivered by the President.

By 1996, the Sherlocks were on the move again after Yvonne wanted to shift to quieter and warmer lifestyle off the Kapiti Coast. This meant before they moved to Raumati South, Murray resigned his Karori RSA Presidency, although he remained a member of the club for the rest of his days. Over time Murray and Yvonne then shifted to Paraparaumu, before the passing of Yvonne in February 2020. This made Murray decide to move back to Karori two years later, where he bought an apartment in the Huntleigh Home. Although no longer active in golf and his other sporting passions, Murray was still an active walker in his late 80's and would sometimes go down to Karori Park to watch some cricket, visit the Karori RSA on film nights, to assist with collections on poppy days, attend the Christmas parties or just have a drink and a meal with some old golf friends at one of the local pubs.

As noted by past Karori RSA President Trevor Frederick, "Murray was a very cheerful guy and his familiar laugh would never be too far away from the surface, even when things appeared to go against him."

"He however usually put that behind him as he would then focus on something else to ensuring whatever he set out to do was done properly like he had shown as a plumber for many years."



Right photo: Murray (left) and Bruce Johnston manning a stand inside the Karori Mall on Poppy Day in 2023.



WELLINGTON
RETURNED AND SERVICES ASSOCIATION (INC)

The Wellington RSA would like to invite you to a luncheon (your cost)

Where: Chapman Taylor Café/Restaurant

113 Molesworth Street



Date: Tuesday 26 August 2025

Time: 11.30am

If you are able to come, please phone/email the Office by Monday 25 August 2025

OFFICE PHONE NO: 385-1191

If you no longer wish to receive the social invitations, please ring or email me, so I can remove you from my list



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RSA is people helping people

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KARORI RSA

27A Campbell St, Karori. Open Fridays 7.30pm – 10.00pm.

For further information check out the Karori RSA Facebook page. We always welcome new visitors.