



Message from the Minister of Veterans' Affairs

Veterans' Support Bill passes into law

It was with great pleasure that I welcomed the passing of the long-awaited Veterans' Support Bill in Parliament in the last week of July.

I introduced the Bill late last year, in order to enable the Government to better meet the needs of both older veterans and those of modern-day deployments. It was pleasing to see it pass its final reading in Parliament with cross-party support.

The Bill is central to the \$60 million package announced by the Government in response to the 2010 Law Commission review of the War Pensions Act 1954. The 1954 Act was found by the Law Commission to be outdated, unwieldy and no longer suitable for the needs of veterans.

The new legislation will come into effect in December this year, and see thousands of veterans benefit from increased care, support, and recognition – including extending the Veterans' Pension to all veterans of recognised conflicts.

As we mark the 100th anniversary of the start of New Zealand's involvement in the First World War, it is fitting that Parliament passed the Veterans' Support Bill into law, to enable us to improve the services provided to our current and future veterans.

The Bill was a significant piece of work, and many people have been involved in its development over recent years. I would particularly like to thank the hard-working and dedicated staff of Veterans' Affairs New Zealand.

Commemorations

June 2014 saw the last of the official Second World War 70th Anniversary commemorations where New Zealand veterans attended both domestic and international commemorations in recognition of the service and sacrifice of so many from these shores.

A group of nine veterans attended D-Day commemorations in France, with another 16 veterans attending the national commemoration at Parliament Buildings. Those activities brought to an end the commemoration of some of the most significant engagements in our military history – Fall of Singapore; Battle of Crete, War in the Pacific, Battles of El Alamein and Monte Cassino through to the Normandy Landings. We remembered all those who served and sacrificed so much; we also remembered those who never returned home and the impact it had on families, friends and communities up and down New Zealand.

None of these commemorations would have been possible without the never-ending support and tireless efforts of the staff from Veterans' Affairs New Zealand and many other areas of the New Zealand Defence Force. For those who joined our veterans in both New Zealand and overseas, including the 60th Anniversary of the Signing of the Korean War Armistice, it was indeed a special privilege for all to hear the stories of bravery and sacrifice and to be there to share in the memories that each of our veterans have.

It was special for me to see the impact those shared memories had on our younger generation.

The 100th Anniversary of the Gallipoli Landings is fast approaching and as we look towards Anzac Day 2015, we also marked the commencement of the First World War Centenary on 4 August 2014. The centenary is an opportunity for all New Zealanders to remember those who served and those who died. The centenary will also provide a living legacy of the war's impacts and on-going significance, so current and future generations can be more informed.

Second New Zealand commemorative service at Gallipoli 2015

I recently announced that a second New Zealand commemorative service will be held at Chunuk Bair on the Gallipoli Peninsula in August 2015. This will enable those who were not successful in the ballot for Anzac Day 2015 to consider attending this service for which there will be no ballot for attendance. The Battle of Chunuk Bair was an epic battle and it is fitting that we commemorate the 100th Anniversary next year as part of the First World War Centenary.

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A NEW LEADER AT VANZ'S HELM

Veterans' Affairs New Zealand's (VANZ) new General Manager wants to widen the understanding of who veterans are and to ensure they feel appreciated for their service.



Jacki Couchman has been with VANZ since May 2014. She is responsible for implementing new legislation which will modernise the War Pensions Act 1954 to make it more relevant for today's veterans who include serving personnel.

It is the implementation of that new legislation which has prompted the organisation to challenge the way New Zealanders, including members of the NZDF, think of veterans.

"It surprises people to learn that New Zealand veterans can be aged from 19 to more than a hundred years old. That you can be currently serving and be a veteran and you can be working as a civilian and be a veteran,"

It is important, she says, that younger veterans and serving personnel are aware of VANZ and what it does because, while they may feel it is irrelevant to them now, that situation could change at any time.

From conflict in Bosnia to Bougainville, Afghanistan to Sudan, the past two decades have been the busiest in the NZDF's history. An operational tempo as high as it has been brings

with it a slew of veterans, many of whom are still serving and a good number of whom are now civilians.

The new Veterans' Support Act will see the introduction of new types of entitlements and support for veterans. It will give VANZ the ability to introduce more health, social and vocational rehabilitation for current and former servicemen and women.

"In the future we will be able to support veterans to train for another career if that's in their best interests. This recognises that it is not all about just the health of the veteran but about their career, their family and their general well-being. VANZ will work with other groups within the NZDF and in the wider community which support the health and wellbeing of service people and their families."

Ms Couchman is meeting as many veterans as she can, to spread the message.

"My priorities for VANZ are that we appreciate and thank our veterans for their service. That we ensure veterans and their families get the right support. And that we recognise and understand the way our population of veterans is changing."

Ms Couchman says she has been impressed with the care and support the VANZ team provides to veterans.

"They are devoted to what they do, and do their very best for our veterans and their families, and that's inspiring. This job is all about recognising and supporting extraordinary New Zealanders and their families. I'm really enjoying the new role and being part of the NZDF."

Jacki Couchman is a former lawyer with an MBA and extensive experience with change and modernisation in government agencies.

Her sister and brother-in-law served with the Australian Army. Her six-year-old son has wanted to join the Army (like his uncle), since the age of three.

Message from the Minister of Veterans' Affairs Continued...

Travel Concessions

On 1 July 2014, the travel concession mileage rate paid to eligible veterans increased by 20 per cent. It's important that the mileage rate is reviewed from time to time to ensure that it remains relevant to changes in the cost of travel in private motor vehicles. Veterans with 100% War Disablement Pensions are eligible for a travel concession, which entitles them to the reimbursement of the costs associated with qualifying travel within New Zealand for personal or private purposes. The new mileage rate consideration was based on the average of the four flexible running cost per km rates published by the New Zealand Automotive Association for small, compact, medium and large categories of motor vehicle in 2013. The mileage rate has been increased to 27.1 cents per km, a 20 per cent increase from the previous travel concession mileage rate of 22.5 cents per km which was set in May 2010.

Grant to RNZRSA

In June 2014, I announced a \$150,000 grant to the Royal New Zealand Returned and Services' Association (RNZRSA). The grant helps the RNZRSA support veterans through district welfare activities, including organising visits from welfare officers to veterans, assisting veterans to attend medical appointments, and other services. We owe a great debt to our veterans and it is important that we recognise and continue to support those who have served our country, and those who are currently serving. The RSA do a great job supporting those who have made sacrifices for our country and as we reflect on the passing of 100 years since World War One, it is great that we can provide some assistance to help those supporting veterans in our community.

Q&A: VETERANS' SUPPORT BILL

1. Where are we currently at in the legislative process?

- The Veterans' Support Act has now been passed. Royal Assent was given on 7 August 2014. This means that the commencement date for Scheme One is 7 December 2014.

2. When do changed entitlements commence?

- Scheme One and the majority of the new Act will commence **four** months after Royal Assent on 7 December 2014.
- Scheme Two and the remaining items will commence on 7 December 2015

3. What does this mean for Veterans and their families?

- There will be some new entitlements available for veterans and their families, particularly once Scheme Two under the Act is implemented. A special edition of VANZ News will be published in December to outline the new entitlements.

4. Where can I find a copy of the new Act?

- <http://legislation.govt.nz>

PENSION THEFT

Over the past few months VANZ has, unfortunately, referred complaints of theft with the Police in four separate cases. Following an investigation of the files, VANZ found family members had failed to notify VANZ of the passing of the veteran or surviving spouse and continued to use the pension funds for their own benefit over a considerable period of time. Charges of theft were subsequently laid by Police against the individuals concerned in three instances and they are considering whether charges will be laid in a fourth.

In two cases the offenders have pleaded guilty and convicted of theft. One awaits sentencing on the theft of \$89,000 and in the other instance the person was sentenced to 200 hours community work, \$26,253 reparation and six months Community Detention. The third case is still in front of the Courts.

VANZ continues to undertake regular audits of files to ensure recipients of pensions are still alive. It also informs veterans and surviving spouses on a regular basis of the need to advise family members or the Executors, what to do following their passing in respect of notifying VANZ to stop the pension.

VANZ relies on family members or the Executor of the estate to inform it and any other Government agencies of the passing of the veteran or surviving spouse. If this does not occur, notations of pension money deposits on bank account statements are a good indicator to an executor of an estate or family member winding up the affairs to notify the relevant agency to stop further payments.

NEWS FROM THE VANZ MEDICAL DESK

By Doctor Anne Campbell, VANZ Medical Adviser

When I accepted the position as Medical Adviser, Veterans' Affairs NZ (VANZ), I hadn't considered the possibility of travelling the world with the responsibility of aged veterans from the Second World War – someone's father, grandfather, great grandfather, someone's husband, someone's brother – who survived the war and now want to return to their mates in far away places.

Thank you to all those Second World War veterans who applied to attend the events conducted in Singapore, London, El Alamein, Noumea, Cassino and Normandy over the past two years. You are all remarkable men to have achieved the ages you have following service for your country. Many of you served in more than one campaign. We knew we would not be able to take everyone who applied due to health and social reasons. The worst part of my involvement was to advise those of you who couldn't travel! This stressed me beyond belief.

Those who did travel represented Veterans all with distinction. Thank you all for sharing your wartime stories with the support team. For me it was the greatest way to be taught our NZ military heritage that has made this country what it is and who we are as kiwis. Those who did travel will admit that travelling in your eighties and nineties is not the easiest. We occasionally had to leave someone in a foreign hospital but

all veterans got back to the shores of NZ, yet again. Thank you for letting us care for you. Thanks for the support we had from personnel of RNZN, NZ Army and of course to be able to enjoy the comfort of our own aircraft from RNZAF and avoid commercial international airports! To the NZ Cadet Forces cadets; to the NZDF Maori cultural group; the NZDF photographers; to the artists who all contributed to make these journeys so special – thank you!

In my office I have a wall covered in memorable photos but in my mind I will take the memories of your war service with me forever. Many a time I have been asked to share the stories of these journeys with others on my return. So I pass on what it was to live in the desert, live in the tropics with no antimalarial drugs, tropical ulcers, flying off into another mission in the dead dark of night, your romances with future wives only to sometimes have your hearts broken as families wouldn't let their daughter come to NZ, one uniform but two pairs of socks for six months, not enough water to bath in so you used petrol, the rubble of the destroyed town of Cassino and of course the historic Abbey. Some escaped but some were taken prisoners of war, to never have touched the beaches of Normandy as you served at sea or in the air but had been serving somewhere on D-Day... the thoughts of "will there be another tomorrow?"

Thanks for the memories, from the generations who have followed your footsteps to provide peace and security.

INVICTUS GAMES – A CELEBRATION OF SPIRIT

In an organisation whose core values include that of Courage and Commitment, it is not unusual to see our men and women pushing themselves that much further in order to succeed. Even when the odds seem insurmountable to some, the men and women on the NZ Defence Force can usually be found going the extra mile to reach a goal – and in September this year, that will be evident when 12 people from across the organisation – both currently serving and retired – travel to London to compete in the Invictus Games.



Instigated and supported by The Royal Foundation of the Duchess of Cambridge, HRH Prince Harry and the UK Ministry of Defence, the Invictus Games is an international sporting event for wounded, injured and sick servicemen and women from 14 countries. Over 400 competitors from 14 countries will be taking the tracks, fields, courts and arenas of London's Olympic venues in a contest that centres on the determination to overcome personal restrictions to continue to lead lives of excellence.

Warrant Officer Gary Clark, Team Manager for the Invictus Games, will head the New Zealand contingent – a role he is proud to undertake.

“I am extremely proud to have been appointed manager of a team of NZDF warriors who have battled adversity, with the support of their families and friends, to continue their life journeys to the best of their abilities”, he says.

With HRH Prince Harry acting as lead spokesman for the Invictus Games, worldwide interest is rising. A YouTube clip featuring high-profile celebrities in the worlds of entertainment and sport has demonstrated the importance of these inaugural Games – and even for a country that will be sending one of the smallest contingents to compete, interest is rising as the Game draw closer.

Two retired Defence Force personnel and several people who have been previously deployed in operations will form part of the 12 contenders. Each are bringing determination and drive to their part in the Games. LTCOL (Rtd) Bill Blaikie spent 22 years as part of the Defence Force, and is excited to participate as part of the Kiwi team. “Being selected to participate in the Invictus Games is an honour and real personal challenge both mentally and physically – I hope meet others with similar illnesses and share stories and create lasting friendships”, he says. Bill will test his skills in Wheelchair Rugby, Sitting Volleyball, Indoor Rowing, and Swimming.

As a sporting activity, the team heading over to the Invictus Games are relying on the generosity of sponsors to help foot the bill – and some big names are already in the pipeline to support the Kiwi effort. Jaguar Land Rover – official sponsor of the Invictus Games, have thrown some support behind the Kiwi team, and other businesses are coming to the party to

show support to the Kiwi team. “It’s great to have businesses like Jaguar Land Rover, Canterbury Clothing NZ and Singapore Airlines on board”, says W/O Clark. “We are a small team – but by the time you add the support staff and each competitors support person to the mix, it’s a big endeavour getting everyone to the other side of the world to compete.”

One of the most important aspects of the Invictus Games for many of those competing is the opportunity to take a person with them who has supported them in their journey so far, as the Games will be providing a programme for the partner or friend each person attending will take with them.

As PTE Dion Taka says – who will be taking his wife, Frances, to the Games, “this is a chance for her to get something back. She has been my rock – a massive support person for me. It’s a chance to say thanks for all she has done during my recovery.”

Each of the competitors is excited to be part of the Invictus Games, with many crediting sport as a huge help in their recovery from being wounded, injured, or diagnosed with illness. David Sherriff, who retired after 20 years of service and remains in a civilian role at the Directorate of Continued Airworthiness Management at RNZAF Base Auckland says “Sport was an important part of my early service career, for both physical fitness and social reasons. I had competed in Water Polo up to a Combined Services level prior to suffering a spinal cord injury. I replaced Water Polo with Wheelchair Basketball and played to an international level at several tournaments between 1997 and 2005. While Wheelchair Basketball became a passion, I have missed being involved in competitive sport within the service. I am looking forward to competing with servicemen again and passing on some of my experience of playing and coaching Wheelchair Basketball competitively.”

That enthusiasm extends to the support team. CAPT Rebecca Maddaford, Liaison Officer to NZ Army’s wounded, injured and ill is one of the medical support people heading over the London. “The Invictus Games exemplifies the benefits of sports to the rehabilitation process, so is an absolute privilege to be able to support our New Zealand team as they go for gold”, she says.

We wish each of the competitors the very best as they head to London. **Kia kaha Kiwi team – we’re behind you all the way.**

WWI: TRACING THE FOOTSTEPS FROM TRENTHAM

100 years ago the war to end all wars began. For many it started in a little suburb of Upper Hutt called Trentham. WWI: Tracing the Footsteps from Trentham is a new exhibition at Expressions Whirinaki that tells the story of the World War 1 Military Training Camp in Trentham that turned New Zealand civilians into fighting men.

This breakthrough exhibition pays tribute to the role the Camp played in shaping those men who became New Zealand's heroes of The Great War. Visitors will follow their journey from the tents and training fields of Trentham to the trails and trauma of war. They will experience what a soldier's life in a New Zealand training camp was like honour their hopes, dreams and fears... and remember the price that they paid. Over 55,000 men trained at Trentham Camp, earning this Camp a special place in the hearts of many New Zealanders and in the official history of the war. Director Leanne Wickham talks of the significance of the camp saying that, "here the Anzacs walked, talked and laughed... They marched along the neighbouring roads, survived the mud, endured the sickness and ate the notorious food. This was the place where thousands of civilians became soldiers, and where men passed from training into active service. For many, it was their last living memory of life in New Zealand. For those who survived, it embodies the sadness and grief of young lives cut short, and dreams left unfulfilled."

Other parts of the exhibition look at cooking and food including the infamous Bill Massey Stew, the huge amount of sickness that pervaded the camp and the hospitality provided by the local community, and sailing day: the day that the soldiers were sent off to the Front Line. Significant material has been sourced from around New Zealand including letters, dairies, memorabilia and photos. Highlight objects include a copy of a maneuver map from Upper Hutt Library which shows the soldiers training ground and an original sheet music of a song called 'Trentham A Marching' of which Expressions has arranged to be recorded by the New Zealand School of Music so that a version will be able to be heard in the exhibition.

EXPRESSIONS
Whirinaki

WWI: Tracing the Footsteps from Trentham

16 August – 3 October 2014

Open 7 days, 9am – 4pm

Expressions Whirinaki Arts & Entertainment Centre
836 Fergusson Drive, Upper Hutt

FREE entry

Media enquiries and images:

Leanne Wickham, Director

T: 027 706 6703 or 04 527 2851

E: director@expressions.org.nz

NZIPP WWII VETERAN PORTRAIT PROJECT

The New Zealand Institute of Professional Photographers (NZIPP) has undertaken an ambitious national project to make portraits of over 3,000 remaining Kiwis who served during WWII. Over 100 photographers across the country are volunteering their time and skills to complete the ambitious mission.

The full collection of photographic portraits will be gifted by the NZIPP to the Royal New Zealand RSA to form a digital archive, and each veteran who took part will also be given a printed copy of their portrait, starting in August.

David Moger, RSA Chief Executive, describes the gifting of the images to the RSA as well as to each veteran, as an approach which is reflective of the project's significance on both a personal and national level.

"Seeing a veteran dressed in their medals, put down their walking sticks and proudly rise to stand unassisted while their portrait is being taken is a hugely powerful moment. This project recognises each individual's personal service and sacrifice, at the same time as creating an archive of national significance for New Zealand's generations to come," says David.

It's not too late to take part

NZIPP WWII Veteran Portrait Project national coordinator, Terry Hann, says that while most of the photographs were taken at RSAs across the country after Anzac Day, photographers are still making portraits.

"We've got seven regional coordinators and over 100 photographers volunteering on this project. We encourage everyone who either served during WWII, or who have a family member who served, to contact one of our regional coordinators," says Terry.

"Many of our volunteers have a family history of military service and all respect and value the contribution our WWII veterans made to our nation. We're using our craft to remember and honour them."



Left: Epineha Ratapu, photographed as part of the project by Esther Bunning.



D-DAY LANDINGS COMMEMORATIONS IN NORMANDY, FRANCE

Nine veterans, aged between 89 and 97, attended the 70th anniversary D-Day landings commemorations in Normandy, France to mark New Zealand's involvement.

Colin Kemp, Desmond Laurie, Roger Maclean, Penwill Moore, Jim Kelly, Allan Hunter, Neil Harton, Hugh Findlater and Allan Davis, together with the rest of the delegation travelled to Normandy by Royal New Zealand Air Force Boeing 757.

During their stay the veterans attended not only the planned official engagements, but had the opportunity to visit the beaches they delivered soldiers to or bombed. They also spent time at the official D-Day museum, the Memorial de Caen and had a guided tour of Les Invalides (Napoleon's Tomb and Military Museum in Paris).

A high point for the veterans came at the Commemorative Service in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) Cemetery Bayeaux, where they had private time and got to shake hands with Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip.

Roger MacLean also dined with all the heads of state at a French Chateau before attended the French-led International

Commemorative Service at Sword Beach. Amberley veteran Allan Davis was part of the official international veteran's receiving line at this event and personally spoke to and shook hands with the President of the United States, Barak Obama and the President of the French Republic, François Hollande.

But of special significance for the veterans was the private ceremony held at the Cemetery Bayeaux where Desmond Laurie laid a wreath with Lt Gen the Rt Hon Sir Jerry Mateparae. The delegation then spent time visiting the seven graves of our fallen, laying roses, poppies and flags.

It was a sobering time. This was later talked about by Neil Harton and Jim Kelly when they were interviewed by TV One outside the Bayeaux Cathedral before the official service.

Although no New Zealand ground troops were involved in the Allied landings on 6 June 1944, many were involved elsewhere – in the air as part of the Royal Air Force and at sea, through the Royal Navy and the Merchant Navy. New Zealanders were also involved in the build up to and aftermath of the D-Day landings.





70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLES OF CASSINO

Cassino veteran and former Spitfire pilot Bunty Bunt says his recent visit to Italy for the 70th anniversary of the Battles of Cassino was wonderful as "I only really saw it from 14,000 feet up in the air during the war."

It brought back memories too, some of them not so happy. "I wouldn't have missed it for anything though," said the 94-year-old from Blenheim.

Flying Officer (Rtd) Bunt was one of two airmen who were part of the 38-strong delegation of New Zealand Cassino veterans who made the pilgrimage to the other side of the world in June to commemorate the 70th anniversary.

The delegation, all of them in their 90s, was accompanied by a team of doctors, nurses, medics and carers. They flew there and back in an RNZAF 757 which was specially configured to ensure their journey was as comfortable as possible.

Originally from Greymouth, he wanted to be a pilot as soon as he left school but his parents wouldn't let him as they thought he was too young. He eventually qualified in Shropshire, England, and began flying Spitfires.

"I was in Italy when Mt Vesuvius erupted. We were OK because we were all metal. We did a lot of escort duties of the B25 bombers, Typhoons, P 40s, Hurricanes and the like. We provided

top cover over Cassino. Our job was to keep the Germans away from the airspace and we certainly did that."

Mr Bunt flew Hurricanes and the Boulton Paul defiant during World War Two.

The Cassino delegation attended three main ceremonies during their visit — one at the Cassino Railway Station, and two at the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery in Cassino. The first of the latter two ceremonies was dedicated to the New Zealand contingent and those Kiwis buried at the cemetery, and the second was for British service personnel.

The railway station ceremony was significant as the site was the scene of a fierce battle between 28 Maori Battalion and the Germans.

Guests at the New Zealand Commemorative service included HRH Prince Harry, and the Governor General of New Zealand Lieutenant General Sir Jerry Mateparae. Prince Harry spoke to each of the veterans, and shook hands with them. He thanked them for their service, and asked some of them how it felt to be back in Italy again.

The veterans visited the Abbey on top of Monte Cassino, and attended a service conducted by the NZDF's Principal Chaplain Padre Lance Lukin.



VETERAN SUPERGOLD CARD

The Veteran SuperGold Card is a specially branded version of the SuperGold Card, which is administered by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD).

You are eligible for a Veteran SuperGold Card if you are:

- 65 years of age and over and have served in the New Zealand Armed Forces in a recognised war or emergency.
- Under 65 years of age and receive a Veteran's Pension.

To apply for a Veteran SuperGold Card, contact MSD on Freephone 0800 25 45 65 and have the following information available:

- Your SuperGold Card client number if you have one (noted on the back of your card)
- Your full name while you were in service
- Your New Zealand Armed Forces service number
- The branch of the New Zealand Armed Forces in which you served
- The war or emergency to which you were deployed, including any additional information such as dates of deployment, location(s), and unit.

Once your service has been verified by Veterans' Affairs New Zealand, MSD will issue you with a Veteran SuperGold Card.

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH VETERANS' AFFAIRS NEW ZEALAND

Please tell us as soon as you:

- Change your address
- Change your bank account
- Change your marital status
- Plan to go overseas to live
- Move to a rest home or hospital
- Have someone come to live with you

In the sad event of a veteran's passing, a family member or the estate executor needs to tell us as soon as they're able.

VANZ case workers can talk with family members about what support is available, such as:

- A Funeral Grant from VANZ or the Ministry of Social Development;
- An ex-services memorial (plaque or headstone) for graves in a public or private cemetery;
- Help ensuring that any necessary cancellations or changes to payments are made to avoid a debt build-up.

We suggest that veterans leave a note with their Will or personal papers so the person looking after their affairs knows to get in touch with us.

MOVING HOUSE? CHANGE OF ADDRESS?

Have you moved or are about to move?

If so, please do not forget to let VANZ know your new contact details so we can keep all your details up to date.

Please call us on Freephone 0800 483 8372 if in New Zealand; +64 4 495 2070 if calling from overseas; or email us at veterans@xtra.co.nz to advise of any changes.

Veterans' Affairs New Zealand
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