

## Long-standing RSA member reflects on 102 years



Douglas Reid is a long-standing member of the Avondale RSA and visits it every week.

Recently, Avondale RSA, along with the Ranfurly Veterans Hospital, arranged a small private morning tea to celebrate Doug's 102nd birthday. Doug is one of the few remaining WWII veterans.

**When asked if he had received a birthday card from King Charles, he responded, "No, but I do have one from his Mum."**

Doug joined the NZ Army in 1941 as a young 19-year-old. He deployed to the Middle East in 1943 to join the 27th Machine-Gun Battalion and relocated as part of the Battalion to Italy, where he was later wounded in action at Monte Cassino.

He was released from the NZ Army in 1946 as part of the demobilisation process.

Doug has connected with 2/1 RNZIR, the custodians of the 27th Machine-Gun Battalion history. They are keen to maintain a dialogue with Doug as one of the last living members of the unit.

In early 2023, after many years of living independently in his own home, Doug became a resident at Ranfurly Veterans Hospital. Ranfurly Veterans' Trust and RSA District Support Advisor Bob Derwin help him navigate support from Veterans' Affairs.

Ranfurly Veterans' Trust (<https://www.ranfurly.org.nz>)

RSA District Support Managers (<https://www.rsa.org.nz/get-support/support-for-veterans/district-support-managers>)

## Veterans' Affairs provides funding for commemorations

With support from Veterans' Affairs and NZDF, Doug returned to Cassino in 2014 as one of the veterans of the New Zealand contingent that observed the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Battles of Monte Cassino.

If you have Qualifying Operational Service, you may be eligible for a Commemorative Travel Contribution

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You can apply for up to \$2,500 for costs related to travel to return to an area related to your Qualifying Operational Service.

More information about Commemorative Travel Contribution (<https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/a-z/commemorative-travel-contribution/>)

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Date

20 May 2024

Tags

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