

# VANZ News



## A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Hon Judith Collins, Minister of Veterans' Affairs



This is the time of year when we reflect and remember those who have served our country and who have given their lives in the name of peace and freedom. The poppy has come to symbolise their courage, their commitment to duty and their sacrifice.

Every year, tens of thousands of New Zealanders wear the poppy

to keep the memory of these brave men and women alive, but also to provide ongoing support for veterans and their families.

The Poppy Day Appeal provides the RSA with funds to provide a wide range of welfare services for returned men and women in the area in which the funds were raised. Each RSA has a Welfare Officer who is available to help veterans find out more about financial assistance. Help might include monetary grants for those in financial difficulty, help to provide glasses, hearing aids and essential dental work, specialist medical appointments as well as surgery, hospital and home visits for veterans. Recipients need not be members of an RSA to benefit from Poppy Day Appeal assistance, but must be returned services' personnel or their dependants in need. It is this kind of financial and practical help that makes the RSA such a respected and trusted organisation in our community.

Many thousands of New Zealanders give generously in the knowledge that funds raised from Poppy Day do so much good.

### BATTLE OF PASSCHENDAELE COMPETITION

This year we commemorate the 94th anniversary of the Battle of Passchendaele, one of the deadliest battles fought on the Western Front during the First World War. On October 12, 1917, New Zealand suffered the greatest loss of life in one day in New Zealand history. More than 2,700 Kiwi soldiers were killed, wounded or listed as missing in action. The losses impacted on every town and city in New Zealand. To ensure that New Zealand's sacrifice on the Western Front is not forgotten, I'm introducing an annual multimedia competition to raise awareness of the Battle of Passchendaele. The competition will be open to Year 13 students. The topic is 'Why don't we remember the Battle of Passchendaele'. Entries can take the form of Artistic representation; essay; diary; letters; music; poetry; short film or web feature. The prize is a \$2,000 education grant to assist the winner with tertiary study. Entries must be submitted to VANZ by 31 August. Go to [www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz](http://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz) for more information.

### INSIDE

Rates of War Disablement Pension

Vietnam Veterans Annual Medical Assessment Registration process

War Pension Claims Panels clear backlog of applications

Sarah Coromandel, Case Manager, VANZ

## THE NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE SERVICE MEDAL



The Royal Warrant and design for the New Zealand Defence Service Medal (NZDSM) has been approved by Her Majesty The Queen. Applications are expected to open shortly. The medal is awarded for non-operational military service in the Defence Force by New Zealanders. Those who have served in the military for more than three years since World War II and those who did compulsory military training or national military service, qualify.

The Medals Office expects to issue around 116,000 medals over the next three years.

The Minister has directed that the priority will be: living ex-Service personnel over the age of 70, living ex-Service personnel over the age of 60, then other living ex-Service personnel. Terminally ill ex-Service personnel will be given overall priority but need to apply in the usual manner. Families of deceased ex-Service personnel will be asked to apply for their late relations' (e.g husband/mother) medal after the processing of applications from older living ex-Service personnel is underway, possibly late 2011. Go to <http://medals.nzdf.mil.nz/nzdsml/faqs.html> to keep up to date with the NZDSM medals.

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR VANZ NEWS ARE TO BE POSTED TO: THE EDITOR P.O BOX 5146 WELLINGTON 6145 OR EMAILED TO: VETERANS@XTRA.CO.NZ

# RATES OF WAR DISABLEMENT PENSION

Recently there has been publicity about the changes to the rates at which NZ Superannuation and War Disablement Pension are paid.

This rise reflects increases to the Consumers Price Index, and helps compensate veterans for the rise in living costs.

Rates of New Zealand Superannuation and Veterans' Pension increased on 1 April 2011. The new rate of NZ Superannuation and Veterans' Pension is set at 66% of the average net wage. The new rate for a couple is \$522.96 per week (after tax). Unlike War Disablement Pensions, which are not taxed, NZ Superannuation and Veterans' Pension is considered taxable income.

If you receive a War Disablement Pension, this is paid in addition to your NZ Superannuation or Veterans' Pension. War Disablement Pension rates increased by 3.75% on 1 April 2011.

Veterans who are aged over 65 years and are in receipt of a War Disablement Pension of 70% or more, or aged under 65 years and unable to work, may qualify for Veterans' Pension. The benefits of Veterans' Pension include automatic entitlement to a Community Services Card without income or asset testing for the veteran and their partner. Veterans' Pension does not cease to be paid

to recipients who are hospitalised for 13 weeks or more, which is when entitlements such as NZ Superannuation are reduced. Veterans' Pension also gives entitlement to a lump sum payment of \$5,579.25 on the death of the veteran, and \$4,254.34 on the death of a partner. This is paid in addition to the war funeral grant of \$2,353.44.

War Disablement Pension payments do not count as income for the purposes of income testing for any social security entitlement. This allows recipients of War Disablement Pensions to access assistance such as the Disability Allowance and Accommodation Supplement despite not meeting the income threshold that other New Zealanders have to meet. Veterans also receive fully funded medical treatment for every accepted disability. In addition, travel costs to medical appointments are reimbursed.

## EXAMPLES OF THE NEW RATES

A veteran in receipt of a 65% War Disablement Pension will receive \$129.39 per week (tax free) in addition to their Veterans' Pension.

A veteran who is on a 100% War Disablement Pension will now receive a payment of \$199.05 per week (tax free) as well as their Veterans' Pension.



A veteran, who is over 60 and in receipt of a War Disablement Pension of 160% (inclusive of Section 23), will now receive a payment of \$350.34 per week (tax-free).

Veterans in receipt of the maximum rate of War Disablement Pension (100%) are also entitled to a travel concession for recreational travel.

If the veteran is severely disabled and unable to travel alone, they can have the costs of someone to escort them paid if the travel is on public transport. In addition, they receive an additional travel allowance of \$24.08 per week.

Veterans in receipt of the maximum rate of War Disablement Pension (100%) are also able to access additional assistance around the house from the Attendant Allowance scheme. A veteran who needs assistance to enable them to stay in their own home, or assistance with personnel care, can receive up to a maximum of \$368.65 worth of services a week.

The rate at which the Surviving Spouse Pension is paid also increased on 1 April 2011. This is now paid at \$146.83 per week (tax-free) and is paid in addition to New Zealand Superannuation or Veterans' Pension.

If you would like a list of the new rates, VANZ has them on their website [www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz](http://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz). If you don't have access to the internet you can get a copy by ringing the VANZ freephone number 0800 483 8372.



# VIETNAM VETERANS ANNUAL MEDICAL ASSESSMENT REGISTRATION PROCESS

Veterans who have registered on the Vietnam Veterans' Registration Database, and have kept their contact details up to date with us, will have been sent an Annual Medical Assessment pack (AMA). Veterans who completed the first Comprehensive Medical Assessment or the subsequent Annual Medical Assessment are issued with the next set of forms 12 months later. Some veterans have now completed their third medical assessment.

If you have not registered on the Vietnam Veterans' Registration Database you need to complete a Vietnam Veteran Registration Form. You can download this from the VANZ website, [www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz](http://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz), or you can call 0800 483 8372 to have a form sent to you. Once your service is verified and the registration process has been completed you will be sent an Annual Medical Assessment pack.

If you are registered but have lost the medical assessment forms, or

if you are not sure if you are registered then call VANZ on 0800 483 8372 to have another pack sent to you, or to check if you are on the registration database. If you have moved house since the last AMA was sent to you please ensure that we have your new address.

Once you have received the assessment pack arrange a medical appointment with your GP. When the assessment is completed the forms and the invoice should be returned to VANZ.

Any new health conditions that your GP finds can be considered in relation to your War Disablement Pension. Any referrals for specialist consultations for which you are not in receipt of a War Disablement Pension should be discussed with your Case Manager before being undertaken. If you are not currently case-managed call the VANZ Enquiry Line on 0800 483 8372 and ask to be assigned to a Case Manager.



OH 08-03558-23



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## WAR PENSION CLAIMS PANELS CLEAR BACKLOG OF APPLICATIONS

Through a combination of changes to internal processes, forms and the moving around of resources, the War Pension Claims Panels have cleared the significant number of applications for a war disablement pension that had accumulated during the first quarter of 2010.

At the end of February 2011, 7,055 decisions on claims had been made since June 2010.

There remains a relatively small number of claims that were received more than 12 months ago. These claims are mainly awaiting reports from medical practitioners and once received, will be immediately referred through to the War Pension Claims Panel.

Currently, provided claimants supply a fully completed application form, decisions on claimed conditions are being made by the claims panel within four weeks of the application being received.



WN 10-0083-064

# CHANGES AT THE TOP FOR NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCE

In January this year Lieutenant General Rhys Jones was appointed the new Chief of Defence Force. Prime Minister John Key said of LT GEN General Jones: "He has the strategic leadership, intellectual capacity, management experience and personal qualities the new position requires." Major General Tim Keating has been appointed Chief of Army. Of his promotion LTGEN Rhys Jones said, "MAJGEN Keating is confident, competent and will be a great leader of the Army at a time of great pressure and immense change." Air Vice-Marshal Peter Stockwell has been appointed Chief of Air Force. In congratulating AVM Stockwell, Minister of Defence Dr Wayne Mapp noted: "Air Vice-Marshal Stockwell is a proven strategic thinker and has the leadership skills and experience to carry out the changes throughout the Air Force required by the ongoing implementation of the Defence White Paper." The position of Commander Joint Forces New Zealand, formerly held by Air Vice Marshal Stockwell will be taken up by Major General Dave Gawn. Rear Admiral Jack Steer, Vice Chief of Defence Force, was re-appointed for a further two years from February 2011.



## CASE MANAGER PROFILE:

### SARAH COROMANDEL

Sarah Coromandel, one of eight VANZ Case Managers based in the VANZ Hamilton office, says the thing she likes most about her job is the daily contact she has with veterans. Sarah has about 150 "active" cases and another 250 "non active" cases on her books, and she particularly likes being able to help people enjoy their lives.

"It's great when we can help veterans stay in their homes by providing them with things like medical alarms, or lawn mowing, gardening and home help services. Without these services some veterans would have to move into care facilities and possibly lose some of their independence."

Prior to joining VANZ in 2007, Sarah developed a passion for customer service while staffing the superannuation phone line for Work and Income, where she realised people were genuinely appreciative of the service provided. Although she is mostly based at the Waikato office, occasionally Sarah has opportunities to meet veterans face-to-face at Case Management in the Community meetings in places such as Ruatoria, Gisborne and Waihi. Another highlight of working for VANZ was being selected as part of the Kiwi contingent that travelled to Gallipoli for ANZAC commemorations last year. "It was a particularly humbling experience to be part of the New Zealand contingent and to have the opportunity to meet four of my veterans – Len, Ken, Gordon and Stoney. Before then I'd only known them over the phone," Sarah says.



LIEUTENANT GENERAL RHYSS JONES



MAJOR GENERAL TIM KEATING



AIR VICE-MARSHAL PETER STOCKWELL



MAJOR GENERAL DAVE GAWN

## MOVING HOUSE? CHANGING ADDRESS?

Have you moved or are you about to move? If so, please let VANZ know your new contact details so we can keep 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](mailto:veterans@xtra.co.nz) to advise of any changes.

Enquiries regarding case management should be made to:

Veterans' Affairs New Zealand  
PO Box 5146, Wellington 6145

Phone: 0800 4 VETERAN