



SUMMER 2018



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About VA News

VA News is published four times a year by Veterans' Affairs New Zealand—Te Tira Ahu Ika a Whiro.

Our team takes care in writing great content and—to the best of our knowledge—has sourced accurate information.

The views expressed in VA News are not necessarily those of Veterans' Affairs or the New Zealand Defence Force.

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Please note our Hamilton PO Box is now closed.

Cover image: A sailor from the Royal New Zealand Navy standing guard over the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior at Pukeahu National War Memorial on Armistice Day 2018.



New Zealand Government

From the Head of Veterans' Affairs

Tēnā koutou katoa

Christmas is always a time when we celebrate the present, show kindness to others and reflect on the year that has been. It's been a busy year with many activities occurring both within our veteran community and Veterans' Affairs.

We welcomed home the remains of 34 of our military personnel and one child from Fiji, American Samoa, Singapore, Malaysia, the United Kingdom and the Republic of South Korea. Project Te Auraki—The Return—reunited families with the remains of their loved ones who had been buried abroad since 1 January 1955. We also mourned the passing of the last surviving officer of the 28th Māori Battalion, Alfred 'Bunty' Preece, as well as the many other veterans who have passed on, leaving behind families and comrades.

We continued to meet with many of you at our community forums which we expanded this year to include Brisbane and Sydney. It's always such a pleasure to engage with our many veterans and their families, and it's a great way to find out what we are doing right and what we might need to improve on. Attending these forums of course remains your choice. We are here regardless and we remain with you for life.

After listening to all your feedback, we refreshed our website and started on our pledge to you to use plain language. You'll find more news about our website further on in this issue of VA News.

Commemorations are always an important part of acknowledging the service and sacrifices made by those who serve our country — and to remember those who were left behind. I was privileged to attend the Armistice Day ceremonies in Wellington on 11 November, as this brought to a close, the centenary of the First World War. I was reminded of an interesting article about Father Patrick Dore, MC, who served as a chaplain in the First World War. He was badly wounded at Chunuk Bair, where he won a Military Cross (he was also awarded a Mentioned in Despatches), was subsequently



Bernadine Mackenzie,
Head of Veterans' Affairs

evacuated to the United Kingdom and then home to New Zealand.

Following his recuperation, he assumed an advocacy role for returned soldiers. Father Dore gave an address in Foxton at an Anzac Day service, part of which is reproduced below. It shows he was ahead of his time with regard to the resettlement of returned soldiers.

"The returned soldiers should be trained to re-enter civil life. He had been taken from civil life and trained to forget it. He must walk like a soldier. He was perhaps under this regime for three years. He came back here with his nerves shattered and with military routine ground into his soul. He was expected at once to get into a job and assume his pre-war work. It could not be done. Perhaps the secretary of the Patriotic Society found him one job or six jobs, and he could not retain them. He should not be abandoned, but the process must be continued until he adapted himself to conditions that suited him. War does not make wasters. It makes men. It's the people here in New Zealand who make the wasters. Train them back."

Veterans' Affairs remains proud to serve and support New Zealand veterans and their families. At Christmas time we are thinking of you all, especially those serving overseas and away from their loved ones.

Meri Kirihimete ki a koe me te whānau, we wish you and your loved ones a safe and happy Christmas season.

From the Minister for Veterans

With Christmas almost upon us, I'd like to extend my best wishes to you, our veterans, and your families. It's been another busy year, so it's important we now take time to relax and reflect with our loved ones.

This time last year, I indicated that one of the key areas I wanted to focus on in my role as Minister for Veterans was supporting those whose health has been affected by their service—in particular, those suffering from PTSD.

I am pleased to see that this is something to which Veterans' Affairs continues to give priority. Those who need help are able to access support such as counselling or treatment, even before decisions on their claims have been made.

After the release in May of Professor Ron Paterson's report into the operation of the Veterans' Support Act 2014, follow-up work has continued on many of the recommendations and I believe that the outcome will be very positive for our New Zealand veterans.

This year was significant in that it marked the end of the First World War Centenary. The people who lost their

lives serving our country, and all those who went to war, were recognised, respected and acknowledged appropriately. There were many sacrifices made during the 'war to end all wars', not only by those serving overseas, but by the families and loved ones left here at home. Today we continue to create new veterans, and with that comes the knowledge that at Christmas time, there will be many families whose loved ones will be serving overseas.

As one of those veterans whose service overseas resulted in my being separated from my wife and children over Christmas, several times, and who understands what a difficult time this can be, I wish all our veterans, wherever you may be in the world, a safe and happy festive season. I know the sacrifice that families make, and the sadness experienced at both ends.

The gift of hope, freedom and peace you have given—and continue to give—is one we all value beyond measure. Of course, some of our veterans' are paying a price for this gift. Christmas is a time of year when those who are struggling mentally can find



Hon Ron Mark,
Minister for Veterans

themselves in an even darker place. As veterans we must be there for one another when one of our number needs help.

If you know someone who is doing it tough this year, reach out and offer to link them to support services like the RSA or No Duff. Remind them they're not in this alone, and there is a way through it. We are a family, and families look out for one another—especially during the holiday season.

I wish you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and all the best for 2019, and please stay safe over the holidays!

Ron

Review of deployments

Veterans' Affairs is looking at ways to make sure that all service personnel who have been at significant risk of harm when deployed, are eligible for its support.

Legislation requires the Chief of Defence Force to assess whether a deployment meets this 'significant risk of harm' test. If it does, the Minister for Veterans makes a declaration that the personnel concerned are eligible under the Act for VA services and support.

"This review is helping to level the playing field for many New Zealand veterans," Deputy Head of Veterans' Affairs Marti Eller says. "When the legislation changed in 2014, so did the criteria for assessing eligibility.

"A lot of new factors can now be considered when assessing if

someone has been at significant risk of harm on a deployment. The review project is running the ruler over post-1974 deployments, to see if any that haven't previously made the cut would now qualify," says Marti.

Over a hundred deployments or operations that have taken place since 1 April 1974 are being reviewed in six tranches.

"Everyone who's been deployed in situations involving significant risk of harm should be able to get support from VA when they need it. This project is helping make sure we're covering all the bases."



As part of the review, VA is seeking input from those who have served with New Zealand's armed forces.

Current and former members of New Zealand's armed forces can find out more and have their say about the review project on the VA website.



[www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/
deployment-review](http://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/deployment-review)

VA helps team put best foot forward

Veterans' Affairs New Zealand got behind the New Zealand Defence Force's Invictus Games team in perhaps the most practical way possible; they supplied the team's shoes.

Head of Veterans' Affairs Bernadine MacKenzie said supporting the team to attend the Games in Sydney from October 20-27 was an obvious choice, and providing the New Balance shoes was a practical way to do that.

"One of our roles is to support veterans to recover and rebuild from service-related injuries and illnesses. A powerful way to achieve this is through sport and maintaining social connection," she said.



"We hope the athletes got a sense of pride from representing not only New Zealand, but also themselves and the achievements they've made in their rehabilitation."

The Invictus Games are an international adaptive event which use

the power of sport to inspire recovery, support rehabilitation and generate a wider understanding and respect for wounded, injured and ill current and former service men and women. This year's event involved 500 competitors from 18 allied nations competing in 11 different adaptive sports.

Family support key for Invictus Games team

The New Zealand Defence Force Invictus Games Sydney 2018 team has returned home a different team to the one that crossed the ditch for the October event.

The people are the same but the experiences they've had has helped them all in their journey—and that's why Prince Harry, who with wife Meghan Markle travelled to New Zealand with the team, created the Games.

New Zealand brought home two medals—gold to Craig Wilson in the men's 1500m and bronze to Nu Filo in the shot put—while George Nepata won the Exceptional Performance of the Games award.

All three paid tribute to the support they've received from their families.

"They've been part of the journey. They have picked me up when I'm down and it's a celebration for all of us," said Mr Filo, whose supporters included partner Mary, his parents and two brothers.

Mr Wilson said winning was even more special as wife Lynda and sons Edmund, 12, Victor, 11 and Jonny, nine, were watching.

"I just wanted to show my kids what doing your best can achieve. I'm just rapt that it's got some results because you never know when your success is going to come and you've just got to keep trying," he said.

Mr Nepata, who was left a tetraplegic after he was injured in a training accident in Singapore in 1989, said he was humbled to receive the Exceptional Performance award.

It recognized his tremendous contribution to the NZDF's wheelchair rugby team; as the only team member fully dependent on a wheelchair he had to play all five games. He had another special moment during the game against Australia, when the Australian and New Zealand teams combined to ensure he scored a try.

"That's the Anzac brotherhood and the Invictus spirit. It was a humbling experience and I'll never forget it. I thank the Aussie guys and our guys for making that a special moment for myself," he said.

Matatoa maps veteran's journey



By Sharon Lundy, Defence Public Affairs

Wearing your heart on your sleeve has taken on a very literal meaning for New Zealand Defence Force Invictus Games team member Daryl Burton.

Daryl recently competed in the Invictus Games Sydney 2018 sporting a tattoo which tells the story of his struggle with injury and illness and, subsequently, mental health.

His Matatoa (Unconquered) tattoo was one of 18 art works featured in an International Veterans Art Exhibition during the Sydney Games and Daryl said seeing the photo of it on display next to the other works was humbling.

“My wife isn’t a tattoo fan but she loves the artwork, the meaning behind it, and so do my sons. That’s what counts to me,” he said.

Daryl has been with the New Zealand Defence Force for 36 years; 30 with the Army and the past six as a civilian and Reserve Force soldier.

While serving he suffered two events which would have life-long consequences: a back injury when he landed badly after jumping off a truck in Bosnia in 1995 followed by a scorpion bite in East Timor in 2001. The bite essentially made his body turn on itself, affecting his nerves and leaving him numb in his legs. Then, earlier this year, he was diagnosed with PTSD.

His Matatoa tattoo is part of his journey to recovery—a journey he says the Invictus Games has helped hugely with. It is a designed around the manaia and features red diamonds for his Army service, while a taiaha pushing away the demon scorpion represents his health battles. He and fellow team member Padre Darren O’Callaghan designed it.

“It’s definitely another step in my journey. That’s the reason I wanted to get it done in the first place,” he said.

“It’s something I can take with me, and it’s going to be with me forever. It’s my story and that’s why it’s not a closed story—the tattoo itself isn’t closed off. There’s space there basically showing there’s room for more improvement, and that’s what it’s all about.”

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Our holiday opening hours



We'll be closed over the Christmas and New Year period.

Our enquiry line will close at 4pm on Friday 21 December 2018.

We will reopen at 8am on Monday 7 January 2019.

Payments

Payment dates over the festive season might be different to what you're expecting. This is because of statutory holidays and our office closure.

Payments due to be paid into New Zealand accounts on 25 December will instead be paid on 18 December. All other payments will be paid as normal, and payments to Australian and international bank accounts will not be affected.

We want to hear from our Korea veterans

If you are one of our Korea veterans and you are interested in being interviewed as part of a special project being sponsored by the Korean Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs, we would love to hear from you.

Interviews will take place in New Zealand during February 2019. They will appear on a special website to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the outbreak of hostilities between North and South Korea.

Please contact us by 11 January 2019 to register your details.

Are you the child or grandchild of a Vietnam veteran?

The Vietnam Veteran (Neville Wallace Memorial) Children's and Grandchildren's Trust is celebrating a quarter century of helping the offspring of New Zealand Vietnam Veterans realise their dreams.

To mark the occasion the Trust is sponsoring an essay competition on the subject "how the Vietnam War and my father's/grandfather's involvement in it has affected me and my family".

The two winning entries will each win a cash price of \$1,000.

For more information visit www.evsayouthtrust.org.nz



WeServed.nz is the service directory for NZ veterans and service personnel.



www.WeServed.nz

PRIDE25: Photography exhibition volunteers needed

In 2019 the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) will mark 25 years of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) personnel serving openly in our three services. This is an important anniversary as both NZDF and New Zealand have come a long way in 25 years in recognising, supporting and encouraging members of the LGBT community.

The NZDF has a number of activities planned throughout 2019 to recognise this milestone, one of which is a photographic exhibition. They are looking for LGBT veterans or ex-service personnel who would agree to their portrait being taken by a professional photographer, and the photo being shown in a public exhibition.



OVERWATCH

VISIBLE | VOCAL | VALUED

If you are interested in participating please email overwatch@nzdf.mil.nz

Chat with Pat

Pat Povey is a familiar face—or voice—to many veterans and their whānau. VA News sat down with Pat for a 'Chat with Pat'.

VA News: *It's nearly the end of the year Pat. What are your thoughts looking back on 2018?*

Pat: It's been a really busy year. We've seen a significant increase in the number of services we're putting in place for our veterans, especially through the Veterans' Independence Programme. I talked last time about the expansion of some services, like those with Chemwash, and now we're working on developing new services for next year.

We've also been out meeting face-to-face with the veteran community more than ever before—both in New Zealand and Australia. I know veterans and whānau have found this positive, and we've found it really valuable in gaining further insight into the needs of our veterans and those that support them.

VA News: *Turning to next year, what are you looking forward to?*

Pat: That's a difficult question. With mixed emotions, I would say my retirement in March next year.

VA News: *So, this is our last 'Chat with Pat'?*

Pat: Yes, I suppose it is. I first started at Veterans' Affairs in 2002,

and there have been so many changes since then. Recognition for our veterans has always been at the heart of what we do, and we're now able to provide a really wide range of support.

I have met so many wonderful people over the years, and want to thank them for the contribution and sacrifice they've made for our country. With many fond memories, it'll be sad to leave.

VA News: *It'll be sad to see you go. Before you do though, what's your tip for this edition of VA News?*

Pat: Just a reminder to veterans that if you're applying to have a condition accepted as service-related, it's really important to have a diagnosis on your application form. Your GP can help you with this. It will support your claim, and help us make a decision quicker.

VA News: *Great tip, thanks Pat. Any final thoughts for our readers?*

Pat: With the festive season nearly upon us, I would like to wish everyone all the very best for a safe and happy Christmas and New Year. Be kind, look after each other, and be well.

Clear communication pays off for Veterans' Affairs

Veterans' Affairs has been recognised for its focus on better communication by being named as a finalist in the Plain English Trust annual awards.

The awards highlight excellence in the use of plain English and in raising the bar for clear communication.

The refreshed Veterans' Affairs website was one of three finalists in the Best Plain English Website—Public Sector category.

"We are delighted to have had our website named a finalist in this year's Plain English awards," Head of Veterans' Affairs Bernadine Mackenzie said.

"It signals to us that we're getting it right in communicating better with our veterans, which is a number one priority for us".

The new website is designed to make it easy for New Zealand Defence Force veterans and their whānau to find out about the support Veterans' Affairs can provide, and how to access it.

Veterans' Affairs worked closely with the veteran community as the new website came together.

"They were fantastic user-testers for us", Bernadine said. "We learned a lot from listening to their feedback. Together, we came up with better language, a much less bureaucratic tone, and an easy-to-follow structure."

The Veterans' Affairs website has been refreshed in recent months and now includes clearer and more useful information, including an online 'check your eligibility' tool.

"The new website is user-friendly and accessible—exactly what we were all aiming for. We know we've got more to do, and being named a finalist for this award is a great motivator for us all," Bernadine said.



2018 in review



12,000+ clients
both veteran and whānau



\$95 million
paid out in financial entitlements,
not including the Veteran's Pension



38,000 phone calls
to Enquiry Line

Our outreach

Where we're visited in the
last 12 months



The NZDF haka performed by the contingent at Chunuk Bair in Turkey on Anzac Day.



The ramp ceremony at RNZAF Base Ohakea for the repatriation of three personnel from Fiji and American Samoa.



The Hon Ron Mark, Minister for Veterans, at the launch of the Veteran Rehabilitation Strategy at Parliament in May.



Veterans and their whānau at a Health Clinic run by Veterans' Affairs, Ngati Porou, and Hauora Tairāwhiti in Te Puia Springs on the East Coast.



The Queen's Colours of the Royal New Zealand Air Force, Office Cadet School of New Zealand, and the Royal New Zealand Navy paraded at sunset ceremony on Armistice Day. As part of the ceremony, the NZDF paraded all 21 Queen's Colours, Guidon, Regimental Colours, Banners, and Standards.



Members of the public placing tributes on the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior at the conclusion of the sunset ceremony on Armistice Day, which marked the end of the First World War centenary.