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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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Cover image: The lower North Island Vietnam Veterans' Health and Wellbeing Expo — full story on page 4.



New Zealand Government

From the Head of Veterans' Affairs

Tēnā koutou katoa

Veterans' Affairs has recently moved from premises in Lambton Quay in Wellington to the Reserve Bank Building on The Terrace, directly opposite the new Defence Force headquarters on Bowen Street.

It's been a time of reflection for us all, as we think back on the 20 years spent on Lambton Quay – and a time of excitement as we look forward to a reinvigorated workspace.

You've probably noticed a number of firsts for Veterans' Affairs this year – we've held expos, which are a new concept for us and our veteran clients; we've begun to hold monthly clinics for Auckland area veterans at Ranfurly House; and we've held forums as far afield as Perth, where we met Kiwi veterans and partners and whānau at two forums we held there.

The three Health and Wellbeing Expos, designed specifically for Vietnam veterans, were held in Christchurch, Auckland and Wellington. More than 600 veterans and their family members came along. These expos really showed us the value of sitting down with our veterans and talking about what they need – and the value also in having those who can provide support and services there at the same time, so that needs can be attended to on the spot.

You'll be pleased to hear that, thanks to the efforts of staff and some extra funding we received in the Budget, we are well on track to clear most of the applications backlog before Christmas – and those which aren't cleared then will be the focus of work in January.



Bernadine Mackenzie,
Head of Veterans' Affairs

We've also made good progress in implementing recommendations from the 2018 Paterson Report. We've actioned 26 of those recommendations by reviewing and amending our processes, and being more flexible in the way we apply the Veterans' Support Act 2014. There's more still to do and there are more changes you'll be seeing soon.

As 2020 approaches we're looking at how we can streamline the way we work to deliver better services to our veterans. We want to make both the applications and the claims processes more efficient, and easier to navigate in the future.

There'll be some other initiatives you'll see as well. In February we'll be hosting another expo, in partnership with the wider NZDF and the Ranfurly Veterans' Trust – this one will be a Post-Service Employment and Wellbeing Expo, and will be open to all who have served, rather than one particular group of veterans. In February, the Korean Government will be holding a vision camp in New Zealand for the descendants of Korean War veterans – and we'll be working with them to arrange this. And we'll also be working closely with our NZDF colleagues to make transition easier for those who are moving out of service into civilian life.

My staff and I are looking forward to serving you again in 2020. In the meantime they join me in wishing you and your whānau a very happy Christmas and New Year.



Programmes for veterans launched in Christchurch

Two initiatives for veterans kicked off recently in Christchurch.

Senior Chef for Veterans is a free eight-week cooking course that started in October. The course is run by Pegasus Health and has been tailored for veterans after discussions with Veterans' Affairs. It focuses on practical cooking skills, meal planning, budgeting, shopping tips, and good nutrition for older people. Participants shared experiences, socialised, and ate meals together. Pegasus Health runs 21 cooking courses, including Senior Chef for Veterans, each year throughout the Canterbury region.

Taking Control and Ageing Well, a six-week programme for veterans and their spouses or partners, started in November. The programme is run by the RNZRSA and the Australasian Services Care Network (NZ) with a grant from Veterans' Affairs. Taking Control and Ageing Well was open to veterans 65 and older, and was attended by 25 veterans with their spouses and partners at the Papanui RSA. The



programme aimed to help veterans maximise their quality of life, manage their health, and build resilience with support from registered occupational therapists. "It's encouraging to see the enthusiasm from veterans and their families" said the programme's coordinator Steve Shamy.

Both programmes were developed after the Vietnam Veterans Health and Wellbeing Expo in Christchurch, hosted by Veterans' Affairs in partnership with the Rannerdale Trust. Feedback from attendees showed a need for programmes where veterans could develop skills to boost their independence.

"Veterans are at the centre of what we do and it's been great to see our partners in Christchurch providing support so that veterans and their spouses and partners can remain independent" said Bernadine Mackenzie, the Head of Veterans' Affairs.

Want to find out more about Senior Chef?

☎ 0800 333 405

🌐 www.seniorchef.co.nz

Want to find out more about Taking Control and Ageing Well?

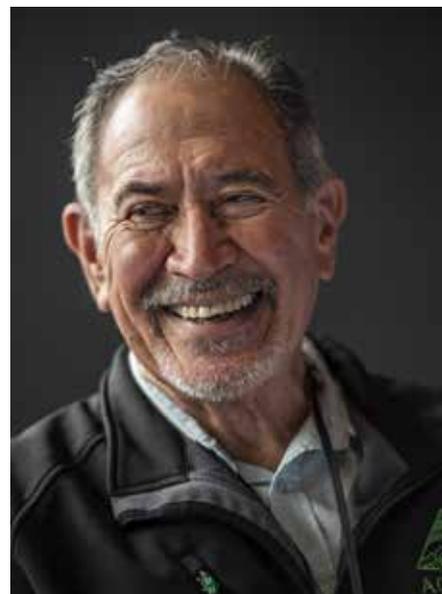
@ ascn.nz@gmail.com



Veterans' wellbeing the focus of Lower Hutt expo

More than 300 Vietnam veterans and their family members attended the Vietnam Veterans Health and Wellbeing Expo in Lower Hutt on 19 October.





Veterans' Affairs, working in partnership with Ranfurly Veterans' Trust, brought together 20 veteran support agencies, providers, and support organisations. Vietnam veterans living in the lower North Island were invited to the expo which featured support and services in a one-stop shop.

Veterans met with Veterans' Affairs case managers, veteran support agencies, and local service providers, received a quick health check, and were offered seminars and tools to support independent daily living.

Veteran Dr Roger Maaka, from Takapau in Hawke's Bay, said the expo provided focus on issues affecting veterans.

"Because our military service is not a feature of daily life, you deal with different things, like health or social or comrade issues, in isolation," Dr Maaka said.

"Coming together with other veterans in this environment allows us to concentrate on all the issues affecting us."

"Some of us are not very well-informed or haven't gone out of our way to be informed. The expo is an opportunity to become informed in a low-key way," said Dr Maaka.

Glenys Meikle attended the expo with her husband Devon who served as a gunner in 161 Battery, and was impressed by what was on offer. "We've spoken to a case manager and to a nurse – to do that in person is really good," she said.

"We've also been really impressed with the range of assisted living products, sometimes you don't know what's available," said Mrs Meikle.

Head of Veterans' Affairs Bernadine Mackenzie said bringing together Veterans' Affairs and affiliated organisations in one place was a great way for local Vietnam veterans to get information face to face.

"We hosted this event because we know that there's value in sitting down with our veterans and talking with them about what they need" she said.

"It helps us to make sure that they're getting the support they need for independent daily living."

Ms Mackenzie said that the focus was on supporting the veterans in the way that best suited them, and the event follows on from other Vietnam veteran expos held this year.

"We held expos in Christchurch and Auckland earlier this year, which were very successful in getting Vietnam veterans connected with us and accessing support" she said. "We're keen to encourage all those who served in Vietnam to register with us so they can access their entitlements, and this weekend's event has helped us to connect to those in the group who are living in the lower North Island".

The expo was an initiative that honours the Crown's 2006 Memorandum of Understanding that recognises specific health concerns by Vietnam veterans.

“Because our military service is not a feature of daily life, you deal with different things, like health or social or comrade issues, in isolation”

– Dr Roger Maaka,
Vietnam veteran

Opposite, from top:
A Veterans' Affairs staff member sitting down with a veteran;
Air Marshal Kevin Short, Chief of Defence Force chatting with veterans.
Above, from left to right:
Veterans catching up over coffee;
Vietnam veteran Dr Roger Maaka.

Veteran honoured in museum exhibition

In October the Air Force Museum of New Zealand opened 'A Rainbow Legacy: the Squadron Leader Peter Rule Story'. The exhibition is a part of Pride 25, the NZDF's celebration of 25 years of open LGBTQ+ service.

Squadron Leader Rule was born in Gisborne in 1931 and joined the Royal New Zealand Air Force in 1955. Squadron Leader Rule deployed to Antarctica, where he crashed in whiteout conditions and survived by sheltering in an igloo. He also deployed to Syria and South Korea as a United Nations military observer and was awarded an MBE in 1972.

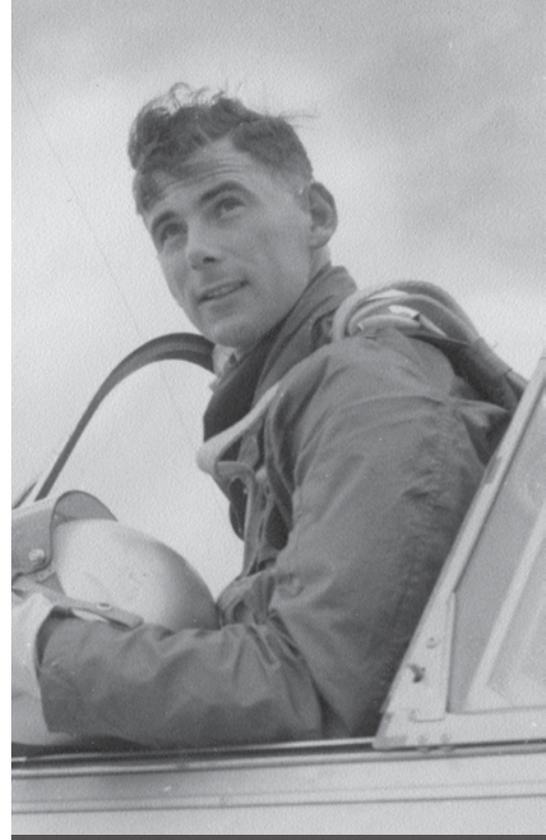
In South Korea, Squadron Leader Rule was observed fraternising with another man and, because LGBTQ+ people were banned from serving in the military at that time, his career ended in 1975.

After leaving the Air Force, Squadron Leader Rule managed the Central Regional Arts Council from 1977 to 1987 and curated the Kahurangi exhibition during the 1984 Olympic

Games in Los Angeles. He committed suicide in 1987, aged 56. In his will he left a fund to be used for the benefit of LGBTQ+ people and the Rule Foundation continues to fund LGBTQ+ organisations in New Zealand today.

The exhibition opening was attended by Squadron Leader Rule's surviving family, Sonia and Neville Hardy, Air Vice-Marshal Andrew Clark Chief of Air Force, the Honourable Grant Robertson, Dame Fran Wilde, representatives from the Rule Foundation, and members of OverWatch, the NZDF's LGBTQ+ network.

"The unjust end to Peter's RNZAF career is an inspiration for our ongoing efforts to be an organisation all talented New Zealanders want to join – no matter how similar or different they are to the next person" said Air-Vice Marshal Andrew Clark.



Squadron Leader Peter Rule

Working on a project that commemorates military service?

The Commemorative Project Contribution supports NZ-based veteran groups to complete projects that recognise veterans' sacrifice.



A Rainbow Legacy: the Squadron Leader Peter Rule Story exhibition at the Air Force Museum of New Zealand.

Code of Veterans' and Other Claimants' Rights

The Code of Veterans' and Other Claimants' Rights sets out the standards of service you're entitled to when you deal with Veterans' Affairs. The spirit of the Code is a positive partnership – working together with trust, respect and understanding.

Your rights

As a veteran, you and other claimants have the right to:

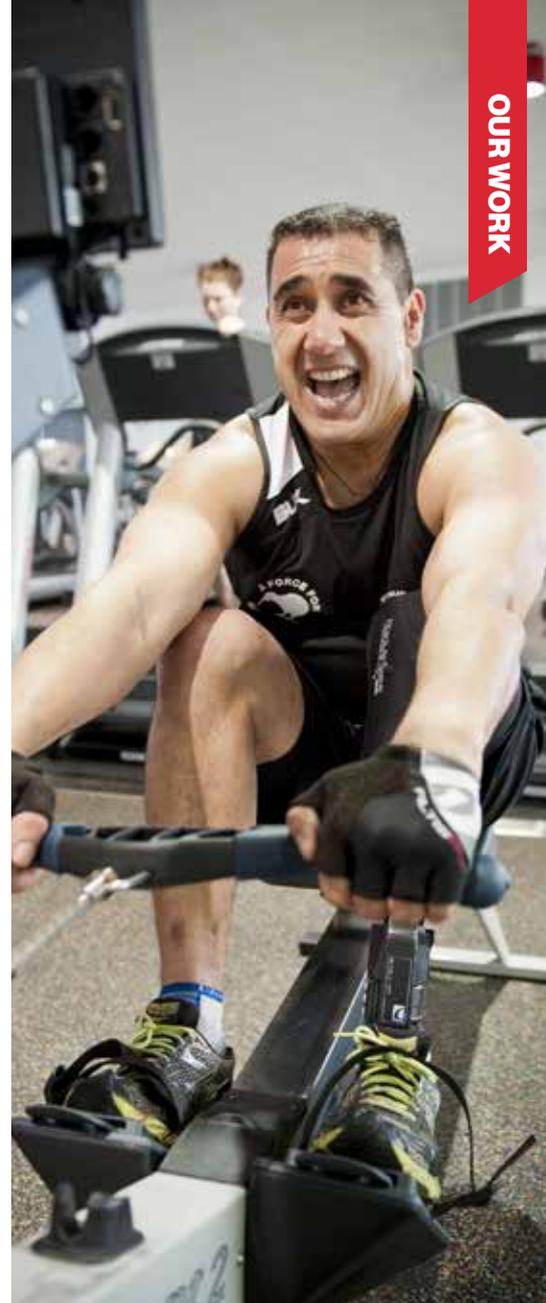
- be treated with dignity and respect
- fair treatment, and consideration of your views
- have your culture, values, and beliefs respected
- a support person or persons
- effective communication
- full information
- have your privacy respected
- complain if you believe that your rights have been breached.

If you think we're not meeting the Code

If you find the service being provided by Veterans' Affairs falls short of these standards, you can raise your concerns directly with us and we will work with you to address any issues. We will also let you know how we have addressed your concerns.

If you feel that your concerns have not been adequately addressed, you can lodge a complaint under the Code. Further information including a copy of the Code and the Complaints Form can be found on our website.

 www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz



Commemorative funding

\$2,500 is available for international travel that commemorates or celebrates your service.

To be eligible for the funding, your trip needs to include travel to either your place of Qualifying Operational Service or an overseas reunion or event linked to your Qualifying Operational Service.

 0800 483 8372

 veterans.projects@nzdf.mil.nz



Sharon's Corner

VA News sat down with Sharon Cavanagh, Manager of Veterans' Services, to talk about what has been happening at Veterans' Affairs over the last few months.

VA News: *Kia ora Sharon, what news have you got to share with our readers for the Christmas issue of VA News?*

Sharon: Kia ora everyone. I think our Korean War veterans would be interested to hear about a trip that I made in September to Seoul in the Republic of Korea, along with the leader of our rehabilitation team. We attended an International Workshop on Veterans' Affairs that was hosted by our Korean equivalent organisation, the Ministry of Patriots and Veterans' Affairs. It was a fantastic event, and we heard presentations from Canada, Australia, the United States, and the Republic of Korea. It was a great opportunity to learn about what other countries are doing to support veterans.

Another highlight for me was when I went along with my case managers to a Vietnam Veterans Health and Wellbeing Expo in Lower Hutt in October. It was great to see so many veterans from the Lower North Island there – plus members of their families. The overwhelming feedback from those I spoke to on the day was positive – and this was also the feeling of our own staff who were working at the event. Now we've proved that this new concept works, we'll be having more expos in the future.

VA News: *That's good news. I'm sure our readers would also be interested in how the day-to-day work is going – what can you tell us about that?*

Sharon: Well – the numbers of those on our books are increasing. Our case managers are now actively managing



more than 4,000 clients – and that's an increase of over 22% compared to last year. The team have also managed to clear more than 400 applications that had been sitting in a backlog. That's a great result, and I take my hat off to them for the hard work that they've all been doing to get us over the hump. I should also let everyone know that, because staff are working late in the evenings and on weekends to clear these applications, it's possible that people might get a call from VA outside of our normal operating hours.

VA News: *Why might a case manager need to make follow-up calls like this?*

Sharon: There are a surprising number of times that things just need clarifying, and the easiest and quickest way of doing this is to speak to the person concerned. Just to give you some examples, sometimes people fill out the wrong form-- or perhaps they don't include all the information that we need. Sometimes people arrange for private treatment and surgery without prior approval from us. VA needs to pre-approve the costs of private care so it's really important that

clients, their advocates, and support people get this approval before they make any arrangements.

VA News: *You've told us before about case manager clinics being held each month at Ranfurly House in Auckland – will these be continuing in 2020?*

Sharon: Yes, they will. The clinics have been well-attended by veterans and working with Ranfurly has been great. Ranfurly House, in Three Kings in Auckland is a beautiful early twentieth century building, which has been fully revamped and it's a super venue for us to hold these clinics in.

Since July, more than 50 veterans have taken the opportunity to meet *kanohi ki te kanohi* with case managers there. We're really grateful to the Ranfurly Veterans' Trust for making it available to us, and we're looking forward to continuing this partnership next year.

The monthly clinics will begin again in February 2020 and veterans can register by contacting our enquiry line.

 0800 483 8372

 www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz

From the Minister for Veterans

It's been a busy year, with a great deal happening for veterans.

In June, the Veterans' Support Amendment Act 2019 was passed. This tidied up a drafting error that had crept in when the original legislation went through in 2014. It was good to see unanimous support for the amendment as it made its way through Parliament. It has meant that, as responsible Minister, I can now declare deployments that have already concluded to be qualifying operational service – so more of those who have served their country can become eligible for services and support from Veterans' Affairs.

There will be more announcements to come shortly. It looks like 2020 will be a busy and interesting time for us all.

One of the highlights of the past year for me was attending the 20th anniversary of the International Force East Timor (INTERFET) which was established to bring peace

and stability to that nation after its independence referendum in 1999. New Zealand deployed over 6000 personnel to Timor-Leste between 1999 and 2002. Five New Zealand soldiers lost their lives during that peacekeeping effort, and without the INTERFET intervention, many more innocent lives would have been lost. It was my privilege to attend the commemorations in Timor-Leste in September, and to help mark New Zealand's contribution to peace.

I've also attended a number of national commemorations at Pukeahu National War Memorial over the past year – and I've met veterans from the many and varied campaigns that we've acknowledged and commemorated over this period. Their ranks may be thinning, but those remaining are strong of mind and will, and the stories they have to share remind us of how much they have done on behalf of us all.

As we start to wind down from a busy year, our thoughts turn to family,

friends, and those who will not be with us over the festive season. I especially



Hon Ron Mark,
Minister for Veterans

think of our military families who have a family member deployed overseas, and of those with loved ones who have passed. The holiday season can be isolating, and a stressful time for those without support. A phone call or popping round for a catch-up can make all the difference to those in need.

It's been an honour to represent your interests in Parliament over the last 12 months. I thank you all for your service and I wish you and your families a relaxing and safe Christmas and New Year.

Veterans' Affairs Christmas Hours

Veterans' Affairs is closed over the Christmas and New Year period. We wish all our veterans and their whānau a happy festive season.

DEC

24

We are closed from 12pm 24 December

JAN

06

We re-open at 9am 6 January

If you require urgent support, please contact 1737

NEED TO TALK?



This 4-digit number is free to call or text, and will connect you to a trained counsellor. It's available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Calling Korean Veterans

Do you have a grandchild or great-grandchild who could be interested in this opportunity?

The Korean Vision Camp is open to New Zealand university students aged between 18 and 20 who are descendants of New Zealand Korean War veterans. Transport, accommodation, and meals are provided.

FEB

3-7

3-7 February 2020



Waikanae and Wellington

How to apply:

Email veterans.projects@nzdf.mil.nz with your name, date of birth, the New Zealand Korean War veteran you are descended from, proof of your enrolment at university, and 200 words about why you want to attend the camp.



Springston graves rededicated in moving ceremony

In May this year 46 bronze plaques were stolen from Springston Cemetery in Christchurch, 45 of the plaques commemorated veterans who served in New Zealand's Armed Forces.





The theft was felt deeply by the families of those whose graves were desecrated and the wider veteran community in Canterbury. On 23 November, a rededication ceremony brought together families, veterans, the Selwyn District Council, members of the Canterbury District RSA, the Minister for Veterans the Honourable Ron Mark, and Veterans' Affairs. Many travelled from outside of Christchurch in order to attend the rededication.

The rededication ceremony included speeches from families of those interred and a blessing from a chaplain. Minister Ron Mark spoke about how plaques stand as a testament to those who served. "Service plaques honour and commemorate those who witnessed and endured suffering and hardship

as they fought to secure our freedom – and the freedom of our friends and allies" he said.

Head of Veterans' Affairs Bernadine Mackenzie recited the poem 'I am a Soldier' and thanked all those who had attended the rededication.

The theft was first reported to the police in May by a Selwyn District Council staff member. Veterans' Affairs replaced the plaques with a contribution of over \$21,000 from our memorial fund, and their reinstallation was overseen by the Selwyn District Council. There is now an agreement with all scrap metal dealers in Christchurch to not accept memorial plaques.



Opposite, from top: Representatives of the Royal New Zealand Navy, New Zealand Army, and Royal New Zealand Air Force paying their respects; The RSA memorial wall at Springston Services Cemetery with new memorial plaques.

Clockwise from top: RNZRSA National President BJ Clark, MP for Selwyn Amy Adams, the Honourable Ron Mark Minister for Veterans, Selwyn District Council Deputy Mayor Malcolm Lyall, and Canterbury District RSA President Stan Hansen after the rededication ceremony at Springston Services Cemetery; Head of Veterans' Affairs Bernadine Mackenzie and the Honourable Ron Mark paying their respects; Three generations of the Nicholls next to their family plaque.



Seven Porirua graves rededicated

On Remembrance Sunday seven previously unmarked graves of First World War soldiers were rededicated in Porirua Cemetery. The graves were brought to the attention of Veterans' Affairs by the New Zealand Remembrance Army. All seven graves are now marked by granite headstones which commemorate the veterans' service.

Our year in pictures



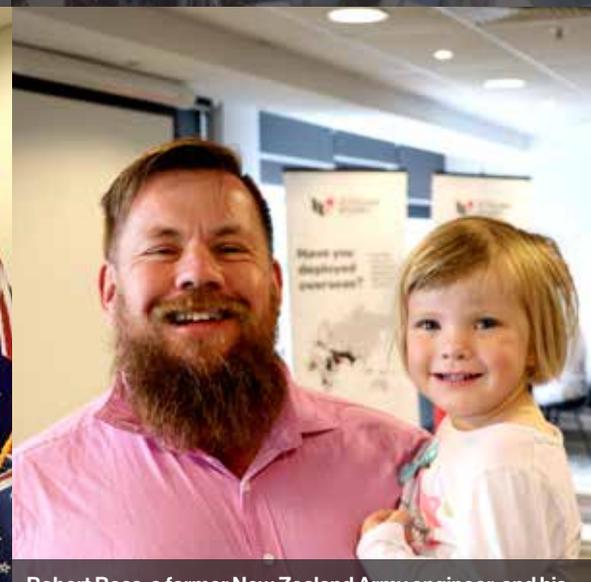
Operation RADIAN veterans in the Hall of Memories at Pukeahu National War Memorial, September 2019.



New Zealand INTERFET veterans in the 20th anniversary commemoration parade in Dili, Timor-Leste, September 2019.



Head of Veterans' Affairs Bernadine Mackenzie signs a Statement of Intent with Park Sam-Duck, Minister of Patriots and Veterans Affairs in Seoul, Republic of Korea, September 2019.



Robert Ross, a former New Zealand Army engineer, and his daughter Annabelle at the Veterans' Affairs Forum in Perth, Australia, June 2019.



Minister for Veterans the Honourable Ron Mark, Christine Tracey, and veteran Maurice Mayston at the National Commemoration marking the 75th Anniversary of the Normandy Landings at Pukeahu National War Memorial, June 2019.



Maryanne and Jimmy Tainui at the Auckland and Waikato Vietnam Veterans Health and Wellbeing Expo, Auckland, May 2019.