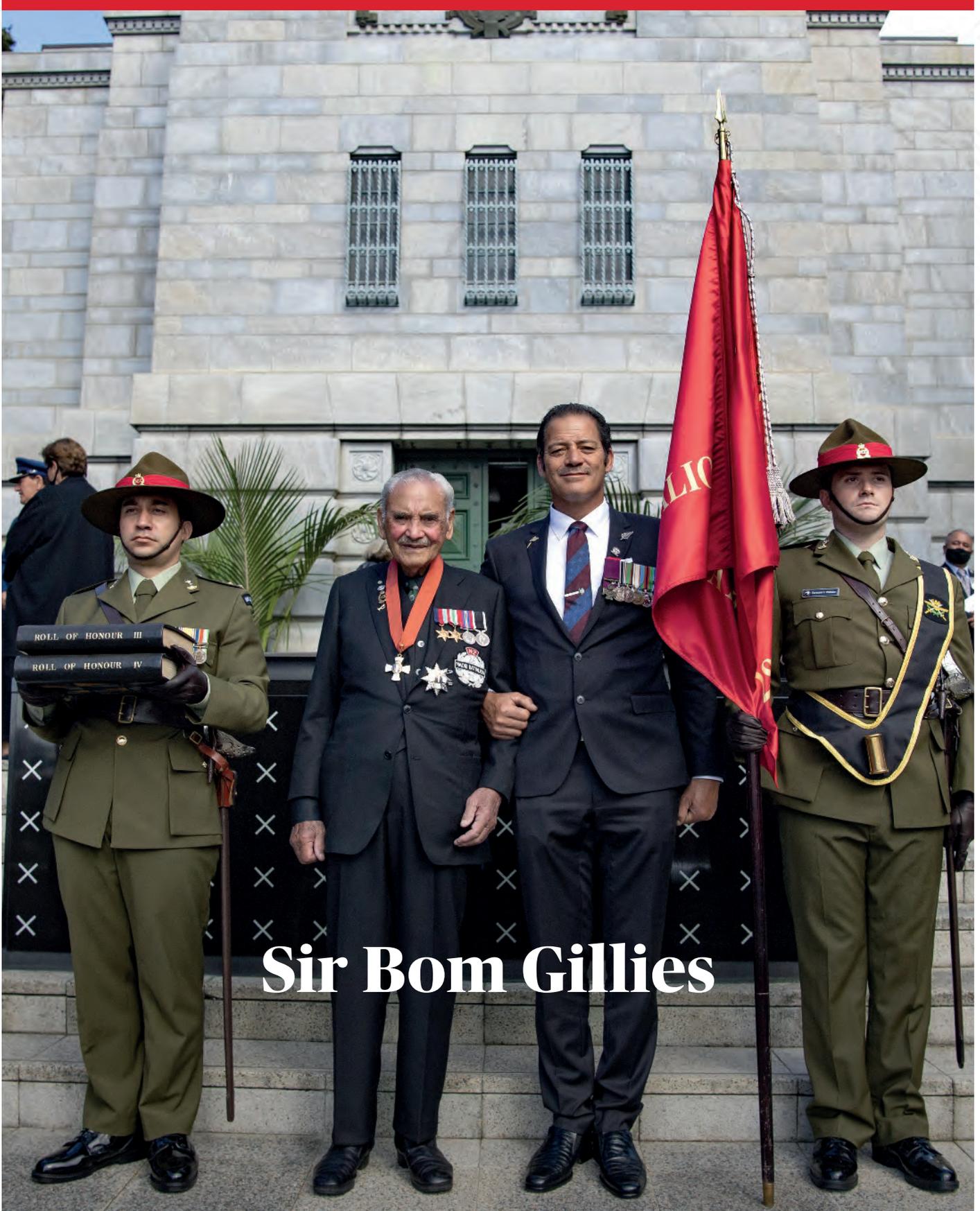


# Veterans Affairs WINTER 2022

TE TIRA AHU IKA A WHIRO



**Sir Bom Gillies**

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# Tēnā koutou katoa

Welcome to the winter edition of our magazine.

Since I last connected with you, we have commemorated Anzac Day and remembered all those who have served our nation, in times of conflict and in times of peace. In early May, I had the great pleasure of attending a wreath laying service at Pukeahu National War Memorial Park and celebrations recognising Sir Robert (Bom) Nairn Gillies, KNZM, who graciously accepted the knighthood on behalf of the 28<sup>th</sup> Maori Battalion. As the last surviving member of the 28<sup>th</sup> Maori Battalion, Sir Bom had many stories to share and in telling them, he remembered fondly those he had served with and with some sadness, the sacrifices made by so many of his mates.

I also sadly attended along with many veterans, the funeral service for Bob “Bukit” Hill, National Vice President of the RNZRSA and President of the Masterton RSA. He also served as a Trustee for the Vietnam Veterans' and their Families Trust for seven years and was recognised by the RNZRSA with the awarding of the RSA's Gold Star and Bar. Both Sir Bom and Bukit were recognised in different ways for their service to our country Aotearoa New Zealand. Both men experienced war time action and both spent their lives supporting, caring for and helping fellow veterans – this is truly outstanding service. Attending these events was a good reminder of why we do what we do at Veterans' Affairs, and what a true privilege it is to work for and on behalf of the men and women who have served our country.

‘Te Arataki mō te Hauora Ngākau mō ngā Mōrehu a Tū me ō rātou Whānau – The Veteran, Family and Whānau Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy Framework’ launched. This resource is a call to action that will hopefully increase awareness of the needs of veterans and encourage more collaboration between government and non-government agencies, so that together we can achieve better outcomes for veterans. I encourage you to visit [www.va.mil.nz/mental-health-framework](http://www.va.mil.nz/mental-health-framework) for more information.

Until next time please continue to take care of yourselves, your mates and your loved ones.



**Bernadine Mackenzie**  
Head of Veterans' Affairs

Check out NZDF's new health site, Pūtahi Hauora -  
[health.nzdf.mil.nz](http://health.nzdf.mil.nz)

Find a range of information about your physical, mental, relationship, social and whānau health. There's also information about where to go for help and support.

# Sir Bom Gillies

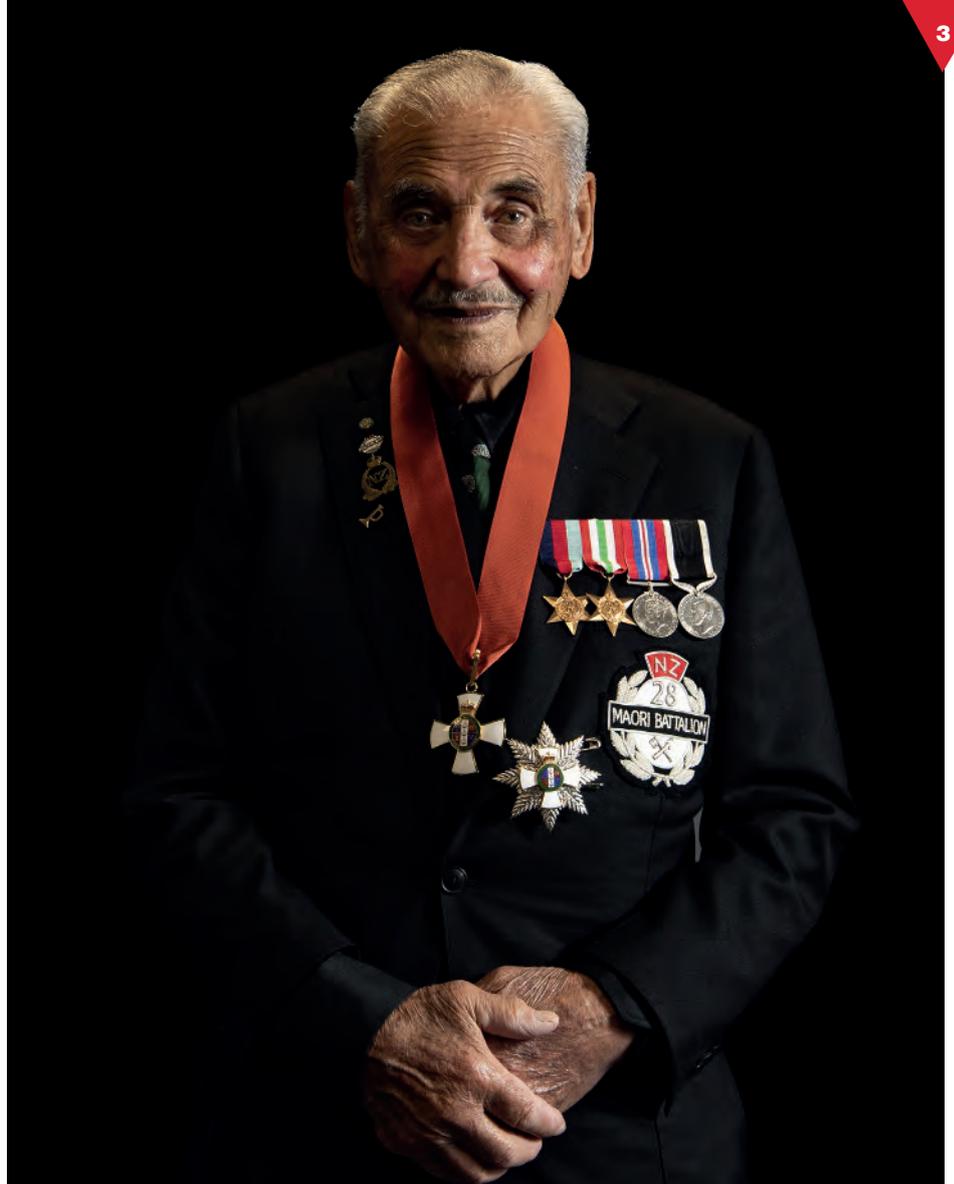
**Sir Robert Nairn Gillies KNZM, affectionately known as Bom Gillies, served with B Company, 28<sup>th</sup> (Maori) Battalion, during the Second World War. He is the last surviving member of the 28 Maori Battalion.**

Born on 14 February 1925 in Rotorua, he is of Ngāti Whakaue and Ngāti Kahungunu.

He attempted to enlist in the Maori Battalion twice but failed. He succeeded on his third attempt at just 17 years old, after lying about his age, as many others did.

Sir Bom served in B Company during the Second World War from 1942–1945. He saw action across Africa, Europe and in the Middle East. He fought in the Italian campaign, sustained injuries at Orsogna but continued serving with the 28 Maori Bn until the end of the war, including at the Battle of Monte Cassino.

Sir Bom has represented the Maori Battalion at many local, national and international commemorations. He attended the ceremonies in Italy marking the 70<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the Battle of Monte Cassino in 2014 and 2019, and led the celebration on the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the return of B Company to Rotorua in 2021.



He had previously declined the New Zealand honour, but accepted it on behalf of all those who had served, saying, “There are many soldiers who did more and who have never been recognised. I accept on behalf of all the boys, all my mates who served in the Maori Battalion.”

In the 2022 New Year Honours, Sir Bom was appointed a Knight Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit, for services to Māori and war commemoration. His investiture was at Government House in Wellington, on 4 May 2022.

*More Anzac Day photos on page 14.*

# Reflections from Gallipoli

**I was honoured to represent New Zealand at the Anzac Day commemorative events that were held this year in Gallipoli. They had been cancelled for the past two years because of COVID-19, so it was very special to pick up the torch for New Zealand again in such a special place.**

I arrived a couple of days before Anzac Day, and on 23 April, I was escorted around some of the battlefields on the peninsula, including the Māori Pa site at No 3 Outpost, home to the Māori Pioneer Battalion. Thirty-six men of the Māori Contingent are buried there. This

was a very emotional visit, and I felt immensely privileged to be there.

New Zealand led the commemorations on Anzac Day morning this year, and I was accompanied by the Chief of Army and a contingent of around 30 personnel from across all three services of the New Zealand Defence Force. They were excellent representatives of our country, supportive, professional and respectful of the occasion and what it meant to everyone involved.

As the dawn service was held, we watched the sun come up over the beach. It was sobering and impressive – and I couldn't help but marvel at the bravery of the Kiwi soldiers, 107 years ago, who had streamed on to the land and up the sheer hills that towered in front of them. Later that day I walked over those hills to another very moving ceremony that was held at the New Zealand Cemetery at Chunuk Bair. It is a beautiful place and



the graves – so many of them – are beautifully looked after.

Our Turkish hosts are unfailingly generous in welcoming New Zealanders and Australians back to their country and to Gallipoli year after year. It is a place where many of their own young men fell during the battles in 1915, and I had been privileged the previous day to be present at a Turkish commemorative service where their own dead were honoured and remembered.

Each person who travels to Gallipoli will come away with their own experience and emotions. I was no different.

The honour I felt delivering our country's words of kaupapa at the Dawn Service would be summed up in a few of the words I delivered in my commemorative address,

*As Minister for Veterans, I am all too aware how the cruelties and tragedy of war linger on, long after the wars themselves come to an end. For Australians and New Zealanders, not knowing what had become of the battlefield graves of those who had died at Gallipoli was one such tragedy.*

*We remember them all, and we take comfort in knowing that Turkey continues to look after them without regard to nationality, and with dignity and honour*

*Ka maumahara tonu tātou ki a rātou*

**Hon. Meka Whaitiri**  
Minister for Veterans





## Lives lost during pandemic more than 100 years ago honoured by NZDF

**When members of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles returned to the battlefields of Gallipoli in 1918 to recover and bury their dead, they faced a new enemy in the form of influenza.**

More than 104 years on and in the shadow of a new pandemic, the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) Gallipoli 2022 contingent returned to a small cemetery in Çanakkale, Turkey, to honour the lives of the eleven men from the regiment whose lives were lost – all but one to the invisible enemy.

A moving ceremony was held on Monday 18 April at Chanak Consular Cemetery, a small cemetery often overlooked by Anzac tourists who visit the Gallipoli peninsula to pay their respects to those who gave the ultimate sacrifice.

Contingent Commander Lieutenant Colonel Sheree Alexander said the ceremony was made all the more poignant given the upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic over the past two years.

“To hear the stories of the men who came here to recover and bury their dead friends, only to be struck down by the flu, has hammered home the incredibly tragic and ongoing toll that pandemics can have.”

The NZDF Māori Cultural Group led the group, which included representatives from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) and Australia’s Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA), in waiata and prayer.

Wreaths were laid by the New Zealand Embassy’s Deputy Head of Mission Nicole Slight, NZDF’s Staff Sergeant Tokahaumata Oltaches-Tagavaitau and Flight Sergeant Rachael Tamehana, DVA Repatriation Commissioner Don Spinks, and Ozden Guney from the CWGC.

The NZDF 2021 civilian of the year Tamara Hamiora delivered a reading during the service which spoke of the story behind two Kiwi civilian nurses who are also buried in the cemetery after they were killed in a car accident in 1965 when visiting the gravesite of one of their grandfathers, Major David Grant, who was killed in action on 25 April 1915.

Hamiora was named NZDF’s 2021 Civilian of the Year following her performance in her role as the Health Inventory Manager for the Defence Equipment Management Organisation after she effectively adapted and led her team during 2020 under the most challenging of supply chain circumstances to meet NZDF demand for PPE during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hamiora was pleased to be there. “We feel honoured to be able to make the journey to acknowledge their service and sacrifice and ensure their memory lives on.”

### **Canterbury Mounted Rifles – A brief history**

The Canterbury Mounted Rifles Regiment fought in the 1915 Gallipoli Campaign, but unfortunately when the regiment returned to Gallipoli, 11 of them died of influenza.

This regiment was one of four regional mounted rifles regiments raised to serve in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force (NZEF) during WWI. Three of those regiments served as part of the New Zealand and Australian Division on Gallipoli in 1915, and later in Sinai and Palestine until 1919 (the Otago Mounted Rifles was reduced to a squadron and went to France with the New Zealand Division).

After the armistice with the Ottoman Turks in October 1918 the Canterbury Mounted Rifles returned to the 1915 Gallipoli battlefields to tend to the graves of New Zealanders who died in that campaign. All but one died from influenza.

They started to get influenza while sailing to Gallipoli, and then when they arrived at the peninsula they faced bitter winter conditions without any shelter.

Two of the 11 men who died in 1918, Lieutenant Arthur Pigou and Lance Corporal Joseph Fifield, had served in the 1915 campaign in Gallipoli.

# Veterans' Mental Health and Wellbeing

In June an important document is going to be released. It's called *Te Arataki mō te Hauora Ngākau mō ngā Mōrehu a Tū me ō rātou Whānau* – and it's the first detailed examination that has been made of the mental health and wellbeing of veterans in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The work to produce this document began last July when Veterans' Affairs organised a meeting of a range of people, all interested in veterans, and in making their lives better. The group included veterans, representatives of their support and advocacy groups, a whānau representative, health practitioners, NZDF, and a number of other government agencies. Despite the disruption caused by Covid-19, the work kept going for the next nine months, and the final product has now emerged.

The group focused on the experience of moving from military to civilian life, and what this means for those who have served, their families, and whānau. There has been quite substantial international work about this, although specific New Zealand research is limited. The evidence indicates that, while many do well when they move out of service, some do not. The work concluded that not only do systems need to be improved,

but there also needs to be increased awareness throughout the community about the needs of veterans and their whānau, more work at an early stage to prevent difficult transitions, and better support available for those who have moved into civilian life.

There will then be opportunities for a range of organisations – military and civilian, government and non-government – to collaborate and take effective steps to improve the wellbeing of our veterans, their families and whānau. Veterans' Affairs will be leading some follow-up work to encourage take-up of what the working group has recommended.

*Te Arataki mō te Hauora Ngākau mō ngā Mōrehu a Tū me ō rātou Whānau* can be view at [www.va.mil.nz/mental-health-framework](http://www.va.mil.nz/mental-health-framework).



# Commemorative Fund: Tutukaka Flag poles

Two new flag poles were erected at the Tutukaka Coast War Memorial just in time for Anzac Day. The Commemorative Fund received an application late last year to fund two new flag poles to stand either side of the main cross armed flag pole. The new poles will fly the New Zealand and Australian flags while the service flags will fly in centre. The Tutukaka community use the memorial to host Anzac and Armistice Day commemorations.

If you have a commemorative project coming up, our Commemorative Fund may be able to help. This fund can make a contribution of up to \$5,000 for a New Zealand-based commemorative project that recognises veterans' sacrifice. Check out our website to find out more.



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



## Veterans' Affairs role with New Zealand Services Cemeteries

**There are more than 180 services cemeteries in New Zealand. Service cemeteries are mostly separate sections located in public cemeteries and managed by local councils.**



Veterans' Affairs funds and arranges installation of official standard plaques or headstones for eligible veterans who are buried in services cemeteries. For eligible veterans buried elsewhere, Veterans' Affairs contributes to the cost of plaques and headstones. Permission for all burials in services cemeteries is decided by cemetery managers.

Eligibility for interment in a services cemetery under the Burial and Cremation Act 1964 is different to eligibility under the Veterans' Support Act 2014. Under the Burial and Cremation Act 1964 those who had "specified operational service in His or Her Majesty's Forces" that is also qualifying service under the Veterans' Support Act 2014 are eligible for burial in a services cemetery.

Veterans' Affairs is funded to support local authorities to maintain services cemeteries. Our contractor, Bronze Plaques NZ, is employed to manufacture and install plaques and headstones.

They also inspect all services cemeteries over a two year period and manage additional maintenance work that is outside of councils responsibilities, which is sub-contracted to local providers.

Local Authority regulations generally require Veterans' Affairs and any interested parties undertaking any work on gravestones to have explicit permission from the family of the person interred.

Manatū Taonga – Ministry for Culture and Heritage – is the New Zealand agent for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and is responsible for war graves. They are also responsible for the graves of those who died in the New Zealand Wars and conflicts before the First World War.

# Force Financial Hub: Become Wealth

**Become Wealth is one component of the Force Financial Hub, the overall network of providers who offer specialised or heavily discounted services to veterans and their families.**



Joseph Darby, CEO of Become Wealth, understands the needs of veterans better than most; he is one, having served in a variety of operational theatres including Iraq, East Timor, and two tours of Afghanistan.

After leaving service, he immediately joined Milestone Direct, which recently went through a merger to and is now called Become Wealth.

“Transitioning out of service into public life can be difficult. There were many things that I hadn’t considered when I left the Army.”

“We’d be very happy to help out fellow veterans when they leave service.”

Become Wealth offers veterans a complimentary initial consultation, and if needed, heavily discounted or subsidised rates are available on most services.

Joseph is proud of the company’s independence.

“Become Wealth is not owned by or aligned to any financial institution, it can recommend a wide range of financial solutions to best meet your needs, and all of Become Wealth’s advisers are paid a salary – they aren’t on a commission.”

The team at Become Wealth can advise on nearly all aspects of your financial affairs.

- access to (usually free) mortgage brokers who can assist in getting you a great deal.
- detailed financial planning, perhaps to ensure your retirement nest egg lasts as long as you do.
- risk management planning and assistance, this commonly includes insurance broking.
- investment management or establishment.
- sometimes, debt reduction or even a reverse mortgage can be explored.
- if needed, ongoing relationships are sometimes forged to ensure you stay on-track for the things that really matter in life.
- There are no hidden fees – if there are any charges, they will be agreed upon first.



To arrange your complimentary initial financial health check:

 0508 BECOME (0508 232 663)

 [hello@become.nz](mailto:hello@become.nz)

**Become Wealth is proud to be trusted as the official provider of financial advisory services to NZDF personnel, their families, and veterans.**

**To find out more about the Force Financial Hub email [benefits@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:benefits@nzdf.mil.nz) or google “Force Financial Hub”.**

# An Essential Service



## Norma Bucknell, veteran of the Women Royal New Zealand Naval Service during World War 2, and just turned 100.

It was a sense of being wanted, says Norma Bucknell.

Norma was among around 700 women who joined the Women Royal New Zealand Naval Service (WRNZNS), established in mid-1942. Norma's parents had died by the time she had turned 16 and wartime service was also a way of gaining some independence.

The 'Wrens' were particularly in demand for signals. They were trained in various types of communications work, including visual signallers, telegraphists, and telephonists, teleprinter operators and telegraphists.

"We felt like we were an essential cog in the machine," she says. "That recognition of appreciation goes a long way."

Norma didn't know anything about the Navy – apart from dating a sailor who "sailed away" – but she had been a Girl Guide and had instruction from the Army in Morse Code. The director

of the WRNZNS had been the Chief Commissioner for Girl Guides in New Zealand. Norma says if you were a Girl Guide, you got a foot in the door.

There were about 15 Wrens working in Lyttelton at the Signals Department Office. Norma, service number W99, stayed with an Aunt in Christchurch and travelled by train to Lyttelton each day, working as a radio operator.

Her work was in decoding. "We were divided into two big sections. There were those doing the Morse code, and those like me who were decoding. When we got the coded messages it was very important they were decoded. You were working with groups of numbers. I remember we had to decode six numbers, in groups of six numbers."

Norma says she would have loved to go overseas, and even her transfer to Wellington felt, at least initially, like a big adventure. However, night duty in Wellington involved spending the night at the Wellington Museum after 11pm in a room full of stuffed animals. "It smelt like a museum. I didn't last long."

A particular memory in Wellington was meeting First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, who came to New Zealand in 1943 to visit the United States forces, look at the work of the American Red Cross and study the contribution of

New Zealand women to the war effort. Norma and another girl were waiting outside a Navy, Army and Air Force (NAAFI) Club when a big car with an American flag stopped outside. "Out hopped Eleanor Roosevelt and her entourage. She stopped and said something to us about our uniforms which I didn't really understand because of her accent. She shook our hands and went indoors."

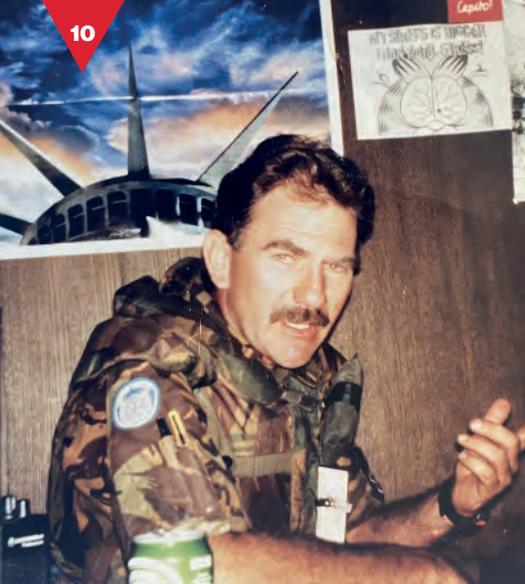
One moment of excitement was receiving an urgent coded message from the Interislander ferry. "A person on deck thought he had seen a submarine in the moonlight. I suppose it could have been."

Norma met her future husband, Tom, at a dance in Wellington. Tom was in the Air Force and they stayed in touch, marrying after the war was over.

The couple have two children and Tom has since died. Norma retired to Christchurch, but moved to Auckland following the Christchurch earthquakes and hasn't returned.

**Written by Andrew Bonallack, *Navy Today***

*Additional material from "75 Years of Memories – Women in the Royal New Zealand Navy" by Anne Hines.*



# Never give up hope

**COL Richard P. Gray OBE (Mil) is a determined man, one who served New Zealand with distinction for (just shy of) 30 years. However, he needed all his determination and that of his wife to come back from a devastating stroke.**



Richard Gray enlisted as a staff cadet in the New Zealand Army in January 1970. He attended the Royal Military College at Duntroon, Australia – graduating in 1973. Over the next 10 years his operational service included being part of (Operation Midford) the Commonwealth Monitoring Contingent in Rhodesia (1979/80), the United Nations Interim Force (UNIFIL) in Palestine (1980–81) and for UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) as the Senior Military Observer and National Officer in Bosnia (1992). In 1994 he was promoted to full Colonel. For his service in Sarajevo, where he led the Military Observers for the first five months of the war, Richard was awarded the military OBE for gallantry. He retired in September 1999.

He has been living in with his wife Fiona Lloyd-Davies in the United Kingdom since 2005.

In 2013, Richard suffered a stroke leaving him barely able to move or speak. Fiona found him on their bed clutching his head in agony. While waiting to be seen in A&E, he lost consciousness. The doctor said that Fiona should call his children in New Zealand as he was in danger of dying.

A scan revealed that Richard had a catastrophic haemorrhage in his brain, bleeding both on the inside and on the surface. The following morning, he had a large section of the left side of his skull removed to allow the brain to swell.

They removed the bone, and the swelling went down. However, a skull protects the brain from atmospheric pressure. With a large piece of skull missing Richard's brain was exposed to atmospheric pressure and this caused his brain to be pushed to the right side of his skull. It looked like half of his brain was missing.

Three weeks after his stroke, Richard couldn't speak, and he had no movement in his right side, but Fiona felt that there was hope.

"You get these little glimmers. I brought Richard's military medals in to the hospital, and he reacted in a way that made me think he knew what he was looking at. These moments are so important. It can be bleak, but you have to believe that the person you love is still there."

Richard's recovery was slow. He'd be hoisted out of bed into a chair for half an hour or so, but he couldn't do more than that. A key event in his recovery was to replace the missing part of his skull with a titanium plate. Fiona felt that without this operation, a cranioplasty, Richard's rehabilitation would stall.

"It was have it and move forward, or don't have it and Richard lives out his life in a care home."

There was a strong likelihood that Richard's operation would be postponed, even for months. He was assessed



every 6 weeks, and if there was no improvement his funding might not be continued and he risked being transferred to a care home or back home where he would need a lot of care, but without the cranioplasty he wouldn't make any improvements. Fortunately Fiona was able to get support and schedule the operation. It was a significant step in Richard's recovery.

"The day after the operation he was able to move his right leg. We were lucky that Richard was medically stable after his stroke – he didn't have any fits, which are always a concern after a brain injury."

After one year of hospitals and neurorehabilitation, Fiona was able to get Richard transferred to the Raphael Hospital. Another specialist neurorehabilitation unit, but one which specialised in applying a holistic approach and unusually, delivered multiple therapies 7 days a week, 365 days of the year. Having heard of neuroplasticity, she felt this was the chance that Richard needed to start his journey back to life.

"It's the ability of the brain to change and repair itself. The brain can adapt and improve its through repeated exercises and tasks. I held onto this idea when Richard became ill – it gave me hope that Richard might be able to recover."

Through daily physical and therapy sessions at Raphael Hospital, Richard

learnt how to walk again. Fiona saw other improvements as well.

"Richard loves animals, and when he came face-to-face with a horse he had his first emotional, spontaneous reaction since his stroke. That was a really special moment; you could see his spirits lift."

The neuroplasticity offers a chance of recovery, but to fulfil it there was a lot of hard work to go in. Fiona and Richard's doctors all felt that he could do it.

"He's amazing. He does still have speech and language therapy twice a week, so his speech is improving dramatically. He has a better understanding of his impairments now, so there are challenges, but he's an incredibly resilient person."

Life is far from back to normal for Richard and Fiona, but Richard can garden, and even occasionally now walks to the corner store (to buy some flowers for Fiona).

"Getting better is hard work, and over the last nine years, I have so admired the amount of effort he puts into everyday things like putting his shoe on or getting up from a chair. Now he brings me a cup of tea in bed every morning!"

What can Richard's experience offer other veterans and their families?

"Never give up hope. A couple months after Richard's stroke, I was sitting in the hospital corridor crying, and one of

**“You get these little glimmers. I brought Richard’s military medals in to the hospital, and he reacted in a way that made me think he knew what he was looking at. These moments are so important. It can be bleak, but you have to believe that the person you love is still there.”**

the nursing assistants came up to me after her shift and showed me a video of another stroke patient who had recovered. She could just have gone home, but she gave me that moment of her time and generosity."

"Ten months after his stroke, I was told that Richard had plateaued and should go to a care home. But I could see that the spark was still there. Sometimes, amazing things can happen."

In 2018, Fiona made a film of their journey for BBC's *Horizon My Amazing Brain: Richard's War*, which can be found online.

# In just 20 minutes

**Maria Eves, NZDF Photographer**

**Just 20 minutes on the runway at Kabul airport, but in those moments Maria Eves brought all of her 12 years of experience as a photographer in the NZDF to bear.**



Maria Eves joined the Royal New Zealand Air Force as a photographer (Aircraftman) in 2009. Based at Whenuapai, for 13 years Maria photographed many Defence Force activities, including commemorations (Gallipoli, Crete 75<sup>th</sup>, Somme 100<sup>th</sup>), Army training exercises, Navy divers in action, mountain flying in an NH90 helicopter and tactical flights in a C-130 Hercules.

Promoted to Sergeant and to Lead Photographer Maria was responsible

for a team of eight other NZDF photographers. She recently left the RNZAF, but of her thirteen years in service, her last 6 months might have been her most memorable.

In August 2021, Maria left for Dubai on her way to cover the evacuation of Afghanistan. On that flight her nerves kicked in.

“Leaving is easy, but once on that flight I realised that I really didn’t know what I was going to face, how dangerous it

might be or anything about what it was going to look like.”

She landed in Dubai several days before the C-130 Hercules that was scheduled for the evacuation arrived. Her apprehension lessened as she prepared for the evacuation although it did include rifle training as she would be carrying a rifle to Kabul.

She caught up with a photographer from the Australian Defence Force who reassured her that the US forces had secured the Kabul airport well. When the Hercules arrived Maria was confident about her assignment, but the flight to Kabul was far from certain.

“It was completely dependent on what the US forces were planning to do. We didn’t know exactly when they were going to leave, and whether we could get in.”

But they were able to fly to Kabul and Kabul airport wasn’t as she had expected.

“It was very hot, but very ordered. Everything was organised – exceptionally well organised. It was nothing like what I had seen in the media. No swarming crowds, no yelling, and I couldn’t hear any gunfire.”

Maria took up a position on the flightline just by the Hercules’ loading



ramp. The evacuees were in line and ready to go. The first was an elderly lady in a wheelchair, and she became the subject of one of Maria's most well recognised photos.

"She was being lifted off the back of a ute. It was a moment that captured so much about what we were doing in Afghanistan."

"The evacuees included young children, and there were a lot of babies. All families of the people who had helped the New Zealand forces while they were in Afghanistan."

The evacuation went without a hitch, and they were soon in the air again.

"In just 20 minutes we had everyone on board and we were heading back to Dubai."

Maria was very impressed with the organisation and compassion of the kiwi service people at Kabul airport, but then had more reason to be proud of NZDF staff when they landed.

"In Dubai many NZDF staff came down to the airport to help the evacuees transfer to a civilian flight to New Zealand. They helped with ticketing, entertaining the kids, making sure everyone had something to eat – it was wonderful to see."

"The evacuation was NZDF's humanitarian role performed at its best."

Soon after arriving home (4 months), Maria boarded HMNZS Aotearoa to resupply McMurdo Station in Antarctica. However, an undersea volcano called Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai, erupted and triggered a tsunami that swept through homes on Tonga's nearby islands.

The Aotearoa and Maria sailed to Tonga to deliver emergency supplies such as milk powder, tarpaulins and 415,000 litres of freshwater. COVID-19 restrictions kept the crew aboard.

"I could only take photos from the ship. The devastation was clear to see. The Parliament buildings which are usually a pristine white with a red roof were covered in brown ash, as was the rest of Nuku'alofa."

However, she took photos of the on-board activities and was able to get some shots of the ash-covered roofs in the city, containers being unloaded and the Aotearoa refuelling a number of ships from other nations. On two occasions the HMNZS Aotearoa performed a replenishment at sea (RAS).

They returned to New Zealand, and without landing, due to covid protocols, they resupplied and set off for Antarctica.

"You know you are there long before you arrived, the massive icebergs tell you so."



"We sailed through the pack ice. It was other-worldly. Although the continent itself wasn't as white as I thought that it was going to be."

"We were able to land and we explored the Hillary Hut, but we weren't allowed to interact with staff at Scott Base."

The Antarctic assignment was an appropriate end to Maria's NZDF career. Her photographic interest lies in landscape photography and now that she has left NZDF she is building her online landscape photography business.

"It is my passion, one that I put into the background as I developed my skills and worked for the NZDF, but now very happy to be back to it and being able to pursue it while being close to my family."

Maria is only a few weeks out of the NZDF, but is there anything that she misses?

"NZDF people are wonderful. I met so many in so many different places – on bases, ships and planes – and every now and again I would bump into them again and it was like meeting a family member. Yes, I miss the NZDF family."

 Maria Eves' landscape photography can be found at [www.mariaoosterbaan.com](http://www.mariaoosterbaan.com)





# Anzac D





# ay 2022



# NZDF in action

## Around the world

New Zealand Defence Force personnel deployed to Europe have quickly integrated with international partner militaries and commenced supporting Ukraine's self-defence.

NZDF logistics personnel are working within the International Donor Co-ordination Centre (IDCC) in Germany assisting multinational efforts to cohere and coordinate the movement of donated military aid to Ukraine.

The first Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) C-130 Hercules flight transporting military aid between staging centres in Europe has left New Zealand.

The Hercules will be based at the Royal Air Force base at Brize Norton, United Kingdom. It will fly to centres in Europe to load and transport military equipment consignments to forward staging points from which the equipment is moved into Ukraine.

Outside the Pacific, the NZDF routinely has 110 personnel working throughout the world. Of those 50 personnel are working with the United States and Canadian militaries and 40 personnel are working with the United Kingdom's Armed Forces in various roles. Around 20 personnel are working throughout Asia. Additionally, in Esquimalt, Canada, 165 NZDF personnel are currently supporting the Frigate Systems Upgrade of HMNZS Te Mana.

Twenty-six RNZAF P-8A crew trainees are embedded with the United States Navy in Jacksonville, Florida, for training on the new P-8A aircraft.

A contingent of 32 personnel deployed to Turkey to participate in Anzac Day commemorations.



## Operations

**Personnel deployed on major peace support operations, training missions and headquarters positions around the world:**

**31** personnel to the Multinational Force and Observers in Egypt, including the Force Commander.

**12** personnel to the United Nations Command and Military Armistice Commission in the Republic of Korea.

**8** personnel to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation based in Golan Heights, Lebanon and Syria.

**6** personnel in the Middle East in roles associated with the Defeat-ISIS Coalition in Iraq.

**4** personnel to Honiara, Solomon Islands

**3** personnel to the Combined Maritime Forces Headquarters in Bahrain

**3** personnel to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan

**1** personnel deployed to UK Maritime Trade Operations in United Arab Emirates as part of our Maritime Security commitment.

## NZ and the Pacific



Six soldiers are in Fiji supporting the Republic of Fiji Military forces as they conduct professional training courses.



One member of the NZ Army band is providing training and mentoring to the Republic of Fiji Military Band and Fiji Navy Band.



Four Army engineers are supporting reconstruction of a secondary school in Fiji following Cyclone Yasa in December 2020.



A Boeing 757 transported the Prime Minister and her delegation to Singapore and Japan.



A P-3K2 Orion completed surveillance patrols and compliance checks of fishing fleets off the coast of Banks Peninsula.



Around 100 personnel are working with the Australia Defence Force and Pacific security forces in Cook Islands, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, Tonga and Vanuatu.



The NZDF is hosting personnel from Australia, Canada, Fiji, Indonesia, Malaysia, Tonga, UK, USA and Viet Nam on courses in New Zealand.