



Hauraki News

“Whaka tangata kia kaha”

May 2019 Issue No 93

Official Newsletter of the 6th Battalion (Hauraki) Regimental Association Incorporated

Compiled & Edited by Des Anderson

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To review Hauraki News prior to 2008

http://tauranga.kete.net.nz/remembering_war/topics/show/1287

President's Report

Every time I start a “Hauraki News” I am never sure how much input I am going to get from YOU. Many of the Members have taken up Facebook and other like social media, which gives instant gratification to both the writer & reader. I have told the Editor to continue with his task of producing the Hauraki News as it becomes part of our Hauraki history.

The President attended a presentation of the Vietnam Veterans (Neville Wallace Memorial) Children's & Grandchildren's Trust held at the Mount Maunganui RSA. Awhi gave a very emotional presentation of her family living with a soldier father who had seen service in Vietnam. I was given permission to produce her experiences in the Hauraki News; with the condition we don't publish her family name.

Lieutenant Colonel Leith Comber (Retired) gave a briefing about the Veterans Advisory Board “**Who should be considered a veteran in New Zealand**”: which he submitted to the Minister of Defence. My understanding from the briefing: it is to assist with **Welfare Assistance** to “Veterans”. I know, and sure you know of “Veterans” who are not currently receiving that assistance, because they do not qualify, using the tight bureaucratic definitions that exist today. The Minister of Defence is expected to give a response before the end of the year.

The Administrators of Facebook 6 Hauraki 2020 ANZAC Reunion had a meeting with the President & Secretary, prior to this ANZAC Day. The Editor has copied a plan for their Reunion 2020 in the Hauraki News. For more information join on their Facebook 6 Hauraki 2020 ANZAC Reunion.

The Association is going well. We are holding our AGM on Sunday 14th July 2019.

Kia Kaha

Des Anderson

3/6 Battalion - Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment

Captains Tane and Laura North have undertaken a massive walk from Wellington to Auckland over the last ten days to raise awareness and money to help their son Elijah gain much needed treatment in Australia.

They will finish at the Auckland War Memorial Museum at approximately 1300 today (Saturday 23 March), and would appreciate your support. If you have the time, get down and cheer them across the line. Alternatively, you can make a donation through their Givealittle page at www.givealittle.co.nz (search Elijah “wonderboy” North).



In less than a month Captains Laura and Tane North will hit the road to walk from Wellington to Auckland to raise money for treatment for son Elijah – and we're with them every step of the way.

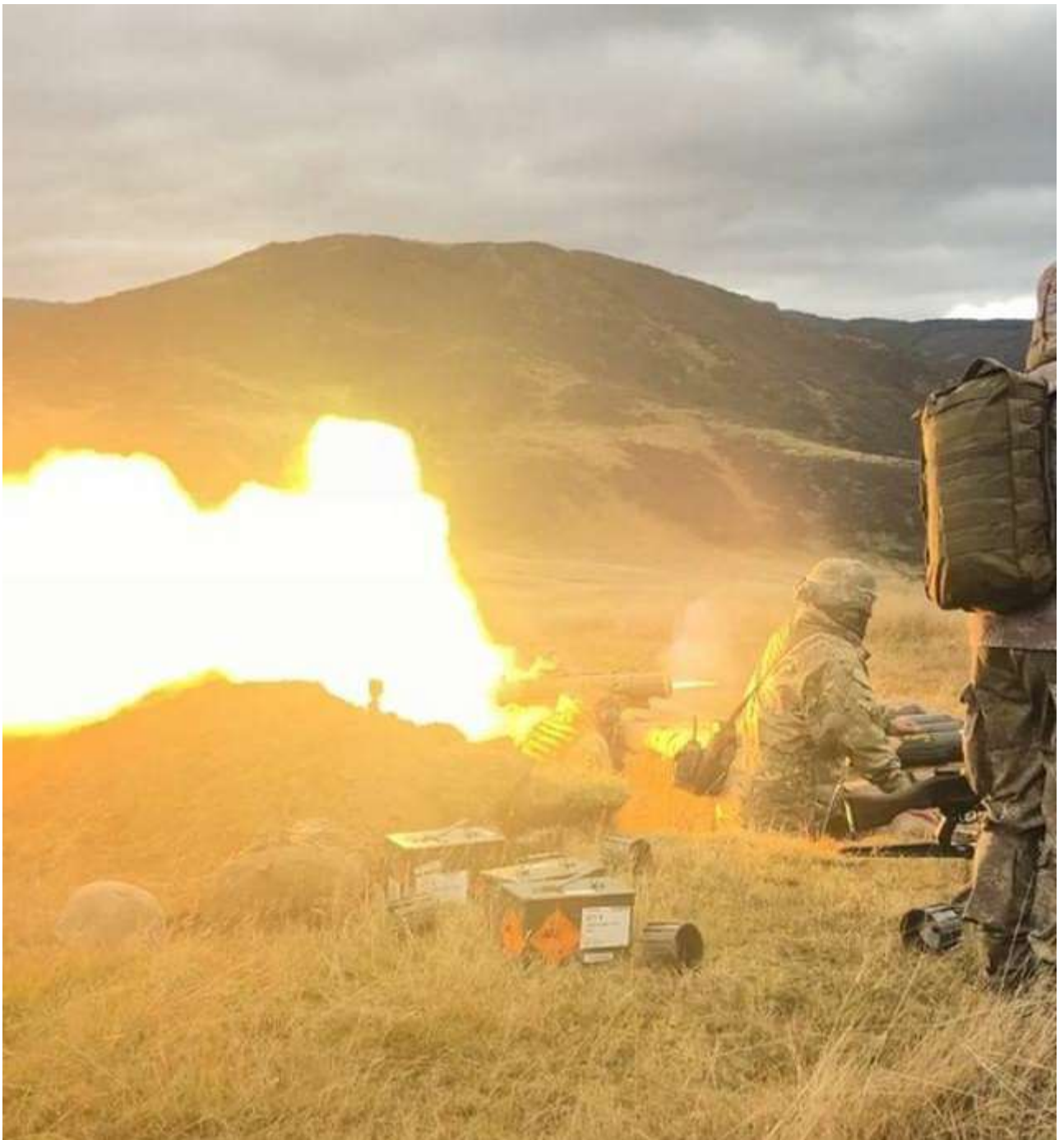


The CO and RSM with RSM and Adjutant 5/7 Bn on the penultimate day of the “Walk for Wonderboy”.

LCpl Hemi FLAVELL OCS Demo Squad firing the 84mm Carl Gustav Anti-Tank Weapon, during a weapons effect demonstration for the officer cadets.

LCpl FLAVELL is a proud 'Broraki' 6th Hauraki member, who has been part of OCS Demo Squad since 2016 and recommends those who are interested in being part of this integral team of Army Command School OCS Waiouru need apply.

Gone are the days of counting foot powder, and scraping ammo tins. Demo Squad Support Section 2019, is a multipurpose skilled unit in all aspects of the military (rifleman, sigs, logistics) that work hard and reap the rewards of their efforts.



ANZAC DAY

The first Civic Service took place at the new Papamoa Cenotaph today.

Members of the public gathered to remember those who served in the First World War.

The service began with a march lead by bagpipe players, and school students with wreaths and New Zealand Defence Force members were also in attendance.



Tauranga's civic memorial teaching 'honour' to the young generations



A veteran (Retired SSgt Eric Kristensen) laying a wreath (Vietnam Veterans) among many others at the cenotaph. Photo / Andrew Warner

The words of God Save the Queen could be heard far and wide as thousands of voices sung the tune to begin Tauranga's civic memorial service yesterday morning.

Little and big voices of all those who came to pay their respects filled Memorial Park as two low-flying jets flew over the service, creating a poignant start to the important ceremony.

A day for the veterans.



Veterans led the parade at the beginning and the end of the service. Photo / Andrew Warner.

Tauranga mayor Greg Brownless was the first speaker, welcoming the huge crowds who had turned out and reflecting on the importance of the ceremony.

He paid tribute to those who fought in the war and in Gallipoli itself, saying that today we reflect on those "who gave their lives so we could be free".

RNZAF Group Captain Carol Abraham said Anzac Day was a time created to show pride for your country, duty to your community and a reminder that we must live to make the world a better and brighter place.

"We no longer have World War I veterans among us and our World War II veterans are thinning, now is the time to honour them."

She said there were 86 fallen soldiers locally who fought in World War I, which was a large number of people from the small settlement Tauranga once was.

Head prefects from Bethlehem College, Misha Nesbitt and Rebecca Bridgman, spoke on behalf of the younger generation. Nesbitt highlighted how New Zealand's relative safety in a generally peaceful nation could make us forget the sacrifice past soldiers made for us.

Off the back of this, Bridgman said how tragic it was that the nation's safety that veterans had fought so hard for had been "jolted" following the events in Christchurch.

More than 50 wreaths were laid in the wake of the speeches, decorating the cenotaph with an abundance of colour.

Sweet pipe band music created an old-time ambience, perfectly fitting the occasion.

Tauranga MP Simon Bridges and his young family, along with veterans, nurses, emergency service workers and students, made their way up the stairs to pay their respects.

A poignant moment for all was watching veterans salute the cenotaph as a tribute to likely friends and family who lost their lives fighting alongside them.

National Leader Simon Bridges and family lay a wreath

The Ode to the Fallen was read emotionally by Tauranga RSA president Fred Milligan before the Last Post silenced the thousands.

This silence erupted again with the Australian and New Zealand national anthems sung loud and proud, before the final march past to conclude the ceremony.

Many service-goers told the Bay of Plenty Times they thought it was important to see younger generations getting involved with the service.

Training warrant officer in the New Zealand Army, John Harris, who was a part of the march, said the civic service was all about including the children and making them aware.

He said it was extremely important to remember who we were as a nation and pass the knowledge and honour on to the next generation.

More than 50 wreaths decorated the cenotaph.

Veteran and president of the Bay of Plenty Officers Club, Des Underwood, who served for just under 60 years, said the service was a part of their "continuity" and a way to pay respect to those who served alongside them.

Alister and Rachel Keam, whose son Elijah marched in the parade, said it was easy to forget what soldiers did for the nation and they felt it was their duty to teach their children about it.

Mother and daughter Michelle and Karen Wharerau said they came down to pay respects as their father/grandfather fought in World War II.

Karen Wharerau said they come every year to lay their poppies and as the country was losing its World War II veterans, it was more important than ever to thank and respect them.

Caroline Fleming



Richard Burgess (Support Company, 6 Hauraki Battalion) observed ANZAC Day at sea on the cruise ship MSC Splenda (Italian). Along with a number of Australian & British passengers.

Photo Penny Burgess



Dawn Service at Muruika Soldiers' Cemetery where Ryan Kelly collapsed resulting in a trip to the hospital. Photo / Ben Fraser

Family seek identity of soldier who helped teen after he collapsed at Thursday's Anzac dawn service

After being rushed to hospital in the middle of Thursday's Anzac dawn service, one family are seeking the identity of a soldier who they believe helped save a teenager's life.

Ryan Kelly was attending the Rotorua Dawn Service along with thousands of locals who came together for Anzac Day in Ōhinemutu when a wave of dizziness rushed over him.

The 19-year-old said to his girlfriend he felt "yuck" but when she went to grab his hand it wasn't there.

His mother Nadine said Ryan had collapsed and whacked his head on the concrete.

"He started vomiting and we were also told that there was a bit where he stopped breathing but he was pretty much in and out of consciousness."

Ryan was eventually taken to hospital and was now home resting but Nadine said it could have been a different story if the soldier standing next to him hadn't put him in the recovery position.

"As soon as Ryan hit the ground this guy leapt into action.

"This guy pretty much saved his life so we just want to track him down and say thank you."

Past and present servicemen and women stood in their uniforms to commemorate all who had fought for our country and Nadine believes the man was either a soldier or cadet.

"He was part of the service dressed in full uniform."

Ryan was standing near the tombs in the Muruika Soldiers' Cemetery.

If you know the identity of the man in the uniform, please email news@dailypost.co.nz.

A Rotorua teen was among the hundreds who gathered on the shores of Lake Rotorua for the Anzac Day dawn service at the Ohinemutu war memorial last Thursday. When his still stance crumpled, the situation dramatically worsened when he suffered a significant head injury from the fall. Quick thinking from others in the crowd helped turn the young man's fate around. After his release from hospital and with help from the public, he has now had the chance to thank the soldier whose quick first aid actions may have saved his life.

The identity of the soldier who helped save the life of 19-year-old Ryan Kelly after he collapsed and started vomiting has been revealed.

Josh Bishop, a firefighter and territorial force officer, was at the Anzac dawn service at Ohinemutu last Thursday when Kelly fainted, hitting his head on the concrete.

After being rushed to hospital, Kelly's mum Nadine approached the *Rotorua Daily Post* to find the identity of the man she believed helped save her son's life.

As many soldiers were, Bishop was standing in the crowd at the right time and place.

"I heard a loud thud and I turned around to see a young man on the ground and people were trying to move him but it was quite clear that something was wrong."

At that point, Bishop took control and carried out first aid he had learnt through his time in the defence force and as a firefighter.

"It was pretty bad, he wasn't breathing.

"But I don't believe what I had done was heroic in any way, it was simply what any soldier or officer would have done in that position."

Bishop said he was grateful he was in the position where he could help.

Kelly told the *Rotorua Daily Post* this week his head was still tender but overall, he was fine thanks to Bishop.

"It was kinda weird because it was the first time it had happened to me so it was all a bit scary."

Kelly can't remember anything apart from a feeling of dizziness that crept over him then waking up in an ambulance half an hour later.

"It has definitely changed me; I am going to change my whole diet and start being a bit healthier."

The pair met in person last night so Kelly could say thank you. They had previously been exchanging messages.

"He said 'no need to thank me, he was just glad he could help'.

"[It was] good to thank him because it was good to have someone that knew what they were doing there.

Kelly wanted to thank everyone that was involved including those who lent their jackets under his head to support him.



Josh Bishop (left) has met with 19-year-old Ryan Kelly after he helped save his life at the Anzac Day dawn service. Photo / Ben Fraser

OBITUARIES

Cpl Albert Sidney Puia



Surname: Puia

First name(s): Albert Sidney

Rank: Cpl

Corps: RNZIR

Service number: 40218

Unit: V2 4 Troop NZSAS

Date of Birth:

Tuesday, 31 October 1944

Date of death:

Thursday, 28 February 2019

Place of burial:

Taruheru Cemetery, Gisborne

Sidney Puia service in the NZ ARMY

He served his country in the following operational theatres:

Borneo/Vietnam (1 RNZIR) and Victor 2 Company 11 Mar 1965 – 25 May 1968

Vietnam (4 Troop, NZSAS) 10 Dec 1969 – 14 Dec 1970

Rhodesia Monitoring Force from December 1979 to May 1980

Singapore 15 May 1980 – 09 May 1982

6 Battalion (Hauraki) - Cadre for A Coy (Rotorua) – 1982- 1984

Sid served 21 years in the New Zealand Army with time spent in both the RNZIR and the NZSAS.

Sid retired 09 August 1984 at the rank of Sergeant.

Decorated veteran Brigadier Ian Thorpe dies aged 88



Brigadier Ian Thorpe, CBE, has died. Photo / File

[By: Kelly Makiha](#)

One of New Zealand's most highly ranked and decorated former army officers, Brigadier Ian Thorpe, has died.

He was surrounded by his family when he died today at the age of 88.

His death came just days after he celebrated his 60th wedding anniversary with his dearly loved wife, Pat.

Thorpe (Brig. Gen 31359) had a military career that spanned more than 50 years, during which he served two monarchs and two countries - New Zealand and Fiji.

Brigadier Ian Thorpe CBE was the guest speaker at last year's Anzac civic service in Rotorua.

Living in Tarawera since 1960, it was trout fishing and sailing that lured the family to the area.

He was an integral member of the local community. For some years Thorpe was Tarawera and neighbouring Rotomahana lakes' launch master. Alongside his wife, they also ran a sailing school.

Thorpe was 17 when his army career began as a cadet in Australia's Royal Military College, Duntroon.

His first New Zealand posting was Papakura Military Camp where he instructed compulsory military trainees (CMT).

Thorpe's Bay of Plenty introduction was in the early 1950s when he was appointed adjutant of the Hauraki Regiment.

He served in Fiji, teaching himself Fijian, as Commander tackling communist insurgents in the Malayan jungles.

After marrying, the pair settled in Wellington and Thorpe oversaw the military's involvement in a major SEATO conference.

In 1962 the Thorpe's moved to England where Thorpe was seconded to the UK Staff College.

Thorpe was summoned back to Malaya (now Malaysia), helping clear up the remnants of communists active in Indonesia and Borneo.

At the height of the Vietnam War he was second-in-command of the Anzac Battalion in Nui Dat.

He also served in the UK, Australia and with the SAS. When he retired in 1974, he was director of this country's defence operations.

Fiji snaffled him up - twice, first as its Commander of Military Forces then as Commandant of the Fiji Officers' School and military adviser to the government.

He has 14 honours and decorations, including CBE, OF (Officer of the Order of Fiji), MSD (Meritorious Service Decoration), MID, (Mentioned in Dispatches).

On April 25 last year, he was the guest speaker at Rotorua's Anzac Day Civic Service.

Rotorua mayor Steve Chadwick extended her condolences to Thorpe's family, describing him as a "man of enormous stature, both in his military career and as a civilian".

"He was a great man who served his country and contributed to his community.

"We have lost someone who made an important contribution both to New Zealand and to the Rotorua community.

"He considered himself to have been fortunate in life. We consider ourselves fortunate to have benefitted from his military and community service."

A service will be held at Rotorua Cemetery 160 Sala St, Rotorua 2pm on Wednesday followed by a celebration of his life at the community centre, Alexander Rd, Lake Tarawera at 5pm.

Our people: Brigadier Ian Thorpe CBE

Brigadier Ian Thorpe CBE. Photo/Stephen Parker
Rotorua Daily Post By: Jill Nicholas

When Brigadier Ian Thorpe CBE delivers the address at Wednesday's Anzac civic service Rotorua will be tuned into one of this country's most highly ranked and decorated former Army officers.

Nor is Ian Thorpe a "mere" brigadier. In Fiji where he's also served, he's addressed as Brigadier General.

His is a military career that spans more than 50 years during which he's served two monarchs and two countries.

With his service so distinguished its mission impossible for Our People to do this professional military man justice, rather we've chosen to highlight a handful of postings and personal milestones.

Away from the parade ground, Tarawera has been the Thorpe's' playground since 1960 when Thorpe and Pat, his wife of 59 years, were drawn there by two things the army couldn't offer, trout fishing and sailing.

Despite the comings and goings military life demands, they've been integral members of in the local community; for some years Ian was Tarawera and neighbouring Rotomahana lakes' launch master, they've also run a crowd-pulling sailing school.

Thorpe was 17 when his Army career began as a cadet in Australia's Royal Military College, Duntroon.

The son of parents unable to afford a university education for him, the Army was his ideal alternative.

"I was looking for something where I could study and play rugby."

One of only four Kiwis in his intake "three of us are still alive and kicking" the first year was bully central.

"It was called bastardisation; its aim was to pull people down and make them amenable to the harsh training."

Thorpe survived, studying English, physics and chemistry, along with military exercise and three hours of sport a day.

His first New Zealand posting was Papakura Military Camp where he instructed compulsory military trainees (CMT). "Some were my age, 21, I won favour when I formed a company rugby team that included three future All Blacks." All Blacks' captain Wilson Whineray (later Sir Wilson) included.

Thorpe took a CMT contingent earmarked as promising officer material to Waiouru, among them Rotorua's Pita Anaru (Our People, May 31, 2015).

"I had to study late every night to stay one step ahead of them."

Thorpe's Bay of Plenty introduction was in the early 1950s when he was appointed Adjutant of the Hauraki Regiment, "the biggest battalion in New Zealand". The Haurakis played an integral role at the recently-crowned Queen's 1954 Arawa Park reception.

"I'm impressed how much kapa haka's improved, then it was very rough and ready, people dressed in all kinds of clothing, . . . Beer bottles everywhere."

Thorpe was earmarked for Korean war service but its ending signalled his first association with Fiji. He was sent to command its platoon tackling communist insurgents in the Malayan jungles.

"It was by far the most efficient unit in the history of the emergency, their job was to kill terrorists, they were twice as effective as the Ghurkhas."

He learnt Fijian and gave himself a fright looking in a mirror. "I'd think my God I've got a white face."

In Johore the platoon was involved in what could have been an international incident, adroitly avoided, obviously by Thorpe, although he doesn't say so.

"One of our patrols killed a tiger, we discovered tigers belonged to the Sultan, we sent a delegation with a whale's tooth to seek forgiveness . . . Later the crown prince presented us with the most beautiful tiger skin complete with head. It hangs in the military headquarters in Suva, it's a bit moth eaten now."

Thorpe's first meeting with Pat, a teacher turned Army officer, was at Waiouru where he was adjutant of the Army schools. Fraternisation between the sexes came close to firing squad material.

Pat Thorpe gives us a peek of how they got together. "We met in the mess, I immediately thought he was rather nice with the most beautiful accent. I applied for leave, he happened to be going on leave too, offered me a lift to Auckland." The insight ends there.

But we do learn the day after they became engaged Thorpe was directed to attend the UK School of Infantry, attached to the Coldstream Guards as they exercised in Germany.

It was more than a year before the pair reunited and married, the dictates of an inter-military marriage forced Pat Thorpe to relinquish her commission and return to teaching.

Settled in Wellington, Thorpe oversaw the military's involvement in a major SEATO conference.

Getting with military precision to the official opening from Trentham was any Army commander's logistical nightmare, the scheduled transport was a no show.

"I commandeered horse floats, anything on four wheels, to ferry them into Wellington, Land Rovers were tearing along with soldiers standing in trailers, they just had time to brush hay off their uniforms before the formalities began."

In 1962 with their family roll call increased by two daughters, the Thorpe's moved to England where Thorpe was seconded to the UK Staff College. Their son was born during that period.

Thorpe was summoned back to Malaya (now Malaysia), "helping clear up the remnants of communists active in Indonesia and Borneo".

At the height of the Vietnam war he was second-in-command of the Anzac Battalion in Nui Dat.

Like most who served there his reaction to that controversial conflict remains guarded.

"It was beneficial to the Army, we got good experience, whether the whole war was worthwhile isn't easy to answer."

Pat Thorpe blames Vietnam for her husband's profound deafness. "We exchanged tapes, all I could hear in the background was gunfire... boom, boom, boom."

He's spent more time in the UK, in Australia and with the SAS. When he retired in 1974, he was director of this country's defence operations. But his Army days weren't done, that's when Fiji snaffled him up – twice, first as its Commander of Military Forces then as Commandant of the Fiji Officers' School and military adviser to the government of that coup-prone island nation.

As Pat Thorpe succinctly puts it, "his life's been rather busy".

IAN THORPE CBE

Born: Auckland, 1930

Education: Remuera Primary, Auckland Grammar, Duntroon Military College

Family: Wife Pat, two daughters, one son, six grandchildren, one great-granddaughter

Honours and decorations: 14 including CBE, OF (Officer of the Order of Fiji), MSD (Meritorious Service Decoration), MID, (Mentioned in Dispatches).

Interests: Family. "Staying alive". Sudoku, crossword puzzles, woodwork (makes beautiful boxes). Sailing, fishing "not so much these days".

On his Life: "I've been very, very lucky."

On Anzac Day: "It's the day people pay attention to old soldiers, sailors, airmen, it's the day for them, the day to remember."

Personal philosophy: "I don't have one."

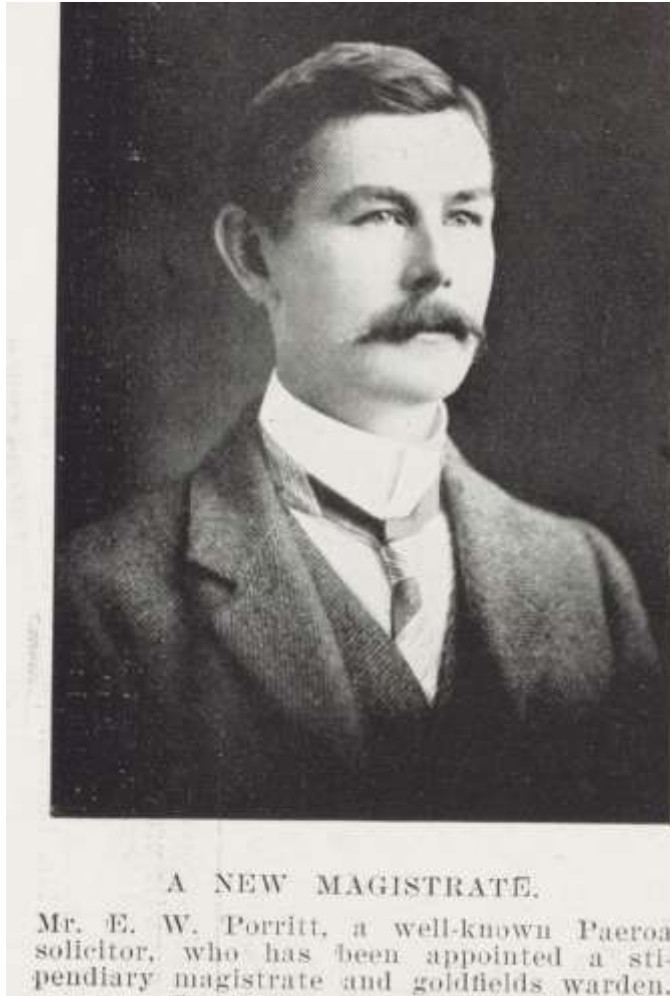
Brigadier General Robert Ian Thorpe

NZ Army 31359



28th May 1930 – 3rd March 2019

HAURAKI HISTORY



Edmund William Porritt V.D. (1865-1936)

Adjutant: 1898-1900; 2nd Battalion Auckland Rifle Volunteers.

Commanding Officer: 1900-1919; 2nd Battalion Auckland (Hauraki) Infantry Volunteers (from 1 October 1901); then VI (Hauraki) Regiment (from 1909).

Honorary Colonel: 1923-1936 (died in appointment).

While Edmund William Porritt is not now, nor has been for a good many years, known to the Territorial or (now) Reserve Forces personnel in our area, he was, for a long time intimately associated with the 6th (Hauraki) Battalion and the Paeroa heartland of the Territorial and Volunteer forces. He was widely known in the community and much respected; as a volunteer officer, a lawyer, and as an active community participant.

Porritt's association with things military commenced in 1885 as a Lieutenant in the Greytown cadets.

Summarised, his subsequent promotion journey looks like this:

Lieutenant in Wellington Guards; 21 January 1891.

Captain and Adjutant of 2nd Battalion Auckland Rifle Volunteers; 8 November 1898.

Captain and Adjutant; promoted to Major; 6 June 1900.

Promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and Commanding Officer 2nd Battalion Auckland Rifle Volunteers; 28 January 1902.

Relinquished command of VI (Hauraki) Regiment and transferred to Retired List; December 1919. Appointed Honorary Colonel; the Hauraki Regiment; 14 September 1923 until 1936. Deceased; 17 March 1936.

Edmund William Porritt was associated with the Hauraki's right from the 'go get' in 1898 when the 2nd Battalion Auckland Rifle Volunteers was formed. He led the Hauraki Regiment, from 1902, through the transition from Volunteer unit to a Territorial Force battalion. He helped guide the battalion through the Boer War and lead it through World War One, but he did not command it, or any sub-unit of the battalion, overseas on active operations; rather he commanded the unit from which active service personnel were drawn. He was responsible for training and administration of the regiment and his contribution to the establishment and subsequent development of the Hauraki Regiment is without doubt. It is evident that he made a significant contribution to the preparation of those men destined to be involved in fighting; and, it must be said, of those men who returned home wounded and / or suffering from 'shell-shock'. His discipline and thoroughness in training is very evident in contemporaneous news articles – as is his determination to keep up to date with evolving tactics being employed in the war in Europe; and passing those lessons on through his training.

That Edmund William Porritt was an outstanding member of the Paeroa community, there is absolutely no room for doubt. He appears utterly tireless in his pursuit of the improvement of the town of Paeroa. It is difficult to imagine how he balanced the many competing demands he willingly accepted upon his time; except perhaps to understand the exemplary role Mrs Porritt must have played in supporting him and assisting in his community and military service. Indeed, it ought to be recognized that Margaret Porritt, especially during the war, was equally tireless in her fund-raising efforts for men at the front.

Porritt was often publically recognized as a committed citizen and capable and diligent military leader. So, it is especially galling that there appears to have been little or no recognition of his tenure as Commanding Officer upon his retirement in 1919, nor of his tenure as Honorary Colonel from 1923 to 1936. It might be that the protracted period of illness that he suffered prior to his death saw him much less involved in the community and that his military involvement, as Honorary Colonel of the Hauraki Regiment, was more nominal than actual. That may explain why it was not until four years after his death that Sir Stephen Allen was promoted to replace him.

Porritt stands as an exemplary role model for officers, N.C.O.s and soldiers of the Reserve Forces. His absolute commitment to God, King, Country and community is unquestioned; as are the moral values and ethics that impelled his involvement in the military and his community.

Russell Skeet (Thames)



1984 Annual Camp Waiouru - Administration Company 6 Bn Hauraki win the Efficiency Shield for the First Time.

Malay Emergency veteran's 'brotherhood' to gather for Easter weekend



Photo / Andrew Warner

Reunion organiser and Bunnies member Stephen Rosser said the weekend would be spent catching up with dear old friends. Photo / Andrew Warner

For the first time in 30 years, more than 100 war veterans of the Malay Emergency are expected to reunite this weekend for a time of fellowship and to share memories.

A three-day long reunion affair will see members of the Alpha Company, nicknamed the "Bunnies", meet and commiserate 30 years after the unit returned in from South East Asia in August 1989.

Reunion organiser and Bunnies member Stephen Rosser said the weekend would be spent catching up with dear old friends and remembering their time together all those years ago.

"It's a gathering of people with a life-long friendship. Even though it's been 30 years when we see each other it's just like yesterday.

"It's a brotherhood. We used to live together, we used to sleep together, we used to shower together."

When the early birds to the gathering met on Thursday night, they had decades of catching up about families, wives, and jobs to do.



The Alpha Company, nicknamed the Bunnies, in their hey-day. Photo / Supplied

Hungahungatoroa Marae in Matapihi would be used as a base for the reunion with some of the attendees sleeping in the whareniui.

A meet and greet was held at the Tauranga RSA for early comers on Thursday night, followed by a powhiri, whaikorero and mihimihi at the marae and a formal dinner at the Mount Maunganui RSA on Friday.

Today, the guests will be treated to a late breakfast and a day of sports and activities.

This will include an afternoon spent reminiscing and viewing old footage from the tour of duties, followed by a hāngī dinner and band at the Tauranga Sports Club.

On Sunday, a memorial held at the Tauranga Centotaph will honour the members of the unit who did not return from the war with 16 white crosses to be erected to honour their lives.

The guests will also have a historical tour of Tauranga before attending **an evening function hosted by the 6th Hauraki Battalion Garrison Club.**

Monday will see the members meet for the last time for breakfast at the marae before leaving after a formal farewell.

The 1st Battalion of the Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment was raised for service in Malaysia in the late 1950s.

The unit was based at the Dieppe Barracks in Singapore but trained and operated in Malaysia.

The battalion was stationed in South East Asia until its return to Linton Military Camp in Palmerston North in 1989.

The Malayan Emergency

- Malayan Communist Party attempt to overthrow the British colonial administration
- Conflict lasted from 1948 to 1960
- New Zealand helped provide border security until 1964
- 15 New Zealand soldiers died, three from enemy action

By: Jean Bell

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Kia ora Des

Thank you for coming along to the presentation of my essay. It was not an easy task to stand up in front of others and share details of my family however, there has been healing in it for me. My hope is and without taking away from the soldiers and the road they have travelled, that it may bring some understanding for other families.

I am happy for you to share the document I have attached to this email in your newsletter. I am happy for you to use my first name but **I ask that you do not include my father's name**. Could you also send me a copy of the newsletter once you have published it?

Thank you and if you would like any more information, please email me.

Nga mihi
Awhi

How the Vietnam war and my father's involvement in it has affected me and my family".

I loved my dad, even though he was hard to live with. Even to this day I never knew if that was who he had always been or if the Vietnam war had had such a profound effect on him that he'd changed forever. My mum told me that his sister had referred to him as a gentle giant before he'd gone to war. A giant he was, gentle I'm not so sure about.

A soft side would show through every now and then, but I mostly saw his hard exterior. He was a big, strong Maori man from the East Coast, with huge hands and an authority about him that no one messed with. He was a man of few words and as a kid, I was scared of him.

Mum and dad met not long after dad returned from Vietnam. Mum was also in the army and was introduced to dad through his sister Rebecca. I came along not long after and was born in Christchurch in 1970. We lived there until I was 4 then we moved to Singapore for 2 years. I remember a few things from that time, but mostly what involved me rather than dad. We moved back to NZ in 1977 to Waiouru and stayed there for 3 years until dad was posted to Tokoroa. He eventually retired from the army after 20 years while at that posting but continued in the territorial force for a few more years.

I arrived in Waiouru when I was 7 and we left when I was 10. I have lots of memories of my life

I arrived in Waiouru when I was 7 and we left when I was 10. I have lots of memories of my life in Waiouru. Many of them are great and I still talk about them to this day. School, the snow, climbing trees and riding horses at the local pony club. Other memories are not so good and up until recently the events that took place were part of defining who I became as an adult. These are memories of dad, a man who I remember as always being drunk. Like I said at the beginning, he was a big man and a big drunk man is a very scary person to a little child. There were moments that I feared for my family's safety and on one occasion my brother and I were taken to the neighbour's house so we weren't exposed to what was going on. I heard arguments and yelling at other houses, so I knew we weren't the only family where this happened.

After we moved to Tokoroa, this way of life continued. Dad drunk many nights, arguments, yelling and knots in my stomach continuously. I slept with a bible under my pillow because in some small way, I felt like this would keep me safe. When I turned 15, I decided I no longer wanted to live under his roof, so I left school, left home and started working. This was tough on my mum and when I was 16, my parents separated. The life with my dad had been hard enough for me, I can't imagine how tough it had been for my mother.

When I was 19, I moved to Australia and this is when my relationship with my dad started to improve.

He visited me a couple of times and I got to know a little about who he actually was. He was more than the big, scary man I had grown up with. He was intelligent, he cared and I realised he worried about me. When my first child was born, my dad surprised me totally when he started singing nursery rhymes to her. I had no idea he even knew what a nursery rhyme was. Like I said previously, he was a man of few words so he never really talked to us much. I had two more children and dad spent time with them, teaching them games and playing with them in the backyard. This is the soft side of dad that we never experienced growing up as his children. Between my first and second child, I had 3 miscarriages. Dad made comments about it being his fault, he thought that maybe the effect of Agent Orange had transferred through to me and this is what caused me to have the miscarriages. Through investigation, it was found I have antiphospholipid syndrome which can be caused by an autoimmune disorder. We will never know if this was in any way linked to Vietnam however, no one else in my family has this syndrome.

This was the first time we had heard dad talk about Vietnam. Throughout the following years, dad would make random comments during conversations that had nothing to do with Vietnam. It would catch us by surprise and often we asked him to repeat what he said, but he never really did. In the end, we learnt to tune in to when he would go off on another track of thought and voice it out loud. The comment that stands out to me the most was - 'it was either Charlie or me, and I chose me'.

When Dad was in his 60's he asked me to write down what life was like for us kids. He wondered if he had PTSD from Vietnam after he had seen a video on the subject. This is what I wrote:

"What I see in regards to depression is you seem to go into a shell and are not interested in anything around you. I notice this when I talk to you on the phone and you just seem grumpy and not interested in what I am saying to you. You answer me with one-word answers and do not volunteer any information on what you have been doing.

When we were kids and living at home you never used to speak to us. It was like you just shut us out of your life. I still can't work out why but you always seemed angry about something. Alcohol was a big part of my memories of you. You were always drunk and that scared me. I remember the fights you and Mum used to have and I remember the violence.

I've noticed you don't like to be in crowds of people, that being something like a family gathering. You just up and leave with no real reason. Well none that I can see. It's like you get depressed all of a sudden and have to get away in a hurry. I notice you change your mind a lot. You will tell us one thing then go and do something totally different. I personally think you are suffering from PTSD".

I'm not sure if dad had any counselling for this but he decided for his 65th birthday that he would invite all the men that had served with him in his section, so they could share their stories with us, and that we would have a better understanding of what had happened. This ended up being a time of healing, laughter, tears by all and a connection to the men that dad had served with all those years ago. They told us their memories and stories of dad and who and what he had been to them back in those days. It was then that we realised that our dad held a lot of mana with these men. We were seeing our dad in a different light and an understanding started to develop for the reason he spent so many nights drunk when we were kids. I think he just wanted to block out all the thoughts that were going through his mind.

When dad was 70 years old, he was diagnosed with larynx cancer. My mother, brother and I cared for him during this time and after nine months of this disease, he died at the age of 71. He never once complained, his only comment being, 'it's a bit of a bugger'. Throughout these nine months, our family had a chance to be together and heal. Mum cared for dad in her own home after his treatment. A sacrifice she made for my brother and I. Once dad left the hospital, he needed full-time care, my brother ran a business and I was working supporting my family. One of us would have to give up work to look after him. As I mentioned, they separated when I was 16 but she took him back and cared for him so we could continue to work. We were all devastated by the loss of dad. In the end, he paid the ultimate sacrifice for his country. Not

during the war but 42 years later by a cancer which is on the list of presumptive illnesses of Vietnam.

Nine years after dad passed away, my family attended a ceremony at Government house in Wellington, where we received on behalf of dad, an acknowledgement from the government for service. He was formally recognised for his Mention in Dispatches award and we were given his citation. This was a proud yet humbling moment for our family.

The effect of the Vietnam war on our family took its toll, yet the price my dad paid was much bigger. In my grief after dad died, I wrote a letter to the then Prime Minister - John Key, asking him to remember my dad on ANZAC day and the sacrifice he had paid for his country.

For further information the website for the Vietnam Veterans (Neville Wallace Memorial) Children's & Grandchildren's Trust is www.evsayouthtrust.org.nz

Editor

Copied from the Facebook 6 Hauraki 2020 ANZAC Reunion

Ok. Here is the updated Itinerary for our Reunion 2020. For those going on the Waiouru leg of the Reunion...Phase 1:

Wed 22 April 1000hrs:

RV at Tauranga Army Hall Garrison Club.

Prep for journey to Waiouru leaving approx. 1200hrs.

Arrive at Waiouru Marae approx. 1630hrs.

Powhiri at 1700hrs then prep for Dinner/Supper.

Will set timings for next day activities. Free time in evening TBC.

Thurs 23 April:

Reveille TBC

Breakfast at Marae.

0900hrs: Waiouru Army Museum visit, Move to Waiouru Camp conducting Barrack Tours, Ranges Tours and WETS activities.

Approx. 1500hrs:

Move back to Marae prep for Dinner.

Freshen up for Tour Group Function...2 cans per man...yeah right.

Back to Marae accommodation in your own time for crash out.

Fri 24 April:

Reveille TBC

Breakfast at Marae.

Approx. 1000hrs: Leave Waiouru Marae.

Approx. 1100hrs: Stopover in Taupo for free time.

Approx. 1230hrs: Call in to Onward Bar Taupo.

1400hrs: Move to Tauranga Army Hall Garrison Club.

Approx. 1700hrs: Arrive back to Tauranga Army Hall, meet and greet in Garrison Club with those who have arrived for the main Anzac Day activity and join in the Hauraki Fellowship.

BBQ Dinner at Tauranga Army Hall TBC.

NB: You will need to sort your own accommodation on the Friday and Sat night, those that are staying in Tauranga.

Sat 25 April:

0430hrs: Move to Anzac Dawn Service TBC.

1000hrs: Attend Tauranga Anzac Day Civic Service (taking up our places as 6th Hauraki Reunion Group) at Memorial Park, opposite Tauranga Army Hall.

At end of Civic Service move back to Tauranga Army Hall Garrison Club.

ENDEX.

The timings will be more accurate once we get final numbers for those attending the Waiouru leg. As we know we do have a cut-off date of early Feb 2020 so we can make confirmed arrangements for rations, accommodation, vehicles, petrol, koha and any other associated costs that may occur in Phase 1.

Just make sure that if you are attending this leg that you confirm by that date so don't be THAT GUY that misses the cut off to avoid potential embarrassment.

Note that the visit to the Onward Bar has been confirmed by Gary "Slash" Brandon. He has said that the Bar is a BYO bar. He is conducting his own Reunion on the Anzac Day 2020 but is welcoming us to the bar on the Friday. This is definitely worth a visit.

On Anzac Day there is an option for those who wish to attend your own Anzac Dawn Services in your locs but we want the Reunion Group to be in full numbers attending the Tauranga Civic Service...which is our main purpose of attending this Reunion 2020. Timings also to be confirmed closer to the date.

Some of us staying in Tauranga will touch base with those attending Tauranga Dawn Services and may attend the Mount Maunganui Service TBC.

A heads up that Des Anderson has informed us that the vehicles will need to be parked at Tauranga Boys College as the streets around the Civic Parade will be closed to the public. That also means us who may think we can park at the Tauranga Army Hall but that is not going to happen...on that day.

Matt Nuku is heading back to Waiouru in the coming days to finalize some loose ends and confirmations at the camp with our Hauraki comrades down those ways.

Well there you have it Hauraki.

A novel and a half but let's get it out there.

Any other things I may have missed here I will update the page in due course.

Hope where ever you are, be safe with your whanau and friends.

ONWARD.

SIR KEITH PARK STATUE UNVEILING IN THAMES

On the 27th of April, at 11 a.m., a bronze statue of Air Chief Marshall Sir Keith Park, KCB, KBE, MC and Bar, DFC, Defender of London and Malta, and a son of Thames, was unveiled outside the War Memorial and Civic Centre in Mary Street Thames; this following a dawn blessing of the site and statue at 6 a.m.

The funds for the creation and placement of the bronze came from a bequest from Betty Hare, who sought to have Sir Keith more widely recognised within his home town. The statue was the work of artist Mark Whyte and was cast by Jonathan Campbell.

Distinguished guests for the ceremony included Hon. Ron Mark, Minister of Defence and Veterans Affairs; Air Commodore Carol Abraham, Deputy Chief of Air Force; Commander Guy Hayward, Royal Navy, UK Defence Advisor to NZ, Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu; and Scott Simpson, MP for Coromandel. **The MC for the ceremony was Russell Skeet.** Approximately sixty Park descendants, with one travelling from Australia, were in attendance amongst a gathering of approximately 300 people. **The Curator of the 6 Battalion (Hauraki) Association Museum, David Cross & Karen Cross represented the Association.**

The ceremony included a fly past of four waves of aircraft, including a spitfire and a hurricane, by pilots from Warbirds. The unveiling ceremony was followed by light refreshments. Dr Adam

Claasen, the senior lecturer in history from Massey University and an expert in military aviation, concluded the mornings activity with an excellent address about Sir Keith Park and his leadership during World War Two. An excellent display and audio-visual presentation, assembled by Wendy Hare and Nigel Milius, supported the event and remained open for public viewing for three days following the Saturday event.

Conducted under a slightly cloudy blue sky, with a gentle breeze and warm conditions, the event was generally heralded as successful – much to the relief of Wendy and Ralph Hare, the executors of the estate of Betty Hare, and the organisers of the bronze and the unveiling event. Minister Ron Mark summed up Sir Keith Park with his words; “... Simply put, Sir Keith was an outstanding man, leader and ‘Kiwi’. No other New Zealand born military figure has had a greater impact on history than Park, for none have ever had such a significant role in determining the course of such a major battle. A battle that had it been lost, would have allowed Hitler’s land forces to invade Great Britain, thereby changing the history of the world. ...”

Russell Skeet

Images courtesy of Nigel Milius.





What is a Veteran?

A “Veteran” – whether active duty, discharged, retired or reserve – is someone who at one point in his or her life wrote a blank cheque made payable to “NEW ZEALAND” for an amount of “up to and including his or her life”

Thank you for your service

Lieutenant Colonel Leith Comber (Retired)

Report sent to the Minister of Defence on the 23rd May 2019. What is a Veteran?

A Century of Eric Wilson

It was a celebration fit for a soldier. Over the weekend Eric Wilson, war veteran and long-time Howick RSA member celebrated his 100th birthday. Around 100 family and other invited guests joined the centenarian in celebrating this milestone occasion. The afternoon was filled with laughs and reminiscing on Eric's adventure filled life. His daughter Noeline read out the telegrams from Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and most importantly the Queen. **Captain Paul Couch, representing the 6 Hauraki Regiment and 6th Battalion (Hauraki) Regimental Association also spoke and gifted Eric a copy of "Comrades Brave" the unit's centennial volume covering the period 1898-1998.** Eric was also presented a special commemorative coin by Lieutenant Colonel Roger Erat representing the NZ Defence Force. His eldest granddaughter Tracey Bowyer gave a heartfelt speech filled with loving anecdotes of Eric's life. "It is measurable by the amount of people here to celebrate you, Poppa, what a truly special man you are". Tracey said. "You have shared in our lives and touched our hearts in different ways with your generosity of time and kindness". She spoke of Eric's fierce commitment to family, tenacious timekeeping, great story telling and even his inability to watch someone park their car without any pointers. "Have you ever pulled up somewhere of course Eric is there first and at the ready to tell you how to park"? "Right back in, left hand down, hard round, hard round, keep it coming. Right, that'll do". She says, imitating her grandfather with the crowd laughing. Tracey spoke of Eric's loving relationship with his wife Doris, his love for his family and his faith that one day he will get lucky and win Lotto. Her speech honoured Eric and thanked the gathering guests for being "instrumental in the success, greatness and longevity of this wonderful man's life." Eric celebrated with a few rums and time with friends and family. Eric's official birth date was Monday, April 29.



Eric at the RSA & cutting the Cake.

Last known remaining Battle of Crete veterans honoured at Mount Maunganui service



Centenarians Brant Robinson, Eric Wilson (centre) and Bill Bristow at the NZ Battle of Crete Association 78th Commemoration Service at Mount Maunganui RSA. Photo/ George Novak

By: Sandra Conchie

Three centenarians took centre stage at the New Zealand Battle of Crete Association's 78th commemoration memorial service at the Mount Maunganui RSA yesterday.

Eric Wilson and Bill Bristow, both aged 100 from North Shore, and 102-year-old Brant Robinson from Pukekohe, are the last three known remaining Kiwi veterans from 1941 campaign in Greece.

We also know of one other veteran in New Plymouth. Ralph Ward (19th Bn.) is doing OK but unable to travel.

About 100 people took part in the special service with the three men seated together and warmly acknowledged by speakers and those in attendance.

Eric Wilson, a driver with the 24th Battalion, Hauraki Company, who turned 100 last month, said it was a significant and important service and something he had looked forward to attending.

Eric Wilson said services such as this brought memories of his time in Crete flooding back.

"It's a special day not only for New Zealanders but for the people of Crete," he said.

The Battle of Crete was one of the most dramatic engagements of World War II.

Commonwealth troops including New Zealanders fought in the 12-day battle that began with an airborne invasion by German parachutists on to the Mediterranean island.

After 12 days of fierce, bloody fighting against Nazi paratroopers, often at close quarters with bayonets fixed, 672 Kiwis were dead.

A further 967 were wounded and more than 2000 taken as prisoners of war as the Mediterranean island fell into Hitler's hands.



NZ Battle of Crete Association, President, Peter Moss welcoming three special veterans at Mount Maunganui RSA.

Peter Moss, the President of the Association, said it was an "absolute privilege" to have Eric Wilson, Bill Bristow and Brant Robinson attend the service.

"We are so pleased to be able to honour these three veterans' service in particular, who hold a special place in history," he said.

The Master of Ceremonies; Lieutenant Colonel Warren Banks, former Commanding Officer 6th Battalion (Hauraki) RNZIR stated he has been involved with the Association since 2006.

Mayor Greg Brownless also paid tribute to those who had died and the returned servicemen who suffered the physical and emotional scars from fighting in the battle.

The keynote speaker was retired Colonel Raymond Seymour who shared insights into the battle, which his father Jim Seymour fought in, and its aftermath.

He said the battle was "brutal" with significant losses on both sides.

The battle was etched into the memories of Kiwi families and the people of Crete, who suffered at the hands of the Germans for harbouring Commonwealth soldiers, he said.

Anglican vicar Reverend Marie Gilpin delivered the opening prayer and reflection and Bill Taare read The Ode.

The Tauranga Brass Band performed the national anthem, and bugler David Travers-Watt played The Last Post and the Reveille.

The flag bearers were members of the NZ Cadet Forces.

The President 6th Battalion (Hauraki) Regimental Association presented Eric Wilson with a Hauraki Challenge coin.

Once the official ceremony finished, Tauranga's Athena Dancer Group entertained with a lively display of Greek dancing in the clubhouse.



Tauranga Cadets gathered at the Mount RSA to support three Crete Veterans and the Crete Commemoration Service

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Museum Curator: David Cross

This newsletter is compiled by Des Anderson, President, of the 6th Battalion (Hauraki) Regimental Association Incorporated. It contains many personal views and comments which the views of the Association or Committee may not always be.

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6th Battalion (Hauraki) Regimental Association Incorporated

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New Membership
Full

Renewal Membership
Associate

Regimental Number

Date of birth

Full Name

Partners name (if applicable)

Full Postal Address

Telephone Number (home)
Mobile

Business
Email

Brief resume of service with 6 Hauraki
(Include dates & appointments)

Highest Rank Held

Service in other Units

(If Associate member - your association to 6 Hauraki Assoc.)

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Receipt Number

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