



C-O-N-N-E-C-T-I-O-N-S

Newsletter of the Lower Hutt Memorial RSA — **June 2021**

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PO Box 38-905 Wellington Mail Centre, Lower Hutt

*The Lower Hutt Memorial RSA meets on Friday from 4:30pm to 6:30pm
in the Members Lounge at the Petone Workingmen's club 47 Udy Street, Petone*

SAD NEWS

Mike Sharpe who was a long-standing member of the LHMRSA died on Saturday, 5 June at Shona MacFarlane Retirement Village in Lower Hutt.

Mike served in the Royal Navy for 22 years, attaining the rank of CPO, specializing in Aviation Medicine. A good part of his naval career was spent on the Commando Carrier, HMS Bulwark, in which he served during the Indonesian Confrontation of the 1960s, and RNH Haslar, the Royal Naval Hospital at Gosport, Portsmouth.

Mike's funeral was held at Arise Centre, Korokoro, at 2:00pm on Monday, 14 June.

OUR NEXT GUEST SPEAKER

There will not be a guest speaker this month (June).

Our next guest speaker will be LTCDR Peet Hoeksma RNZN. Peet will be providing us with an illustrated presentation on anti-piracy measures he was involved with in the Middle East, on Friday 30 July in the ANZAC Lounge.

The ANZAC Lounge will be open from 4.30pm until 6.30.

All are invited to hear these experiences.

And, yes... the bar will be open!

NEED HELP WITH INTERNET BANKING PROBLEMS?

This month sees our trading banks opting out of issuing and receiving cheques, and a number of our members will find the transition to internet banking problematic. To this end, our Support Services Team are available to assist members with understanding how this new system works, and guide them, step-by-step, through the process.

If you need some help to get you started with internet banking phone PWMC Reception on 0-4-568 5404, leave your contact details, and ask for a LHMRSA Support Services Team member to get in touch.

PARALLEL INTERESTS

Looking out of a restaurant window, I noticed a woman struggling to parallel park. After a good few minutes of watching her move backwards and forwards, I went outside to offer my help, which she readily accepted. After I parked her car, a man came over to thank me.

"You're welcome," I said. "Are you her husband?"

"No," he replied. "I'm the guy parked behind her."

NEW SUPPORT SERVICES APPLICATION FORM

Reproduced below is the new Support Services Funding Application Form. This form and the application itself has been streamlined to be more user-friendly for all concerned.



LHMRSA

Discretionary Funds Application

Only applies to Returned/Service personnel or Widow/Widower/Partner of a Returned/Service person residing in the Lower Hutt Memorial RSA area (Proof of service is required by non-members of the Lower Hutt Memorial RSA).

Name:.....

Service No:.....

Address:.....

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Phone No:.....

Being a Returned/Service person I wish to apply for a grant in respect of Dental/Optometrlist/Specialist/X-ray/Hearing aids/ Doctor/ expenditure by myself.

Amount of expenditure \$..... Original receipts & details attached

Bank details

Email

Address.....

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Signature:.....

Date:.....

Approved:.....

Date:.....

Support Officer: Ph. 568 5404 & leave contact details.

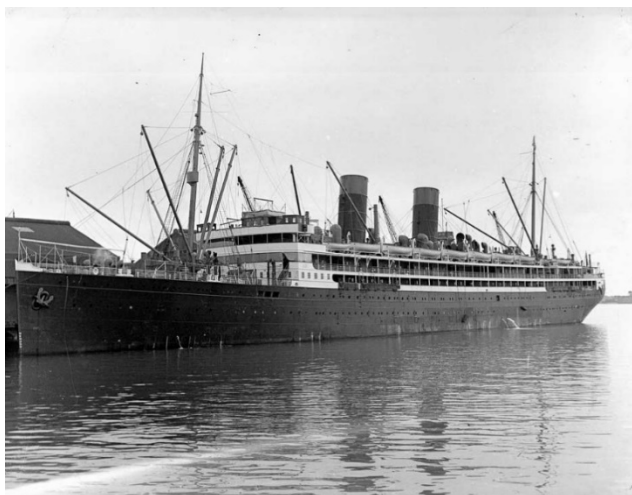
THE MONTH OF JUNE IN NEW ZEALAND MILITARY HISTORY... by Keith Garwood

Each month Keith will present fewer historical events, but each of these events will be fleshed out with a bit more detail. Any feedback as to content etc., would be appreciated.

German mines in Hauraki Gulf

Launched as a freighter for the Hamburg America Line in 1930, the *Kurmark* was requisitioned by the Kriegsmarine in 1939 and renamed *Orion* to be a World War Two merchant raider. The *Orion* entered New Zealand waters in June 1940 and laid a total of 228 mines in the approaches to the Hauraki Gulf on the night of **13/14 June 1940**.

Success came quickly for the *Orion* when the 13,415-ton Royal Mail Ship *Niagara* was mined and sunk off Bream Head in the early hours of the 19th of June 1940 – fortunately without any loss of life. Included among *Niagara*'s cargo were 590 gold bars valued at £2.5 million (\$5 million). Most of the gold was recovered in 1941 followed by a smaller amount in 1953, but five gold bars are thought to remain unaccounted for.



RMS Niagara



HMS Puriri Memorial, Ocean Beach, Whangarei Heads

The *Orion* claimed another victim when the minesweeper HMS¹ *Puriri* (a converted Anchor Company coaster) was mined and sunk north-east of Bream Head on the 14th of May 1941. The *Puriri* sank quickly making it impossible to launch lifeboats. Five of the crew of 31 were lost, with the survivors being picked up by HMNZS *Gale*, which was operating nearby as part of the 25th Minesweeping Flotilla that included both ships.

Ruapehu furlough draft

Following the defeat of the enemy in North Africa in May 1943 the New Zealand Government took the decision to bring personnel of the first three volunteer echelons of 2 NZEF home to New Zealand on furlough. The draft, codenamed 'the Ruapehu Draft', of almost 6,000 men comprised the married men of those echelons together with 60 percent

¹ *Puriri* was sunk just before the creation of the RNZN, at which time RNZN ships became HMNZS.

of the single men chosen by ballot. The Ruapehu Draft sailed for New Zealand on the **15th of June 1943** on the *SS Nieuw Amsterdam* and arrived in Wellington on the 15th of July.

The story of the draft, and in particular the failure of many of the members of the draft to return to duty, came to be known as the 'Ruapehu Affair' in subsequent writings, commentaries, and documentaries. It is a story of misinformation, resentment, doggedness, and eventual resolution.

Based on information apparently given by officers of the furlough draft, the men believed that at the end of their three-months of leave they would be given the option to return to the Middle East or stay in New Zealand and return to civilian life. Army authorities subsequently denied that leaving the Army was an option for the men.

Historian Nan Taylor has described the resentment that the men felt on their return to New Zealand:

They found New Zealand comfortable, very far from the war, full of Americans, with thousands of fit men in the home forces or held in industry, some on high wages. Feeling was strong that they had done enough, that no man should go to the war twice before all had gone once.²

As the furlough period progressed it became apparent that many of the men would resist returning to duty when ordered to do so, thus creating a difficult situation for the Government to deal with. In order to defuse the situation the Government exempted many categories from returning to the Middle East. These included: married men with children; those aged over 40 years; and all Māori. Appeals against returning were given sympathetic consideration and 2,500 men were found medically unfit for further service.

About 450 of the 1,600 men who were faced with returning to the Middle East refused the order to return and were convicted by court martial of desertion and dishonourably discharged from the Army. The Court of Appeal later quashed the convictions for desertion while noting that the men could have faced other charges such as insubordination or mutiny.

The Ruapehu Affair also created a dilemma for the RSA, which had quietly supported the defaulters' grievances on the basis of fairness (no man should go to war twice before all had gone once) while at the same time RSA rules denied them membership because they had been dishonourably discharged.

Matters came to a head and were resolved in 1945 when the RSA incurred the Government's ire by deciding at its national conference to admit the defaulters to membership³, following which the Government withdrew the defaulters' dismissal notices and restored their discharge privileges.

² Nan Taylor (1989) 'Human Rights in World War II in New Zealand', *New Zealand Journal of History* 1989, Volume 23, No.2.

³ Some local associations had admitted defaulters to membership before this.

⁴ Stephen Clarke (2016) 'After the War: The RSA in New Zealand' Penguin Random House.

LHM RSA SUPPORT SERVICES

The LHM RSA offers Support Services for all Returned and Service personnel (and their spouse/partner, or dependants). Assistance can be tailored to individual needs via grants or assistance with expenses for:

- Doctors' visits and prescriptions
- Dental
- Optical
- Audio impairment
- Specialist visits
- Funeral expenses (conditions apply)
- Mental Health

As well as home and hospital visits, assistance with a variety of home help services may also be available.

If you require assistance from the LHM RSA Support Services Team for any contingencies other agencies cannot assist with, phone PWMC Reception on 0-4-568 5404, and ask for an appointment with the LHM RSA Support Services Team, and leave your contact details.

WELFARE OFFICER

The PWMC have allocated funding for a Welfare Officer. Dale Ansell of the MAF Committee will be available to assist all Members with their welfare concerns. Office space has been established for Dale in the LHM RSA Office/Library, which is situated downstairs, off the Members Lounge. Appointments can be made to see Dale for Tuesday 9am to 1pm; Wednesday 9am to 4pm; and Thursday 9am to 1pm, at Reception on 0-4-568 5404.

ASSISTANCE FOR VETERANS FROM VETERANS' AFFAIRS NEW ZEALAND

Veterans can get the following assistance from VANZ to help with quality of life issues, including:

- Lawns and gardens
- House cleaning
- Gutters cleaned
- Windows and external house washing
- Help may be available for internal windows
- Home modifications to assist entry and exit (e.g. ramps)
- Furniture modifications
- Attendant care (short term basis only)
- Adaptive clothing and footwear
- Personal alarms (in case of falls, etc.)
- Assistance with applications for funding of mobility scooters
- Travel allowances (conditions apply)
- Assistance with medical costs and hearing loss

The above is available to all who served prior to 1 April, 1974 and includes all operational deployments and routine service deployments. This also covers those who served after 1 April 1974 in various theatres since Vietnam.

For further information or clarification, contact your Veterans' Affairs Case Manager directly on 0800 483 8372, or e-mail veterans@nzdf.mil.nz

If you are already dealing with VANZ and are having to wait a long time to see an appropriate professional, make contact with the LHM RSA Support Services and if we can help speed up the process with VANZ, we will.

