



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

Newsletter of the Lower Hutt Memorial RSA — **January / February 2022**

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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*

WELCOME TO 2022 — Norm Rosser (President)

Welcome back to this year, I hope that this will be a better year, We can do without any Covid lockdowns.

I have to let you know that we said goodbye to an old stalwart in Harold Steer. His funeral was held on his 100th birthday (17-1-2022)

This year we are starting with a speaker, Mr Bob Rowell. Hope you can all attend this to make this an enjoyable evening. I have arranged a speaker for Friday 25 February 1700-1800 "My World through Rose Coloured Glasses" by Bob Rowell. (retired).

Bob is ex owner of "The Glass Shoppe". The talk will be on his experience of replacing and reworking the stained glass windows of important buildings such as Government House, Te Papa, and the Embassy, St James and Batts theatres. He also did Parliament House as well as the General Assembly Library after the fire.

In this issue of 'Connections' you will find a new form for our Support Services Discretionary Funds. This replaces the form you will have seen in previous issues of the newsletter. To streamline the processing of welfare/support applications we now have a LHMRSA/MAF letterbox which is behind the PWMC Raffles Desk in the members' lounge downstairs.

MORE SOUTH EAST ASIA VETERANS 1959 TO 1974 QUALIFY FOR A MEDAL — NZDF

The Minister of Defence Hon Peeni Henare announced on 3 November that 4500 more veterans are now eligible for the New Zealand Operational Service Medal (NZOSM) for service in South East Asia from 1 February 1959 to 31 January 1974.

The New Zealand Government has extended eligibility to the additional military veterans who have not previously received a medal for that service.

Veterans affected by the changes include Royal New Zealand Navy and Royal New Zealand Air Force personnel who served across the entire period, and about 1,000 Army personnel who served in South East Asia from 1967 to 1974 but did not serve in Vietnam or have previous service in the Malayan Emergency, on the Thai-Malay border or in the Indonesian Confrontation.

Associated units include 40 Squadron, RNZAF, whose aircrew and supernumerary crew flew frequent sorties between New Zealand and South East Asia in direct support of FESR and ANZUK.

The recent review by the New Zealand Defence Force showed the need for a wider approach to medallic recognition for South East Asia than had been practised in the past.

An eligible veteran must have been posted or attached for seven or more days with the Far East Strategic Reserve (FESR), the Australia New Zealand United Kingdom Force (ANZUK) or associated units during the above dates. Awarding this medal recognises the valuable contribution to the defence of South East Asia by veterans who served in Malaysia and Singapore, but were not required to deploy into combat theatres, such as Borneo or Vietnam.

New Zealand Armed Forces personnel who undertook official visits to FESR or ANZUK will qualify for the medal if they have accumulated 30 days of official visit service. The 30 days can also be accumulated from service in different operational theatres.

There is no change to the eligibility of New Zealand Force South East Asia NZFORSEA (1974-1989), as this service does not meet the threshold to qualify for medallic recognition.

Visit the [medals and service records section](#) for more information.

- [2021 - Background Information and Historical Notes - South East Asia medallic recognition](#)
- [Final Report of service in South East Asia - Dec 2013](#)
- [FAQ's South East Asia](#)
- [South East Asia Report 2021](#)

JANUARY AND FEBRUARY IN NEW ZEALAND MILITARY HISTORY... by Keith Garwood

The RNZAF's worst day

In accounts of New Zealand's military history the **15th of January 1945** is remembered as 'Black Monday'. On that day eight Corsair fighters and seven pilots were lost, making it the largest single-day loss for the RNZAF.

The disastrous day began shortly after 0900 hours when a 14 Squadron Corsair was shot down during an attack on the dock area of the Japanese-held Simpson Harbour on the island of New Britain.

Flight Lieutenant Keefe exited the aircraft by parachute but landed in the harbour perilously close to Japanese forces on shore. He reasoned, as did those organising the considerable rescue attempt that followed, that his only chance of rescue by friendly forces was to swim to the harbour mouth where a US Navy Catalina seaplane could land out of range of Japanese shore batteries.

Throughout the long day covering Corsairs of 14 and 16 Squadrons RNZAF prevented the enemy from launching a boat to capture the pilot who valiantly swam for the harbour entrance for a rescue attempt

planned for 1815 hours. But after an energy-sapping all-day effort FLTLT Keefe was swept back into Simpson Harbour by the turning tide and was recovered alive by the Japanese and taken prisoner. What had already been a bad day for the RNZAF became much worse. Of 15 covering Corsairs that set out to return to their Green Island base in the evening only eight made it home. A tropical front had built up making navigation to their small atoll base extremely difficult, and a series of disasters, all caused by weather, saw five Corsairs crash into the sea, one crash at Green Island while landing and a seventh disappear in clouds. All seven pilots were killed. And then just 15 days later FLTLT Keefe died of blood poisoning thus bringing the losses associated with Black Monday to eight pilots and eight Corsair Fighters.



Black Monday Memorial, MOTAT 2, Auckland

This story gives us pause to think about some of the finer aspects of human nature that come to the fore in times of adversity, particularly war. The first is what was headlined by Australia's 'The Argus' newspaper of the 2nd of February 1945 as, '8 Pilots Die in Glorious Tragedy – NZ Air Force Epic'.¹ And that of course concerns the pilots of the aircraft involved in the attempted rescue mission who were prepared to put their own safety at considerable risk to rescue one of their own. The other is the gesture and generous donation of the former American Seabee Marvin Brink, of Brooklyn, New York, who 60 years after the event remembered the comradeship he enjoyed in the company of New Zealand servicemen on Green Island by making a substantial donation to the memorial at MOTAT 2 (pictured previously).

Badges of honour?

On the **19th of February 1916** the New Zealand Government introduced a system of arm badges to distinguish those who had already served and been honourably discharged from the Expeditionary Force (a scarlet armlet with a yellow crown) and those who had placed their services at their country's disposal (a khaki armlet with a red crown) but who had yet to be called up or would not be called up for reasons including unfitness or exemption.

While not as blunt an instrument as the campaign which saw women presenting white feathers to men in civilian clothing who they perceived to be avoiding their duty – sometimes mistakenly so – it was nevertheless an officially-sanctioned attempt to shame men into answering the call. The official position was put by Prime Minister Massey as follows²:



Government-sanctioned armlets



Silver War Badge

“The wearing of the badge is, I suggest, a duty they owe to their brother soldiers in the firing line, because the armlets will, if worn, be constant and eloquent reminders to all eligible unencumbered men in the Dominion of the urgent duty they owe to their brother New Zealanders who are now waiting at the front for help to finish the work so honourably begun”.

The Prime Minister's urging may have been because some returned men did not like the appearance of the armlet, preferring, instead, the silver war badge. Falsely wearing the armlet or silver war badge was punishable by imprisonment, and those properly entitled to wear them were given a signed authority issued by the Army.

¹ [02 Feb 1945 - 8 PILOTS DIE IN GLORIOUS TRAGEDY - Trove \(nla.gov.au\)](https://trove.nla.gov.au)

² [Papers Past | Newspapers | Dominion | 25 March 1916 | WEAR THE ARMLET \(natlib.govt.nz\)](https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz)

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. Step-by-step assistance with understanding and using Internet Banking is offered too.

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 LHM RSA and the PWMC jointly fund 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.



LHM RSA SUPPORT SERVICES

Discretionary Funds Application

Email: lhmrta@gmail.com — Website: www.lowerhuttrsa.co.nz

Assistance may be available for Returned or Services personnel, or their qualifying families or dependents.

(Please provide proof of Military Service if not a financial member of the Lower Hutt Memorial RSA)

Name:.....

Service No:.....

Address:.....

.....

Phone No.:.....

Email:.....

I wish to apply for LHM RSA financial assistance towards the cost of approved Support Services benefits, which has been directly incurred by myself.

Total expenditure incurred / assistance sought \$.....

(Please attach original receipts and details of expenditure incurred)

Bank Account No.:.....

Signature:..... Date:.....

Approved:..... Date:.....

If you need to contact LHM RSA Support Services: Phone 568-5404 and leave contact details.