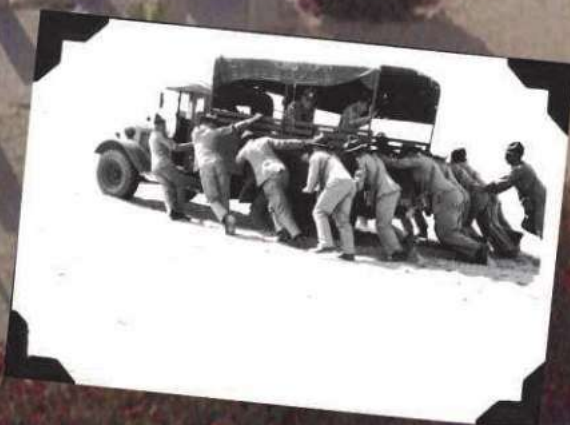


The New Zealand Genealogist

Mahuru September 2025

Vol 56 No 406



New Zealand Society of Genealogists

Te Rangapū Kaihikohiko o Aotearoa

Family history - Preserving our past for the future



4001 Mt. EGMONT. TARANAKI. N. Z.

THE BEST PICTURE EVER PRODUCED OF THE MOUNTAIN. Muir & Moodie



Kiwi Collection

September 2025 Update!

Postcard by Muir & Moodie, 1908, Te Papa Collections PS.001314/02

The South Taranaki Database
has nearly 300k records. Will
your family be in there?

**The September update will
include 5 new record sets,
and 51,000 'creep' records,
taking the total to
16.5 million records!**



www.genealogy.org.nz/kiwi

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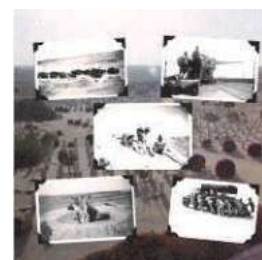


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Inside back cover:
Branch and Interest Group Services

Cover Photo :
Photos taken by
Lt. GA Nicholls,
4 Field Regiment
in Egypt in 1941,
with cemetery at
El Alamein as
background



The Mission of the **New Zealand Society of Genealogists** is to provide educational opportunities and research resources for the development of knowledge, skills and practice in family history, genealogy and whakapapa for members and the wider community.

Being a member, you get to be part of a community of amazing people with access to a wealth of information that members have put together for nearly 60 years. You can contribute to that information, either by writing articles about your own research, or helping with projects such as indexing school records in your area of interest. You will get direct help with your own research from other members or by joining one of our online or in-person courses. Or you can help other members with their challenges. It is all about sharing your passion and knowledge with people who get it, and as a bonus, making new friends!

Benefits of Membership include:

Become a better researcher
Save money on your research
Help preserve resources

Discover new resources

Share your research and skills

* See pages 112-113 for more information

How to become a member

Applications to become a member can be made online at www.genealogy.org.nz or may be made in writing. Application forms can be downloaded from the website or are available from NZSG Membership Department, PO Box 14036, Panmure, Auckland 1741 or by emailing membership@genealogy.org.nz.

Membership Category		Subscription
Ordinary	Open to any one individual (one journal, one vote)	\$115.00
Joint	Open to any two persons living in the same household (one journal, two votes)	\$160.00
Student	Open to people 12–25 years (one journal, one vote)	\$35.00
Institutional	Open to any library, institution, museum, facility, corporate body, family history organisation or group that is supportive of the objects of the Society and which is willing to assist the Society to promote these objects (one journal, no vote)	\$185.00

Subscriptions are for 12 months from the first day of the month in which payment is received.



This month's theme

World War II

Copy deadlines

Feature articles submitted for consideration must be received by the Editor by the following dates:

Issue	Last date for consideration
March	17 January
June	17 April
September	17 July
December	17 October

Deadline for regular contributions from NZSG, Branches and Interest Groups, Members' Area: 17th of the same month.

Submission of copy

Submissions can be made in electronic format by email in .doc, .txt or .rtf file format emailed to editor@genealogy.org.nz.

Include your name, contact details and membership number.

Criteria

1. Relevance: related to people and their society; genealogy, family history, whakapapa, research, documentary sources, application, biography, genealogical technology etc.
2. Length: Feature articles: 1,800 to 2,700 words (2–3 pages) plus images; Short articles: 500–900 words plus images.

Upcoming themes

December 2025

Where did they live?

June 2026

Unions, Clubs and Societies

March 2026

Occupations

September 2026

Miners and Mining

Style Guide

A Style Guide is available on the NZSG website:

genealogy.org.nz/NZG-Editors-Notes/11168/

Editing

The Editorial Team reserves the right to edit articles to meet standards and for readability, but if substantial changes are required the Editor will consult with the author.

Advertising

Contact the NZSG [National Manager](#) for information about rates, specifications and conditions, or find details on the [NZSG website](#) with other details about *The New Zealand Genealogist*. Copy must be received by 17 January, April, July and October.

Members' Area

Includes: Contact Sought, Information Wanted, Information Offered, Trader and Reunion notices. Members may submit queries of up to 50 words (excluding submitter's name, email and membership number). Please do not abbreviate your enquiry. All surnames should be in capitals. There is no limit to the number of entries you may submit, but your full name, email and membership number must be included with each entry.

BOARD REPORT



We have had a great Family History Month around the country. I hope you found the time to attend one of the events or to do some family history.

The NZSG hosted the Auckland Expo for the first time. A huge thank you to the many volunteers who made this event happen with such short notice. We had a great array of speakers, including keynote speaker, Chris Paton, who flew in from Scotland to visit Christchurch and Auckland. It was a great weekend and well attended.

At our AGM at the end of June, we welcomed new Directors Simon Young and Garry Phillips. Both have strengths in areas that will be beneficial to our Society.

We also awarded a Life Membership for the first time in a few years. Heather Bray has been a NZSG member since 1986 and has held roles at national and local level since then. It was a great pleasure to acknowledge Heather's hard work and dedication in this way.

The Board met for its annual in-person meeting on 26 July. Sarah Hewitt was re-elected as Chair with Melanie

Middleton as Vice-Chair. Trisha Dunn was elected as the third member of the Executive. Discussions were wide ranging. We have decided to implement a Strategic Records Group which will look at the end-to-end processes of our records and also identify gaps in the information we are collecting. We will also have a Strategic Education Group to move forward on the many ideas we have for expanding our educational offerings.

In September we are looking forward to the next update of the Kiwi Collection. In addition to half a million new records, including the latest 'creep' records, we have five new record sets. This takes the total records to 16.5 million over 436 record sets. Thank you to all the volunteers who have worked to provide these records and the team that gets them on the Kiwi Collection. What will you find?

If you have any thoughts to share with us, please do not hesitate to get in touch. Our strength comes from our members.

Sarah Hewitt, NZSG Chairperson



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only a click away!**

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Glenn Stewart
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Life Membership Award 2025 – Heather Bray

At the Society's 2025 Annual General Meeting earlier this year, the Society awarded Life Membership to Dunedin Branch member Heather BRAY #6587. Heather is the 46th NZSG member to receive this award and the fourth Dunedin Branch member, joining Eleanor LECKIE, Ngaire OCKWELL and the late James (Jim) MARSHALL. The last recipient of this award was Heather McLEAN in 2019.

Heather joined the Society in 1986, and the Dunedin Branch a year later. She has served on the Branch Committee in various capacities including Branch Secretary 1989-1991 and 1993-1996, Branch Convenor 1991-1992 and 1999-2000. Heather was re-elected to the Branch Committee in 2023 and holds the positions of Branch Secretary, Newsletter Editor, and Facebook Administrator.

Heather became an officer of the NZSG in 1994 responsible for the Pre-1856 New Zealand Marriage Collection (position held until 2018) and in 2004 was appointed Education Officer (South Island) for the New Zealand Society of Genealogists, a position she held until 2007. From 2007 until 2015 Heather was the editor of eight regional research guides published by the NZSG.

Heather has been a much sought after speaker, presenter and educator travelling widely to speak at NZSG Branch

meetings, seminars, and workshops in Mosgiel, Balclutha, Gore, Invercargill, Alexandra, Oamaru and of course with many other Dunedin-based organisations. Heather was also the guest speaker at the 1998 NZSG Conference in Dunedin and the 2008 NZSG Conference in Christchurch.

As the NZSG Chair Sarah Hewitt indicated that she would not be travelling south to Dunedin for some time to present the certificate, badge and citation, it was decided that it would be presented by the Convenor of the NZSG Dunedin Branch, who happens to also be Heather's husband Kevin, adding an extra special meaning and possibly a unique occurrence. Heather chose to receive her award at the August Dunedin Branch meeting during Family History Month.

The closing paragraph of Heather's citation provides a fitting summary of her 40 years with the Society: 'Heather's constant and generous encouragement of others in researching and writing family histories has been a hallmark of her extraordinary services to genealogy, her local branch, and the Society.'

Kevin Bray
E: kgbzero6@gmail.com

***Heather Bray being presented
with her NZSG Life Membership
certificate, badge and citation
by Dunedin Branch Convenor
Kevin Bray.***



Theme for December 2025 Issue — Where did they live?

Our theme for the December 2025 issue of *The New Zealand Genealogist* is 'Where did they live?'.

What have you discovered about the places your family lived? What interesting records have given you details about the land they lived on and houses they built or lived in? Do you have a story to tell?

Make sure to look at the tips on submissions on our website genealogy.org.nz/NZG-Editors-Notes/11168/ before submitting your article.

Send your submissions to editor@genealogy.org.nz by 17 October 2025.



Vivienne Parker (1943-2025)

Vivienne Margaret PARKER née HANCOCK was born in the Wirral, Cheshire, England on 7 November 1943 and after a long and productive life, she passed away peacefully at her home in Meadowbank, Auckland on 2 July 2025 in her 82nd year. Vivienne leaves behind her husband Keith VAUTIER, her two sons and two grandchildren.

Vivienne joined the New Zealand Society of Genealogists in 1983, and she has been involved in many ways with the Society. Her first involvement was with the despatch team for the magazine who were responsible for packing the printed copy into envelopes, sorting them by postcode and attaching stamps, then taking these to the post office for distribution.



Vivienne as editor

After serving on the editorial production team for a while Vivienne became Editor of *The New Zealand Genealogist* in 1991, a role she held until 1997. The Federation of Family History Societies (an organisation established in England with world-wide family history society membership) holds a competition every year for the best journal published, known as the Elizabeth Simpson Award. The November/December 1993 journal, produced under Viv's leadership, was submitted and was awarded first place for that year.

In June 1993, Vivienne initiated the establishment of the North West England Interest Group and a separate North East England Interest Group. These were separate groups at commencement, but later amalgamated and became the Midlands and North West England Interest Group. Vivienne received Interest Group Service Awards for North East England, North West England, Channel Islands, Southern England, East Anglia and Cornish Interest Groups. In about 2015 it was decided to combine all the British Interest Groups, and they became the English Interest Group in 2017 with Vivienne as Convenor until her resignation in 2023 which came about because of a decline in her health.

Vivienne was convenor of the 1994 Conference held in Hamilton and in 1996 she co-organised a train trip from Auckland to Invercargill to assist members from the north to the south to get to the Invercargill conference. It was recorded: 'We have 127 members, husbands, partners, and friends ... travelling on "Genealogy Going South".' There was great hilarity on that train with members and the public boarding at many stops on the way south.



Vivienne with husband Keith 'Going South' in 1994

The carriages were decorated with NZSG signs and insignia and the public who saw this were confused about genealogy thinking it may be gynaecology or geriatrics! Vivienne was in her element educating many of the public about family history and this encouraged some to become members when they saw the fun aboard.

In 2002, Vivienne co-organised a Seminar 'Imprint: Putting Your Family History in Print' with speakers on writing your stories, then having them published. This was a weekend event held at the event centre on the Panmure basin with glorious views of the calm waters and wildlife. John TITFORD, an author from Derbyshire, was the keynote speaker, along with local speakers who all gave inspirational talks.

Life Membership was conferred on Vivienne in 2003 in recognition of her enthusiastic work and the many ways she had promoted the Society for the 20 years since becoming a member.

Vivienne was appointed Welsh Research Advisor in 2011 and was an assessor for the Duke of Edinburgh Award for family history. She was a member of the Family Research Centre Management Committee and of the Projects Management Committee. In 2007, Vivienne was appointed Deputy Returning Officer and she held this position until 2014.

In 2007 she edited *Forty Years On.... The Development of the New Zealand Society of Genealogists 1967-2007* for the 40th anniversary of NZSG. This publication is full of facts gathered from minutes, reports and memories of many of our members and has become the 'go to' book for information about members, branches, interest groups and management facts.

Vivienne and Keith Vautier organised the NZSG Conference held at Alexandra Park in Auckland in 2017 when the Society celebrated its 50th year and they carried most of the load. They contacted all the speakers, worked out the programme, and did almost all the organising.

In 2018 at the AFFHO (Australasian Federation of Family History Organisations) Congress held in Sydney, Vivienne was presented with an AFFHO Meritorious Service Award. This is a most prestigious award given for meritorious service to family history in Australasia and having promoted family history for many years in a voluntary capacity, it was wonderful to see her enjoying the last AFFHO Congress held in Brisbane earlier this year.



***Vivienne in 2018
receiving the AFFHO Meritorious Service Award***

Vivienne was a sought after speaker at Branch meetings and Conferences—her talks covered social life in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Quarter session records, British emigration to New Zealand, among many other topics. She will be remembered for the occasions where she dressed up in period costume and she wowed the audience with both the costumes and the talks.

Vivienne was elected Convenor of Panmure Branch in 1999, and she held this position until 2023, resigning unfortunately because of her ill health. She will be

remembered for her efforts in keeping the members interested in their own family history by announcing a theme for the evening and asking members to bring something from their own family history which fitted with this theme. She also sought out websites, events and occasions which would assist with research and announced these at each monthly meeting.

Vivienne was appointed Education Officer in 2008 until the Covid lockdown put a stop to gatherings in 2020. These featured 'beginning your family history' classes for different aspects of family history research as well as specialised areas. Vivienne was a Volunteer and Team Leader at the Family Research Centre in Panmure, assisting members with their family history, organising the roster and other administrative tasks. The library contains much which Vivienne has organised or created—her creativity in pamphlets, posters and information boards will live on. Vivienne always wanted the best for members everywhere and strived to make the NZSG library the best, and for members to feel comfortable and be able to locate the resources needed. She set up training and revision programmes for volunteers so that they were familiar with all the resources and able to pass on the most helpful resources as appropriate for those visiting the library.

Vivienne has been presented with every NZSG Award: Service Awards for her Branch and Interest Groups, NZSG Service Awards, a Merit Award and Life Membership.

We will remember Vivienne for her willingness to assist members, her stellar organisational and creative skills and her exceptional knowledge about world-wide family history resources.

Robyn Williams
E: p.williams@xtra.co.nz



Vivienne in action at a conference



June Springer née Crowe (1933-2025)

It is with sadness that the Whanganui Branch NZSG acknowledge the death of June Springer, QSM, but with gratitude that we appreciate a life well lived.

It is hard to quantify June's contribution to both local and national genealogical records. June was custodian of New Zealand Society of Genealogists' cemetery collection records for 21 years. If you have used cemetery records, school records, or our local Whanganui Historic Rates records, you can be very thankful to June for the meticulous, well-organised records we have. Many of the early headstones transcribed have now become illegible or no longer exist. We are very lucky to have headstone inscriptions which still existed in the 1970s recorded for our research purposes.

June led by example and set very high standards. She preferred to stay in the background, whilst keeping an eagle eye on proceedings. June was a foundation member of the Palmerston North and Whanganui Branches of the NZSG,

and a Life Member of Whanganui Branch. She received Life Membership of the NZSG in 1986. She was awarded a QSM in 2000 for her national services to genealogy and was the third New Zealander to gain an award from the Australian Federation of Family History Association for services to genealogy.

June has been an inspiration to genealogists around her and provided enormous guidance in gathering records for research. All who have worked with June appreciated her and learned from her experience. She will be deeply missed.

Whanganui Branch
New Zealand Society of Genealogists



June and the Cemetery Records



*Penny Stewart and June in 2023,
at June's 90th Birthday morning tea*

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A Legacy of Caring: Our World War II Nurses

Jennie Hamilton and Nanette Ainge

Just over 600 New Zealand registered nurses were deployed to distant military hospitals during WWII. Of those nurses, 101 trained at Christchurch Hospital, with most serving with the New Zealand Army Nursing Service (NZANS). Like thousands of enlisted soldiers, they had little inkling of what lay ahead.

'A Legacy of Caring', a display in the Christchurch Nurses' Memorial Chapel in September, tells the stories of those 101 nurses serving in WWII, and with J Force in Japan 1946–1948.

We learn of the testing and ever-changing physical conditions they faced while caring for badly injured and sick soldiers, local people and prisoners of war. Round the clock nursing was still required for common illnesses such as dysentery and influenza, as well as hepatitis and malaria. The availability of sulfa drugs, then penicillin later in the war, dramatically improved recovery and death rates.

To serve overseas, matrons were required to be 35–45 years of age and sisters 25–40 years. Nurses also had to have two years' work post-graduate experience to be accepted for service in the NZANS.

The New Zealanders soon earned a reputation for their professionalism and rolling up their sleeves and getting on with whatever situations they faced. General Bernard

FREYBERG, Commander of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force said: 'Our nursing sisters are second to none, and their devotion to the sick and wounded warrants the gratitude of everyone in New Zealand'.

Edyth (Edith) WORN, who was awarded the Associate Royal Red Cross (ARRC) for her war service from 1939 to 1945, left New Zealand with the 1st Echelon of NZANS sisters on 5 January 1940. Before being discharged with the rank of matron, she had served with 2/10 British General Hospital in Egypt then Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 5 New Zealand General Hospitals in Greece, the Middle East and Italy. Sister Worn also nursed at a Medical Clearing Station near the front line in Italy, and on the hospital ship *Maunganui*.

The evacuation of 52 NZANS sisters from No. 1 NZGH in Greece, while dodging German air raids, was particularly hazardous for Edyth Worn and the other nurses. Matron Eva MACKAY recalled that after being warned that planes were approaching 'we all jumped out of the trucks and then lay flat in the fields ... they droned over, bombing and machine gunning, but none of our party were hurt'. A cemetery they had sheltered in during daylight was blown up the next day.

After travelling to Crete on an Australian destroyer, then boarding a small Greek vessel four days later, all 52 New Zealand nurses finally arrived safely in Alexandria. Major challenges awaited them as New Zealand troops became involved in the thick of major battles such as El Alamein.

New Zealand nurses of the 3rd Echelon departing from Wellington during WWII.

Photograph taken by Charles P S Boyer, 28 August 1940.

New Zealand. Department of Internal Affairs. War History Branch.

Ref: DA-07102-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. natlib.govt.nz/records/23023508

Sisters Nora NEWTON and Mabel TARPEY, with six other New Zealand nurses, were at the No. 1 NZGH Casualty Clearing Station during their service overseas. With the Allied advance into Libya, they worked through long days and nights in tent operating theatres and wards, nursing the wounded, close behind the forward line, according to an official war correspondent.

There was no let-up in the intensity of battles and therefore care of the wounded and sick in No. 1, 2 and 3 New Zealand General Hospitals as troops advanced up Italy. Many of the Christchurch nurses were deployed there.

During German bombing raids on 2 December 1943, No. 3 NZGH in Bari was extensively damaged and 17 ships, one of them carrying mustard gas, were sunk in Bari Harbour. Four months later, while coping with frontline casualties, staff also had to care for 1,800 injured when a ship carrying explosives blew up. For nursing staff, the battle at Monte Cassino in February and March 1944 delivered a seemingly endless number of casualties.

NZANS sisters were also deployed in the Pacific. Jean GALLOWAY nursed at a military hospital in Fiji, then No. 4 NZGH in New Caledonia, No. 2 NZ Clearing Station at Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands, No. 5 NZGH in Egypt and No. 3 NZGH Italy.

Jane Kiritapu NEPIA (Ngati Kahungunu, Rakaipaaka) was the first Māori nurse to serve in WWII. Joining the NZANS in 1941, she was initially posted to Trentham Military Camp and then served on the hospital ships *Maunganui* and *Wanganella*. She also nursed at camp hospitals at Waouru, Narrow Neck and Trentham.

Awarded the ARRC for her services, Jane's citation states: 'Her work throughout was of an exceptionally high order and her kindness, cheerfulness and devotion to duty were an inspiration to junior members of the service and a great

comfort to her patients.' Jane was a frequent visitor to the Māori Battalion, enjoying the companionship of those she knew from home on the East Coast.

After serving in No. 3 NZGH Hospital in Italy, Sister Mary DE THIER was one of 12 Christchurch Hospital nurses deployed to No. 6 NZGH (J Force) in Japan in 1946. Medical staff cared for New Zealand troops, who were part of the Commonwealth Occupation Forces, and the local population of Kiwa where they were based. They witnessed the effects of the atomic bomb and all food they ate was tinned due to radiation concerns.

Conditions for the NZANS nurses varied greatly between locations and even the time of day, with temperatures ranging from freezing to extremely hot, and exhausting. At No. 2 NZGH in the desert, nurses and other staff were restricted to 600ml water per day for personal use.

Air raids were common and scorpions, fleas and flies were often a problem. Many nurses resorted to putting bed legs in tins of kerosene to combat bedbugs.

Work-related stress was eased for many by the camaraderie forged with other nurses, medical staff and patients. Visits by famous figures such as Lady MOUNTBATTEN and Vivien LEIGH were a highlight. Where possible, special events, such as Christmas and New Year, were celebrated and, for many, there were opportunities to visit scenic landmarks such as the pyramids or go shopping.

Weddings became more common as the war continued, with nurses permitted to stay overseas 'as long as they continued to perform their duties efficiently' and did not become pregnant.

The display includes profiles of all 101 Christchurch nurses who served overseas in WWII and J Force. Visitors can also seek details of other New Zealand nurses who served overseas in WWII.



Christchurch Nurses' Memorial Chapel, 1-7 September 2025, 12pm to 4pm.

Jennie Hamilton, Nanette Ainge
E Ainge.n@xtra.co.nz
www.cnmc.org.nz

References

McNabb, Sherayl, *100 Years New Zealand Military Nursing 1915-2015*. New Zealand Army Nursing, Hawkes Bay New Zealand, 2015.
Rogers, Anna, *While You're Away, New Zealand Nurses at War 1899-1948*. Auckland University Press, 2003.
The New Zealand Nursing Journal (Kai Tiaki), 1935 – 1946.

Four NZANS nurses, posed in front of a pyramid in Egypt (c 1941–1943).
Photo from the Nancy Frances Carter Collection, by kind courtesy of the South Canterbury Museum.
[Catalogue number: 2021/086.07.](#)

Growing up in England during World War II

Marion Heap

I was just over three years old when WWII commenced and nine when it ended. Our family was particularly fortunate in that my father had an occupation classified as 'essential', so he did not have to enlist. When I commenced school, many of my classmates were growing up with effectively solo mothers. In the house next door to us there were three sisters whose husbands were at the Front. They were living together with their six children in a sort of commune. One day a school friend told me that a man had come to stay at his house who was very fond of his mother, and who was obviously stealing his usually undivided attention. My father explained to me that 'the man' was his father who was on leave from his Unit, a fact that my friend could not comprehend.

Although at one stage we lived under an enemy flight path to Coventry, which had many air-raids, there was minimal bombing near us. My younger sister and I listened for the sound of the bombers passing overhead without understanding the significance, and my sister even prayed for a bomb to be dropped so she could see it go off. On one occasion a bomb landed just beyond our garden fence, but thankfully it did not explode. It was said that it had probably been off-loaded on a return trip. At the time I was sitting on my mother's knee in the cupboard under the stairs, being the safest place in the house. Some houses had an air-raid shelter half-buried in the garden, but these were usually rather damp and unwelcoming. Many schools had concrete block shelters in their grounds where we would all go when the siren wailed, with a gas mask in a cardboard box hanging around our necks.

Early in the war my father acquired a radio, as listening to the news and Government announcements had become essential. My parents kept any worries they had about the war to themselves, but I noticed Dad's very close attention to the radio, even on occasion telling me to stop talking so that he could listen. From my four-year-old point of view this was quite unacceptable and so I quietly took one of my mother's knitting needles and thrust it through the loudspeaker grille to silence the intruding voice!

Having no memory of life before the war, the privations that eventuated had only a minor impact on my sister and me. Food rationing was instituted which ensured everyone had a reasonable share of what was available. Some items were pretty meagre. I can still remember having a lamb chop which provided only one mouthful of meat, leaving me feeling rather short changed. Ration coupons covered basic food but occasionally the Government decided to provide a bit of cheer and released some tinned fruit, with a limit of one tin per family. We always hoped for peaches and not pears, as they were far more attractive to us and we were quite amazed when grown-ups said they preferred pears.

The Government was concerned about healthy eating and produced booklets, like the one below published in 1940. A large number of Government funded 'British Restaurants' provided a well-balanced and satisfying three course meal for about \$6 in today's money, which did not require 'ration

points'. This was particularly valuable for people in areas where houses had been severely damaged by bombing, and maybe also for poor cooks or those who had exhausted their food coupons for whatever reason. We went to a British Restaurant once for curiosity, but my mother felt she could do better in her own kitchen.

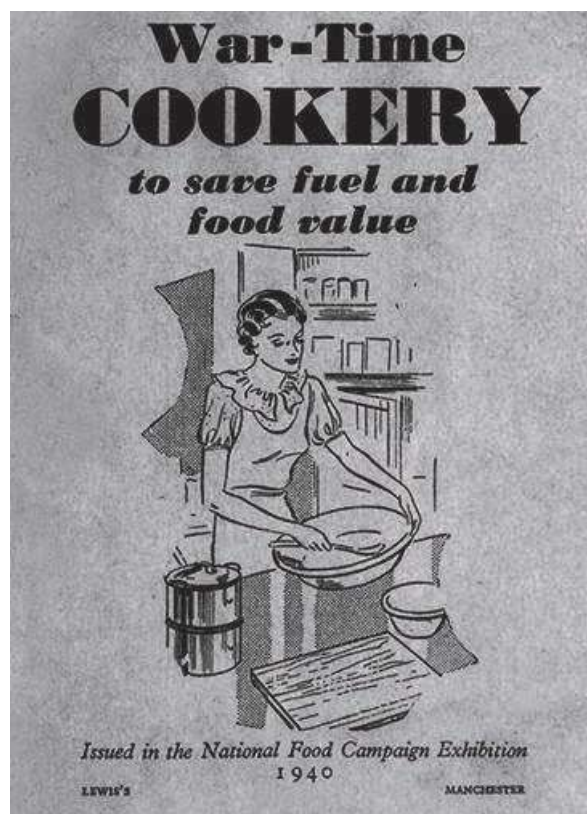
As far as we children were concerned, one of the great features of the rationing system was sweet coupons, which permitted us to purchase 'a quarter' (100g). On Saturdays we would take our pocket money to the shop and gaze through the window (now almost totally covered over in paper) at the small but still very exciting range. I always remained within my price bracket, but my younger sister liked the more fancy sweets and would save up her pocket money so she could buy them.

We loved to visit the United Kingdom Woolworths too, which was like a 'Two Dollar Shop'. The range of goods was very limited indeed and we knew that a favoured item might not be available, but we enjoyed checking out what was on sale. My grandmother, who usually lived in London, came to stay with us as the bombing at the corner of her road had totally destroyed the local library and also many houses. While she was with us, she heard that our local Woolworths was going to have some bouncing balls on sale—one ball per child. On the appointed day we arrived before the shop had opened to find a huge queue. Needless to say, grandma obtained one ball each for my sister and me.

'Dig for Victory' was a popular rallying cry, and mothers and fathers commenced growing vegetables. There was a five-minute slot on the radio just before the news providing hints on plant propagation and their frequent mention of 'Derris Dust' has stayed with me. I remember my father trying his hand at growing curly kale, which was a less refined variety than we see now. My sister and I really hated it, but we were told that we had to eat it because of things he called 'vitamins'. We were not impressed.

There were no streetlights, and all windows were blacked out, so walking outdoors on a dark night was nearly impossible. Fortunately, there were very few cars on the roads. Torches had to be pointed down. I remember my mother returning home one dark night and getting lost. There were buses, some of which had a large gas bag on the roof to provide fuel. Their windows were covered with blast netting and the inside lights dimmed. A small clear diamond at the centre of each pane allowed passengers to see where they were.

Shortages of workers and fuel resulted in a marked reduction in train services, which led to overcrowding, exacerbated by large numbers of soldiers with their kit bags moving between camps. This deterred many people from going far but it did not stop our family catching the train at holiday time. On reaching the coast we discovered, to our dismay, that the sandy beach was inaccessible due to rolls of barbed wire and concrete blocks, apart from a three-



metre strip by the road. The lovely vending machines on the station platforms still carried tempting descriptions of bars of chocolate for a few pence, which made our mouths water, but they were no longer in action.

My grandparents went on holiday, departing from the chaos of London by train. Signage, announcements and lighting at railway stations were poor, and they inadvertently boarded a wrong train and found themselves a hundred miles from our house at midnight. Domestic phones were uncommon, but in the daytime, there was a rapid letter service called a telegram, where usually one line of text would be transmitted by a teleprinter and delivered by a bicycle rider. In this case, a friendly policeman from the local constabulary stepped in and delivered the news to my parents in person.

To address the holiday travel problem local Councils often organised a 'Holidays at Home' programme. A marquee would be erected in a local park and there was daily entertainment in the form of plays, concerts and cabaret shows. The jokes of the comedians were rather average, and my sister and I dutifully laughed, but I remember our parents cringed at some of them.

New fabrics were hard to find and so old garments were unpicked and the material reused. My mother made me a warm padded coat with a tartan collar from some old black material. After all her efforts, sadly black did not appeal to me. However, on another occasion she acquired some pretty dress material that had been 'discovered' at the back of a warehouse and the result was a great hit. Recycling was not confined to the sewing room. We knew an elderly man who lived near us who collected wheels. He had a workshop with obscured windows from which hammering noises regularly emerged and we were under strict instructions not to enter his property. It was all a bit of a

NATIONAL FOOD CAMPAIGN

WAR-TIME COOKERY
To Save Fuel and Food Value

1. Keep a vegetable stock-pot with the water from celery, leeks, onions, carrots, potatoes, greens, and other vegetables.
Never throw these liquids down the sink; they contain valuable minerals and vitamins, and partly help to make up deficiency in rationed foods.
2. Use the liquid from boiled vegetables to dilute tinned soups.
3. When serving soup and vegetables at the same meal, cook the vegetables in the soup.
4. Steam root vegetables.
5. Cook potatoes in their jackets.
6. Save all fat from cooking meat; refine it and use it for other cooking purposes.
7. Cook meals as far as possible with one "unit" of heat, e.g. in one large steamer on a low fire or single gas-ring you may cook: a meat roll, steamed jacket potatoes, boiled or steamed suet pudding; or in one oven you may cook: baked meat, casserole of mixed vegetables, fruit pie or pastry, scones.

Introduce into the menu as often as possible the following foods:

Meat.—Tripe, cow-heel, ox-tail, liver, kidney, hearts, tongues, rabbits, calves' and sheep's heads, fresh bones.

PAGE ONE

Fats.—Olive oil, vitaminised margarine, dripping, suet, nuts, fat from boiled mutton and beef, oily fishes (such as herrings, sprats, bloaters), cheese.

Cereals.—Wheatmeal flour, semolina, barley, oatmeal, macaroni, rice.

Vegetables.—Carrots, swedes, beets, celery, parsnips, onions, leeks, turnip-tops, spring greens, tinned spinach, dried pulse vegetables, and raw salad vegetables in season.

Fruits.—Tomatoes, figs, dates, raisins, prunes, dried apricots, currants, and citrous fruits.

Fish.—Kippers, herrings, bloaters, cod and herring roes, sardines, sprats, mackerel, tinned salmon.

puzzle to us. However, on Christmas Day we awoke to discover two brightly painted home-made wooden scooters by the fireplace, and they gave us many hours of pleasure.

Schools in winter were chilly, and we wore our outer coats in class. However, I remember many cheerful warmer days too. Towards the end of the war our family moved to Bristol, which was well away from the worst of the bombing. I still have many happy memories of long warm summer days, with picnics and paddling in a very shallow river, netting tadpoles and small fish. I went to a little church school which I enjoyed immensely. We had 'Gardening on Fridays' which was absolute bliss. I loved growing plants, especially flowers, and smelling their fragrance. I upset the teacher one day when I was trying to do mental arithmetic (which I hated) and she made me stand on the seat of my desk, but that was heaven for me. I could see the blue summer sky through the high windows and look at the flowers on the window ledge, from which a delicious perfume had cascaded down onto my desk.

Transmission of television programmes started just before the war but was terminated as the signal from the transmitter might aid enemy aircraft. Radio therefore played a strong role in domestic entertainment. There were weekly music and comedy shows that had national followings, and for the younger set there was Children's Hour, transmitted between five and six each evening, and which was a must for us. The programme was overseen by

Derek McCULLOCH, alias Uncle Mac, and an able team from studios around the country inputted on different nights. I still remember 'Norman and Henry Bones, Detectives' and Helen Henshall's 'Music at Random', preceded by a theme from a Brahms's Symphony.

There was no doubt about the general relief when VE (Victory in Europe) Day arrived. My mother heard about it on the radio and rushed out from the house to tell me the exciting news, but I was busy playing in the garden, which was much more important to me. However, we soon got involved in the organisation of street parties with trestle tables arranged down the centre of side-roads. Pubs did a roaring trade and there were bright lights everywhere. Men returned from the forces and endeavoured to re-integrate into civvy life, which must have been very hard for some. Most of those we encountered seemed very happy. My twin cousins, who were in their twenties had had a great time, in spite of one being wounded and hospitalised for some months. They spoke with pride of the day when they drove the lead vehicle of their convoy through Belgium, the Commanding Officer preferring safer transport farther back, but sadly they got no praise later as it was not politic to discuss the matter.

Some ex-soldiers were, of course, affected. I remember one man at our church who communicated very reluctantly. My father often spoke to him and mentioned to my mother that he thought a wife might provide the best therapy. We knew a young lady who seemed 'very suitable', and a meeting

took place 'by chance' at our house. The happy marriage that ensued seemed to do the trick and they remained a very active and outgoing pair for the whole of their lives.

The transition from the war to the post-war period was largely invisible to my sister and me. The mood of the country undoubtedly lightened but there was still rationing and many privations. Retail therapy took a long while to eventuate. One of the first 'luxury fabrics' seen in the shops was Parachute Silk, of which there was now an excess. The material was fine nylon and was invariably in bright colours, resulting in very identifiable blouses. Nylon stockings appeared in 30 denier and later 15 denier. Whilst the old black Lisle stockings worn during the war were very durable, the new ones sadly laddered very easily but were irresistible. Army surplus shops popped up everywhere with an immense range of ex-military equipment that was snapped up by do-it-yourself young men.

Most of the memories that my sister and I have of the War years are fortunately happy ones, as a consequence of the location of our various homes and our parents' loving care, in spite of the very stressful times that they must have experienced. With the arrival of peace, we were entering a brave new world together and we were so grateful that our family had survived the hostilities intact.

Marion Heap

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'War-Time Cookery' recipes

Cabbage and Rice

One young cabbage—remove stalk, shred finely (about 6 ozs.); 1 oz. onion—fry in 1 oz. fat, then add the cabbage, $\frac{1}{2}$ gill of water, a little salt only, as salts are retained in the vegetable.

Bring to boil on a slow fire. When cabbage is half done, put 1 oz. uncooked rice and $\frac{1}{2}$ gill of water to cover rice, and cook for another twenty minutes slowly. Then dish.

Vegetable Pie with Mashed Potatoes

Put some mixed cooked vegetables into a dish and season. Make a brown gravy with $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of fat, small $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ pint vegetable stock, seasoning, and a very little grated nutmeg. Pour this over the vegetables. Put a thick crust of mashed potatoes on top, sprinkled with chopped cheese, and bake.

Pea Soup

(Quick method)

1 lb. leeks, onions and celery. $\frac{1}{2}$ pint cooked peas
mixed 1 oz. fat

Fry together, put in $\frac{1}{2}$ pint of cooked peas, minced, and 1 quart of water. Boil until tender, thicken with rice or potato flour, sprinkle a little chopped mint on top.

Onion and Potato Soup

1 large potato $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. margarine
1 large onion

Chop vegetables small and sauté in fat for ten minutes. Add three teacups of water (or liquid from macaroni, potatoes, or tripe) and cook till vegetables are pulped. Sieve, add 1 teacup of milk, and bind with $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful cornflour. Season, sprinkle with chopped parsley, and serve with croûtons of brown bread fried in dripping.

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Date and Apple Pasty

Make $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. plain pastry and roll out to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick. Line a flat tin, place on it a thick layer of apple and stoned dates finely chopped. Cover with a thin layer of pastry, pressing the edges well down. Bake in a hot oven for a quarter of an hour to twenty minutes.

Syrup Tart

Make $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. plain pastry. Line plates with pastry a good $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick, leaving some paste over for decorating. Fill the centre with golden syrup and sprinkle thickly with soft white crumbs. Decorate with twisted strips of paste and bake till a pale golden brown.

Date and Walnut Loaf

$\frac{1}{2}$ lb. dates	3 ozs. sugar
1 teaspoonful bicarbonate	1 level teaspoonful baking
soda	powder
$\frac{1}{2}$ pint boiling water	1-2 ozs. chopped walnuts
$\frac{1}{2}$ lb. flour	1 egg
2 ozs. margarine	Salt

Stone the dates and mince or chop them small. Sprinkle with the bicarbonate of soda, pour on the boiling water, and leave to soak. Rub fat in flour, add all other dry ingredients. Add date mixture when cool, and then beaten egg. Put into two greased $\frac{1}{2}$ -lb. bread-tins, and bake for one-and-a-half hours in slow oven.

Apple Pancakes

Stew 1 lb. apples to a soft pulp without sugar. Beat two tablespoonfuls of syrup into the apple. Make batter pancakes in the ordinary way, and serve with a large spoonful of the apple mixture folded into the centre of each.

PAGE ELEVEN

How World War II affected our family

Yvonne R Milbank

Although my parents George and Hope ROBERTSON seldom spoke about the war years, I have been known to say, 'there was a war between my sister and me' and 'I am a post-war baby'. In what ways do I see WWII has influenced my life and that of my family?

My parents, George and Hope, met in Auckland, and they married there in early 1939. Mum left her secretarial job to move to Napier where Dad, some months earlier, had been transferred from Auckland to the Napier Branch of the Bank of New Zealand. In their first year of marriage, they set up their home, enjoyed married life, and settled into the Napier community. As regular worshippers, they participated in various groups at the Presbyterian Church. They were both involved in the local Harrier Club—Dad competing in regular club and interclub runs, while Mum helped in the social side of club activities. At this time, as well as working full-time, Dad was continuing to study papers towards his Diploma in Banking from the University of New Zealand.

Their life, and the lives of many other New Zealanders, suddenly changed on 3 September 1939 when Britain, France, New Zealand, and Australia declared war on Germany. At the end of that year, the New Zealand Government called for volunteers. Later, single men were called up, followed by married men without children, then married men with children. Dad was drafted early in 1942

as he was a married man without children. By this time, my parents had been married three years, and Mum was pregnant with their first child. What a frightening and uncertain time this would have been for them both—a long-awaited child on the way and the possibility of not seeing each other for a long time or ever again.

My mother would have been particularly worried about the possibility of becoming a war widow, as her father had died when she was five years old and her Mum (my Nanna) brought her, and her two siblings, up alone. Neither Mum nor Nanna spoke about these times, but it would not have been easy for their family back in the 1930s—before any government funding for solo mums. Mum, of course, was also worried about what Dad would experience overseas, especially when an article in the *Central Hawkes Bay Press* in February 1942 reported from an article in the *New Zealand Banker* (the official organ of Bank Officers) that 'Bank clerks are taking their full share of the war'. It goes on to list the number of bank clerks who were wounded, prisoners of war, or missing.

Dad, on the other hand, would have been concerned about leaving his wife in her pregnant state, and about going into the unknowns of army life. He was not a typical Kiwi bloke—he was brought up in a large Christian family on a farm and was a strict teetotaler. That, along with his Christian faith, would have made him stand out in a crowd of many young men in the army who were regular drinkers and rugby players. This was indeed the case, as I have some of his hand-written notes about a meeting of Christians while in a camp overseas: 'We were not interested in denominations—we were Christians, and it was indeed a privilege and joy to meet in Christian Fellowship away from the swearing, drinking and gambling of the tent lines.'

Like many other young couples at that time, they had no choice. Aged 30, Dad passed his medical, dental, and hearing tests, and a chest X-ray. When he signed up, he indicated he had no preference as to which service he wanted to serve in and was placed in the army and posted to a training camp in McLeans Park, Napier—a quarter of a kilometre from their home in Vigor Brown Street. He was nearby, at least for a while. Apart from a fortnight spent in Army Training Camp in Dannevirke, Dad remained at the McLean Park Army Camp until the end of the year. My sister was born during that time, and Dad was told of her arrival by the Camp Padre. No doubt Dad had some leave to visit both Mum and my sister several times before his overseas posting. As in many communities during the war years, Mum received support and friendship from friends and others in the community. Her mother also came and lived with her to help with the baby.

Just after Christmas 1942, my dad embarked for New Caledonia with many other young men. He served in the 3rd Division of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force and was fortunate to be posted in the Records Office of the New Zealand Army in Bourail, New Caledonia. Dad's fighting



George Robertson in uniform
Milbank family collection

in the war was not with guns but with pen and paper, keeping the records in order, and that was quite a job. To quote from the *Base Wallahs'* book, Chapter 4 page 27: 'However it may be, it is a notorious fact that there is very little a soldier can do, or have done to him, without someone, somewhere, filling in a form about it.'

It was not until my husband and I visited the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery in Bourail, New Caledonia, that we saw not only individual graves of those servicemen who had died, but also a memorial wall listing hundreds of names. The heading on this monument read: 'These officers and men of the New Zealand Army, and the Royal New Zealand Airforce, and the Western Pacific Forces, served, and died, in the Southern Pacific on land, at sea, and in the air, and have no known grave.'

To me this signified the importance of the work done by Dad and his colleagues in the Records Office. Had records not been kept and carefully filed, many, many families would not have known if their family member was alive or dead. Should they want to pay their respects and mourn for their loved ones, there would be nowhere to go. Dad had fully participated in the war but his posting to the Records Office had spared him from many of the horrors of fighting on the front.

Dad came back to New Zealand in 1945, after a three-year stint in the army. My sister was now three. While Dad was away his photo, in army uniform, hung on the wall at home and each night Mum took my sister to it to say goodnight to her Daddy and give him a kiss. When Dad returned home and walked in the door in civilian clothes, I am told my sister started to cry—she did not recognise her Daddy who was out of army uniform.

Dad returned to work in the Bank of New Zealand in Napier. He applied for, and was credited with, his last paper of a Diploma of Banking, because war service had disrupted his studies. Both Mum and Dad settled back into life in their community, involving themselves with the church, harrier club and friends, but no doubt with some changes to include their three-year-old daughter and her activities.



**Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery
in Bourail, New Caledonia
Milbank family collection**

My birth just over a year after Dad's return completed our family. Mum and Dad were now in their mid-thirties, and Dad had another promotion in the Bank which meant moving to Putaruru in 1948. Our next move was to Warkworth in 1951, and being not long after the war, rental accommodation was hard to find. Dad moved to his new job leaving the rest of the family behind. After six months apart, Dad reluctantly rented a less than suitable flat on the edge of town so the family could be together again. During this time, I turned five but was unable to attend school as it was too far to walk and we had no car. The older children in the neighbourhood were given a ride on the back of a local farmer's small truck. With no suitable rentable accommodation in town Dad looked for, and found, a suitable house to buy with a bank loan provided at the cheaper rate for staff. Once we moved, I was able to attend school. Over the years Dad also accepted other promotions, so our family moved several times in my childhood.

Having my only sibling four years older than me meant by the time I started school my sister was in standard three, and she had left home and gone nursing before I had started high school. Because of the age difference we often had different interests and different friends. We did share many of our toys and books, as after the war they were expensive and hard to come by. I remember not getting a big doll until I was about 12 years old. Many of our toys were hand-me-downs from Mum and Dad's friends who had older children. Most children's books in those days were written and published in England, then shipped to New Zealand. During the war, and for some years afterwards, the publishing and printing of children's books was not a priority. England had been more affected by the war than New Zealand, but even in New Zealand there was a paper shortage. Mum ensured we had books to read by joining us up as members of the local library, and we enjoyed our walk to the library to choose our limit of three books every fortnight.

As many items purchased in New Zealand came from overseas, there were delays until production was running again and the shipping lanes were open. New Zealand did have ration books during and after the war for food and clothing items, but by the time I was big enough to know about rations, I think the restrictions had finished. Mum and Dad were always careful with food, clothes, and money in general so I do not think the wartime rations, or the slow return of consumer goods, affected my life in any way. They had learnt to be careful throughout their lives and had lived through the Depression.

Dad was very tidy and methodical in everything he did, including in his large vegetable gardens, the church books, and around the home. He kept a diary for many years recording notable events in our family, as well as mundane day-to-day records like how many eggs the hens laid. His notes were in abbreviated form, like coding he would have used in the army. He also regularly wrote a two-page letter to his mother once a week from the time he left home until she died, aged 76, in 1969. Some of his routine nature would have been a result of his time in the army.

I feel that the war did affect our parents and our family life as it did with most New Zealand families, but nowhere near as much as if Dad had been fighting in the front lines and

seeing colleagues killed or maimed around him. Dad was not physically injured and did not see the need to block out the negative images or thoughts of the war by drinking alcohol. I will never know if Mum and Dad would have had more children if the war had not happened, or if the household would have been less ordered had Dad not been in the army. I may have had more new clothes, toys, and books but maybe not. My sister and I had loving parents and a happy childhood, so, to me, the effects of the war on our family were not negative. War was just accepted as part of life. I have been known to say there was a war between my sister and I—World War. Dad's photo continued to hang on the wall in whatever home we lived in, but Dad seldom spoke about his war service, and I never thought to ask.

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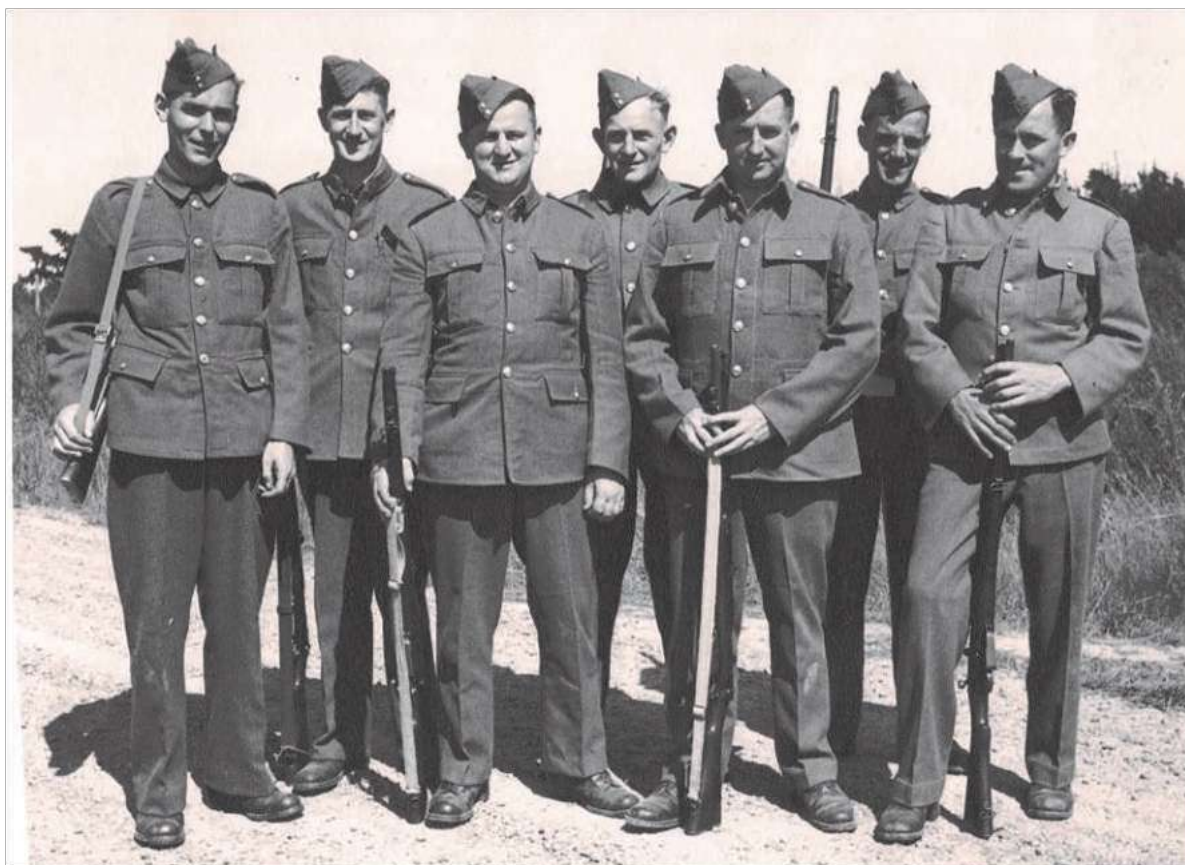
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Army Base Pay Office New Caledonia—Milbank family collection



My Dad's Army

Eric Reay Innes Clarke 1902-1980

Jeanette Grant

When WWII started in 1939, my father, Reay CLARKE, was 37 years old, so he joined the Home Guard and spent several years going on exercises with them, digging 'tank traps' near beaches on the Manukau and socialising with men of his own age.

On 27 January 1943 at the age of 40 with a wife and child he was 'called up'. I was three years old when I had my first train ride to go and visit him in camp at Papakura. I also remember being told that he was required to have all his teeth pulled out so that he would not have any toothache problems to complicate army life. As his father was a dentist and his teeth were in excellent shape, this was a most peculiar requirement.

When they had their final medical inspections before being sent overseas, the doctor said that he had incipient rheumatism in his hands which would have flared up in a damp tropical climate, so he was tagged for home duties. He became a gunner with the 9th Heavy Artillery. As a photographer in his professional life prior to the war, his hands would have spent a lot of time in the cold water used for rinsing the chemicals off the photos. Although this diagnosis possibly saved his life, the problem never eventuated. He spent another 20 years after his war service actively working in his photographic dark room and never, to my knowledge, suffered any problems with his hands.

After spending March and April 1943 at Kamo, his paybook shows that he was stationed on the guns at North Head, where he spent his off-duty time playing billiards as there was nothing else to do. His pay slips show he was earning the munificent sum of 7/6 a day of which 5/- came to Mum. Being based in Auckland meant that he was able to come home and visit us regularly, so I probably saw almost as much of him as any small child with early bedtimes would do.

One of my vivid visual memories is of our air raid shelter in the back yard. When the Japanese entered the war by attacking Pearl Harbour at the end of 1941, followed by the rapid taking of Singapore and the bombing of Darwin, there suddenly seemed to be an imminent threat of invasion, or at least air raids. The Education Gazette announced that all school committees were to organise the immediate construction of air raid shelters in case of a feared Japanese attack. Trenches were duly dug; children were issued with name badges, cotton wool to put in their ears and a cork to bite on. Mum was by then teaching at Owairaka School which was within walking distance of our home in Jerram Street. Their first air raid drill was a little less than a success. The trenches were there all right, but they had omitted to dig any deep enough to hold the staff.

*Image above: Reay Clarke is second from the left
Grant family collection*



*The camp at
Papakura
Grant family
collection*

We had a little trellis-sided summer house in the back garden, so Dad dug our air raid trench inside that so there was a roof over it to keep it from filling up with rainwater. It had clay banks as seats along the side, and these were 'upholstered' with old sacks. I dread to think what damage we might have suffered from flying splinters and fire if it had ever been put to the test.

On one occasion he was off duty when a practice night shoot was planned, so he took me and my mother down to the waterfront to watch. In those days there was a gun on the point by the Tamaki Yacht Club as well as on North Head and we were able to see the orange flashes of light when they fired. We saw the searchlights all along Tamaki Drive in action and afterwards we went up the flight of steps on the cliff face near Mission Bay and actually went inside the cliff to the generator room making the power for the searchlights.

I can still remember the curved silver shapes (of the generators) which were taller than I was. I had never seen anything actually bolted onto a concrete floor before. His comment to Mum the next day was that 'the boat towing the target was in more danger than the target'.

In 1943 my mother fell pregnant again and in January 1944 Dad was granted compassionate leave to be home for the baby's birth. She was late, but it meant he was available to help with our move to a larger house in Mt Eden and my sister was born the day before he had to report back, so he did actually see her. From then on, when he had leave, much of his time at home was spent under the house digging out enough headroom to be able to install a three-quarter size billiard table.

EMS/BAC		NEW ZEALAND MILITARY FORCES		WAR. (Form N.Z.-494, for use of 150.)	
Posting Order by Area Commander (Area No. 1)					
Item Number:	Date:	Comp. (Unit, etc.)	9th Heavy Regt.		
No. 480311	10/10/44	Gnr. CLARKE, Eric Reay, 41 Photographer,			
(Rank.)		(Name.)		(Age.) (Occupation.)	
Married: 2	Children: Single	Home Address: 662A Mt. Eden, Rd.,		Mt. EDEN, AUCKLAND.	
Boarded Auckland 6/10/44. Grade 3. Not fit to live in camp. Army pay including 7 days part annual and 14 days retiring leave ceases 31/10/44, then placed in Area 1 Pool on ILWOP. MANPOWER RELEASE. File to Area 1/Pensions.					
				Captain,	
				for Area Commander.	

*Reay's order to be demobilised
Grant family collection*

When the decision was made to cut back the defences of Auckland, as told in J A Speer's story, 'Writing off a Regiment'¹, Dad was one of the older men initially sent on leave without pay and then demobilised on 31 October 1944 and he was soon back in the photographic business.

Dad's influence had some odd effects on me. The first songs I knew that were not nursery rhymes were army songs—'The long and the short and the tall', 'Mademoiselle from Armentieres' etc. For many years afterwards, I made a point of listening to 'the Diggers Request Session' at 8.45 on Sunday mornings as they asked for all those old favourites.

Even in those days before television, children still heard more about the war than their parents realised. I was less than five years old, but I can clearly remember thinking 'When I grow up, I will be a sniper'. Fortunately, this never became necessary, but I remained keen on learning to shoot—something encouraged by the fact that Dad was an excellent shot and we used to regularly go out to my aunt's farm in the Waitakeres. He gave me an air rifle for my 14th birthday, and we all practised shooting at home—in the backyard or under the house. Well, I wore the rifle out. It was probably 1959 or 1960.

I was at university and used to get a ride into town with Dad in the morning. He had a reserved parking spot up by St Patrick's Cathedral as his firm, Walter J Thompson Advertising Studios, was on the corner of Wyndham and Albert Streets. I used to walk down to Queen Street and up to Princes Street through Albert Park.

One day, I strolled down Wyndham Street and along Queen Street to Tisdalls—with the air rifle under my arm hoping they could repair it. Nobody turned a hair. Today, the Armed Offenders Squad would have probably intercepted me before I reached the shop.

I still have Dad's paybook and the booklets he was given on Morse Code, small arms training, Section leading in Attack & Defence, Infantry section leading, the Bren Gun, Arms drill, Guerrilla Warfare etc.

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1. 'Writing off a Regiment', J A Speer, 2014, 13th issue of *Prospect*—the annual publication of the Epsom & Eden Historical Society Incorporated

Random Memories of WWII in Australia

Antonia Jones

I was an infant when war was declared in September 1939 and six when it ended in September 1945, so my memories are those of childhood—home and school, friends, family and neighbours in a Brisbane suburb. These are some of the things I remember.

Night time:

My father listening to the war news on the radio in the evenings. Was there a map of Europe pinned on the wall? I think so. The searchlights scraping the sky every night seeking enemy Japanese planes. They seemed to stretch right across the black night and blot out the stars. They were in the north and east and were on the hills, including Mount Cootha or in the coastal suburbs.¹ The window-glass in the house was painted on the inside with black paint so that light did not shine through at night. It must have been very difficult to remove at the end of the war as there were still traces of black paint years later in the grooves of the bubble-glass panes.

My father digging an air-raid shelter at the bottom of our acreage:

The soil was thin and the subsoil rocky, so he never got very far. He had a few sheets of corrugated iron to pull over the top in an emergency. The hole used to fill with water in the rainy season.

The time we went north to the beach at Caloundra for a holiday:

Huge rolls of barbed wire were stretched along the outer beaches to prevent the Japanese invading. We were standing on a headland one day and I remember my father pointing out a long line of warships sailing north to the Coral Sea – the American Fleet heading into the war zone.

Rationing:

My mother trading tobacco and petrol ration coupons for extra butter and sugar with the insurance man, Mr HEALEY, who called regularly to collect his payment. My father's car was grounded, so he did not use the petrol. He walked to work or took public transport. One thing I especially

remember is my mother being warned not to buy rabbit meat from itinerant hawkers who came knocking on doors, as they were said to be selling meat from cats they caught. Rationing went on for several years after the war ended.

The games the boys played:

They changed from Cowboys and Indians, which was always popular, as the then current movie serials were Westerns. Instead, Nazis and Allies became the vogue, complete with the family gasmasks on the Nazis to make them look really hideous. This was not a game for girls!

My great-aunt Flo always knitting something when we visited:

I learned she was knitting socks for the troops and knitted so many pairs she could do it without even looking, four needles clicking busily. She also attended the Civil Defence Headquarters at Town Hall once a week, along with many other women to help make camouflage nets. I still have the netting shuttles she used.

At school:

The effects of the military call-up were noticeable. Many of the young male teachers had enlisted, so our teachers were mainly single women and older men, some of whom were recalled from retirement. Married women came back to work as well although, pre-war, the Public Service required women to retire once they were married. I remember whispers going about that the husband of my second-year teacher, Mrs GREEN, had been killed in the war.

A Japanese invasion:

There was always an undercurrent of concern about a Japanese invasion, and I learned many years later that the Australian government may have had a contingency plan to abandon the northern parts of the country and defend the south below a line drawn across from Brisbane to Adelaide more or less along the Darling River. This, when it leaked out, was politically disastrous, and eventually a decision was made to defend Australia from the mountains and seas of New Guinea.



Oil Fuel Lighter HMAS Rocklea, showing her port side, built by Evans Deakin

[Australian War Memorial](#)

How could Australia help:

When war broke out in 1939, Australia asked the British Government how it might help. Among the suggestions were that the facilities for building destroyers and escorts at Cockatoo Island, New South Wales, should be increased and that consideration could be given to private shipyards to build defence vessels.

My father worked for Evans Deakin (EDCO), a large engineering firm which usually contracted to provide steel for buildings, did ship-repair work and in 1935 had won the contract to supply 10,000 tons of

steel for the now iconic Story Bridge at Kangaroo Point. Evans Deakin geared up quickly to war production and entered the ship-building arena. A drawing-office for the purpose was set up at their Kangaroo Point yards on the Brisbane River, with 12 draftsmen supervised by my father, Lauren MCDONALD, who was a mechanical engineer and soon-to-be naval architect. The company team started from scratch. They used only a general line drawing and specifications from the British Navy to design their first vessel, the *Rocklea*, a navy oil-lighter. The keel was laid in July 1940, and the ship was launched in November, a record performance. It was fully fitted out by April 1941.² For years we had a photograph of the *Rocklea* hanging on the wall above my father's desk at home, which often held a blueprint or two of ships he was working on, such as the pressure to increase the Navy fleet. EDCO built 11 corvettes (mine-sweepers), and a floating dock for the Royal Australian Navy during the war years. There were two frigates on their slips when the war ended.

During the war, ship repair work was urgent. The American South West Pacific Force was based in Brisbane from December 1941, and their repairs were originally carried out at South Brisbane Docks,³ and then from 1944, at the new and bigger Cairncross Docks near Bulimba.⁴ From 1942 until February 1946, 1073 naval and merchant vessels were repaired in Brisbane.² EDCO did some of the secondary work and operated a round the clock schedule to maintain warships and merchantmen. EDCO also became major contractors to the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) for repairs and services. They had their own staff and facilities at both South Brisbane and Cairncross Docks and worked on a range of vessels. The book *Built Beneath the Bridge*² gives a listing of the ships they worked on: US Naval vessels - 122; US Army vessels - 55; RAN vessels - 104; Royal Navy vessels - 27; Merchant vessels - 57.

I have a vivid memory of going with my father to see off an American cruiser at Bulimba. It had had some repairs done by EDCO and was heading back into service. We stood there on its deck with some of the personnel watching as a fighter-plane was lowered into the depths of the ship. My father became acquainted with various US Navy personnel and invited them home from time to time. One

man taught the family how to play 'Pea Knuckle' which I later discovered was pinochle, an American card game. Another time, there was a party and, all of four years old, I emerged in my pyjamas and was passed around to sit on the uniformed knee of every man in the room and discover the joys of pink bubble-gum.

EDCO built 81 ships altogether, and as I grew older, I was privileged to attend some of the launchings. The drafting office had a partially flat roof which was perfect for watching the heart-stopping slide of a huge shell of a ship into the river where it would ride out to the end of its heavy anchor chain. There was always a dead silence as the steel body slid down the greased runway, then relieved cheers after it entered the water and floated.

I have no recollections of the progress of the war or even of its end, which everyone celebrated. It was only when I was older that I began to realise the significance of some of my memories.

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References

1. By early 1944, when the fear of Japanese air attack had diminished, Brisbane was defended by 24 3.7-inch guns (in six-gun stations); 12 40mm Bofors; and 21 searchlights. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heavy_Anti-Aircraft_Gun_Station_385.
2. *Built Beneath the Bridge; the vessels built by Evans Deakin at Kangaroo Point, 1940-1976*. Brisbane, Queensland Women's Historical Association, 1997.
3. The strategic significance of the South Brisbane Dry Dock came to the fore during World War II when the Port of Brisbane served as a major Allied base. 47 RAN vessels and 94 US Navy vessels (including over 50 submarines) were serviced in the dock during the period 1939 to 1945. maritimemuseum.com.au/learn/collections/dry-dock/
4. The first ship entered the dockyard on 22 June 1944. The [official history](#) of Australia in World War II states that while the dockyard was 'constructed at a remarkable rate', by the time it was ready the peak demand for ship repair facilities had passed.
5. Nevertheless, by 31 May 1946 the graving dock had been used by 128 ships, including the British aircraft



Evans Deakin Shipyard: Brisbane's Wartime Engine of Industry
Queensland State Archives

WWII Stories

Jean Grant

One of the most addictive things about genealogical research, is the variety of family stories which tie you into world events. Here in New Zealand, we were fortunate that while we made preparations for invasion, such as air raid shelters, tank traps, searchlights and gun emplacements, they were never actually put to use. However, here are a few examples of the ways various relatives were affected by WWII.

My husband, John James GRANT, was born in the Wirral on 3 September 1935 and frequently adds the comment that he 'got WWII for his 4th birthday'. Apparently, they heard the radio announcement of the declaration of war during his birthday party. They lived on the Wirral Peninsula, just across the Mersey from Liverpool, and one of his most vivid memories is of the first major bombing raid on Liverpool on 28 August 1942 when 168 bombers attacked the city. 'In the middle of the night, there had been a knock at the door, and a fire warden said that we were showing lights. We said that was impossible as we were all in bed, the lights were all out and all the windows had been blacked out with sheets of black paper fixed on the inside. He replied that an RAF plane had reported seeing lights and they had tracked them down to the back of our house. We went outside to check and found that the flames from the burning city across the Mersey were so bright that they were reflecting off our windows. The glass seemed to be at just the wrong angle, and we had to hastily drape old curtains across the outside of the glass to stop the reflection. Shutters were needed as a permanent solution.'

John's father, James (Jim) Grant (1905-1975), and uncle, Frances (Frank) PEAKE (1902-1981), were both civil engineers who spent the war working for the War Department doing a range of jobs, which stretched from building prisoner of war camps to delivering tanks. John spent a couple of years living with this uncle who was involved with the construction of the nuclear research plant at Windscale, later renamed Sellafield. He still remembered their drive north through Liverpool the day after that first major bombing raid, a trip which should have taken less

than an hour but with all the fires and diversions, took most of the day.

Frank's brother, Reginald (Reg) James Peake (1907-1993), was a ship's carpenter and spent most of the war on the *Queen Mary* which had been commandeered as a troop carrier. He was on board at that fatal moment on 2 October 1942 when the *Queen Mary* altered course in the Irish Sea to avoid a suspected U-boat and unfortunately rammed the nearest escorting destroyer, the *HMS Curacao*. She drove right over it and it sank with the loss of about 333 men below decks. Reg said that all the ship felt was 'a jolt' but it ended up with a hole the size of a bus in the bow.

Bernard COWARD (1918-2013) was the youngest brother of John's mother—Margaret Louisa Grant née Coward (1912-1978). He became a radio operator in the Merchant Navy in 1936 and was in Rabaul, on a ship named *Rabaul*, when war was declared in 1939. The captain must have been prepared for such an eventuality as he gave him a code book to use in the future. Bernard received several medals, including the North America Star, for making 16 crossings of the North Atlantic on various ships between 1939 and 1943. During these years, the German U-boats were most active and many merchant ships were sunk.

Here are a few extracts from the reminiscences Bernard wrote when he was 85:

'On the worst night I can remember, while on watch in the Radio room, I heard no less than 28 ships sending out their SOS calls after being torpedoed. The ships I was on always made a safe crossing, something I was thankful for. On one of the voyages across the Atlantic, we went to the port of Newport News in America. We loaded mainly army equipment, guns, tanks etc. On deck we loaded mothballed aircraft. We then anchored offshore where we loaded explosives of all kinds—shells, bombs and bullets etc. When fully loaded, knowing that a spark could cause the ship to go up with a bang, we set sail for the Middle East via Cape Town and Durban.



A panoramic view of bomb damage caused by the Liverpool Blitz

[Liverpool Blitz D 5983, Imperial War Museum](#)

After Durban we sailed to the Red Sea and carried on through the Suez Canal to Port Said. We were unable to get a berth to discharge our cargo, so we had to berth at a coal quay. We were warned that the Germans were bombing this area every night. When the bombing started that evening, I went on to the bridge to see the fireworks. The Captain was already on the bridge and we watched while Port Said was heavily bombed, and fires were started. Not long after, the ships were targeted, and we had a very lucky escape. A bomb hit the pile of coal, and the blast knocked the Captain and myself over and we hit the deck hard. We picked ourselves up and dusted off the coal dust. Except for a few bruises we were unharmed. No one else on board was hurt and the ship was not damaged.

Later in 1944 we sailed down the western side of India and round the southern side of Ceylon, now called Sri Lanka, when we got our orders to pick up a cargo in Vizagapatam which is on the east coast of India. The cargo was more arms and ammunition which made us a floating bomb once more. When fully loaded we set sail across the Bay of Bengal hoping to land our cargo on the coast of Burma. Somehow the Japanese submarines missed us, although we were a sitting target unloading our dangerous cargo.'

After the war, Bernard went back to college and obtained his Flight Radio Officer's Certificate. He flew in both civil aviation and the RAF, and participated in the Berlin Airlift and the Suez Crisis.

Our middle son's mother-in-law, Jean Margaret WILLIAMS née CRESDEE (1934-2010), was living at Bexleyheath in Kent, near Woolwich, at the start of the war. Her father, Alfred William Cresdee (1903-1988), was not there as he was a toolmaker and engineer working on airfields all over England, repairing the damaged British planes as soon as they landed. He hated the job as he would meet the pilots and knew he probably would not see them again. He was not called up in the forces as he was too valuable at home.

Jean recorded:

'One night "Moaning Minnie" (the air raid warning siren) went off. We got up and got as far as the back to make a dash to the Anderson air raid shelter at the bottom of the garden. Then Mum, Lilian Cresdee née PARKER (1910-1988), stopped dead in her tracks as I knew she would. She deliberately waited for the guns to open fire, as it would then be too late to make our dash as the shrapnel from the guns would be falling and it would be too dangerous to run. She then said, "it would be more comfortable to die in bed, and we could roll under the bed for protection, if need be." Mum hated that shelter as the dirt fell in from the sides and so did the earwigs. She was more frightened of them than the bombs, so we went back to bed and back to sleep. She wasn't worried and slept, so I did the same; we never heard a thing! I woke once during the night, uncomfortable and said there were breadcrumbs in the bed, and was told to "shut up and go back to sleep", which I did'.

'The next I knew it was daylight and someone was outside the bedroom door shouting "Is there anyone there?" Mum jumped up in a fright, half awake, grabbing her dressing gown and putting on her slippers as she rushed to the door, confronting this stranger indignantly, asking how he got into the house, to which he replied, "Lady, the front door is off, the back door is off, the roof has gone and all the

windows are smashed in, be careful where you walk. Are you alright?" He then added "You had better take a look in the mirror. You gave me quite a turn. Don't tell me you slept through it all?"

'With that he went on his way. He was the Air Raid Warden checking to see if anyone was still alive. The "breadcrumbs" I felt in the middle of the night were the soot that fell down the chimney with the blast when the bomb went off, demolishing the house across the road. Fortunately, there was nobody home there at the time.'

After a later incident with a rocket, Jean was sent to stay for a couple of years with her grandmother, 'Nana Parker' – Margaret Hannah Parker née SHEEN (1879-1961)-who lived at Aberfan in South Wales.

'My grandfather, Pryce Noel Parker (1874-1956), worked on a local farm and had pigs and chooks in the back garden, a big allotment and veggie garden; plenty of food. In fact, you wouldn't have thought there was a war on in Aberfan, except for the food and clothing coupons and the rationing books for sugar and tea etc. We kids were lucky having relatives to go to, as lots of children from London and other cities were just labelled, had a small bag and bundled onto trains to go to various destinations in the country where they were boarded by local residents. Often brothers and sisters were split up; they called them "Evacuees".'

Most of the men were away fighting in the war so the women had taken over the men's jobs, like driving the buses, working in the ammunition and other factories, and joining the Woman's Land Army, with big notices out 'Dig for Victory' and 'Eat carrots to see in the dark'. Up until this time, it was virtually unheard of that women should go out to work.

'My father came to visit us one weekend and looked awful; his usual ruddy complexion was dead white, with a sticking plaster on the left side of his forehead. Apparently, he was on a bus to Paddington to catch the train to Wales. He was upstairs in the back seat smoking, as you were not allowed to smoke downstairs. There were two buses in front when a rocket dropped in front of the second bus. The bus Dad was on was knocked over on its side and the windows blown in with the blast, a piece of flying glass cutting Dad's head. He was very lucky. Everyone on the bottom deck was either killed or seriously injured, and all killed on the two buses in front. The injured got taken to hospital where they stitched Dad's head and he was allowed on his way.'

Jean served in the Queen Alexandra Nursing Corps and met her future husband Robert David Williams (1936-2016) on the *Wilhelm Rice* on the way to New Zealand. Bob had served in the Army in Ireland, Kenya and Malaya etc, and he also moved to New Zealand after he was discharged. His father, John Laughton Williams (1905-1940), was one of the early civilian casualties of the war. They were living in Cardiff, and he was run down during the blackout and later died of his injuries.

So, while there were no overly dramatic or heroic family stories, they give an idea of the range of experiences that 'ordinary people' encountered.

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They became Prisoners of War

Paul Hickford

Like all impressionable teenagers growing up in the 1950s, I had heroes—mine were fighter pilot Douglas BADER and motor racing driver Stirling MOSS. Now in my latter years I have come to realise that within my own family, I had more than a handful of heroes—relatives who put their lives on the line and endured the enemy's wrath for our future, and I know there are many more New Zealanders like me.

Most patriotic New Zealand pioneer settlers would have been very proud to know that they had grandsons and great-grandsons serving in WWII. Using my own family as an example, many paternal relatives and maternal relatives served in the war.¹ We were represented in each of the military services—Navy (two), Army (12) and Air Force (one). Another four were members of the Home Guard and cousin, Elsie Winifred HICKFORD of Waverley, South Taranaki, was a member of the New Zealand Women's Auxiliary Corps (Home Service).

Captain Lawrence David (Lawrie) Hickford had lost an eye in a farming accident and was considered unfit for overseas service. Not one, however, to be easily thwarted, Lawrie engaged in recruiting young men for military service, and older men for the Home Guard, while serving in Queen Alexandra's Mounted Rifles training camps.² He also served as Staff Captain of the Second Mounted Rifles and as Chairman of the Manpower Advisory Committee, which strived to ensure New Zealand's essential services and production were maintained, by assisting with the provision of labour.³ In 1957, Lawrie was awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE), for his services to agriculture.

Further discoveries, both in New Zealand and Australia, identified countless cousins who also fought for King and country. Family records reveal that two of our close relatives were killed in action: Flight Sergeant Leonard Charles (Micky) Hickford (1923–1944), adopted son of Arthur and Violet (née PAUL) Hickford, a rear gunner who was killed when his Lancaster bomber, AA-D of 75 (New Zealand) Squadron, was shot down on 21 July 1944 while flying over the Netherlands. In 2003 Helen and I made a pilgrimage to the site of the Jonkerbos War Cemetery in Nijmegen where we placed a wreath of flowers and a fern on his grave.



**Headstone on the grave of Leonard (Micky) Hickford in
Jonkerbos War Cemetery, Nijmegen
Courtesy of New Zealand War Graves Project**

The other one was Raymond Arthur WELLS (1920–1945), son of Decimus and Evelyn (née Hickford) Wells. He lost his life while serving with the New Zealand Armoured Corps in Italy.

Another three family members were captured by the enemy and were to spend the remaining years of the war in prisoner of war camps—two in Germany/Poland and one in Burma.

Haydn 'Neil' GUYMER (1920–2014), No. 401805, Warrant Officer, 15 Squadron, Royal Air Force, enlisted at Wellington, New Zealand on 10 September 1939. On the evening of 26 July 1941, Neil was the rear gunner in a Short Stirling MK1 bomber, LS-K, which was one of nine aircraft engaged on a raid on enemy territory. He was the only Kiwi on board and had already completed 30 missions with his Australian skipper/pilot, Flight Lieutenant Frank THOMPSON.⁴



**Headstone on the grave of
Raymond Arthur Wells in the
Padua War Cemetery, Italy
Courtesy of New Zealand War
Graves Project**

On the return journey over the English Channel, and just 20 minutes flying time short of England, the bomber ran out of fuel. There were conflicting reports about why the aircraft failed to complete the return flight to Royal Air Force base Wyton, Cambridgeshire.⁵ Neil believed that they were using excessive fuel while constantly changing course to avoid enemy flak batteries.⁶ The Aviation Safety Network report suggests the aircraft was badly shot up by a Ju88, a twin-engined multirole combat aircraft, causing significant damage to the Stirling's fuel tanks.⁷

Thompson successfully ditched his plane into the sea, allowing him and his crew to escape in a dinghy which was washed ashore near Flushing, Netherlands. The crew's freedom was short-lived as all were captured and became prisoners for the remainder of the war. Neil spent the next four years in five different camps—Stalag Luft III at Kirshain, III at Sagan, VI at Heydekrug, 357 at Thorn (now known as Torun, Poland), and Fallingbomel where he was liberated by the 7th Armoured Division,⁸ British Army.⁹ He was reported safe in England in the *Evening Post*, Wellington, 26 April 1945.

Post-war, Neil was based in England as the European Manager for the then Apple and Pear Marketing Board, which in about 1985 sold over five million cartons of fruit into Europe and the Middle East. In that same year, he was awarded the OBE for service to export. Neil died in Cobham, Surrey, England, on 3 October 2014, aged 93. He was survived by his wife and two daughters.

Neil's brother, Warrant Officer Leslie Raymond Guymer (1917–1993), was a member of the Royal New Zealand Air Force undertaking overseas training when he was returned home in one of several drafts in November 1944.¹⁰ By September 1944, the Royal Air Force had found it had a surplus of airmen and over the following months many men were redeployed elsewhere or repatriated to their home countries.¹¹ Leslie's English-born wife Mary Anne Guymer (née HARKER) served with the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (RAF).¹²

In the latter stages of the war Neil and Leslie's Australian cousin, Archibald Elwyn (Arch) Guymer (1911–1983), was Squadron Leader of 28 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force, which was undertaking surveillance and providing air cover for ground forces advancing through Burma. On returning to civilian life in 1946, Arch resumed his career in education culminating in his appointment, in 1971, as Director-General of Education for Queensland, Australia. He retired in 1976.

A member of the extended Guymer family was Arthur Alexander RUSSELL (1909–1941), No. 5867, Private, 19th Battalion, 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force. He was the son of John and Rachel Bentley (née Guymer) Russell of Wellington. Arthur died from sickness on 17 January 1941 at the Convalescent Depot, New Zealand Medical Corps, and was buried in the Cairo War Memorial Cemetery.¹³ His funeral and graveside service were, in all probability conducted by Reverend C E HYDE, and was attended by my uncle J C H BARKER - see below.

The common ancestor connecting the Guymers and Hickfords was Robert Guymer (1766–1841), my 3x great-grandfather, who lived in Little Thurlow, Suffolk, England, less than 45 miles from Neil's air force base at Wyton.

John Charles Henry (aka Jack) Barker (1915–1992), No. 4878, Private, Headquarters, 4th Infantry Brigade, was my maternal uncle John who entered a military training camp on 3 October 1939. He went on to serve as the batman to Reverend Claude Edward HYDE (1902–1976), chaplain of



the 19th Infantry Battalion,¹⁴ initially in Cairo and later on Crete.

John embarked in Wellington on NZTS Z3, formerly the P&O liner *Strathaird*, on 5 January 1940 and was one of 1350 New Zealand troops destined for the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force desert camp at Maadi. On arrival at Port Tewfik (now known as Port Suez), Egypt, all were transported ashore by lighter and proceeded by troop train to their destination, a distance of approximately 12 kilometres. Fourteen months later, in April 1941, infantry units of the New Zealand Division were sent from Egypt to reinforce more than 42,000 Allied troops who had been evacuated from Greece to Crete earlier in the month in another Dunkirk-style operation.¹⁵ John's Battalion arrived on Crete on 28 April 1941 and was stationed just east of Galatas.

The prospects for holding the big island of Crete, which occupied a strategic position north of the convoy route from Alexandria to Malta, seemed good.¹⁶ The British, however, had intercepted plans for an enemy attack on the island which was expected to come from the sea. Therefore, the Royal Navy had positioned its ships for a seaborne landing, but instead it came in the form of an airborne invasion about 8am on the morning of 20 May 1941.¹⁷ The Battle for Crete was short-lived, and within 12 days of the initial assault the enemy had secured control of Crete. New Zealand casualties were high: 671 were killed in action, 967 wounded and 2180 captured, including John/Jack Barker who was allocated POW number 5445.¹⁸

Along with his fellow New Zealanders, John was placed in a Dulag (transit camp) on the island before being transported by train with his fellow prisoners to Germany where he was imprisoned at Stalag VIIIB near Lamsdorf (later renumbered 344) and then Stalag VIIIA near Gorlitz.¹⁹ During his period of internment, John was able to send postcards and letters to his sister and next-of-kin, Mrs Graham (Cassie) FOOKES (née Barker), whose husband served with the 2nd New Zealand Divisional Artillery in Italy.²⁰ John was reported safe in the United Kingdom on 29 May 1945.²¹



Left: Picture on front of post card showing John (right) enjoying tea on the lawn of Maadi Camp with his mates

Right: Obverse of post card sent by John Barker to his sister Cassie Fookes for Christmas 1940

Card is also signed by Rev. Claude E Hyde, Chaplain to 19th Infantry Battalion, NZEF

Courtesy Barker family collection

Pre-war, John had worked as a barman in Palmerston North and following his discharge from the New Zealand Army on 9 January 1946, he was employed as a hotel keeper in Tauranga, Bay of Plenty. John, a heavy smoker and diabetic, never truly recovered from the trials of the prisoner of war camps and died in Tauranga on 16 February 1992, aged 75. His widow, Jeanne Valencia (née BUTLER) Barker, remarried and, together with her new ex-serviceman husband, Edward William ROUND (1917–2005), became a staunch member of the Returned and Services' Association in Tauranga. Jeanne was well known in the city where she operated a reputable catering business, and her services were frequently called upon for wedding breakfasts and funeral receptions.

Relton Claude (Rel or Relly) Barker (1902–1988), NX21644, was a Private in the 2/17th Infantry Battalion and 2/2 Pioneer Battalion, Australian Imperial Force.²² Relton, a first cousin of John/Jack Barker (see above) was born in Auckland, New Zealand, and prior to 1926 moved to New South Wales, Australia, for work. Initially he found employment as a barman at the Railway Hotel, Chatswood, before eventually gaining a better paid position as a grocer's assistant.

Notwithstanding his age of 38 and being married, Relton enlisted at the Marrickville, New South Wales, military



*Relton Barker getting a shoeshine in Damascus, Syria,
December 1941*

Courtesy of Loraine Walkerdene (née Barker)

recruitment centre on 10 April 1940, understating his age by four years. Following training in Australia he was despatched with the 2/17th Battalion to the Middle East in November 1940 and was engaged in the North African campaign until January 1942. Re-deployed to Batavia, Dutch East Indies (now Jakarta, Indonesia), Relton joined the 2/2 Pioneer Battalion which became involved in the battle for Java against a strong enemy force. Within a month of his landing at Batavia on 18 February 1942, Relton, along with about 3000 other Australian troops, was captured and so began a life of misery and a struggle for survival.

Seven months later, on 24 September 1942, the records officer from the Australian Military Forces wrote the following to Relton's wife, Pat: '... inform you that a broadcast over Tokyo radio intimates that your husband No. NX21644 Private Claude Relton Barker, 2/2 Pnr. Bn., is claimed as being held a prisoner of war by the Japanese. This information is conveyed to you on the understanding that taking into consideration the circumstances of its receipt and that it originates from enemy sources, it is to be accepted with the reservation that it may not be authentic. Immediately confirmation is obtained through official channels you will be advised of the fact by telegram.'²³

Eight hundred and eighty-four prisoners of war, mainly from 2/2 Pioneer Battalion, and under the command of Lieutenant Colonel John Munslow WILLIAMS (1904–1997),²⁴ arrived in Moulmein, Burma, on 25 October 1942. They had travelled via Singapore where they had been imprisoned in the infamous Changi Prison. From Moulmein they were transferred to Tanyin 35 Kilo Camp which initially consisted of two native-style attap huts that were open on one side.²⁵ Within 500 yards there was a well for drinking water and a stream for bathing.²⁶

The men were set to work on constructing a section of the Burma–Siam railway and were required to move six cubic metres of earth daily and worked seven days a week. A 10-minute break was allowed after every hour. The Australians were hard workers and soon found they were able to complete their assigned task by midday avoiding the heat of the afternoon, but the daily earth-moving quota was soon increased to double.

Nothing could have prepared these men for what the Japanese demanded of them and life in an enemy prisoner of war camp was beyond human comprehension. The conditions were squalid as prisoners struggled to maintain their personal health and hygiene. Their diet was inadequate for men undertaking exhausting physical work and existed of rations of rice—hardly enough to sustain a child let alone those engaged in unrelenting physical labour. Malnutrition, malaria and skin ulcers were rife—furthermore Red Cross parcels containing items of food and clothing were frequently withheld or taken by the Japanese officers.²⁷

Outbreaks of dysentery were endemic through contaminated water, and in the absence of adequate medical supplies, many prisoners died from intestinal infections, malaria, dengue fever and cholera. Military uniforms were reduced to tatters and the prisoners became reliant on native items of clothing including loin cloths and/

or thongs (G-strings) and footwear; crudely fashioned wooden clogs were common.

Miraculously, Relton survived his prisoner of war ordeal and on 20 August 1945 was reported safe in Siam (now Thailand). His days in the military ended on 5 February 1946 when he was discharged from the Australian Imperial Force. Post-war Relton returned to live in New Zealand, to be closer to his brothers and sisters. He died in Auckland on 25 June 1988 and was survived by his wife Mary (Pat) Patricia (née CAMPBELL) Barker whom he had married in New Zealand in 1931.

To this day Relton's memory lives on with his relatives in New Zealand and Australia, and on the Cenotaph site at the Auckland War Memorial Museum and at the Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park, Sydney, where a number of his personal belongings are held including letters to family. While I am not an authority, I believe prisoners of war in the South-East Asian region were treated far more harshly than those in Europe. Furthermore, their death rates were over 25 per cent compared to fewer than five per cent in the European camps.

Post-war, Lieutenant Colonel John Williams, who had personally experienced torture at the hands of his prisoner of war camp commander, was a key witness in the war crime trials held in Singapore and Tokyo. In 1947, he was awarded the Order of the British Empire for meritorious service and devotion to duty in Java.²⁸

Australian author Richard FLANAGAN, winner of The Man Booker Prize in 2014, provides an eloquent and confronting novel based on his father's experiences as a prisoner of war in *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* [the Thai-Burma death railway], which was first published in Australia in 2013.

Paul Hickford
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21. New Zealand Defence Force, History Sheet for Private John Barker, No. 4878
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23. Extract from paper by Dr Catie Gilchrist, *From Rat of Tobruk to Prisoner of Japanese*, Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park, Sydney, NSW, Australia. Relton's niece, Loraine Walkerdene, deposited all her uncle's war time memorabilia (147 items) at the Memorial.
24. Gilchrist, Relton served as his batman
25. Constructed using palm fronds thatched together to form the walls and roofs
26. Welcome Soldiers' Nominal Roll/2/4th MGB Stories Timeline, www.2nd4thmgb.com.au
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Have you had a look at our
Overseas Resources?
They're to help you when your
research takes you out of
New Zealand.
Look under Resources on our
website

HAMMOND, Arnold Roye

Wendy Clark

Service: New Zealand Army
Service Number: 2840
Regiment: 18th Battalion, & Armoured Regiment
Last Known Rank: Private
Memorial Board: Patumahoe Domain

'Afterwards, we never talked about the war, except with each other', Roye (Smiler) HAMMOND said. However, when he was in his eighties, his youngest daughter, Lynne, persuaded Roye to share his story. She had discovered wartime letters saved by his mother, and a diary he kept throughout the three and a half years of active service in the North African, Greek and Crete Campaigns.

Born 29 July 1918, Roye was the youngest of eight children, four of whom were half-brothers and sisters. His schooling ended after 12 months at Pukekohe High as he was needed on the family farm at Runciman. Several years of milking cows prompted him to decamp to the South Island for work, returning only when his father had a heart attack. Being back in that cowshed confirmed his ambition to drive trucks. He worked first for George HUNTER of Patumahoe, and later for Smeed's Quarry near Mercer, where he lived on a derelict launch under the willows of the Waikato River.

Within a week of war being declared, Roye enlisted. 'I was the only unmarried brother, without dependents, so it had to be me,' he explained. The New Zealand Army accepted him as a specialist driver and gave him 12 weeks training before sending him off to Maadi in Egypt with the 18th Battalion. There he trained for 10 months in desert warfare until, in early 1941, they suddenly exchanged Egypt's flies,

heat and sandstorms for the rugged, freezing mountains of northern Greece. This was probably in response to the German declaration of war on Greece and their swift descent from the north.

Daughter Lynne says: 'Roye wasn't particularly concerned about what lay ahead. He was just glad to get away from the monotony of Egypt.' However, faced with 350,000 German soldiers and the Luftwaffe in control of the skies, the bitterly disappointed Kiwis were ordered to retreat, first to Servia Pass where they were repeatedly bombed and lost their first 18th Battalion man, Claude FINCH from Tuakau. To their disgust, the Royal Air Force was nowhere to be seen. Too often, it seems, soldiers were let down by poor decisions or lack of promised back-up. The retreat became an evacuation. When their remaining 257 members fled to Crete, they left 500, dead or captured, behind in Greece.

Later, the Battle for Crete would be described as one of the most savage fought by New Zealanders during WWII. Roye's usual role was to cart ammunition and food to the forward troops, but he'd had to disable his beloved A3 truck and leave it behind in Greece. Instead, he carried supplies on foot. At night he shared a single blanket with Harry COCHRANE of Pukekohe. They covered themselves with long grass to keep off the dew and hid from strafing planes under the olive trees. The daily food issue was a tin of bully beef and a handful of biscuits between three men, which they supplemented with oranges. Even water was a scarce commodity.

On 24 May 1941, a diary entry records: 'Stray bullets and poorly ranged mortars have been dropping around us all day'. That evening, in the absence of any infantry, odds and sods from the transport platoon were ordered to engage in a ragged bayonet charge up Red Hill.

This was something the specialists had not been trained for, and Roye had little idea of what they were meant to do or achieve. Their only instruction was: 'Get up there or I'll shoot you'. They advanced, firing from the hip. He took a bullet to the wrist. At this point in the battle for Crete, the Allies faced imminent defeat. The walking wounded were advised to escape over the mountains to the southern coast in the hope of catching an evacuating British Naval hospital ship. Roye was one of the lucky ones who made it. After recuperating in Egypt, he rejoined his unit in time to see action in Libya. Only 42 of the original 18th Battalion were left.

Roye renamed the Battle of Belhamed, the 'Shambles of Belhamed'. As he described it: 'When the New Zealand Infantry was getting cut to pieces by the German Armour, the British tank regiments should have intervened, but they would not because they had not been given orders. That happened on many occasions in the early part of the Desert War. Later, Lieutenant-General Freyberg prevailed upon General Montgomery to ensure British tank support was under New Zealand's command.'



*Roye with his pipe
Hammond family collection*

A letter sent home on 1 May 1943 said: 'The days when we were keen on this war are just about past'. Yet when, to his surprise, he was balloted for three months furlough in New Zealand, he had mixed feelings about leaving behind his mates. On getting back to Auckland, he caught chicken pox from the Hunter children, ending up at a military hospital at Ellerslie racecourse where he was also treated for scabies and boils. He stayed for six months at the hospital, working in the kitchens while continuing treatment for the boils that persisted for the rest of his life. He was discharged from the army as a P3, unfit for further service but not sick enough to qualify for a pension.

Roye attributed his smooth adjustment to civilian life to that stint working as a team member with the hospital staff. They helped assuage his sense of loss at being separated from his unit. 'Other returning soldiers struggled,



Portrait of Arnold Roye Hammond, 2840 (2014)
© NZIPP Photograph by Harry Janssen

sometimes for years, adjusting to life outside the army', he said.

At the end of their three-month leave, many of his fellow 1st Echelon soldiers refused to return to war. They could not see why they shouldn't swap places with the able-bodied men who had stayed home to work in Essential Services. Despite being accused of mutiny only 500 returned out of the 5000 that came home on furlough.

Roye went back to Patumahoe and, in 1946, married Hilda ROPER, a girl conscripted to work in the local market gardens. He carted vegetables to the dehydration factory in Pukekohe. Hilda used to give him cheek when he refuelled at the army hut where she worked beside the red shed and parts store on cropping land now owned by the WAI SHINGS. Later, they lived in two army huts on half an acre. They established a depot and a successful general carrying business known as Patumahoe Transport. They also raised three daughters and a son.

In later years Roye became a staunch member of the RSA. In 2012 he flew to Egypt to honour the 70th anniversary of the battle of El Alamein. After decades of silence, he allowed NZ On Screen to interview him at age 96. He was now a rarity, one of very few WWII soldiers still alive. By the time he died, in his 100th year, he had attended eight official anniversaries commemorating the conflict in Crete. His laconic humour and easy-going nature are remembered with great affection and respect, not only by his family, but by the Franklin community.

Roye is remembered on the memorial wall at Patumahoe Domain.

Wendy Clark
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Sources

- *Never a Winning Battle* as told to Roye Hammond's daughter, Lynne.
NZ On Screen – Memories of Service, 2016
- Roye's daughter, Lynne, and her siblings for sharing the photos and Roye's story.



Looking for records in New Zealand? Find a link in Kiwi Resources



Available to NZSG Members

Services and Benefits for NZSG Members

This page explains the services and other benefits available through individual or joint membership of the New Zealand Society of Genealogists.

Supporting genealogy and family history in New Zealand

All NZSG members support the Society to make resources more accessible through projects and liaison with national organisations. Major achievements include access to birth, death and marriage registrations, improved content access to government records, and the creation of nation-wide transcriptions, such as cemetery and school records.

The New Zealand Genealogist

We produce four issues per year of our award-winning journal, published since 1970. You access it online, including some back issues to 1977. The Editor welcomes articles for publication. Information on submissions is on page 86.

Keeping in Touch

Our e-newsletter, *e-KIT* (electronic Keeping In Touch), is a regular email full of up-to-date Society and genealogical news. Along with The BIG Picture (news for Branches and Interest Groups), *e-KIT* is also available on the website.

Those on Facebook can follow our [Facebook page](#). Members can join our [Forum](#) and our Google group [Memlist](#) to keep in touch with current events, information and assistance.

Courses and Online Groups

Our [Introductory Course](#) is available online or at the FRC. Information on these is on our website under NZSG Services.

We are currently building a number of Online Groups to enable our members to get together, wherever they are in New Zealand or the World. One of our more popular ones is our [Online DNA Interest Group](#) (ODIG).

NZSG Library

The Library is based at the Family Research Centre (FRC) in Panmure, Auckland. The FRC is open to the public, but members receive a substantial discount on entry fees.

The Library is open Monday, and Wednesday to Saturday, 10am to 4pm, with late nights on Wednesday and the first Friday of the month. Check the website for opening hours around holidays.

See our website for the Library Catalogue and details on borrowing or using our Research Service.

FRC Research Service

We provide research guidance to members if you are unsure where to search next for that elusive fact about your ancestor or family member. We can also look up any of the resources not available for borrowing, or if you live outside of Auckland.

researchservice@genealogy.org.nz

Other Research/Purchasing Services

We have a number of other services which you might find useful. Full details of how to access these is on our website under NZSG Services.

Membership discounts

Members receive a discount on access to the Family Research Centre (FRC) and for some NZSG sales products. Other member discounts will be listed in the member-only section of the NZSG website and promoted in *e-KIT*.

Reciprocal access

Members can request a letter of introduction for reciprocal access to Australian genealogical libraries, including the Society of Australian Genealogists in Sydney and the Genealogical Society of Victoria. Contact the membership administrator with details of your visit and your membership number

membership@genealogy.org.nz

On our website - www.genealogy.org.nz

The NZSG website is the hub for information about the NZSG, both for the public and for members. Here you will find background, events and contact details.

Members and the public can:

- Access the NZSG Library Catalogue
- Access the member/public tier of the Kiwi Collection
- Access our Resources on Getting Starting and Research Skills, including *Getting It Right*, a guide on how to cite your sources and information on copyright
- Find their local Branch or Interest Group
- See what's happening in their local area
- Purchase products and services from the NZSG Shop (some are not available to non-members)
- Watch our monthly presentations on many different aspects of the NZSG and researching your family

Members can login for a range of online resources and services:

- Access to information on NZSG Record Collections: see next page for more information
- Access Kiwi Resources and Kiwi Guides—help for researching in New Zealand; and our Overseas Resources for researching further afield
- Free access to historical newspaper databases for Great Britain and other countries through Gale Newspapers
- Free downloads of digital records on 'Discovery' at The National Archives (London)
- Submit entries to the online Register of Members' Interests
- Receive free assistance through the NZSG Research Service to search Library collections
- Receive assistance to search New Zealand land records (charges may apply)
- Subscribe to all the records on the Kiwi Collection

NZSG Record Collections

Members have collected a considerable amount of information over the years and made it available to other members. With the exception of the Kiwi Collection, this is available to members without charge. It is a major benefit of membership and for personal research only.

Full details on all our Collections and how to access and contribute to them are available under NZSG Collections on our website www.genealogy.org.nz

Members are welcome to contribute new or updated material.

Access to some Collections is through Research Services researchservice@genealogy.org.nz

NZSG Certificates Collection

This collection was set up as a repository for certificates that members had obtained, but found to be unrelated to their research. We now accept certificates and miscellaneous documents of any kind whether they are related or unrelated to your research. We welcome further contributions.

Certificates can be accessed either through our online email service or through our postal service. Details on how to access these are available on our website. An index is included in the Kiwi Collection.

First Families

First Families is a collection of information about families; where the family emigrated to New Zealand before and including 1901 and where partners were married in New Zealand before and including 1901.

It is an index, that has been compiled from family record sheets, contributed by both members of the NZSG and non-members. Each family record sheet includes the names of three generations and their spouses where known. It can include parents who may not have come to New Zealand, thus bridging the gap between New Zealand and the country of origin.

Surnames can be searched by members in the database accessible on the First Families page on the website. An index and images are also included in the Kiwi Collection.

Pre1856 New Zealand Marriage Records

This is a collection of New Zealand marriages that took place before compulsory civil registration. The collection contains over 28,500 entries from sources including civil registration entries, church records, newspaper notices, family and social history publications, Māori Mission records, Bible entries, ministers' diary and journal entries and submissions from NZSG members to name a few.

Access is through Research Services or by subscription to the Kiwi Collection. Contributions can be made through a form available online which can be emailed or posted to us.

Pedigree Registration

This is a collection of Pedigree Registration forms submitted by members. Every surname on the forms is indexed. These names appear in the Kiwi Collection.

An online search request form is on our website. A contribution form can also be found there. Please note the submission requirements.

Funeral Service Sheets

One of our newer Collections, Funeral Service Sheets are collected by members all over the country. An index is included in the Kiwi Collection. Access is through Research Services.

NZSG (Griffis) Illegitimacies

This collection is a name-searchable database involving illegitimate births in New Zealand between 1877 and 1950 that were available in public records, either at local court houses or National Archives. Virtually all of these records have now been transferred to Archives New Zealand.

The database includes details of the child (if named) the mother and the father, the location of the event, the record type and repository. Query results provide basic information only. Researchers are encouraged to go back to the original source record for more fulsome detail.

Access is only for records more than 100 years old and is through Research Services or by subscription to the Kiwi Collection.

New Zealand Cemeteries

We have produced cemetery transcriptions for approximately 1400 cemeteries nationwide, for burials from 1812 through to 2020. Most municipal cemeteries are included, but a significant proportion of this collection includes private cemeteries, Māori Urupa and remote burial locations. Access is through Research Services and/or by subscription to the Kiwi Collection.

Obituaries Collection

This collection includes contributions from members nationwide from sources such as national and regional newspapers, club newsletters and periodicals. An index is included in the Kiwi Collection. Access details are on our website.

School Records

These records are a valuable resource for family historians because they not only put families together in local communities, but allow us to trace their movements from place to place. The NZSG has been transcribing and indexing school APW records from their earliest beginnings and over time has accumulated records for almost 2000 schools nationwide dating from 1858 to present time.

An index is available on the Kiwi Collection. Access is through our NZSG School Records Officer— see website for current details.

NZSG Kiwi Collection

The Kiwi Collection is a major database of nearly 16 million New Zealand sources, including indexes to many of our Collections, as well as images for some. The Kiwi Collection is an online, subscription-based service available exclusively to NZSG members. See the online Shop for details on how to subscribe.

Information from the NZSG Record Collections is available to full NZSG members only, without charge. Access to the collections is a major benefit of your NZSG membership. Members receive this information on the understanding that it is to be used for their personal research only. You should not pass it on to non-members, or make access to the collections available to non-members. Local NZSG Branch members are not full NZSG members.

NZSG Shipping Collection Project

Launched in May 2024, this collection aims to collect information on every voyage to, from and around New Zealand up to 1920. The Project will be conducted over four phases to ensure as much information as possible is collected.

See our website for more information on progress.



Maxwell Wallace—Navy experiences in WWII

Lianne Sloan

Maxwell, the son of Joseph Albert (Jock) WALLACE and Hilda Agnes BATTERSBY, was born on 16 March 1917 in Helensville, on the outskirts of Auckland. His father purchased a 280-acre farm at Maungatautari in the Waikato in 1916, and then later purchased another 380-acre farm nearby which he ran as a run-off farm. Max had seven siblings, and they had a great childhood. Max was the smallest in the family, and as a child was often called upon by his mother to clean the copper. He loved to get in there as it was so warm. In 1934 he had violin lessons, and he also played football.

Around 1997, my mother's cousin, Bob Wallace, and I headed down to Maketu to visit Max so I could interview him, particularly about his war experiences. We had already visited his brother Graham and Max's daughter, Judy. While he rarely spoke about his time in WWII, Max was happy to talk about his experiences, and gathered there on the day, while I peppered him with questions and recorded his answers, were several family members, including his wife Mollie. He was certainly a character. I was also able to get further information later, particularly about the ships he was on, to supplement his own story.

Max enlisted in the Royal New Zealand Navy on 3 February 1938 in Auckland. He undertook basic training at Devonport. He was part of the Engine Room Branch of the Navy. His first ship was the *Leander*. He travelled to Sydney where they had gunnery exercises at Jervis Bay. Then, after a couple of weeks in Brisbane, the *Leander* returned to New

Zealand. The *Leander* and the *Achilles* were engaged in war exercises in the Hauraki Gulf in April and May 1938.

Max had heard they wanted men on the *Achilles*, so he volunteered and joined the crew. The *Achilles* travelled to Suva, Fiji, where they met up again with the *Leander*. Both the *Leander* and the *Achilles* were recalled to Auckland in August 1939 to complete full war storage (painting and provisioning the ship for war). They left Auckland at the end of August. War was declared on Germany by New Zealand and Australia on 3 September 1939.

The *Achilles'* first port of call was Valparaiso, Chile, where they took on food and fuel. According to neutrality laws, a belligerent (armed) ship was only allowed to take on sufficient fuel to reach the nearest port of a neighbouring state and to stay in port for 24 hours. They were to travel up and down the South American coast.

Meanwhile the *Graf Spee*, nicknamed a 'pocket battleship' by the British, under the command of Captain Hans LANGSDORFF, was under orders to disrupt and damage our shipping by all possible means. They travelled under the guise of their sister ship *Admiral Scheer* and attacked and sunk several British merchant ships. The Germans sunk in excess of 50,000 tons of Allied merchant ships. It is important to note, however, that the captain was determined not to lose a civilian life, and until the Battle of the River Plate, the crews and officers of the ships sunk were transported onto the *Graf Spee* or the *Altmark*, the supply ship.

Image above: Max in uniform with some of his siblings and his parents
From left to right: Nancie, Hilda, Eileen, Max, Graham, Frances and Jock Wallace
Sloan family collection

By October the *Achilles* and the *Cumberland* were part of 'Force G' and were patrolling off Rio de Janeiro while the *Ajax* and *Exeter* covered the Rio de la Plata (River Plate) area. The *Achilles* received orders to arrive at Montevideo, Uruguay, by 8 December 1939 as the *Graf Spee* sank the *Doric Star* on 2 December. They met up with the *Ajax* and *Exeter* on 10 December, 300 miles east of Cabo Santa Maria, Uruguay. Meanwhile, Captain Langsdorff had decided it was time to return to Germany.

However, the High Command had reported to him it would make a grand finale to sink four British cruisers in convoy from Montevideo. Unfortunately for the *Graf Spee*, she met up with the *Ajax*, *Exeter* and *Achilles*. After an hour and 40 minutes fighting, the *Graf Spee* retreated and headed for Uruguayan territorial waters. The *Achilles* followed her and gunfire ensued with a fire being noted in the base of the *Graf Spee*'s funnel.

While the *Graf Spee* entered Montevideo, the *Achilles* moved out and, with the *Ajax*, patrolled the River Plate Estuary until such time as the converging backup ships were able to assist. Both the *Ajax* and the *Exeter* had been badly damaged and even the *Achilles* had 400 holes up to 15cm in size in her. It was hoped they could delay the *Graf Spee*'s sailing. It was later discovered that the *Graf Spee* had been quite significantly damaged in the battle, and on Sunday 17 December 1939 she scuttled herself after the Uruguayan Government refused to allow her to stay any longer for repairs to take place. Many of her crew had been transferred to the *Tacoma*, a German merchant ship. There were 300 British prisoners on board the *Altmark* which managed to escape.

Afterwards, Captain Langsdorff glorified *Exeter* for her heroic fight and *Ajax* and *Achilles* for their daring and tenacity and said that they fought more like destroyers than cruisers. After talking to his crew and officers, and writing to his family, he put a pistol to his head and pulled the trigger, fearing his return to Germany. By this time, he and his crew were interned in Buenos Aires after being allowed to travel there on the *Tacoma*.

The *Achilles* crew members met up with some of the *Graf Spee* crew in Buenos Aires. There was no animosity between the crews. The *Achilles* travelled to Stanley Harbour (Falkland Islands, also known as Port Stanley) for a short stay, and then left for Auckland.

The *Wanganui Chronicle* published an item on page 4 on 15 January 1940:

Achilles Cable.

Cambridge has seven men serving on H.M.S. Achilles, the New Zealand cruiser which took part in the Graf Spee engagement. Advice has been received by Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Wallace, of Maungatautari, from their son, Stoker Max Wallace, that all the Cambridge men are well. A cable was sent by courtesy of Cables and Wireless Limited, who, as a gesture of appreciation, offered every officer and man on the Exeter, Achilles and Ajax a free cablegram to relatives.

There was an earlier article in the *Waikato Independent* on 11 January 1940, which mentioned there were five local

men, that Max had passed on seasonal greetings to his family and the free cables also included a free reply. Max's cable was the only cable received by the Cambridge families.

They arrived home to a heroes' welcome on 23 February 1940. The *Achilles* needed a refit and the crew were granted some leave to see their families. There were numerous newspaper articles about the *Achilles*' crew's welcome home, several of which mentioned Max, especially the *Waikato* papers.

The *Waikato Independent* published an article titled 'Welcome Today - The Civic Reception' on page 5 on 29 February 1940, which mentioned an official welcome home for the five local Cambridge sailors. A parade was organised, as was an afternoon tea and a dance. Max was mentioned in depth further into the article:

'The Cambridge men in the *Achilles* are Acting Petty Officer Stanley Keeley, Seaman-Gunner Wallace Care, Stoker Stanley Lorimer, Telephonist Arthur Speight, Stoker Max Wallace [who] mingled freely, often having a drink together. The stories from Germany about the desecration of the graves of Nazi sailors were absolutely untrue, said Stoker Wallace. He mentioned that the *Graf Spee*'s crew were enjoying their internment. They were made to work several days a week for the Argentine Government, being paid for what they did. Stoker Wallace has an album filled with interesting photographs of the battle. There are many views of the *Graf Spee*, one of particular interest being the battleship as she appears at high tide today, with only her control tower, masts and higher portions of her top-hamper showing above the water.'

'Young Sailor's Career

Stoker Wallace is 21 years of age and was born in Helensville. When he was a year old, he was brought to Cambridge with his parents, who had purchased a property at Maungatautari. He was educated at the Maungatautari No. 1 School, and until he was 19, he worked on his father's farm.

The wanderlust was in his veins and he endeavoured to join the crew of the Finnish barque "Penang", on which another Cambridge boy, Alfred Williams, had many thrilling experiences. The *Penang*'s complement was full and after other efforts, he decided to join the Royal Navy. He joined the crew of the "Leander" and made a visit to Sydney, after which he was transferred to the "Achilles". An island cruise with the Governor-General on board was completed, and immediately after returning the present eventful trip was undertaken.'

The *Waikato Independent* also published an article on page 5 on 29 February 1940 with the heading:

The article continued 'During the first three hours of the battle, Stoker Wallace was at action stations with a fire party, standing by in asbestos suits ready to quell any outbreak of fire. There

THE "ACHILLES" IN ACTION

EXPERIENCE OF CAMBRIDGE BOY

The part played by the engineering section of the crew of H.M.S. Achilles during the battle with the Graf Spee, was told yesterday to an Independent representative by Stoker Max Wallace, son of Mr and Mrs J. A. Wallace, who arrived in Cambridge on Tuesday.

was little for them to do, the only outbreaks being caused through shrapnel damaging the electrical equipment.

"It was the worst part of the battle for me, waiting there with practically nothing to do," said Stoker Wallace. "With the engines full out, the deck plates vibrated under our feet adding to the strain."

'Shells were passing over the ship and one took the aerial away without exploding. There were no direct hits, owing to the wonderful manoeuvring by the captain, but altogether there were 400 holes in the "Achilles" from pieces of shrapnel.'

'The nearest shell exploded 25 yards to port, and it was a fragment of shrapnel from this that killed Able-Seaman Archibald Shaw and wounded Able-Seaman Edgar Sherley, who were in the conning tower.

'Deafening Noise of Engines:

As the battle progressed, Stoker Wallace took over his own shift in the stokehold, where the noise of the racing engines was deafening. Every half-hour reports of the fighting were sent to the men below, who were waiting in tense anxiety. All food for the stokehold crew had to be lowered down.

'Following the battle, the chief stoker was decorated for having the stokehold in such perfect order. All the men were praised for their excellent work, and Captain Parry said, when decorated with the C.B., that he would like to cut the ribbon into bits for everyone to share.

'The captain said that his men had done most of the work, but the crew, to a man, agreed that Captain Parry was one of the best skippers they could possibly have had.

'Tense Four Days

Next came the strain of four days of waiting for the Graf Spee to come out of Montevideo. There was no sleep for anyone for five days, during which time the Graf Spee was never out of sight, except when behind smoke screens.

"When we were first told that the pocket battleship had been sighted, we all thought that it was only a matter of time before we would be with the mermaids," said Stoker Wallace.

'The Graf Spee first fired at the Exeter, which was hiding the Achilles. When the battleship saw the latter, it turned round and fled. A running fight commenced which lasted for over 400 miles. It was the Achilles that scored the most direct hits on the Graf Spee.

'There was plenty of hilarity after the battle, except for the time when the four men who were killed were buried at sea. These first casualties of the war stirred the men very deeply, said Stoker Wallace.

'Credit to German Sailors:

[Max] was not beyond giving the German sailors some credit for their effort in the battle. They had done well, he considered, in view of the fact they had served only three years at sea. Some of the Germans were met in Montevideo, and they said they were sick of the sea and living on nothing but tinned food.'

Max advised he was at Tulagi (Solomon Islands) three years later waiting to be picked up by the *Moa* when she was sunk on her way in. The *Bay of Plenty Times* published an item on 13 April 1943, announcing that the *Moa* had been sunk after heavy enemy air attack off the Solomon Islands on 8 April 1943.

Max went to a camp run by the Americans, and while there made up some game boards and managed to earn quite an income from this source. He also managed to get some

whiskey which he raffled off. During this time, he was not paid and needed some money to keep himself going. However, he was also missing his 'cobbers' and met up with a mate who told him about a camp further up country and decided to go for a visit. He ended up staying there for three days. Unfortunately for him the *Leander* came to pick him up and could not find him. On his return to camp he was put in the brig for two weeks as he had been AWOL. However, in the end he did manage to get on the *Leander* which was transporting shell-shocked Americans home. On 13 July 1943 the *Leander* was torpedoed in the Battle of Kolombangara (Solomon Islands) with 28 lives lost. Max had been in the 'A' Boiler Room on the 8 pm-12 am watch. He was requested to do an extra watch; however he needed a break so refused. Just after 1.00 am the cruiser was torpedoed after the *Leander* missed Admiral Ainsworth's turning signal on ship-to-ship radio. All those in the 'A' Boiler Room were killed including Jack Battersby, Max's cousin. The *Leander* was seriously damaged, however, by cross-connecting her boiler systems, and by back-feeding intricate machinery below, the ship steamed slowly on two engines, taking steam from the 'C' Boiler Room, to reach Tulagi.

At Tulagi they started work immediately to repair the 20ft x 30ft hole in the port side using tons of cement which the Americans were persuaded to part with. They left Tulagi and arrived in Auckland on 29 July 1943. The crew who had been killed down in 'A' Boiler Room were still there and the dockworkers refused to come on board. After the engine room staff refused to go down, as their kin and cobbers were down there, the Royal Marines were ordered down. Max identified his cousin by a ring on a hand with the initials 'JB'. It was certainly a hard time for all, and despite the time that had passed we were all moved when tears ran down Max's cheeks at the mention of his cousin's death. Jack's son, Derek BATTERSBY, spent a long time on Auckland Council local boards. I met him a few times and we had discussed his father's death and Max's connection to him. The Battersby family was related on Max's mother side while I was related on his father's side.

Max left the *Leander* at this stage and spent about a year on minesweepers and in the Examination Services on the *Duchess* checking boats and ships coming in. He then travelled to Japan on the *Gambia* and was at the Yokohama Dockyards when the Instrument of Surrender was signed by General Douglas MacARTHUR on the *SS Missouri*.

The *Waikato Independent* published an article on 29 October 1945, and once again Max was at the heart of the story:

BOYS OVERSEAS

IMPRESSIONS OF JAPAN

CAMBRIDGE BOY ON "GAMBIA"

'The following interesting extracts are from letters of a member of H.M.S. Gambia's crew, Petty Officer Stoker Max. Wallace, to the members of his family at Maungatautari: – Writing during September from Osaka, Japan, he stated that although it was Autumn it was very hot. He remarked that the US bombings of the five cities of Japan – "they certainly made a job of it". Just imagine three buildings left in Queen Street, the remainder a pile of broken bricks, twisted iron and ashes. Not even a piece of firewood left. You have no idea of the conditions left in Yokohama and Tokio [sic]. The clever US precision bombers left a modern restaurant here and there is a picture theatre, all hospitals, gasworks, copper mine and such other places as they needed immediately they took over. It was a grand sight watching hundreds of 3,000-ton barges entering Yokohama laden with everything from ice-making machines to bulldozers. The Yanks are not depending on the Japs for anything.

'Petty Officer Wallace has a very poor opinion of the Japs... The Petty Officer continues: "Apparently it was an all-out war effort for Japan as they had not prepared to feed their population if they were beaten and my heart bleeds for the starving kids..."

'Since the Petty Officer wrote the letters the Gambia has set sail for home, and it is expected that she will arrive in the Dominion in the matter of a few days.'

Max married Mollie HICKS on 11 April 1945 at the Registrar's Office, Auckland. They had met while Mollie was working at the cafeteria at the Devonport Naval Base while Max was on the minesweepers. He was on the minesweepers for about a year travelling up and down the west coast of the northern region of New Zealand. They had two sons—Alan (Nicky) and David—and three daughters—Raewyn, Judy and Kay.

After the war Max and his brothers, Bruce and Keith, looked after the run-off farm for their father. However, Bruce pulled out and Max and Keith bought the land from their father and divided the property. Once a house was built on each block it ceased to be a run-off and was run as a farm. Max sold his land in 1963 and bought a 1,000-acre sheep farm with his sons Nicky and David ('Warihi' at Roydon Downs). This was sold to the Government in 1976 and pine

trees were planted on this land, which was heart-breaking after all the effort put in over the years clearing the land. He and Mollie moved to Maketu near Te Puke. He used to do a little fishing, however his main interest when we visited him was his gardening, which kept him fully occupied. Judy had mentioned that if her father liked us we would come home with a boot full of veggies (and yes, we did). He had a large garden at home, and he also had a large garden at the RSA. As he shared his veggies with neighbours and locals, he often had friends stop by after a fishing trip to drop off fish.

Max died on 27 June 2007 at Cambria Rest Home, Rotorua, aged 90. His ashes were scattered in the Waitemata Harbour at his request.

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Max with his wife Mollie née Hicks

Hector Ivo Dabinett, Royal Air Force, Number 29007

Elaine Prakash

New Zealand Family

Hector was a grandson of Otago pioneer farmer Job DABINETT (1820-1897) and Sophia née HECTOR (1824-1882) of Warepa. He was born at Hawera, Taranaki, on 11 July 1905, and was the second son of Albert Edwin Hector Dabinett (1863-1947) and Isabella Oliver née MILNE (1968-1962).^{1, 2} His parents had married at Knapdale Parish, near Gore, Southland, in 1891.³ Within two years they had moved to Taranaki. Nine children's births were registered to Albert and Isabella between 1893 and 1911 while they were resident at Hawera.^{4, 5} Their third daughter, Isabella Frances, died as an infant in 1895. Tragically, she was just twelve days old when she succumbed to acute bronchitis that had lasted four days.⁶ During his childhood, Hector experienced the loss of both of his brothers. Rae Edwin was an exhausted eleven-month-old when he died, from Cerebro Spinal Meningitis infection, on 30 January 1910.⁷ Hector was a teenager when news came that his elder brother, Francis (Frank) Milne Dabinett, had died in WWI. Frank was killed in action on 7 October 1918, while serving with the New Zealand Machine Gun Corps at Le Cateau. Frank was buried in France, aged just 22 years.^{8, 9, 10}

Education

Hector started his primary education at Hawera School. On 15 August 1910, he was the 5000th pupil enrolled since the opening, in 1880, of the forerunner to the Hawera District High School.¹¹ His father's address was Dublin Street when Hector was admitted to St John's Infant School, Wanganui, on 6 June 1912.¹² The family move to Wanganui was due to his father's promotion to Head of Department after 20 years as a telegraph and telephone linesman.¹³ Hector next attended Sedgebrook School from 2 February 1914 when the family were resident at Wanganui East. Although awarded a prize at Wanganui East in 1915 for coming eighth in the standard two class, he was outdone by his sister Alice, who came first in standard five.¹⁴ Attendance at the District High School followed. In December 1919 he gained 'Competency' in the Proficiency Examination results.¹⁵ Hector left Victoria Avenue School to enrol at Wanganui Technical College, where he studied engineering/general courses between 1921 and 1923.¹⁶ His participation in sports included swimming, cross-country running, amateur boxing, cricket, and football. Results of these efforts were reported often in local newspapers. He was selected for college representative teams in both cricket and football.¹⁷ Hector continued his association with this college by playing rugby for the Technical Old Boys' Club.^{18, 19} There is a named photograph of the 1924 junior team available at the Whanganui Regional Museum.²⁰

RAF Career

Hector was employed in engineering with the Mechanician's branch of the Post and Telegraph Department at Wanganui. In the 1928 Rangitikei Electoral Roll he gives his residence as Mt View Road (his parents' address from 1914) and his occupation as mechanic.^{21, 22} Hector resigned this first job

to try and join the British Air Force. He paid his own passage to England, travelling on the ship *Tamaroa* from Wellington to Southampton, departing on 30 October 1929.²³ That he had visited New Zealand House, London, in January 1930 was noted.²⁴ Together with Douglas GORDON, the two Wanganui men passed the air force tests and were both accepted for training at Salisbury flying school.²⁵ By year's end Hector was successful in becoming a Pilot Officer. Three other New Zealanders, (Gordon, HANKINS and KIPPENBERGER) had also 'passed out from No. 1 Flying Training School at Netheravon'.^{26, 27} He then steadily made his way up the ranks of Flying Officer (1930), Flight Lieutenant (1931), and Acting Squadron Leader to Squadron Leader (1938) by the time WWII was declared.^{28, 29} D Gordon was a 'Squadron Leader who had recently been transferred to Canada' by November 1940, when photographs of local airmen were displayed in McGruer's Ltd., Wanganui, department store window by the Air Relations Committee.³⁰

Personal Life

In March 1931 Hector Ivo Dabinett was promoted from Squadron Leader to temporary Wing Commander. He then went to Malta, as relieving adjutant to the base, leaving London via the ship *Naldera* on 15 April 1932.³¹ Three months later he married Muriel HENRY,^{32, 33} who had arrived in Malta from England on 24 June 1932.³⁴ The couple returned to London on the ship *Rawalpindi* on 8 December 1933.³⁵ Their marriage was short-lived however, as within five years, Muriel had filed for divorce.³⁶ I have found one birth registered at Brentford, Middlesex, in March quarter 1937 for a daughter to this marriage.³⁷ On 8 July 1939 there was another marriage for Hector Ivo recorded, to Joyce BIRD at St George's Church, Egbaston, Birmingham, Warwickshire.^{38, 39 40} Searching for any issue to Hector and Joyce I have so far found one son's birth registered in December quarter 1941 at Oxford.⁴¹ Joyce Dabinett was resident at Farm Cottage, The Street, Mildenhall, Suffolk in the 1939 England and Wales register. The entry annotated with a different surname (TAYLOR) indicated she may have re-married sometime after this.⁴² There is a subsequent marriage registration for her in the March quarter 1948 to Norman Taylor at Thanet, Kent.⁴³

Escape from Blazing Bomber

During his career Hector was stationed at various bases in England and Ireland, usually attached to bombing squadrons. He specialised in night flying and was involved in testing London's defences with mock, large-scale, night air manoeuvres in 1934.⁴⁴ One incident I have found confirming reports about Hector's being involved in a narrow escape from a blazing bomber on 18 February 1935. The pilot was Flight Lieutenant Frederick William MURISON (No. 192331) and the other crew member was Flying Officer Montagu Victor Murray CLUBE (No. 90015). The squadron 500 Virginia K2325 aircraft 'burst into flames on the starboard wing when approaching 500 feet after take-

off from Manston. The pilot makes a quick turn and side-slips to keep the flames away from the fuselage. Losing height, he force-lands the aircraft up-wind, with the three occupants jumping from the aircraft. Ground crews rush to the aircraft with fire extinguishers to prevent the aircraft being totally destroyed.⁴⁵ From 1935 to 1939 Hector was an instructor to advanced pilots—teaching navigation, gunnery, and bombing.⁴⁶ He received further training as a flying instructor in 1937, undertaking courses between April and July.⁴⁷ Instructing could be a dangerous job too, being prone to fatal accidents. On another occasion, during Bastille Day celebrations on 14 July 1939, Hector took pride in leading the RAF Units for a fly past over the Arc de Triomphe and down the Champs Elysées.⁴⁸

War Time Service

As Squadron Leader Hector flew in the first air raid of the war against Germany on 3 September 1939.⁴⁹ The German fleet anchored at Kiel Harbour was their target. His letter home explained that after travelling over 300 miles and arriving in darkness, they were ordered to return to base due to a thunderstorm thwarting any bombing plans. Navigation at that time involved making visual sighting of landmarks and targets. Next day the other half of the squadron, though still in unfavourable wet cloudy weather, was more successful in a daylight Kiel Canal raid, making several direct hits on battleships anchored there.⁵⁰ A report by air observer Melville INNES-JONES of Hamilton, New Zealand, in his letters home, described being in one of the rear aircraft on this 4 September raid and that 'those 10 minutes in the Kiel Harbour were the hottest I have ever had in my life.'⁵¹ Kiel Canal runs for 98 kilometres linking the North Sea to the Baltic Sea between Kiel and Brunsbüttel. The Germans had dockyards there where submarines were assembled, so it was a heavily fortified area being at that time the only opening to the Baltic not mined.^{52, 53} Two of the 14 Wellington bombers used in the raid were lost.⁵⁴ By disabling German shipping the RAF made it safer for Allied convoys travelling in the North Sea area and for British shipping coming increasingly under attack from U-boats.

A propaganda film reconstruction of the raid was made, featuring the actual men involved, called 'The Lion has Wings'. Cuts were made to the original before the film could be safely released to the public in war time. It was viewed by the King and Queen in 'their first visit to a public cinema since the King's accession'.^{55, 56, 57 58} When shown in New Zealand cinemas Hector's father Albert was able to recognise his son, in uniform, talking to the returning airmen.⁵⁹ Another film featuring Squadron 149 men was called 'Target for Tonight'. It was filmed on location at Mildenhall, Suffolk (using the fictitious name Millerton aerodrome), and focused on the planning and execution of an air raid.⁶⁰

The 24 September 1941 *London Gazette Supplement*, page 5569, in which the King 'has been graciously pleased to give orders for the publication of the names of the following who have been mentioned in dispatches by the Air Officers Commanding-in-Chief: included Wing Commander H I Dabinett. In the June 1942 New Zealand King's Birthday Honours lists, and again in 1943 New Year's Honours, Wing Commander Dabinett, RAF, was again one of those who had earned a 'mention in dispatches'.^{61, 62}

Retirement Travels

Hector married Grace Constance née WARD, formerly SPEIRS, in mid-1949 in London.⁶³ She had previously been married to Ronald James Speirs in 1934 at Wandsworth, London.⁶⁴ Grace had a son Hugh R I Speirs from her first marriage.⁶⁵ London electoral registers between 1932 and 1972 show Hector's residence in the Lambeth area during this time period.⁶⁶ The couple had already visited New Zealand as a passenger list shows them returning to Southampton via *SS Australis* from Auckland 19 March 1971.⁶⁷ After he retired, Hector returned home for a few years with his English wife. The couple appear in Wanganui Electoral Rolls from 1978 to 1985, residing with his eldest sister, Stella Edith Dabinett, at 70 Mt View Road, between 1978 and 1983, and then at 3 Ridgeway Street from 1984 to 1985. Stella had moved to nearby Hikurangi Home (1 Mt View Road) from 1983 to 1986. She was 93 years old when she died on 15 January 1987 at Wanganui hospital. Her ashes were scattered a month later at Aramaho Cemetery.⁶⁸

Laid to Rest in Wales

Hector and Grace must have returned to the United Kingdom soon after his elderly spinster sister had been settled in at Hikurangi Home, where she was to outlive him. Hector Ivo Dabinett's death at Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, Wales, is registered in the second quarter of 1984.⁶⁹ The United Kingdom Burial and Cremation Index gives a death date of 3 June and a cremation date of 8 June.⁷⁰ His third wife, Grace Dabinett, died 9 March 1991, at Bridell Pen-Y-Bryb, Dyfed, Wales, and was cremated at Pembrokeshire 13 March 1991.⁷¹

Dabinett(e) New Zealanders

The short-term free access to United Kingdom Military records at Ancestry for the 2025 ANZAC Day period was the spur for me to research Hector Dabinett's life. I had already written a short piece about his brother Francis for the Hawkes Bay NZSG Branch's newsletter.⁷² I started with several unattributed newspaper clippings I had received from another researcher back in 1989 about an airman 'H T (sic) Dabinett'.⁷³ I discovered the portrait image in one clipping (attributed to Tesla Studio) had also been published in the *Dominion*. The amount of detailed, more recent, information I have been able to collate about this airman entirely from online websites is wonderful, thanks to the dedicated work of the content creators. I will continue to research the other Dabinett men listed at Online Cenotaph since they will be cousins. Almost all Dabinett(e) in New Zealand are descendants from the same family as my 2x great-grandmother Rebecca HARWOOD née Dabinett (1827 -1913).

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74. Howard Warren Dabinett, Letter to EF Prakash, 15 July 1989, enclosing clippings and family charts re Dabinetts. One item headed, 'Airman's Fine Record', was published in January 1941 in the *New Zealand Herald* (10 January 1941, p. 8) and *Te Awamutu Courier* (15 January 1941, p. 2). Another item included Wing-Commander Dabinett's portrait and text attributing the image to Tesla Studio. This same image was published by the *Dominion* on 31 January 1941, p. 9, without attribution.

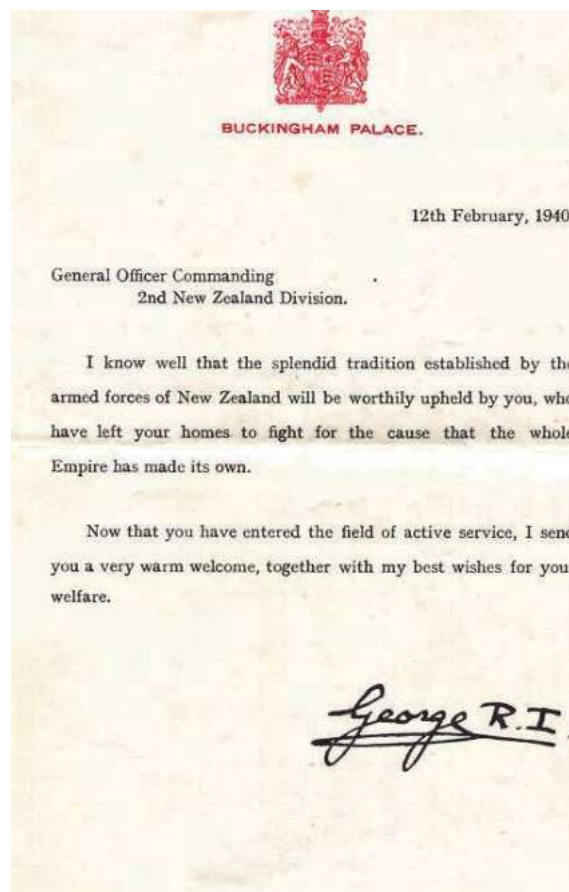
A message from the King

Cheryl Closey

My Grandfather was Lieutenant Colonel R. V. Closey, E.D., M.I.D. He was an officer in the 24th Battalion. These were among his papers.



*The Officers of the 24th Battalion in Egypt
Closey family collection*



A man of few words finally told his story

Lianne Sloan

I feel very honoured that my great-uncle Allan chose to tell me his story close to the end of his life. He told his family very little about his time in the war years, and even when I interviewed him, he would not let his wife, or three children, come anywhere near us.

This is his story of his early life, some of which I knew from my own grandfather, James (Jim) WALLACE, and also what great-uncle Allan experienced during WWII and afterwards. Further information was provided by his Australian Military records and research online.

My great-uncle Allan John Wallace was born in Maungaturoto on 23 February 1912. His parents were James Wallace (1882–1929) and Irene Frances FLETCHER (1888–1958). He was the oldest of five children and had one brother, my grandfather, James Albert (1914–1983) and three sisters, Myrtle Irene (1915–2005), Edith Mary (1917–1992) and Ethel Eileen (1921–1977).

James and Irene and their family lived in a house built by James near his brother, William, on the road to Kaiwaka. Both brothers often worked away in the bush so their wives and children would often be alone. Around 1917, the brothers took up a piece of land in the very swampy Ruawai Flats. They took up farms in Dunns Road, with James remaining for some years. Their children, including Allan,

went to Raupo School although at times the Ruawai Flats would flood and they couldn't get there.

Allan's father, James, died aged 47 on 3 June 1929 at Mt Pleasant Hospital from pneumonia, influenza and heart failure, which he had suffered for nine days. Allan, and my grandfather, Jim, had no doubt been helping their father on the farm but now they were expected to help their mother run it. They took turns going out to find work elsewhere while the other brother would help their mother on the farm until it was sold. This was most likely in the mid-1930s as Allan was overseas from 1935, and my grandparents were married in Auckland in 1936. They started their family there. His mother and sisters moved to Auckland and his mother leased a boarding house to provide work for her daughters for a while.

Allan used to wrestle and went to Auckland for competitions. He was shy and retiring.

Allan told me he travelled with his cousin, Bruce Wallace, and Keith BRADLEY, to the South Island a couple of times between 1932 and 1933 and did wheat harvesting at Darfield. Work was hard to find during the Depression, so they went wherever there was work.

Allan travelled by sea to Australia in 1935 where he was to spend some five years. He spent most of his money in Sydney, so he paid for a ticket to Journey Junction which was very near Albury. He worked in the mines in the Outback, then travelled to Gibbsland, Melbourne, where he was a contract bush worker. They got burnt out by the Black Friday fires of 1938, so he travelled to Lake George where he worked in the mines again. He then decided to enlist so travelled to Melbourne to sign up.

The Australian Military Forces Attestation Form shows his Army no. was V.X.5810. Allan John Wallace enlisted for service at Dandenong, Melbourne, Victoria, on 20 October 1939. He was shown as born in New Zealand and as a natural born British subject. He was aged 27. Date of birth was 23 February 1912. He was single. His occupation was Bush Worker. He had not previously served on active service. His next of kin was his mother Irene Wallace who was living at 300 Great North Road, Grey Lynn, Auckland. He was living at the time at Jindivick via Drouin, Victoria. His church denomination was Church of England.

He did his training for a year just north of Melbourne. The Australian Second 7th Battalion was shipped out, travelling through the Suez Canal to Palestine, and on to Egypt. Allan was part of Steve BERNARD's platoon, and they were given an opportunity to visit Jerusalem where they followed the crucifixion route. He went on to fight at Libya against the Italians. Rommel landed and they were sent to Greece. They were part of the rear guard and were left behind.

They were captured and sent to Salonika (now Thessaloniki) after they were forced to march from Athens with Nazi soldiers watching them. They travelled on through



*Allan John Wallace's WWII Army Photos
Wallace family collection*

Yugoslavia to Poland. They were at Prison Camp 8B where they were part of working parties. They were well treated there, working in a quarry. Allan decided to join in an escape attempt, and they did succeed, however it was snowing, and they were starving and after hearing church bells in a local village they went down, still in their uniforms, and waited in the centre to give themselves up. The villagers were too scared to give them food or drink. They spent 14 days in the cooler supposedly getting only bread and water. However, they received soup most days.

They were sent to another Polish Prison Camp where they were forced to do coal mining. The conditions there were only just within the Geneva Convention rules, with enough food being provided to only survive on. The temperatures were freezing at times, and it was actually warmer down in the mines than above ground. No more escapes were made by Allan.

Towards the end of the War in Europe the Russian front forced the German guards to march approximately 80 allies to Regensburg. They marched in 1-1½ feet of snow, and they passed German troops, some of which were only boys in uniform, and they admired the Allies' boots. After two days they were passed by some Russians. They had a couple of buggies and horses to help carry their gear. After five days they fell behind the Auschwitz survivors, not seeing the actual marchers, only those who were shot when they couldn't keep up. The guards threatened them with 'that will happen to you if you don't do what we say'. It took about three months to travel the distance, and they ended up eating one of the horses, which was only skin and bones; the other horse was sold to civilians. They were surviving off turnips, potatoes, beetroot and whatever else they could find. They were desperate and sent out an SOS to the Red Cross who arrived and supplied them with treatment and food. Even though the conditions were bad, they knew the war was coming to an end and had hope.

The four months when most of the Allied prisoners were forced to march were January–April 1945. January and February 1945 were among the coldest winter months of the twentieth century in Europe, with blizzards and temperatures as low as -25°C, and even in March the temperatures were well below 0°C. Most of the POWs were ill-prepared for the evacuation, having suffered years of poor rations and wearing ill-suited clothing in the appalling winter conditions.

They were down to around 20 people at the end of the march, with many falling by the way. Allan was not aware of them being shot, however, and hoped they found help in the villages along the way. They arrived at Regensburg and were looking down at the bridge when the US fighter planes (Mustangs) dropped smoke flares and then bombed the bridge, over which New Zealand and other Allied soldiers were marching, as it was believed the bridge was mined, and so many were killed. They were ferried across the Danube. The Americans arrived and put them in trucks after a day or two and they were transported to Reims, where there was a big airfield. The Peace Treaty was signed that night.

They were transported to a British airfield and were sent to Australia House in London to recuperate. VE day was the

day after they arrived in London, however Allan did not wish to participate and kept well clear. There was a big list of people who offered hospitality, and he recuperated at some of these places.

The *Stirling Castle* troop ship transported Allan home, stopping at Wellington, and after seeing his family, he flew to Australia where he was demobbed.

Allan's military records show he was recorded as Missing in Action in Crete in June 1941 and officially reported as a Prisoner of War on 5 January 1942 at Stalag VIII B, and on 15 January 1944 as interned at Stalag 344. He arrived in the United Kingdom Ex-Western Europe on 10 May 1945. He was granted Proficiency Pay on 19 June 1945 and embarked from the United Kingdom to New Zealand on 18 June 1945. He arrived in Sydney on 16 August 1945 and was discharged on 31 August 1945.

He did receive some war medals after being demobbed, although some took some time to arrive as there were one or two that were sent to an old address in New Zealand from Australia. The military records show him following up on these several times, which took a few years. It obviously was important to him. He appears to have earned the 1939/45 Star, Africa Star, Defence Medal, War Medal and Australian Service Medal.

A German Prisoner of War form for Dulag 183 (Salonika now known as Thessaloniki), Dist. 5 shows: WALLACE, Allen John, born 23/2/1912, Auck. NZ. Faith: Protestant. Paters [Father]—James. Mutter [Mother]—Irene Fletcher. Australian [Army]. New Zealand was crossed out. A.I.F. Mechanic. Vx5810. Crete 30/6/41 [probably the date he was captured]. Black hair colour. His finger or thumb print was shown. Next of Kin—Mrs I. F. Wallace, 36 Kauwau Road, Auckland, New Zealand. 8/10/41 Stalag VIII B. 21/2/1943 Greflohen. Engriffen 22/2/1943. 2/4/1943 N.E. 563 Robertgrube bei Jaworzno. 30/3/1943-12/4/1943 Laz Gr. Strehlitz.

Stalag VIII-B was also known as Stalag-344 and was located near the village of Lamsdorf, now Lambinowice, in Silesia, Poland. The hospital facilities at Stalag VIII-B were among the best in all the Stalags. The Lazarett [hospital] was set up on a separate site with 11 concrete buildings. Six of them were self-contained wards, each with a space for about 100 patients. The others were treatment blocks with operating theatres, X-ray and laboratory facilities, as well as kitchens, a morgue and accommodation for medical staff. The Lazarett was headed by a German officer, but the staff were made up entirely of prisoners. They included general physicians and surgeons, a neurosurgeon, psychiatrist, anaesthesiologist and radiologist.

Greflohen is the past tense of Fliehen which means to flee from and Ergriffen appears to be captured, so it appears he escaped on 21 February 1943 and was captured the next day on 22 February 1943.

Strzelce Opolskie at Gross Strehlitz had a coal quarry. Robertgrube—Grube means pit. There was a Nazi Concentration Camp at Jaworzno which was opened on 15 June 1943. It was one of the sub-camps of Auschwitz. It provided forced labour for the German war industry.

Inmates were principally employed in coal mining and construction of a power plant. Among the builders of the camp were British prisoners of war from Stalag VIII-B at Lamsdorf.

After Allan's discharge from the Australian Army, he returned to New Zealand. By this stage the home farm had been sold so he did odd jobs. Work was hard to find. He travelled down to Tirau where he bought 100 acres of land, and later he married Ethel TOCKER on 15 April 1946. They went on to have three children—Robert 'Bob' (1947–2020), Joan (1948–2021) and Patricia 'Pat' (1950–2019). The farm needed a lot of clearing and it was hard, physical work for Allan.

Allan applied for a ballot, but this took some six years to eventuate, so he leased off some of his land and worked at different farms in the Waikato. His ballot was 169 acres at Reporoa. It was broken in, however there was little fencing. This was to be a dairy farm with horses being used for a while until a tractor was purchased. They stayed on this farm for 15 years.

After leaving the farm, they moved to a house at Warkworth, and then to Pohuehue where they had an acre

of land. They then moved to Wharehine where Allan and Ethel spent their last years. Allan suffered badly from emphysema and towards the end was in the Ranburn Resthome in Waipu when he required more care than his daughter, Joan, could provide.

He died on 12 April 1997 at Ranburn Rest Home in Waipu. The funeral service was on Wednesday, 16 April 1997 at 11am at Minniesdale Chapel in Wharehine, and he is buried in the small cemetery there along with wife Ethel, who died on 11 October 2011, and his three children.

The notes I took on the day I interviewed him were used in his eulogy. His son Bob had taken me up to Wharehine to see if his father would agree for me to speak with him about his experiences after feeling rather frustrated. I can only think that great-uncle Allan was ready to tell someone his story but not his immediate family although, of course, they did see the notes. Thank you, great-uncle Allan—your story really shows your life was not easy, but you survived and went on to have a family of your own.

Lianne Sloan

E: lianne.sloan@xtra.co.nz

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Persönalkarte I: Personelle Angaben

Kriegsgefangenen-Stammlager: 183

Bezeichnung der Erkennungsmarke: 18 Nr. 7911 Dist. 5
Lager Dulag. 183

Name: WALLACE.
Vorname: ALLEN. JOHN
Geburtsdag und -ort: 23/2/1912 AUCKLAND. N.Z.
Religion: PROTESTANT.
Vorname des Vaters: JAMES.
Familienname der Mutter: IRENE FLETCHER

Staatsangehörigkeit: AUSTRALIAN
Dienstgrad: SOLD.
Truppenteil: A.I.F. **Komp. ufw.:** INF.
Zivilberuf: MECHANIKER **Berufs-Gr.:**
Matrikel Nr. (Stammrolle des Heimatstaates): 1A 5810
Gefangennahme (Ort und Datum): CRETE. 30/6/41
Ob gesund, krank, verwundet eingeliefert: SOUND.

Lichtbild

Nähere Personalbeschreibung

Größe	Haarfarbe	Besondere Kennzeichen:
1,80	BLACK	NIL
Fingerring des rechten 1. Zeigefingers		Name und Anschrift der zu benachrichtigenden Person in der Heimat des Kriegsgefangenen
		MRS. J. F. WALLACE. 36. KAUWAI ROAD. AUCKLAND NEW ZEALAND.

The first page of Allan Wallace's Dulag 183 record
Wallace family collection

Crises, Characters & Controversies in New Zealand Military History

Conference 13-15 February 2026, Wellington, New Zealand

The New Zealand Military History Committee's next conference has been confirmed for 13-15 February 2026. The venue for the conference is Massey University Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa, Mt Cook, Wellington. Using the same facilities as our last two conferences will make for a very friendly event with people you will have met before. Massey is located in the central Wellington valley, walking distance from the city and accommodation, with plenty of free parking and a good bus service (No. 3 or 27) bringing you from the Railway Station through town to within metres of the venue.

The conference will include a half-day on Friday 13, with a Friday evening reception with keynote speaker at the same location. A bar will be open for your liquor purchases and finger food will be available. A full day on Saturday 14 will follow, with Sunday's programme going until about mid-afternoon.

The number of excellent papers offered to us has required two streams to be run throughout the conference. The

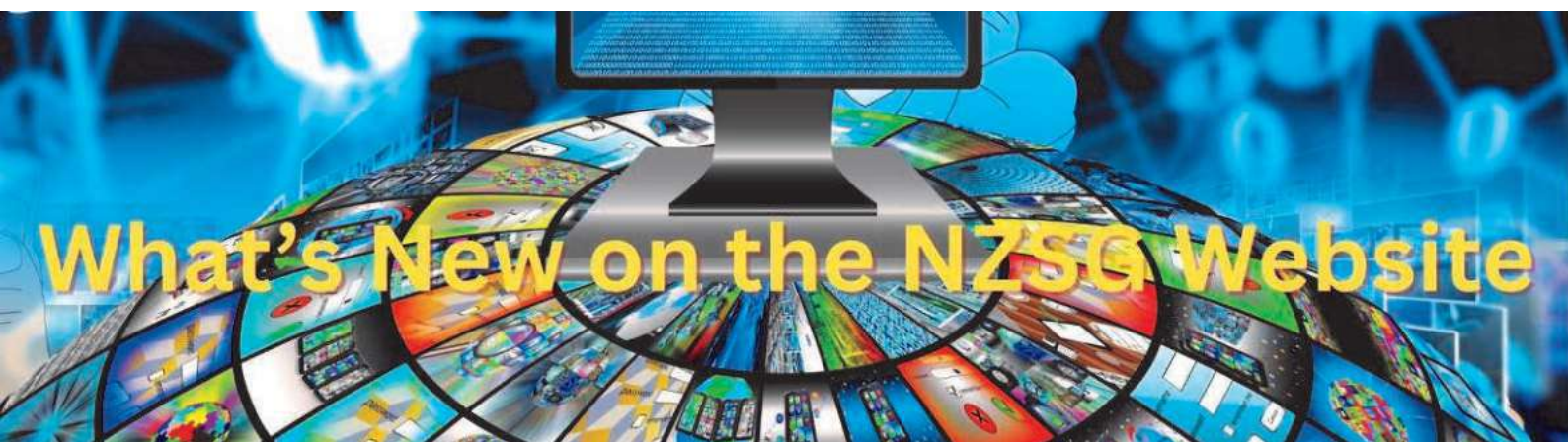
venue makes it possible to move between streams without disturbing the audience.

Registration

The registration fee has not yet been calculated. Pre-registration for attendees is open, which will guarantee you getting details of the registration fee and the speaker list when they are finalised.

John Crawford, Chairman, and Peter Cooke, Secretary NZ Military History Committee
PO Box 9724, Wellington 6141, New Zealand
E: petercooke_donz@icloud.com

The New Zealand Military History Committee comprises Peter Cooke, John Crawford, Damien Fenton, Steven Loveridge and Ian McGibbon.



Wellington had the theme of 'Sharing and Preserving your family history' for their Family History Month Day. If you need help with this, there are some resources on the NZSG website you might find useful.

Firstly, there is the series of *Getting It Right* on [Sharing Your Family History](#) which gives some options. You can share this with your non-member friends. All the *Getting It Right* resources are available to everyone. Have a look under Resources/Research Skills.



In addition, we have added a new page for members about [Preserving Your Family History](#). This page gives practical tips about preserving your physical holdings as well as your data. There are also links to good resources for further help. You can find it under Resources/Keeping Organised.

The Kiwi Resources continue to grow. It is up to 27 pages now! A recent addition is [Technology and Innovation](#). Do you have a family member who was an inventor? Or perhaps owned a reputable business with a Trademark? Discover where these records are held and what is available online.



If you have not been onto the website for a while, now is a good time to go and have a look around. And do not forget to log in first!

And if you come up with any ideas for further resources, or additions to our current ones, please email education@genealogy.org.nz.

Big Leap Forward for Ōtaki Rotunda Restoration Project

Di Buchan

The Ōtaki Rotunda Restoration project was granted \$200,000 in the recent round of allocations made by the Lottery Grants Board. 'This has been a wonderful outcome after all the hard work involved in putting the application together', said Ōtaki Rotunda Trust chair, Di Buchan. 'We are very grateful to the Lottery Board. A lot of applicants missed out.'

The Rotunda was first built in Rotorua as a ward for soldiers returning from WWI. It was moved to Ōtaki in 1931 to serve as a dormitory for children staying at the Ōtaki Children's Health Camp (the first children's health camp in Aotearoa). This year the building will be 110 years old and is classed as a Category 1 heritage building.

The restoration is well underway with the first stage, funded by the Friends of the Ōtaki Rotunda Trust, having been completed. The next stage has been funded from Department of Conservation's 2024-25 budget. 'The \$200,000 from Lotteries will enable the work to continue seamlessly until at least the end of July by which stage the Rotunda will be looking quite smart.'

'We still have a long way to go but this grant is a significant step forward.' The Trust is still receiving donations and will continue fund-raising activities such as the recent highly successful Quiz Night at the RSA. Another fundraising campaign recently begun is "Sponsor a Window".

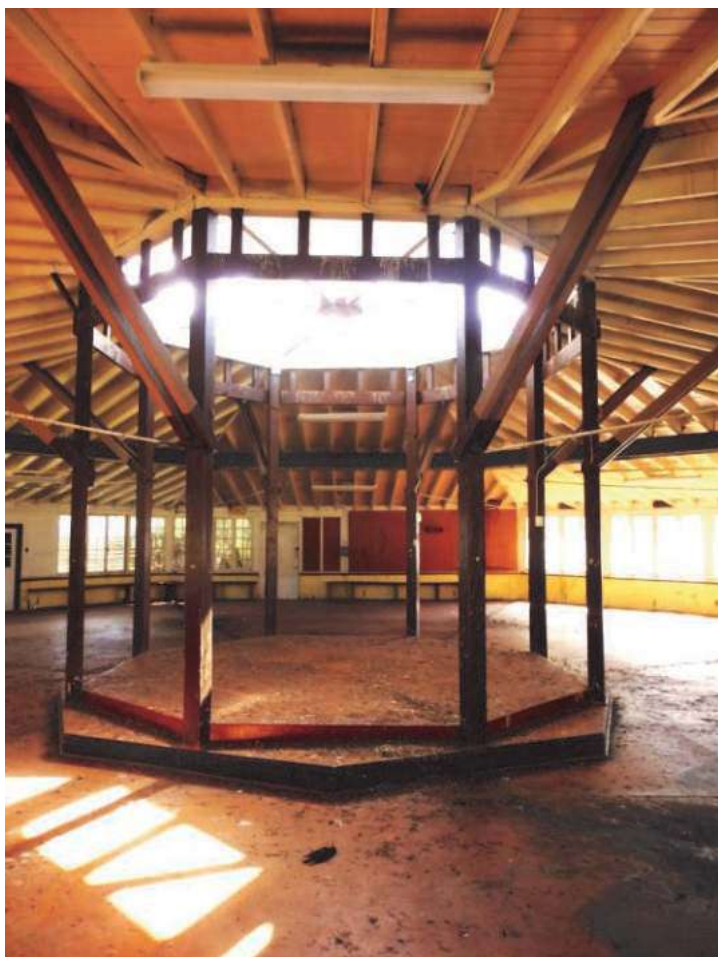
Individuals, families and businesses are paying \$500 for a window sash and their name will be recorded on a plaque on the windowsill. 'It's a great way to make sure your family, business or organisation is recorded in perpetuity as part of Ōtaki's history.'

'What seemed like an almost impossible task is now coming to fruition due to support from the community, Department of Conservation, the Kāpiti Coast District Council and our wonderful volunteers, some of whom are turning up every week to paint. Another great boost helping the budget go further is that all the paint is being provided, free of charge, by Dulux. Their advisors are nearly as excited by the project as we are.'

'The restored Rotunda will be a huge asset to the Kāpiti community. We are receiving enquiries already from organisations and entertainers keen to book the facility. We are going as fast as the funding will allow but finally, after six years of planning and fund-raising, I am beginning to see a stream of light at the end of the tunnel!'

If you are interested in sponsoring a window sash, or for further information, contact Di Buchan 027 683 0213.

Di Buchan
E: di.buchan.nz@gmail.com



Left: The interior of the rotunda

*Above: Glenn Hewett, Andrew Buchanan, Ron Ansell
at work on the restoration*

From camp magazines to casualty lists: researching WWII in Papers Past

Jason Murphy

For family historians tracing their ancestors' wartime experiences, the National Library of New Zealand's Papers Past website offers an extraordinary window into WWII New Zealand. With free access to historical newspapers, magazines and journals, researchers can discover everything from daily life accounts to extraordinary wartime stories.

A rich collection spanning the war years

Papers Past holds a significant newspaper collection covering WWII and the events leading up to and beyond. Since 2023, several titles now extend their coverage into this crucial period. Publications like the *Dominion*, *Southland Times*, *Taranaki Daily News* and *Marlborough Express* are now available through to at least 1945. This brings the total to almost 50 newspaper titles with complete coverage of 1939 to 1945, with many more spanning part of this period.

These publications provide reporting on local, national and international wartime events, along with invaluable information about service personnel and their experiences. You might discover a relative among a list of returned soldiers, through a military commendation, or perhaps on leave paying Mum a visit. Reflecting the turmoil of those times, sadly some may be found among the obituaries and rolls of honour.

Beyond newspapers, Papers Past features a unique collection of 45 camp and troopship magazines created by New Zealand personnel stationed at home and overseas in the Pacific. These publications often reveal the lighter side of military life through jokes, stories and illustrations created by the servicemen themselves.

The freshly digitised *New Zealand Listener* (now covering 1939-1959) and its predecessor the *Radio Record* (1927-1939) are also valuable sources. They offer different perspectives on the war, for example reflections from returned soldiers and early discussions of what we would now recognise as post-traumatic stress disorder.



'Dominion at War.' New Zealand declares support for the United Kingdom in war with Germany. Manawatu Standard, Volume LIX, Issue 235, 4 September 1939

paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/M519390904.2.67.1



Masthead for 'Down the Hatch', a twice weekly printed troopship magazine published on board the HMAS Mooltan (HMT 82) on its voyage from Wellington to Egypt between January and February 1944 during WWII.

paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/periodicals/down-the-hatch

Mainly for Women

"Dorothy."

By

Mrs Dobson left Hastings this morning on a visit to Rotorua.

Mrs J. W. Lawson, New Plymouth, is on a holiday visit to Napier.

Miss Vona August, W.A.A.F., Wellington, is visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. C. August, Patangata.

Miss D. Spargo, W.A.A.F., Levin, and Mr. H. Spargo, Petone, are visiting their parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. C. F. Spargo, Otane.

Column from the *Hawke's Bay Herald-Tribune*, 17 March 1943.

paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/HBHETR19430317.2.50

Unlocking the vault: effective search strategies

Finding your ancestor's story in this vast collection requires some strategic thinking. Here are a few key tips to help you uncover some of those elusive wartime gems.

Think beyond names and dates

While it might seem logical to search for your ancestor's name and specific dates, this approach often yields disappointing results. Instead, avoid putting dates directly in the search box. Use the date filter to narrow your time frame either before searching or to refine existing results. This approach casts a wider net initially, then allows you to focus your findings.

Master the art of name searching

Use single quotation marks around names and phrases to ensure the search engine looks for words together. A search for 'Roll of honour' will find that phrase as read, whereas without quotes, you will receive pages containing those words anywhere on the page—potentially thousands of irrelevant results.

Be creative with name variations. Marjorie THOMSON (née CONWAY) could appear as Marjorie Conway, Mrs Thomson, Mrs Richard Thomson, or numerous other variants. Consider all the ways your ancestor's name might have been recorded or abbreviated in wartime reporting. Use your experience as you search to gain familiarity with these conventions.

Think like a wartime reporter

Remember that phrases commonplace today might not have been used as frequently, if at all, during the war. Searching for 'World War Two' across 1939-1945 can be hit or miss, as contemporaneous accounts will also refer less formally to 'the war', 'the present war' or 'this war'. Similarly, what we now call 'D-Day' was often reported as 'the invasion' or 'the Allied landing'. Consider what language would have been current at the time.

Cast a wide geographic net

Do not apply location filters too early in your search. Newspapers routinely covered events from around the country and internationally. A story that happened in Southland could easily receive coverage in Christchurch, Wellington or Taranaki publications. Your ancestor's military service might be mentioned in a newspaper from an entirely different region.

Search events and places, not just people

If name searches prove fruitless, try searching for events, places or circumstances. Names were not always recorded in news reports, but the type of event often was. A search for 'crash Taihape' might locate the story that searching for 'Ezra DAVIS crash' would miss entirely.

Refine your results with filters

Papers Past displays search results with filtering options on the left-hand side of the page. Use these facets to limit results by date, region and article type. This systematic approach helps you work through large result sets methodically.

Papers Past represents more than a simple archive—it provides a comprehensive picture of New Zealand during one of its most challenging periods. By understanding how to search effectively and thinking creatively about the information you seek, you can uncover stories that bring your ancestors' wartime experiences to vivid life. Whether you find a brief mention in a casualty list, a detailed account of heroic actions, a woman's auxiliary service record or a family's struggle on the home front, each discovery adds another piece to your family's wartime puzzle.

The website's help pages at paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/help/searching-papers-past provide additional research strategies, but armed with these fundamental techniques, you are well-equipped to begin your exploration.

Jason Murphy
Service Manager, National Library of New Zealand
E: paperspast@natlib.govt.nz



**Student Memberships available
for the student genealogist aged 12-25!**

Book Reviews

The Hore Alchemists

By Shaun Brown

Stories of personal experience illuminate history in a way that no weighty analysis of policies and events ever can. In *The Hore Alchemists*, author Shaun BROWN uses the personal stories of a group of Maniototo pioneers to provide a rare and intimate view of the history of the region.

The central characters in the book come from two large Cornish tin-mining families, closely related and both bearing the surname HORE, whose ancestors, for at least 300 years, had worked the tin on the isolated moor they called home. In the 1860s both families were suddenly hollowed out when no less than 14 offspring answered the siren call of gold down under. Almost all came to Otago, chasing the gold rushes from one discovery to the next, ending up on the Hogburn (Naseby), Kyeburn and Hamiltons goldfields. They may have intended to return to Cornwall, but few did.

The author's painstaking investigation into the motives, achievements and sacrifices of these pioneers reveals their lives in raw and sometimes uncomfortable detail. The book traverses the challenging years from the gold rush to after WWI.

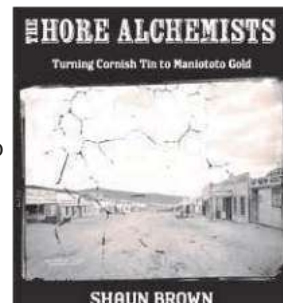
The families launched farming dynasties and started businesses, without ever abandoning the hope of

discovering more gold. That expectation led to some desperate gambles, including on the sham gold rush at Nenthorn that crushed the ambitions of so many Maniototo entrepreneurs.

The author's intimate close-up view of history is enriched by the inclusion of 90 illustrations, including a number of old photographs of the district published for the first time.

The book is available at selected booksellers and online through nationwidebooks.co.nz.

Shaun Brown worked as a journalist and broadcaster with the ABC, NZBC, TVNZ, BBC and, most recently, with the Australian television network SBS where, until his retirement in 2011, he was managing director.



Shaun Brown

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Saving Their Souls. The Iberian Origins of London's First Jewish Mendoza Family

By Neil Solomon and Beryl B. Solomon

Published in 'Human Rights and Social Justice'
ISBN 9788410712034, pp. 87-116

Completed by the joint authors in their retirement, this genealogical study leads back to a time in Iberia when successfully hiding one's religious beliefs was paramount for an ever-decreasing number within two widespread socio-cultural groups—Moriscos and Conversos. However, genealogy is not an exact science, as one eminent New Zealand historian has so aptly written:

'Who were the people of this era? That is a difficult, if not impossible, question to answer historically. Māori whakapapa offer names without remains – that is, stories without evidence – while archaeology offers remains without names – evidence without stories.'

King, Michael. *The Penguin History of New Zealand*.
Auckland, Penguin, 2003

With their combined academic rigour, the authors first reject a recently published but spurious genealogy relating

to London's first Jewish Mendoza residents. They then proceed to weave a family history in context, this linking a late seventeenth and early eighteenth century habitation in London and Amsterdam to the mid-sixteenth century Mendoza matriarch whose family was variously involved in the production of silk cloth, an enterprise being developed at that time in Pastrana, a quaint medieval township at the heart of noble Mendoza country in the province of Guadalajara, in Spain.

The article is published in English, the electronic text itself being currently available for 30€ at editorial.tirant.com/es/ebook/human-rights-and-social-justice-jose-maria-puyol-montero-9788410712034

Neil Solomon

Beryl B. Solomon

E: neil_and_beryl@xtra.co.nz

Members' enquiries and notices

This section is free to members for enquiries of a genealogical nature but is not available to non-members. Please be precise and state clearly what you want to know. For submission guidelines see the front of this journal. Where no details of a query are given it is presumed that the inquirer would be grateful for any information. When someone has taken the trouble to write to you with reference to your request for information, please acknowledge their letter whether the information they have shared is of use or not. It is customary to repay their postage.

Mangatiti Valley (up the Whanganui River)

I am currently researching Arthur MILBANK and Alice Annie BENTLEY, and would like to correspond with descendants of other families who lived in the Mangatiti Valley between 1910 and 1950 to find out about living and working conditions at this time.

Yvonne Milbank
E: ymilbank@xtra.co.nz

Hokianga help request

I am looking for a person in the Hokianga area willing to help in the search for my 2x great-grandmother Hariata, possible surname CALLENDER. Hariata was probably part Māori, born in the 1830s, possibly at Waima. I would really appreciate some local help or advice.

Rex Sinnott
E: rexmsinnott@gmail.com



Send your enquiry or notice to
editor@genealogy.org.nz



NZSG Online DNA Interest Group

onlinedna@genealogy.org.nz

ODIG is two years old!

Building on the NZSG Board's vision of an online DNA interest Group, ODIG launched its first presentation in August 2023. In November the same year we opened the Google Classroom.

DNA has become an increasingly important aid to traditional genealogy research and ODIG's kaupapa from the beginning has been to provide free online support and education for NZSG members. An impressive range of resources are now in the Google Classroom, including a library of monthly recordings that can be referred back to as your knowledge and skills grow.

To date, over 450 NZSG members have registered with ODIG, with over 300 regularly accessing the Google

Classroom. Monthly meeting attendance varies between 60 to 100+, depending on the topic. We are always on the lookout for new presenters and welcome presentation offers, and to ensure we meet the needs of our members we run regular surveys which help frame our annual programme. The next objective of the ODIG planning team is to work more closely with existing NZSG education initiatives to develop a DNA Getting Started course for beginners. Watch this space!

See the ODIG Planning Committee's latest article on DNA on page 134.

Branch News



NZSG Hamilton Branch Service Awards

Two of our long time Hamilton Branch members were presented with NZSG Branch Service Awards at our AGM in May 2025, in recognition of their incredible services, by retiring Convenor Marilyn RICHER.

Beth HOOPER was acknowledged for her past contribution on the Committee, multiple Branch projects; the Scottish and Irish Interest Groups; and her huge dedication to the Schools' Admission Indexing Project. A steadfast assistant with the LINZ project; Probates and Intentions to Marry projects; a Library Assistant Coordinator at the Hamilton City Library; and promotional stands at Mystery Creek and the Aspire Shows. Beth was also keeper of the Branch archival records, and in 1991 held a series of genealogical classes for beginners.

Christine BARBOUR was recognised for her 25 years on the Branch Committee that included terms as President, Secretary and Convenor, plus her loyal support of many Branch and National projects, writers and interest groups, including Intentions to Marry; Probates; Waikato School of Nursing Personnel files; LINZ, Schools' Admission indexing; the DNA group, creator of the Facebook group 'Family History—Hamilton', and volunteer supervisor with the 'Surviving Soldiers of Le Quesnoy, 2022'. A prizewinner, and later on the panel of the Kevin McNulty Award for a published Family History story and Christine has written several articles for *The New Zealand Genealogist* journal.



Beth Hooper, Christine Barbour and Marilyn Richer



Find your nearest Branch
under *Get Involved* on our
website

www.genealogy.org.nz

Lifting our Profile in Thames

Thames Branch of the NZSG recently had the opportunity to expose the Branch to the public at an open day of the Thames Vintage Bottle and Collectors Club. The club has only been going for two years and challenged themselves to put on a show on 22 March 2025.

Some members of the Thames Branch of NZSG are also members of this club, and it was agreed that we were also collectors (of families). The Bottle Club was approached for a table, and it was agreed to give us a space to promote our branch. Time to organise was limited and we quickly gathered material for a display. NZSG sent down information packs to which we added a flyer with details of our monthly meeting and a brochure about the NZSG Thames Branch.

It was decided that a banner was needed. A quick check on Google and we found that our local Warehouse Stationery would be able to oblige. A logo was sent by Julian, National Manager of NZSG, and down we went to the shop with a print of the logo. We discussed the banner size and wording with the young shop assistant and left him to it. An hour later the banner was collected and we were delighted—total cost \$20.94 for the printing and \$20.00 for the stand. It is easy to put up and will take pride of place at all our future meetings. The next objective is to get a larger banner.

At our monthly genealogy meeting members were asked to volunteer on the stall. There were two people at a time, and the hours were from 10am to 3pm. These hours were easily filled and the volunteers all arrived on time and felt confident talking to members of the public. Face-to-face contact was made with 23 people, information packs given out, and a lot of family histories listened to. Although we didn't gain any new members it was felt that the day was enjoyable, very worthwhile and our profile had been lifted. With five hundred visitors attending the day was a win-win for everyone who participated and enjoyed by all.

We could have done better by having a few photos to catch the eye of the public, but at the time we didn't know the size of the table we were getting.



Celia Newby and Karen Woodford ready to help

On 31 May 2025 the Thames Museum held a day to commemorate the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE Day). It was well attended by people of all ages, who enjoyed a full day of talks and activities. The Thames Branch of the NZSG also had a stall at this event to advertise the Society. We were able to give help with military research and had the opportunity to tell people about our branch. Our members made contact with a number of interested people and gave out the information packs provided by the Society.

Marise Morrison
Secretary NZSG Thames Branch



Left: Eileen Bain and Karen Woodford



Right: Marise Morrison and Dave Pryor

Waiting patiently for 'customers'

The passing of three former NZSG Dunedin Branch convenors

It is with immense sadness that the NZSG Dunedin Branch records the passing of three former convenors of the Branch.

Agnes Clunie Burt WALLS

1941–2024

Agnes was a member of the NZSG Dunedin Branch Committee from 1994–1995 and Branch Convenor from 1995–1996. She was a guest speaker at many of our Branch meetings and with much humour and passion. Agnes was a member of the 'Friends of the Dunedin Family History Centre' and along with other members raised money to purchase computers for the Family History Centre. The group of mostly NZSG Dunedin Branch members ran education classes and published 'how to' books on using the Dunedin Family History Centre, part of the LDS Church in Fenton Crescent, Dunedin.



The Reverend Brian Philip WILLI SCROFT QSO

1935–2025

Brian was a member of the NZSG Dunedin Branch Committee in 2009 and was the Dunedin Branch Convenor from 2010–2014. He, along with other Branch members instigated the move of the NZSG Dunedin Branch library to the McNab Heritage Room at the Dunedin Public Library. Brian also served as NZSG Dunedin Branch newsletter editor from 2011–2014.



Elizabeth Mary TIMMS (née WEBB)

1932–2025

Elizabeth was the backbone of our Branch's success in its heydays of the 1990s when she convened a Branch of over 400 members and oversaw several weekend seminars held at the University of Otago. Elizabeth joined the Branch in the late 1980s and was elected to the Branch Committee in 1990. In 1991 she became involved in the organisation of the six-week Beginner Classes run by the Branch from 1991–1993. Not only did she organise the classes, but she was also one of the presenters. She was also a regular speaker at our monthly Branch meetings with her favourite topics being London research, her Webb family, and her Cromwell connections. She arranged to copy, compile and donated the Tallis London Street maps to the Branch Library. She was a wonderful asset to members with London research.

In 1992 she became the NZSG Dunedin Branch Deputy Convenor and from 1993–1995 was the Branch Convenor. When Elizabeth retired as Convenor she took over the role of Branch librarian from 1997–2000. She took this role very seriously, cataloguing our holdings and ensuring every book got returned to the right place on the shelves. She also took on the role of the Branch Archivist for several years in the early 2000s. The 1998 NZSG Conference was held in Dunedin and Elizabeth served as Conference Secretary.

The Branch recognised Elizabeth's contribution with an NZSG Dunedin Branch Meritorious Service Award in 1997. The New Zealand Society of Genealogists also awarded Elizabeth with a Branch Service Award in 1998 and a Merit Award in 2003.



25th Celebrations— NZSG Dunedin Branch 1994.

Elizabeth Timms (Convenor) and James (Jim) McCready, (Convenor 1974-1977, the oldest living convenor present at the event)

Heather Bray
NZSG Dunedin Branch Secretary



Online DNA Interest Group A FREE benefit of NZSG membership

Jane Chapman and Sandra Metcalfe on behalf of ODIG Planning Committee

Whether you are new to DNA and its application to genealogy, or experienced in its analysis, the ODIG Classroom has FREE resources for NZSG members of all levels of experience.

This article follows on from those in the March and June 2025 issues of *The New Zealand Genealogist* which focused on Getting Started. Still on the Getting Started theme, we now move into the analytical side of DNA testing and what to do when you get your DNA results.

What do I do now I have my DNA results?

While everyone has their own goals in mind when taking a DNA test, most people interested in their family history decide to test their DNA for one or more of the following reasons:

- To 'test' the genealogical work they have already done in building their family tree, so confirming or refuting the research; and/or
- To use DNA-related information, along with genealogical and historical records, to resolve brick walls and expand their family tree; and/or
- To resolve family mysteries such as unknown parentage. In cases of unknown parentage, the sorting and grouping of DNA-related information is crucial to building trees and finding those missing pieces.

In most cases, the starting point for DNA analysis is to group your DNA matches and work out how the matches in each group connect to one another. In theory, this will ultimately lead you to an ancestor, common to you and your shared match. The closest ancestor you share in common with a match is referred to as your MRCA—short for Most Recent Common Ancestor. The technique entails working with shared matches to cluster, triangulate and connect the matches. The methodology associated with this is sometimes called 'reverse genealogy'.

While traditional genealogy starts with yourself and works backwards in time, 'reverse genealogy' works by identifying an ancestor or ancestral couple you share with a group of DNA matches—and then building the lines forward to identify all their descendants, living or deceased. The living

descendants of your common ancestral couple who have also taken a DNA test, are the ones who show up in your match list. The challenge is working out how you connect, which may be on one line or on several different lines.

Note: clustering on its own does not necessarily guarantee you will find the right 'genetic' common ancestor. In many communities, intermarriage was common and while Ancestry's Thru Lines are a useful cheat tool to help you get started, they do not identify more than one line of connection. Only extensive tree building can do that.

'Reverse genealogy' entails three key actions and draws together the information and patterns you need to look for in your data, to develop hunches; to formulate hypotheses about possible genetic and/or genealogical relationships; and to document your findings to test your hypotheses.

The following three actions will be covered in more depth in future articles:

1. Cluster (or group your matches)
2. Triangulate (data), and
3. Connect (information and matches).

Note: the term 'triangulate' refers to a method of confirming a likely shared ancestor by comparing how multiple people match each other on the same region of a chromosome.

What is available in the ODIG Classroom about Reverse Genealogy?

The Google Classroom has a huge number of useful resources on analysing your DNA results, some more advanced than others. If you are new to DNA analysis then under the topic 'NEW to DNA' are articles by Christa Cowan (*Ancestry DNA 101*); Dave Vance (*How to Understand Your FamilyTree DNA Autosomal Matches*) and Donna Rutherford (*DNA What, Where, How, When—FAQ for Beginners*).

How do I register for ODIG? How do I know if I am already registered? How do I access the Google Classroom?

Check out ODIG under the DNA tab on the NZSG website, or the ODIG articles that appeared in the March and June 2025 editions of *The New Zealand Genealogist*. If you need help, then email onlinedna@genealogy.org.nz



Inspired by what you've read?
Have a story to share?
Send it to:
editor@genealogy.org.nz

Irish Interest Group

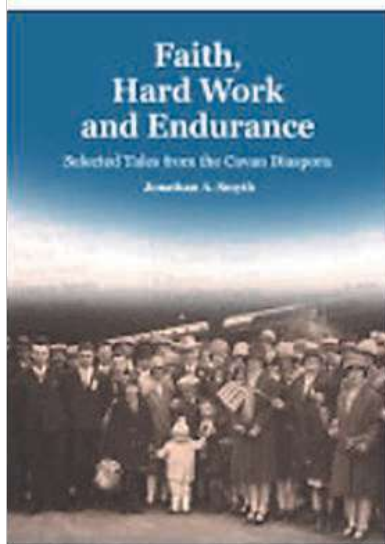


Townland Atlas of Ulster

Andrew KEANE, researcher of the Ulster Historical Foundation and author of the *Townland Atlas of Ulster* presents on the historical significance and genealogical importance of townlands, the smallest administrative units in Ireland. His talk covers the meticulous documentation and research processes that have preserved townlands, emphasising their role as key markers of local identity and history over several centuries. Andrew Keane gave a lecture on the topic of Townlands at the Public Record Office Northern Ireland (PRONI). This lecture was recorded and can be viewed using this link: youtu.be/jf3SB5qnrLA [We thank the UHF for this item.]

Faith, Hard Work and Endurance

Faith, Hard Work and Endurance—Selected Tales from the Cavan Diaspora is the latest work by Jonathan SMYTH. Jonathan is well known in his home County of Cavan as Local Studies Librarian at Johnston Central Library and contributor to the local newspaper, the *Anglo-Celt*, where his weekly column provides a fascinating insight into the people and places of County Cavan in times past.



Faith, Hard Work and Endurance looks at the lives of over 100 Irish emigrants from County Cavan and the impact that they made in countries across the world. Between its pages you will find tales of soldiers, scholars, priests and press barons—as well as the occasional rogue!

Of particular interest to readers in New Zealand will be the lives of Cavan emigrants Aileen GARMISON and Margaret Jane SCOTT, both of whom struck blows for the rights of women and workers in their adopted country. Likewise, Wild Bill HICKEY, born in Nelson of Cavan stock, who travelled from New Zealand to the United States and on to Ireland in the early twentieth century before returning home to help organise a union for mineworkers.

Another Cavan native, Mother Xavier LYNCH, helped build the Lewisham Hospital in Christchurch, while Frances Jane ROSS made a significant contribution in the field of education, as well as improving conditions for immigrants through her work with the Young Women's Christian Association.

These are just a small selection of over hundred brief biographies of Cavan people who left their native land and made a mark on their adopted countries, helped by faith, hard work and endurance. [Reviewed by Melanie Ward]

Irish Conference New Zealand

The Irish Studies Association of Australia and New Zealand (ISAANZ) Conference this year is to be held in Dunedin over 20-22 November at the University of Otago. View details isaanz.org/cfp-isaanz-27-health-wellness-and-care/ Subscribe to ISAANZ newsletter to be kept up to date with conference programme where more events and highlighted talks will be added over the next few months.

The Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland

Seven centuries of lost historical records covering espionage, political corruption and the lives of ordinary people in [Ireland](#) have been recovered and released. The [Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland](#), a global academic collaboration led by Trinity College Dublin, deployed historians, computer scientists and other specialists to digitally recreate parts of a vast archive destroyed in Ireland's civil war. virtualtreasury.ie/

It was long assumed that all was lost but the project enlisted 75 archives and libraries in [Ireland](#), the United Kingdom and around the world to source transcripts and duplicates of documents, many of which had lain, forgotten, in storage. The latest troves to be catalogued and digitised bring the total to 350,000 records and 250 million words of searchable Irish history.

The latest material includes 60,000 names from the lost censuses, creating a data hoard for genealogists and Irish diaspora descendants, among others, to trace family lineage, says Ciarán WALLACE, a Trinity historian and co-director of the project. 'This is only a fragment of what's missing, but 60,000 is a huge improvement on a blank slate.'

The material is searchable by surname or place name. Results will be linked to images of the manuscript or record, which will appear as part of the collection it belongs to. virtualtreasury.ie/2025-new-releases

Irish Roots

The *Irish Roots* magazine No. 134, second quarter 2025 contains: Discover Local Resources for Family History Research, County Westmeath by James G. RYAN; AI for Genealogy: Unlocking the Past with Artificial Intelligence by Donna RUTHERFORD; Surnames of County Westmeath by Sean O MURCHADHA; The Guinness Archive by Susan McKEE; and Using The Dippam Archive by Mary HATFIELD. Plus, regular features from IGRS Steven SMYRL; Claire SANTRY's What's New? Review; Australian Irish



Connections—Biographical Dictionaries: *Irish Australian Explorers* by Jennifer HARRISON and A Register of Genealogy with Nicola MORRIS.

Irish Roots magazine is also available in digital format www.irishrootsmedia.com

Next Auckland Irish genealogy meeting

Our next Irish genealogy meeting is to be held at the NZSG Library, 159 Queens Road, Panmure, in late November. Visit our website for details on events and dates.

Geraldene O'Reilly
Convenor

E: IrishSIG@genealogy.org.nz
genealogy.org.nz/Branch-details/11084-s1100100/



Update from Auckland City Libraries

In the spirit of continuous improvement, as of 1 July 2025, Research Services now provides 30 minutes of free research, including scanning documents, for all customers, regardless of whether researchers are library members or not. After those 30 minutes a charge of \$25 per half hour applies to research time, and \$20 per high resolution file of an image from our heritage collections. Previously we charged non-library members from their first half hour.

Our new software, RefTracker, helps us keep track of our customer enquiries. It is the same system that many libraries and museums use. When a customer sends in a query, they receive an automated email acknowledging receipt and advising of a response within 10 working days. However, a response is usually with the customer within a couple of days (subject to staffing levels).

Our research queries are a mix of family history and whakapapa, social history, local history—including that of old Auckland province, Aotearoa-New Zealand history, and Pasifika history and culture. Sometimes we even get research queries that have nothing to do with history or heritage of any kind.

Some of our statistics that may be of interest:

- 5,291,358 photos in our Heritage photograph collection. Second largest photograph collection in the country, behind Alexander Turnbull Library
- 1.5 million records (indexes, transcriptions and images/photographs) are now in Kura—Heritage Collections Online. Includes migrations from our previous databases as well as new collections. Photographs that were in Heritage Images Online are also being added
- 12,488 people visited our 'Other Worlds' exhibition in the L2 Special Collections exhibition room—highlighting our SciFi books, magazines, newsletters, ephemera etc. in our Heritage Collections
- 1,150 attended Tamaki Untold Talks and Notes on Tamaki Concerts
- 2,678 customer enquiries at the Research Central reference desk between March and June (equates to approximately 900 enquiries a month)

- 3,275 customer enquiries have come through our new RefTracker system

As well as my community outreach events to libraries and community groups around the Auckland region, I am still busy doing free Book-A-Librarian sessions for those that need assistance with their family history.

Events

At Research Central, a series of Family History workshops is scheduled to run every quarter on the first Saturday of the month beginning Saturday 6 September. The topic of each session will be based on the country(ies) of interest and pitched for researchers at beginner to intermediate levels.

The intention is to use our extensive resources on the shelves and in filing and microfilm cabinets, as well as those online. If there is enough interest, we could also hold a Europe and a North America session at a later date.

Aotearoa New Zealand family history and Whakapapa	Sat 6 September
Australia and Pacific Islands	Sat 6 December
England and Wales	Sat 7 March
Scotland	Sat 2 May
Ireland	Sat 1 August

Bookings will be available online on our library website and Eventfinda.

This year's Auckland Heritage Festival is being held from Saturday 20 September until Sunday 5 October. This year the theme is 'Auckland at Play' inspired by the 75th anniversary of the Empire Games. As usual there will be a multitude of events on throughout Auckland, with many libraries running events. Please check 'Our Auckland' for the full range of events.

Seonaid (Shona) Harvey
Senior research librarian, research engagement, family history
E: Seonaid.Harvey@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Branch and Interest Group Services

HĀWERA

The SOUTH TARANAKI BIOGRAPHICAL INDEX consists of school admission records; newspaper birth, death and marriages; Anderson's memorialist records; funeral sheets. Request by surname. Send SAE and donation to: Jill Williams, Fairfield Road, Hāwera 4610 or email peter.williams@xtra.co.nz or julesmar@xtra.co.nz

HAWKE'S BAY

HAWKE'S BAY BIOGRAPHICAL INDEX. Request by surname. Mail service only. Include contact telephone and/or email address. Send SAE and donation to Branch Secretary, c/o 200 Pakowhai Road, Frimley, Hastings 4120.

IRISH INTEREST GROUP – LOWER NORTH ISLAND

We hold education and research days locally, and across the Lower North Island region on request by branches and groups, and can also provide presentations and a helpdesk at genealogy events. Enquiries to Irish.LowerNI@genealogy.org

NELSON

A database of half a million entries covering the wider Nelson area, from indexes and books in our library, Ancestors Attic. Includes pre-1856 marriage index, including Māori, passenger shipping lists 1840–1914 to and from Nelson and from the UK and Australia. E: nelson@genealogy.org.nz or PO Box 1879, Nelson 7040.

NORTH SHORE

Lookups for births and deaths c1940 to date from *The New Zealand Herald*. Email request to northshore@genealogy.org.nz, or to Dennise Cook, Research Officer, North Shore Branch NZSG, PO Box 89045, Torbay, Auckland 0742. A small donation to the branch will be welcome, depending on results.

OAMARU

Oamaru Cemeteries CD Headstone Transcriptions. For both the Old and New Cemeteries. The Old Cemetery records have been updated. Cost \$25 including p&p. Enquiries to Oamaru@genealogy.org.nz

PALMERSTON NORTH

Our SETTLERS DATABASE 1870–1900 contains 3,000 names or family groups. Cemetery headstone transcriptions; BDM newspaper clippings; school admissions transcriptions – 20,000 and growing; funeral cards. Enquiries to: palmerstonnorth@genealogy.org.nz. Include what you already know. A small donation is requested.

PAPAKURA

The PAKAKURA AND DISTRICTS BIOGRAPHICAL INDEX includes Alfriston, Ardmore, Ararimu, Clevedon, Drury, Karaka, Kawakawa Bay, Maketu, Ramarama, Slippery Creek, Springfield and Wairoa South. Enquiries welcome, mail service only with SAE and donation to NZSG Papakura Branch, PO Box 72–993, Papakura 2244. papakura@genealogy.org.nz

TE AWAMUTU

Booklets of MEMORIAL INSCRIPTIONS FOR ST JOHN'S and ST PAUL'S ANGLICAN CHURCHES including full transcriptions from cemetery and church interiors, plans, histories and index. Also digital images of inscriptions from both cemeteries, lookups for local school admission registers (varying dates) and local newspaper family notices (1911–1974). Enquiries to teawamutu@genealogy.org.nz

WELLINGTON ARCHIVES RECORDS REQUESTS

While Archives New Zealand have suspended their digitisation programme, NZSG Kilbirnie Branch is available to do lookups for the Wellington Reading Rooms. Please provide the R reference from Archives NZ's Collections Search. A small koha is appreciated. Enquiries to Kilbirnie@genealogy.org.nz

Contributions from branches and interest groups are always welcome in the magazine – especially if you can pass on useful information from your area that may assist other members. Events, projects, new repositories and services, ways you have engaged in the community and given something back. Contact the Editor. editor@genealogy.org.nz

NZSG Kiwi Collection



Over 16 million records

With over 300 different record sets, and an ever increasing number of records, the Kiwi Collection covers a wide array of record types and includes indexes to the NZSG's collections.

\$NZ50 per year / \$NZ20 for a month

NZSG Kiwi Resources



Research help

Your guide to researching in New Zealand - time saving links to find records and tips on how to search them. Over 20 subject headings to help you find your Kiwi family and tell their story.

NZSG Kiwi Guides



Local resources

A regional guide to finding local information in New Zealand. A listing of local councils (cemeteries and libraries), museums, archives and local history societies. Add that local flavour to your family's story.

Available only to NZSG members

www.genealogy.org.nz