

DECEMBER 2016

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Looking back at 2016



# NEW HEAD OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Bernadine Mackenzie, Head of Veterans' Affairs and Secretary for War Pensions

Tena koutou katoa

'Christmas in the Trenches' is a poignant children's book, based on a World War 1 event known as the Christmas Truce. Thinking about home and peace, soldiers from both sides of the battlefield willed the fighting to stop in the midst of the terrible war. During the Christmas of 1914 as many as 100,000 soldiers may have stopped the fighting, if only for a few hours, to participate in unofficial truces.

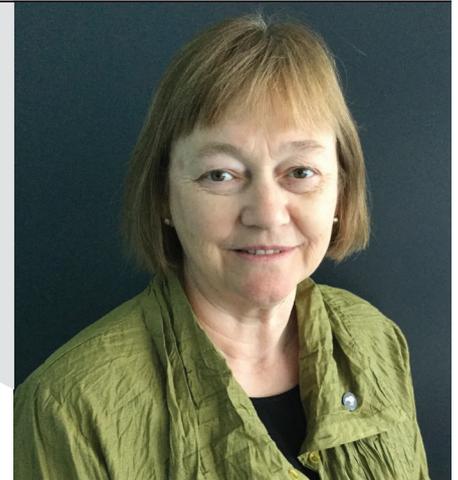
I'm Bernadine Mackenzie, the new Head of Veterans' Affairs, and for me this story captures the power of the human spirit to reunite – even in times of battle. Christmas is a time when we all reunite with our children, grandchildren, old friends, colleagues, family and wider whanau. It's a special time for celebrating the year past and thinking of the next one. The future is very positive for Veterans' Affairs. We are here to help, and where we cannot provide the help you need ourselves we will try to find another agency that can. We want to make sure you get the assistance you and your family are

entitled to. You may not need our support and services right now, but further down the track you might.

It was with much sadness that the VA team recently acknowledged the passing of Liz Petersen. She had a long and respected career firstly in the New Zealand Army from 1977 to 1985 and then from 1989 as a member of the civilian staff within the NZ Defence Force, working primarily with Army Units including WRSU Trentham Camp and Army General Staff at the former HQ in Stout St. Liz joined Veterans' Affairs in June 2007 and managed our reception desk. Liz will be sadly missed by all.

We also acknowledge those who lost their lives in the Kaikoura earthquake and praise the remarkable work of NZDF in supporting the disaster recovery. Here in Wellington we also endured the November 14th earthquake and flooding that followed.

You may not need our support and services right now, but further down the track you might.



This was a great introduction for me to the teamwork, passion and drive VA staff have to service veterans. This saw them go beyond the call of duty to get the pay run delivered during a time when buildings were closed and services were significantly compromised. I am pleased to lead an organisation strongly focused on the needs of veterans and willing to help and support you as much as we can. We are proud to service those who have served New Zealand.

Wishing you a very Happy Christmas –  
*Nga mihi mo te kirihimete*

## Support over the festive season

Veterans' Affairs will close over the Christmas and New Year period. Our enquiry line will close at 5pm on Wednesday 21 December 2016. We will reopen on Wednesday 4 January 2017. If you are in need of urgent assistance over the festive season, contact:

- 111, in an emergency.
- No Duff if you or a veteran are in crisis (see page 3).
- RSA's District Support Advisors, through your local RSA.
- 0800 NZDF4U (0800 693 348), a 24/7 confidential mental health helpline staffed by trained health professionals.

If you have concerns with services funded by Veterans' Affairs, contact your service provider directly.

Thank you for your service in the New Zealand Defence Force. Your contribution on behalf of our nation is greatly appreciated and will never be forgotten.

# MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Hon Craig Foss, Minister of Veterans' Affairs

With Christmas almost upon us, I'd like to extend my best wishes to you, our veterans, and your families. It's been another busy year, so it's important we now take time to relax and reflect with our loved ones.

A very warm welcome to Bernadine Mackenzie, the new Head of Veterans' Affairs. Bernadine joined Veterans' Affairs from the Ministry of Social Development, where she held a variety of roles. Bernadine brings with her a wealth of experience in health, disability support, social services and machinery of government. She's a very experienced senior public servant with a commitment to providing the best possible support to her clients and their families. In welcoming Bernadine, I would like to thank her predecessor, Jacki Couchman, for the fantastic work she did positioning Veterans' Affairs to operate effectively under the Veterans Support Act 2014, and in particular, Scheme Two of the Act (for veterans with post-1974 service). The Veterans' Support Act introduced the Veterans' Independence Programme (VIP), which includes a range of support and assistance to help veterans maintain their independence in their own home.

The Royal New Zealand Returned and Services' Association continues to be a strong advocate for our veterans. Last month I was pleased to announce a grant of \$175,000 for the RSA's support services programme. Staff and volunteers at RSAs all over the country work tirelessly to support our veterans and their families. In particular, RSA Support Advisors help ensure veterans are aware of and have easy access to support from a variety of providers, including Veterans' Affairs.

At my direction, the Veterans' Advisory Board has begun considering New

Zealand's repatriation policy. The Board is looking at the policy in relation to all veterans and dependents who died while serving overseas between 1948 and mid-1970. As part of that process, I expect the Board to thoroughly consult the families of personnel buried overseas. The families' experiences and stories are vital to ensuring a robust and fair process, with the right outcome. Initial advice will be provided to me before the end of March 2017.

August this year marked the 50th Anniversary of New Zealand's involvement in the Vietnam War. Thirty five veterans were selected by ballot to attend commemorations in Canberra, alongside many Australian veterans with whom they served five decades ago. In Wellington, a full commemorative service was held at the Michael Fowler Centre. These events gave our veterans an opportunity to come together to remember friends and colleagues, and they gave the public an opportunity to honour the service and sacrifice of thousands of military and civilian personnel.

The Chief of Defence Force will shortly commission an independent review of the Veterans' Support Act. The review, mandated by the Act itself, is designed to ensure the legislation fulfils its purpose of providing fair and reasonable entitlements, rehabilitation and support for eligible veterans and their families.

As I'm sure you'll be aware, the Kaikoura earthquake has had a significant impact on many businesses and organisations, not only in the South Island, but in Wellington also. The offices of Veterans' Affairs suffered some minor damage, forcing staff out of the building for several days. I'd like to acknowledge your patience



and understanding for any delay in communication or services you may have experienced. I urge anyone requiring support as a result of the quake to contact the case management team at Veterans' Affairs.

I wish all our veterans, wherever you may be in the world, a safe and happy festive season. The gift of hope, freedom and peace you have given – and continue to give – is one we all value beyond measure. Merry Christmas to you and your loved ones and all the best for 2017.

## REPATRIATION VIEWS SOUGHT FROM FAMILY, WHANAU, AND NEXT OF KIN

As per the request made by the Minister of Veterans' Affairs, the Veterans' Advisory Board (VAB) has begun considering the Government's current policy of not repatriating the bodies of New Zealand military personnel who died while serving overseas between 1948 and mid-1970.

"We particularly look forward to engaging with the family/whanau and next-of-kin of those persons buried overseas to hear their views on the current repatriation policy", says the Board's Chair Chris Mullane.

Affected family, whanau, and next of kin should contact the Board Secretary.

Visit [www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/vab](http://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/vab), or call 0800 483 8372 (within NZ) or +64 4 495 2070 (from overseas)

## Appeal decisions published online

The Veterans' Entitlements Appeal Board (VEAB) determines appeals against review decisions. The VEAB is a statutory body established under the Veterans' Support Act 2014.

Decisions of the VEAB are published online, in accordance with the requirements of that Act.

To find out more about the VEAB and its decisions, visit: [www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/veab](http://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/veab)

# UPDATE ON MEDICAL ALARMS

Red Wolf High Level Monitoring Limited are our provider of medical alarms to the veteran community. We are working with Red Wolf to roll out the new alarms to those veterans' who require them.

An experienced provider, Red Wolf has excellent business continuity plans which enable them to continue to support veterans through an emergency disaster. Following the 14 November earthquake, Red Wolf



was alert to calls from any potentially affected veterans.

Red Wolf are available 24 hours, 7 days a week to discuss any issues related to your alarm. If you have questions contact them directly, either:

- use your alarm to be directly connected, or
- call them on 0800 73 36 66.

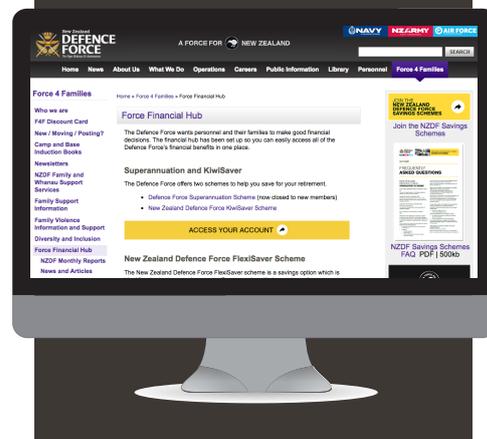
**If you think you might need a medical alarm, please contact us on Freephone 0800 483 8372.**



## Did you know?

Veterans, as part of the Defence Community, are able to join the NZDF FlexiSaver and KiwiSaver schemes, as well as access financial advice and mortgage broker services.

**Find out more about by visiting the NZDF Force Financial Hub – [www.nzdf.mil.nz/financial-hub](http://www.nzdf.mil.nz/financial-hub)**



## Veterans who receive payments into a New Zealand bank account

Due to statutory holidays over the festive period, payments due to made on the 27 December will be paid early on 23 December 2016.

The next payment will be on 10 January 2017.

## Veteran profile

*This profile is based on the experiences of real New Zealand veterans, and draws from multi situations. It showcases the services we provide, and the support we can provide to the Veteran community.*

## Grant served in Timor

He was not injured or unwell during service and is currently serving. After his return he was seriously injured in a car accident in New Zealand. Grant has been supported by the NZDF and ACC. As he has qualifying operational service, Veterans' Affairs can also assist with in-home support for Grant such as housecleaning and lawnmowing, to do the things he's not able to do anymore. Grant's injuries

make him susceptible to falls and blackouts, so he has been issued with a Red Wolf medical alarm. His alarm is monitored 24/7 by Red Wolf, and – if he falls – Red Wolf will be alerted that Grant needs assistance and an ambulance will assist him. Because he can take his alarm with him wherever he goes, his family don't need to worry so much about his welfare when he leaves the house.

## No Duff provides first response support to assist veterans in crisis

Veterans' Affairs partners with No Duff, which has been operating since the start of the year, to support veterans in critical need. No Duff and its team of service and ex-service volunteers, work with other welfare organisations to support veterans.



**NO DUFF**  
NOS ADEPTO FIERI STERCORE

### CONTACT US

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[NODUFF.ORG.NZ](http://NODUFF.ORG.NZ)

f [facebook.com/No-Duff-NZ-Veterans-support-NGO](https://facebook.com/No-Duff-NZ-Veterans-support-NGO)

### VOLUNTEERS

Want to help us help others?

If you're serving, ex-service or a civilian you can make a commitment to supporting and assisting the NZ Veterans community.

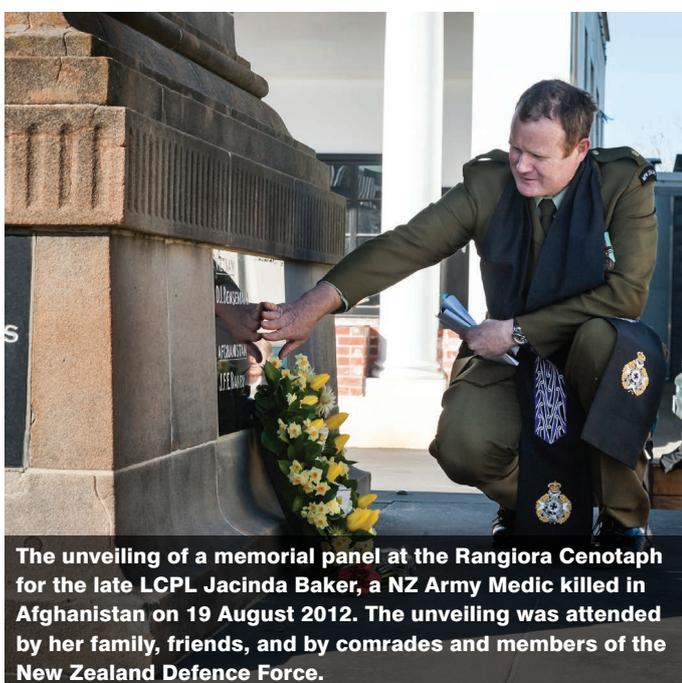
Visit [noduff.org.nz](http://noduff.org.nz) for more information and to register.



The Kiwi Team performs a Haka during the 2016 Invictus Games.



A New Zealand soldier lays a poppy at the Taji cenotaph in Iraq on Anzac Day.



The unveiling of a memorial panel at the Rangiora Cenotaph for the late LCPL Jacinda Baker, a NZ Army Medic killed in Afghanistan on 19 August 2012. The unveiling was attended by her family, friends, and by comrades and members of the New Zealand Defence Force.



The Hon Craig Foss, Minister of Veterans' Affairs, with Mina Bixley and Nina Richardson, first and second place winners of the Minister of Veterans' Affairs Passchendaele Multi Media Competition. View their winning entries at [www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/multimediacompetition](http://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/multimediacompetition)



New Zealand Viet Nam Veterans gather around after the presentation a statue of a Bronze Gunner by artist Matt Gouldie, was presented to the Royal Australian Infantry Corps by Colonel Commandant of the Royal Regiment of New Zealand Artillery, Barry Dreyer, at the Australian War Memorial



Articles for Veterans' Affairs News are to be posted to:

The Editor  
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or emailed to:  
[veterans@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:veterans@nzdf.mil.nz)

Thank you for your service in the New Zealand Defence Force. Your contribution on behalf of our nation is greatly appreciated and will never be forgotten.