

AUGUST 2016

2 MEMORIAL HOSPITAL WING

Rannerdale opens a new hospital wing in honour of Jacinda Baker.



3 MEDICAL ALARMS

Find out more about the benefits of the new medical alarms.



MESSAGE FROM JACKI

Jacki Couchman, Head of Veterans' Affairs and Secretary for War Pensions

At this time in 2016 we continue our focus on commemorations and honouring service. This month we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War and I look forward to seeing a number of veterans and their families and friends at the service at the Michael Fowler Centre in Wellington. Next month we continue WW100 centenaries with commemorations around the Battle of the Somme. The WW100 commemorations have been a catalyst for many New Zealanders to research and recognise the history of military service in their families, from over 100 years ago until the present

day. At Veterans' Affairs we have seen an upsurge in interest in family and community military history and it's been great to see children and young people engaging in research and getting involved in commemorative events.

We also recognise more recent deployments in August with the screening of *Afghanistan: The Soldiers' Story* at Parliament. This documentary is available on Stuff and has been screened at various RSAs and community venues around New Zealand. The documentary was shot by Corporal Aaron Horrell and shows



day-to-day life for the soldiers of CRIB 20 and the aftermath of two fatal attacks on our soldiers in 2012.

Lest we forget.

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Hon Craig Foss, Minister of Veterans' Affairs

August 2016 is a significant month. On August 18 — a day that marks both Vietnam Veterans' Day and the anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan — events will be held in Wellington and Canberra to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam war. More than 3800 New Zealanders served in South Vietnam between 1963 and 1975. We owe a debt of gratitude to each and every one of our service personnel and the 50th anniversary is an opportunity to acknowledge their service and sacrifice.

The Hon Chester Borrows represented the Government and people of New Zealand at the Australian National Service in Canberra, along with 35 of

our veterans chosen in a ballot. He has told me that he was honoured to attend the very moving and memorable ceremonies.

August is also the month we lost five New Zealand Defence Force Personnel in Afghanistan in 2012. I am proud to be hosting a parliamentary screening of *Afghanistan: The Soldier's Story* — a powerful documentary that I hope increases understanding of our military's work abroad and what it means to be a contemporary veteran.

Finally, last month I was pleased to announce additional funding in Budget 2016 for veterans to attend overseas commemorative events or revisit battlefields.

The travel entitlement has increased from \$2000 to \$2500 and is available to any new applicants. Those who have accessed part of their existing



entitlement may reapply up to the new maximum.

This additional financial support recognises the significance of commemorative visits and honours the contribution our veterans have made — and in some cases, still make — to the peace, freedom and security New Zealand enjoys today.

The increased amount is expected to cover much of the cost for contemporary veterans who served in places like Bosnia and East Timor.

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.

Jason Pore lost his leg to a mine explosion in Afghanistan, serving with the New Zealand Army. In 2016 he was the Vice-Captain of the NZDF Invictus Games team, where he competed in Orlando in wheelchair basketball and rugby, discus, shotput and both indoor rowing events. He told some of his story to Jacki Couchman, Head of Veterans' Affairs.

After I got injured in Afghanistan I couldn't qualify for seniority courses. I felt like no-one knew what to do with me. I got paperwork to do, a desk job. That was it. I had to make my own plan.

When I left the NZDF I dislocated myself from everything. I thought: "I'm outta here. I'm on my own – doing it myself."

The things I missed most about the Army were my colleagues and "the life". It's been your life since you were a teenager. It's the middle part of your life.

I needed a job. I wanted to use the skills I had from the Army, but I couldn't do all the physical stuff I could do in the army, due to my injury. I knew I had military skills – I could organise stuff, manage stuff, create processes and delegate. I didn't have any civvy quals. My 10 year plan was to be a safety manager in New Zealand. I'm nearly there. I've got a management degree and a diploma in occupational health and safety. I've got certifications in incident and accident investigation and in mines rescue. I was the first person with a disability to get the mines rescue certification.

When I got injured I was being supported by NZDF and ACC. It was pretty messy. I needed to take hold of it myself. I didn't know what Veterans' Affairs was. I didn't know what I could get. I didn't think of myself as a veteran. I do now.

Now I'm working actively with Veterans' Affairs. My case manager is awesome – he understands what I

can get and use. They've got me good prosthetics including ones for sports which I used at Invictus this year. VA has invested in me. I'm an advocate for them now.

I saw stuff in the media on the last Invictus Games and decided I wanted to be at the next one. I wasn't too fussed on winning a medal – I really just wanted to follow the journey to get to the Games. I had to work my butt off, be committed and train. The most important thing was to stay focused.

To me, nothing's free. If you want something, you have to work for it. You've got to stop being "poor you" and just get on with it.

For about 8 years I felt ashamed about having a prosthetic. In the Army it was all about strength – then suddenly I wasn't strong and fit – it had taken away a bit of me. Invictus is about finding that strength again.

Being in the Invictus team this year – in a way, it felt like coming back home.

The Invictus team was awesome. These guys with illnesses on the team – oh man, I look at myself and think: "I've got no problem – I can just drop my leg on, and off you go." My injury is obvious – people can see it and give you sympathy, if you want it or not. Those with injuries or illnesses inside them that people can't see – that's much harder. They are amazing, what they cope with.

In the team we spent a lot of time just talking. I think about 90% of the healing

**INVICTUS
GAMES**

ORLANDO 2016

FOR OUR WOUNDED WARRIORS



we got through Invictus was from walking and talking to each other. It's been amazing.

If you were thinking about aiming for Invictus – I'd say to go for it.

Register your interest for Invictus Games 2017

Nominations are now being called for the 2017 Invictus Games in Toronto, Canada.

Nominations are welcome from both current serving personnel and veterans who have experienced a significant life changing event through injury or illness whilst serving in uniform.

Contact adaptivesport@nzdf.mil.nz for more information.

Nominations will close on 12 September 2016.

Naming of new hospital wing after Lance Corporal Jacinda Baker, RNZAMC

A new 10-bed hospital wing at the Rannerdale Veterans Care Facility in Christchurch is to be called the Jacinda Baker Wing, in recognition of the service and sacrifice of a younger generation of kiwi soldiers.

Lance Corporal Jacinda Baker was one of three New Zealand Defence Force soldiers killed by an improvised explosive device while serving in

Afghanistan in August 2012.

The use of Jacinda's name was announced at Anzac Day services at both Rannerdale and Burnham Military Camp, where Jacinda trained and later posted before her deployment to Afghanistan. Rannerdale has a strong relationship with Burnham Military Camp and the Defence Health School there.



MEDICAL ALARMS

Red Wolf High Level Monitoring Limited, who were recently awarded the contract to provide medical alarms (personal devices) to our veteran community, have started rolling out this service to those veterans who require it. Whilst the medical alarms provided are transportable personal devices, they also have the following features:

- GPS tracking which allows a veteran to be monitored outside their home in any location in New Zealand – if a veteran has an incident or requires assistance, they can immediately ask for help wherever they are – personal communication from the Red
- Wolf service centre will send the appropriate emergency service and the service centre will keep talking to the veteran whilst they are waiting.
- Fall detection – if a veteran falls, the service centre will aim to talk to the veteran from the device on their person; if the veteran does not respond, an ambulance will be despatched.
- The personal device has two-way communication to a person within the Red Wolf service centre 24 hours per day – no need to get back to the main unit in the veteran's home.
- A charging pad is despatched with the personal device. For those veterans with arthritis – no need to have difficulty plugging it in – just place the personal device on the charging pad.
- If the personal device is low on charge it will advise Red Wolf. The veteran will then receive a call from the service centre advising

the veteran to charge the personal device on the charging pad.

- Red Wolf has an A-Grade facility and excellent trained staff who are on duty 24/7 – 365 days of the year.
- Red Wolf provides a guaranteed response to any emergency activation within 60 seconds.
- Red Wolf has excellent business continuity arrangements if there should be an emergency disaster situation and will transfer monitoring to another location, with no disruption to service for veterans.

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

Podiatry Care

Under a master service agreement in place between Veterans' Affairs and Foot Mechanics Limited, veterans may seek podiatry care services as a result of ageing, medical conditions, lack of mobility and foot conditions suffered during service with the New Zealand Defence Force.

This care includes:

- non-invasive strategies and interventions,
- non-invasive cutting and filing of toenails,
- non-invasive filing to reduce calluses,
- moisturising to help reduce hyperkeratosis skin,
- thorough foot examinations,
- information to veterans which details the potential cause and causes of the foot related problem or problems, and
- treatment and management plans which will help to prevent the recurrence of the problem or problems

If you would like further information on the podiatry care provided, please contact your case manager on Freephone 0800 483 8372.

PICKING UP YOUR PRESCRIPTIONS FOR FREE

Veterans' Affairs fully funds medications for any accepted service related conditions that are prescribed for you by your GP or specialist.

Some changes have been made to the way in which Veterans' Affairs pays for these prescription medications and it's timely to remind all our veterans that prescription services are now coordinated through Green Cross Health. This arrangement means that you are able to pick up your prescriptions for service-related conditions free of charge. You should no longer need to pay up front for these medications and seek reimbursement, or save up your receipts in order to receive free prescriptions after the first 20 annually. You can continue to visit the pharmacy of your choice – but your pharmacy will invoice

us through Green Cross Health instead of charging you up front.

Many of you are already using this service and our provider, Green Cross Health has been working with your local pharmacy to make sure that they understand the new invoicing approach.

If you find that you are asked to pay for your medications for your service-related conditions, you can remind your pharmacy that they should charge Green Cross Health directly. If you have any concerns about the new arrangements, or are finding that your pharmacy is still charging you up front, please contact your case manager on Freephone 0800 483 8372.



THIS IS NOT A DRILL

Since February this year, Veterans' Affairs has been pleased to be able to work with the new NGO No Duff (slang for "this is not a drill"), which has been successfully operating in the community to support veterans in critical need. No Duff, headed up by the "G9", comprises an extensive network of volunteers, many of whom are currently serving or ex-service personnel. The basic concept of No Duff operations is to provide first response support to secure any veteran in crisis, and then to work with partner organisations – like Veterans' Affairs, the RNZRSA and local RSAs – who can put in place more long-term care and support as required.

No Duff's work is primarily focused on the growing demographic of contemporary veterans – those who have served post-1974 - many of whom may have lost touch with their contemporaries if they have left service, and who may not already be in contact with support organisations like Veterans' Affairs or the RSA – or be aware of their entitlements, or understand their status as a veteran. The advent of No Duff goes hand in hand with an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the nature of contemporary service, and its impact. No Duff fills an important gap, working to ensure younger veterans in crisis are

able to receive immediate support on the ground in an emergency situation, and linking them with the long-term support that is available to them.

The work of No Duff complements the work of Veterans' Affairs, and of our other important partner organisations like the RNZRSA, and enhances our

ability to provide younger veterans with the support they need. Working with No Duff, together with the RNZRSA, over the past few months has helped to achieve the best outcomes possible for young veterans on a number of occasions, and we look forward to continuing to partner in future, to achieve our joint goal of ensuring veterans get the care and support they require.

Profile: Kevin

Kevin, 68, has been a client of Veterans' Affairs since 2009, receiving standard entitlements, like war disablement pension for his service-related injuries.

Unfortunately, in 2012, Kevin was diagnosed with cancer, and recently his health has taken a turn for the worse, with his mobility being affected.

"Veterans' Affairs really came to the party" said Kevin. "They supplied me with a ramp, to help me access my home, which has been really valuable. I can now get in and out much more easily."

Kevin speaks highly of his case manager, Di, who calls him at least monthly: "All the case managers are probably good, but I deal with Diane – and she is the cream of the crop."

Getting in touch with Veterans' Affairs has made a big difference for Kevin's life – he recalls that his first contact

was made because a veteran friend suggested he might have some entitlements. "A friend mentioned it, but getting in touch with Veterans' Affairs has been really useful – talking directly to a case manager helped with the processes".

Kevin thinks he's also been lucky to have a GP who understands veterans, and can treat his service-related injuries or refer him to the appropriate specialists for treatment: "if you can find a GP who is used to handling veterans, that can also make the road a lot easier".

Kevin is currently confined to a wheelchair, but we are all hopeful that he may get some of his mobility back after his next round of surgery.



New Zealand Vietnam 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.



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

The Editor
PO Box 5146
Wellington 6140

or emailed to:
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.