



NZSG New Plymouth Branch Newsletter



Number 305

October 2016

Branch Library: Open free to members. A small charge to visitors.
Opening Hours: Monday: 10 am to 12:30 pm (closed 24 October, Labour Day)
 Wednesday: 12 noon to 3 pm
 Saturday: 10 am to 12 noon

Christmas Raffle

The branch is running the popular Christmas hamper raffle again this year. Members are asked to bring along a donation of non-perishable goods to the next monthly branch meeting.

\$1 Raffle tickets will be on sale at the October and November branch meetings. The raffle will be drawn at the Christmas dinner.

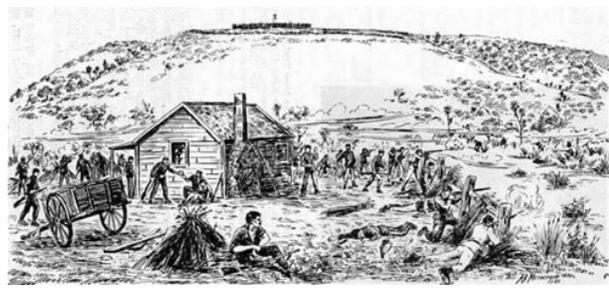


Next meeting: 7:30 pm Tuesday 4 Oct 2016

Battle of Waireka

The Battle of Waireka near Omata in 1860 was the first significant encounter of the Taranaki War. It followed years of increasing tension between tangata whenua and the settlers who had migrated from England.

At our October meeting, Len Jury will talk on this important historical event and also some of the subsequent events.



Convenor: Bruce Bellini 758 0130
Secretary: Charles Le Breton 751 2879
Treasurer: Neville Richards 753 5051

Committee: Lorraine Austin
 John Berntsen
 Jill Jackson
 Annette Larsen
 Ailsa McCrone
 Bev Mulqueen
 Jackie Sewell

New Plymouth Branch
 c/- John Berntsen
 31 Budleigh Street
 New Plymouth 4310

Meetings: 7:30 pm, first Tuesday each month at branch rooms, Moturoa Shopping Centre access off Whiteley Street carpark
Email: newplymouth@genealogy.org.nz
Website: www.genealogynp.com

Last Event: WW2 Research

At the September branch meeting, I spoke about my mother's cousin, Vernon Elton Sutherland, who died at the age of 30 in a plane crash in WW2. He was a bomber pilot in the RNZAF and was involved in many bombing raids over Germany.

The material I presented included an article in the Dominion newspaper, dated October 1941, entitled *Flirting with Flak*. I also was able to show one of the propaganda leaflets that was dropped over Germany by the RAF.

As I researched I became interested in the extent and nature of the blanket bombing of Germany and in particular Cologne. The casualty statistics for the RAF Bomber Command were very high. On some bombing missions air crews might have a one in twenty chance of returning alive.

There has been much controversy surrounding the input Bomber Command, under "Bomber Harris", had in the 2nd World War and this input was never fully recognised by the British government. Bomber Command was the only unit of the British war machine from 1939 to 1945 that did not receive a campaign medal. However, a few years back a RAF Bomber Command Memorial was erected in London to commemorate the 55,573 aircrew that died during WW2.

Flight Lieutenant, VERNON ELTON SUTHERLAND died in service in the RNZAF in WW2. As promised at the branch meeting, here are some of sources that I looked at for my research. Hope this is helpful for anyone seeking information on family in the Air Force.

Books consulted: *New Zealanders with the RAF* by H.L. Thompson, Dept of Internal Affairs, Wellington, 1953. The 3 volumes in this set are in the reference section of our branch library and are very informative and well-indexed.

INTERNET sites consulted: WW2 records relating to the Air Force in particular. (Don't forget: it is worth googling a name first but always put speech marks round the name to limit hits.)

- Wikipedia: [Bombing of Cologne in World War 2, RAF Bomber Command](#)
- [Ancestry](#)

- [MyHeritage](#)
- [Auckland Museum Cenotaph](#)
- [NZ Wargraves project](#)
- [FamilySearch](#) (Wills and probates) Before going to war the service people had to make a will.
- [Findmypast](#) (NZ death index) (Eng and Wales Deaths) This has Vernon Elton Sutherland dying in 1943, 1st qtr. He died on 31 Dec 1942. 1943 would be when the death was registered. (A trap for young players!)
- [RAF Commands Archive](#)
- [www.raf.mod.uk](#)
- [RAF Bomber Command Operational Losses](#)
- [Military crashes in the SW Midlands 1942](#)
- [Commonwealth War Graves Commission](#)
- [They Gave Their Today](#)

Flight Lieutenant (Pilot) Vernon Elton SUTHERLAND RNZAF No. 402223, a New Zealander, age 30 and the son of Charles Vernon and Muriel Elizabeth Sutherland, of Wellington City. He is buried in plot 2 row F grave 11 in the churchyard of All Saints' Church, Middleton Stoney. The *They Gave Their Today* site includes those who died flying with RAF, 16OTU, from Upper Heyford, 1942.

Annette Larsen

November Meeting: 1 November

Bruce Bellini will describe the Taranaki Biographical Index and give a practical demonstration of how useful this index can be in locating information on the people you are researching. This demonstration will highlight the depth and extent of the resources in our branch library.

Daytime Meetings

Date: Sunday 16 October

Time: 1:30 pm

This meeting will also cover any computer or genealogy related questions you may have, so please bring them along.



Convenor's Report

The Library work is progressing well with the processing of Ann Evan's books almost complete. You may notice over the coming months some movement of library items as we start to re-arrange books in an attempt to make more space.

The daytime branch meeting held on Sunday 18 September was attended by several members who are unable to come to our evening meetings in winter. We covered several diverse subjects, from accessing wills online to demonstrating how to backup computer genealogy program data were demonstrated.

Hopefully this dreary spring weather we have been having over the last few weeks will soon pass and we will have brighter and warmer days, which will give us new energy to tackle our genealogy research.

Bruce Bellini
Branch Convenor

Branch Christmas Dinner 2016

The branch Christmas dinner is planned for Sunday 11 December at the Fitzroy Golf Club. Catering by Le Dejeuner Caterers. Meet at 6:00pm for drinks with dinner at 6:30pm.

Mark this date in your diary.

Please book at a branch meeting or with Charles Le Breton.

Legacy Help

The next in Marilyn's series of Legacy sessions will be on Sunday 9 October 2016 at 1:30pm in the Branch Rooms.

Please contact Marilyn Armitstead for further information or if you have any questions. Phone: 757 2599 or email g.armitstead@xtra.co.nz

Christmas Cakes

Neville Richard's wife, Faith, has been making our Christmas cake to raffle for several years now. These have been very well received and if anyone would like to order one, Faith is willing to make them.

The cakes are moist and well flavoured and contain no eggs. They can be made without nuts for those with allergies. The usual size cake is \$35, or a half size is \$20. A donation of \$5 will be made to NP Genealogy for each cake. Please talk to Neville at the meeting or phone 753 5051. Orders should be received by mid October to allow time to mature.

PAPERS PAST Snippets from memlist conversation.

Don't forget before you copy the article to turn off the highlighting (the little yellow button in the top right of the article), this makes for a better view of the article.

Also you may find it easier to view the whole page and then take your copy from there.

After reading the copyright terms, I gather there is nothing that applies to the use of most of the newspaper items covered by Papers Past in that it refers to newspapers of the 19th and early 20th century being out of copyright.

Charles Le Breton



History of Shannon War Camps Uncovered

Amateur historians have begun to uncover the forgotten history of two Shannon prisons, where 250 conscientious objectors were detained during the Second World War.

In 2012, Shannon farm owner Mary Bielski began finding remnants of barbed wire, copper pipe and concrete foundations sticking out of her paddocks. Through piecing together bits and pieces of information she learned the ruins were the remains of Whitaunui camp, one of two nearby sites that were among New Zealand's largest camps to house men who refused compulsory military conscription.

Finding little official information about the camps, she continued to research, joined by friend Margaret Tate. They tracked down mentions in books, letters, obscure publications and pre-recorded oral histories to learn more about both Whitaunui and Paiaka camps, and have begun excavating and recording the physical remnants.

Bielski estimates the camp covered about 20 acres of boggy land near the Manawatu River. It had a hospital, kitchens, toilet block, gardens and a grid of public works huts for the men to sleep in, that formed a grid next to the space her house is now on.

"It is a part of local history and it has been very largely forgotten, and there are sites here that have now been identified and can be found. Most people despised conscientious objectors, there was a very strong feeling against them, and they were ostracised for a considerable time after they left the camps," she said.

Both camps operated from 1941 until 1946, and housed men aged from 18 to 40, from throughout the country. They appeared to have been kept in good physical health, fed well (especially with vegetables they grew), and inmates did the cooking. The huts were probably cold, and furnished sparsely with one or two beds, and perhaps a table and chairs.

"They worked weeding flax. There were very large stands of flax, with various kinds of weeds growing, especially blackberry, and they spent their time cutting down those weeds.

"I don't know that it was particularly hard, but it was very boring indeed. There were constant objections, mainly that it was no use at all - and some of the people that were in charge of them

thought it was a waste of time too."

Some library books were allowed, letters were controlled, few visitors were allowed, and prisoners were often moved between camps arbitrarily.

"It made an enormous impact on them; there were quite a lot of people that were very depressed. It was very difficult for the wives, because the men weren't ... sending them any money, and a number who tried to get work found it hard. When people found they were married to a conscientious objector there could be enough nastiness that they felt they needed to leave."

There were some spectacular escapes, though escapees risked jail, and more time added to their sentences.

"It's reported a few men once went to a film in Foxton and then climbed back in through the wires," Tate said.

The objectors included pacifists, humanists, agnostics and political objectors. Researchers discovered a surprising number were connected to well-known families, including the brothers of Edmund Hillary and James K Baxter, Dan Long (later an influential president of the Public Service Association), and some who continued to become university lecturers.

Tate stressed the research project was not intended to make a political statement, but merely to ensure history was not forgotten.

"We are looking into it because it's almost exactly 70 years since they were closed, to the month. They were closed in 1946, and I've found nobody's aware of it. Young people are now puzzled about why people were so angry about the conscientious objectors - people have moved on, and can't understand how intense the feelings were."

The research is ongoing, Tate said, but had already resulted in Horowhenua District Council adding the sites to the District Plan and actively seeking more information. *Manawatu Standard* 4 July 2016

Charles Le Breton



Library Roster: October

Monday 10 am to 12:30 pm

Wednesday 12 noon to 3 pm

Saturday 10 am to 12 noon

Sat 1 Mike Merrick

Mon 3 Charles Le Breton

Tue 4 Branch meeting – 7:30pm – Len Jury on the Battle of Waireka and aftermath.

Wed 5 Neville Richards

Sat 8 Karen Crowe

Mon 10 Lorraine Austin

Wed 12 Judy Berntsen

Sat 15 Lea and/or Bruce Bellini

Mon 17 Ailsa McCrone

Wed 19 Jill Jackson or Charles Le Breton

Sat 22 Marilyn Armitstead

Mon 24 Closed – Labour Day

Tue 25 Committee Meeting

Wed 26 Elly Harrison

Sat 29 Annette Larsen

Mon 31 Anne Brophy

For those new to genealogy and/or want help knocking down those brick walls, this is an excellent time and place to have our experts help you. Our helpers can show you what is available in the library and how to go about finding what you are looking for.

Empty Printer Cartridges

Please bring your empty printer cartridges in to the branch rooms. These can be either ink jet or laser cartridges, but **we can only use HP or Canon types of cartridges.**

These will be recycled to generate some income for the branch.



Library News

Magazines received;

Family Tree (Oct)

Memories (Oct/Nov)

Who Do You Think You Are (Sept)

Newsletters received;

Canterbury, Dunedin, Fielding, Hutt Valley, Kapiti, Nelson, Otaki, Palmerston North, Papakura, Papamoa, South Waikato, Stratford, Wairarapa, Wellington, Whanganui

Newsletters from some other branches are available in our branch library. Just look at the Eastlight folders down by the committee area.



Newsletter

If you have any comments or suggestions for the newsletter, please contact Peter Hewett at peter.hewett@gmail.com.

