



Fairfax Media NZ / Marlborough Express

**E kore rātou e kaumātuaia  
Pēnei i a tātou kua mahue nei  
E kore hoki rātou e ngoikore  
Ahakoa pēhea i ngā āhuatanga o te wā  
I te hekenga atu o te rā  
Tae noa ki te aranga mai i te ata  
Ka maumahara tonu tātou ki a rātou  
Ka maumahara tonu tātou ki a rātou**

*They shall grow not old,  
as we that are left grow old:*

*Age shall not weary them,  
nor the years condemn.*

*At the going down of the sun,  
and in the morning,  
We will remember them*

*We will remember them.*

## Ka maumahara tonu tātou ki a rātou

As another Anzac Day passes by, we take the opportunity to pause and remember those who have served our country, some who made it home to the warmth of their whānau and whenua, and others who rest with their brothers in arms in lands far away. This year we remembered them at the Picton dawn ceremony, where the whānau of Uncle Nugget MacDonald laid a wreath and at the Blenheim ceremony, where Uncle Howard Sadd and cousin Jess Dornbusch laid a wreath on behalf of the whānau whānui o Rangitāne o Wairau.

Ka maumahara tonu tātou ki a rātou.

We will remember them.



## Our People

### Our staff

This month we farewelled two of our staff members who have resigned to pursue other career opportunities. Sandra Evers has been a part of Rangitāne o Wairau for over 15 years making a significant contribution across all areas including the treaty settlement process, historic events, environmental matters, fisheries management and business support. We thank Sandra for walking beside us during this whole time of historic importance and wish her well in her next journey.

Keelan Walker has been our Communication & Engagement Advisor for the past year and during that time has been involved in nationally significant projects and provided a vastly improved digital framework for our iwi communication. We thank Keelan and wish him well in his future endeavours. Moving forward we will be replacing these two roles in the near future.

Andrew Besley came on board after the AGM in an interim capacity as an Office Manager supporting the Trustees, office and staff while Trustees got up to speed with the roles and responsibilities of our organisation. We're thankful to Andrew for his advice and support during this transition and wish him well in his next venture.

Thanks must go to our office staff Janine Thompson, Diane Ryan and Jodie Palatchie who have kept the office ticking over during this unsettled period of change. We really appreciate their time, effort and professionalism in ensuring that we are able to continue moving forward.

## Our Whānau



The Ngārimu VC 28th (Māori) Battalion Scholarship Board. Front Row: Graeme Vercoe, Dr Melanie Riwai-Couch, Hon. Hekia Parata, Dr Monty Soutar, Linda Te Aho. Back Row: Dr Te Tuhi Robust, Iona Holsted, Peeni Henare. Absent: Kelvin Davis, Nanaia Mahuta, Hon. Te Ururoa Flavell, Phil Heeney, Rino Tirikatene.

### Dr Melanie Riwai-Couch joins the 28th Māori Battalion Memorial Scholarship Fund Board

Congratulations to **Dr Melanie Riwai-Couch** (nee MacDonald) who was recently appointed by the Governor General, Her Excellency the Rt Hon Dame Patsy Reddy to the Ngārimu VC and 28th Māori Battalion Memorial Scholarship Fund Board. This board awards scholarships to exceptional Māori students to continue the legacy of Victoria Cross winner and Second Lieutenant Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa Ngārimu and the other members of the 28th Māori Battalion. There are usually at least 6 scholarships awarded - for undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral studies with academic merit being a high priority during the selection process.

When New Zealand joined forces with the allies in 1939, Māori men and women volunteered and made a significant contribution in all areas of the defence forces and home services. Notable among them were the recruits who formed the 28th Māori Battalion. They fought with distinction in many engagements and perhaps the soldier whose deeds are best known among Māori is Second Lieutenant Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa Ngārimu, whose heroism and ultimate sacrifice were acknowledged by the highest military award the British Commonwealth could bestow: the Victoria Cross. The Ngārimu VC and 28th Māori Battalion Memorial Scholarship Fund Board was established after World War 2 to commemorate the services of the 28th Māori Battalion, and Second Lieutenant Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa Ngārimu.

Ake ake kia kaha e!



Congratulations to Uncle **Cappy MacDonald** who celebrated his 90th birthday in March at the Clubs of Marlborough. Whānau from all over New Zealand and Australia came home to celebrate this special milestone with Uncle, Auntie Bub, their 5 living children, 13 grandchildren, 36 great grandchildren and one on the way. Read about his amazing life at:

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/well-good/89214493/mcdonald-family-in-marlborough-gather-for-90yearolds-birthday>



Congratulations to **Caeden Skipper** who at 14 years old won his division at the recent Jiu-Jitsu National Championships in Auckland. With a high work ethic and great whānau support, we look forward to watching Caeden's progress through the ranks. Read about his success at:

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/marlborough-express/news/91254648/Fighting-to-the-top-Blenheim-teenager-Caeden-Skipper-takes-out-national-jiu-jitsu-title>

# Our Environment

## King Salmon relocation proposal

The King Salmon relocation proposal in the Marlborough Sounds is causing a great deal of controversy in Te Tau Ihu for a variety of reasons, not the least being the impact on our environment. Rangitāne o Wairau have joined the other Te Tau Ihu iwi in opposing the King Salmon proposal. Preparations are underway for these submissions which are scheduled to be heard in May.

## Takutai Moana Act 2011

The Takutai Moana Act 2011 acknowledges the importance of the marine and coastal area to all New Zealanders and provides for the recognition of the customary rights of iwi, hapū and whānau in the common marine and coastal area. In order for our customary rights to be legally recognised, in early April, we completed the two part process which included submitting an application to engage with the Crown directly and an application to the High Court for recognition of our customary rights. Copies of our application are available from the office.

# Organisational Management

During this period of change, the Trust needs to focus on the strategic direction of our organisation. To ensure that we're still delivering activities and events to our people we've created Rangitāne Whakamua!

## Rangitāne Whakamua!

Rangitāne Whakamua! will deliver cultural and social benefits to our people in 2017-2018. The key principles of the project are that it is:

- reflective of a Māori organisation
- self-determining
- focused on delivery and service
- inclusive of everyone
- operationally simple

This project will have an assigned kaiwhakahaere (coordinator) for each kete (portfolio), who will work closely with Jodie Palatchie in our office to coordinate events and activities.

KETE	KAIWHAKAHARE
Te Reo me ōna Tikanga	Janis de Thierry
Mātauranga	Pikihiua Reihana
Kaumātua	Phillipa Carey
Rangatahi	Vacancy
Te kōhi kai	Rick Andrell
Hauora	Lauree White
Pūtea tautoko	Lauree White

## Kaiwhakahaere Vacancy - Rangatahi

Our rangatahi are the future of our iwi and it's essential that we ensure they have opportunities to expand their knowledge of Te Ao Māori (The Māori World) and Rangitāne. We would love to hear from anyone who is willing and able to help create opportunities for our rangatahi. Email us with your ideas at [admin@rangitane.org.nz](mailto:admin@rangitane.org.nz) by 19 May 2017.

## Whakapapa Kōmiti

We are seeking expressions of interest for the Whakapapa Kōmiti. If you have research experience in whakapapa, genealogy or whenua Māori, an understanding of the context of whakapapa in Te Ao Māori, a passion for weaving together the branches of whānau, pieces of land and historic stories with discretion - email us with your story at [admin@rangitane.org.nz](mailto:admin@rangitane.org.nz) by 19 May 2017.

## Mātauranga - Pilot Program for Poroiwi Education Grant Launched

In March we approved and paid out our first Poroiwi Education Grants. This is a program designed to support tamariki ages 5 to 18 years who are actively enrolled in school. We've been delighted to see the level of interest the program generated, which ultimately, will help us determine what features to consider for future programs and services.

A total of 48 applications were received for the Poroiwi Education Grant. This meant that 98 tamariki were awarded \$50 each to assist with their school related costs. The amount budgeted for the program was \$5,000. A total amount of \$4,900 was paid to successful applicants. Applications were received from across the country resulting in the greatest number of tamariki attending schools within the Wairau followed by Ōtautahi and then Horowhenua/Manawatū. Ahitereiria also featured amongst the applications.

As with most new things we have had some teething problems along the way and since our launch, we've been hard at work identifying lessons learned. This has resulted in a number of suggestions for change. The changes are intended to increase clarity and transparency about the Poroiwi Education Grant and other grants and scholarships that may be available to support educational achievement. Please continue to send in your feedback. It will help us determine what features to consider for education grants and scholarships – [matauranga@rangitane.org.nz](mailto:matauranga@rangitane.org.nz)

nā Pikihiua Reihana, Mātauranga





## Our Language and Culture

This year, Janis de Thierry will be leading the Te Reo me ōna Tikanga kete (previously known as the Culture and Language portfolio). Jeremy MacLeod will also support this kete, and the delivery of language and cultural activity to our people. Researchers are currently completing a cultural stocktake for Rangitāne o Wairau and we've started discussions with representatives of our kaumātua, rangatahi and key cultural leaders in Wairau around what resources we have available and how we might best share them with our people. More on this in our next pānui.

## Financial Operation

The financial year for 2016-2017 closed on 31 March so the office was a hive of activity around end of year financial processes. At the AGM, we advised that discussions were still required around the appointment of our auditor. We're pleased to announce that Deloitte have been reappointed to audit the Rangitāne Group for 2016-2017. Kendons Chartered Accountants have also been retained as our group accountant. A significant piece of work is also currently under way to independently review our settlement structure, transactions and obligations to ensure we have met all our responsibilities under the Deed of Settlement and the Trust Deed. This is particularly important given the events of last year and the need for us all to be assured that everything is in order.

## Commercial Operation

Brett Sutton and Ross Butler – the independent directors of Rangitāne Holdings and Rangitāne Investments, have both resigned which allows some alignment in terms of new trustees and directors. We thank them both for providing a solid commercial foundation including the development of our Statement of Investment Policy Objectives (SIPO), Audit Risk and Compliance Committee (ARCC) and for the positive financial performance that the Group has achieved in recent years. They've been invaluable in handing over and we're thankfully in a position to take our time in finding quality replacement candidates. Advertising for these independent Director vacancies has begun. The advertisement is below.

Our properties continue to be well managed under the expert guidance of APL Property. APL have worked closely with Rangitāne for several years and effectively manage Rangitāne House and our Crown properties. Rangitāne House has continued to be an important contributor to our revenue, and we are delighted with its performance following the Kaikōura earthquakes.

### Independent Directors Applications

**Location: Marlborough - Blenheim**

**Work Type: Part Time**

**Strategic and governance leadership**

**Post settlement future focused environment**

**3 positions (including Chairperson)**

Te Runanga a Rangitāne o Wairau (Rangitāne) works on behalf of their iwi to protect and enhance the benefits derived from the settlement of their treaty claims for future generations.

An opportunity has arisen for two new Directors and a Chairperson to join the Board of Rangitāne's subsidiary company, Rangitāne Holdings/Investments (RHL/RIL). RHL/RIL is responsible for the strategic development, investment and effective management of the investment portfolio, together with the leadership, operation, administration and financial operations of RHL/RIL. The board's organisational leadership and guidance will ensure that the organisation achieves the required levels of profit/growth and wealth creation in accordance with financial and strategic targets set by the Trust.

The Board are seeking two Directors who will further strengthen diverse skill sets of

the current board members, as well as a Chairperson with strong governance experience. Ideally, the two directors will possess experience in the fields of property, investment and finance to help grow the Settlement Portfolio. The director and chair will also have an ambassadorial role, requiring a proven ability to understand and meaningfully engage with iwi. As such all candidates must have an affinity with the aspirations of the Trust, and the ability to promote RHL/RIL as a successful and professional Maori business entity.

Ideal candidates will have investment experience, excellent financial skills and a robust commercial mindset. Unafraid to question the status quo, you will possess real passion and ambition for the growth and prosperity of the Trust. As the Chair, you will possess all of the above attributes, as well as governance and ideally iwi experience.

To submit your application, please visit [www.insiderecruitment.co.nz/ceo-and-general-management-jobs/independent-directors/1173256](http://www.insiderecruitment.co.nz/ceo-and-general-management-jobs/independent-directors/1173256).

*For further information please contact Dale Gray on 09 913 0172. Applications will close at 5pm on Friday, June 2.*

# Ka maumahara tonu tātou ki a rātou

## We will remember them

Rewi Maniapoto (Dave) MacDonald



Rewi Maniapoto MacDonald was born on 1 February 1918 in Blenheim. Dave, as he was known, was the son of Hoani MacDonald from Rangitāne ki Wairau and Mary Christina (nee Sciascia) from Ngāti Raukawa ki te Tonga and Trani, Italy.

At the age of 21 on 3rd November 1939 Rewi enlisted. He left for war on 8th November 1940 with the Fourth Reinforcements on the HMS Batory and disembarked in Egypt on 12 December 1940.

Rewi served with D Company. On 4th September 1942 he was wounded in at El Munassib Depression, Egypt. Lieutenant Tikao-Barrett reported:

*"...D Company had split up into two attacking parties. Dave MacDonald had his left arm blown off at the elbow by a heavy burst of fire while he was charging a machine-gun nest". Tikao recalled "...that when he hit the ground he picked up his arm and in his fury threw it at the machine-gun post." (Soutar, 2008, p.231).*

He was invalided home on 9th of December 1942 arriving back in Wellington on the 4th of January 1943. Dave was awarded the Royal Warrant (Bravery Award) on 30 September 1948. On 25th September 1978 at the age of 60 Dave passed away. He is buried at the Māori Island Urupā at Grovetown, Blenheim.

<http://www.28maoribattalion.org.nz/mi/photo/rewi-maniapoto-david-macdonald>

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## The Story of Nugget MacDonald

2/12/1918 – 17/6/1992

### War veteran survived battle against starvation in German POW camp

NB: This article by Nick Ward appeared in *The Marlborough Express* 10 February 1992, 4 months before Uncle Nugget passed away in an accident in Blenheim.

Every war veteran has a story to tell. Some are more interesting than others, and some deserve to be told. Manaia MacDonald's story is a case of the latter, mainly because he is one of a dwindling number of veterans whose exploits have become enshrined in New Zealand military history.

Mr MacDonald (74), commonly known as Nugget is Marlborough's last surviving veteran of the original 28th (Maori) Battalion. But while many of his comrades gained fame fighting in Crete and the North African desert, most of Mr MacDonald's war was spent languishing in a prisoner-of-war camp in Austria, battling starvation and witnessing the cruelty of his German captors. Born at Levin, of the Rangitane iwi, Mr MacDonald came to Wairau Pa as a small child with his family. When he was 15, in 1933, he joined the Nelson/Marlborough/Otago Mounted Rifles and was trained as a Hotchkiss machine-gunner.

He spent his weekends on exercises in the hills around Blenheim, but the highlight of his service was the annual two to three-month camp at Fairhall, in a paddock opposite the present cemetery. "It used to be a great show - three to four hundred horses, men and tents," he remembered. Mr MacDonald's brother Tanginui, another Mounted Rifles territorial, would join him for the camp. The two were known as "the two Maoris from Wairau Pa". While the other men brought their own horses to the camp, the MacDonald brothers had worked out a cheaper way of getting mounts. Back in the 1930's, between 200 and 300 wild horses used to roam the swamps around their Wairau Pa farm.

Several weeks before the camp, the brothers would muster then and select two for breaking. The broken horses, dubbed Raupo and Rush, would be taken to Spring Creek for shoeing, then ridden to the camp. Mr MacDonald remembers the regiment as being one big happy family. "We never had any trouble because we had such good officers." Colonel Lawrence Chaytor was "one of the greats". Others he respected were Sergeant Ron Schwass, Medical Sergeant Roy Large and Russell Ball ("a great horseman").

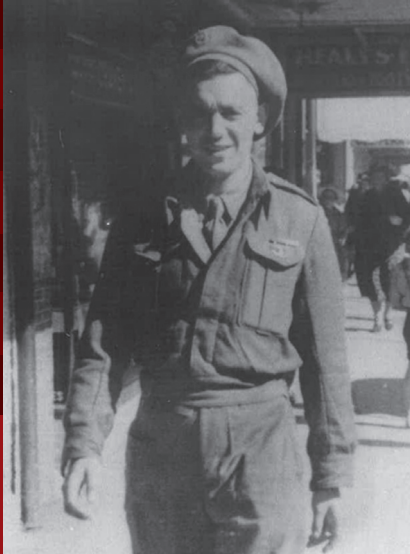
The Divisional Cavalry, including the Mounted Rifles, was later absorbed into the army's mechanised infantry. In 1939, while visiting his elder brother Mason, a former Marlborough rugby representative in Hawke's Bay, Mr MacDonald got a message from his family - the army had asked him to volunteer for service in the event of a war. His response was to go immediately to Waipukurau to enlist. He was sent to Ngaruawahia to train on Bren carriers with the First Echelon, New Zealand Expeditionary Force.

### New unit

It was there that he made the decision to join the newly-formed Maori Battalion, after a run-in with army authority. As he tells it: "Me and two other Maoris, who were the only Maoris in the camp, were celebrating our final leave. We ended up drinking and making noise until three o'clock in the morning." This officer comes and sticks his head into our tent and tells us that the CO (Commanding Officer), Colonel Dittmer, wanted us to report to him at nine o'clock. That sobered us up, and by the time morning came, we were nervous as hell."

The three reported to the CO's second-in-command at 9am. This was Edward Te Whiti Rongomai (Tui) Love of Picton, who later rose to second-in-command of the Maori Battalion, and was killed at Ruweisat Ridge in the Western Desert in July 1942. "Tui sat back in his seat and said, 'The colonel has considered starting a Maori Battalion.'" Mr MacDonald remembers. "We said 'Yes, sir!' right away - he didn't even need to ask us." Mr MacDonald left Ngaruawahia that day, and arrived at Trentham that night to train as a non-commissioned officer.

*Continued over page.*



But he did not end up commanding a platoon as planned. "I was a sergeant, but we found out that the army had no cooks. I ended up training as a cook because all those hungry officer trainees needed feeding. "I always felt that I could serve better as a sergeant by acting like a private. I had men to look after - by not pulling rank, I got better cooperation from them." He later refused the offer of a commission, "and I still wouldn't take one today."

He did further training as a cook at Waiouru before joining the Maori Battalion D Company at its Palmerston North base. Soon after, he and his comrades found themselves on board the SS Aquitania, bound for Egypt. The ship was diverted to England, and the soldiers spent some time in Kent, manning coastal defences during the Battle of Britain and the Blitz. When they had finished there they sailed to Egypt for further training.

While they were there, Mr MacDonald had a bizarre experience - he bought himself a baby. "I bought it from a native woman for a shilling", he explained. "I did it because I was homesick, and seeing this baby reminded me of home. I was ordered to give it back, because they told me that it would hamper me for the rest of my life."

The Maori Battalion then sailed to Greece to join British and Commonwealth forces there. Almost immediately they found themselves caught up in the fighting against the invading German forces. Mr MacDonald was involved in one of their final actions - at Kalamata, near the Corinth Canal, one of the evacuation points for the beleaguered British. "It was all a terrible mistake. We were supposed to board ships at the end of the canal but by some misunderstanding we arrived at a beach where we shouldn't have been. The Germans had set up a big gun on the wharf there and were blasting everything you could see. A lot of boats and even a couple of Sunderlands arrived to take men off, but we were all supposed to get away before daylight. The boats left at dawn, leaving hundreds of men still in the water. They were trying to grab the boats so they could still have a chance to get away," Mr MacDonald said. "I can still hear them screaming today."

The Germans bombed and shelled the New Zealand positions throughout the next day. Mr MacDonald took refuge with a Maori officer, Bill Ngata, with whom he had a strange spiritual experience. "They say that if you pray hard enough, you get looked after. We had all dug trenches to get away from the bombs and machineguns, and there was Bill sitting under an olive tree with a book in his hand. "He asked me to come and sit with him - I was pretty nervous, but I did anyway. The book he had was a Bible. "We sat there for hours, and nothing happened to us. It's something I'll never forget."

## Captured

On April 25, Mr MacDonald's luck ran out. His position was overrun by German paratroopers, and he was captured. "We couldn't compete," he said. "We never had the equipment - one rifle between 20 men. Mr MacDonald was one of 182 New Zealanders captured during the Greek campaign. "Since I came home I have never missed an Anzac parade, because I was captured on Anzac Day, 1941."

After the Germans captured the beach, the Allied soldiers were put to work burying their dead comrades. During the funeral service, Mr MacDonald found out just how ruthless the enemy could be. "Some ignorant person laughed when they began reading the service. The Germans asked for whoever it was to step out, and no-one did, so they opened up to the crowd with their machine pistols. "I ran for it - I don't know how many were killed."

The prisoners were then taken to a temporary camp at a stables near the canal. There, he witnessed another example of Nazi cruelty. All the British artillerymen present were called out, given picks and shovels and told to dig a trench. When they had finished, they were lined up alongside it and shot down. The other prisoners buried the artillerymen in the grave they had dug for themselves. To this day, Mr MacDonald does not know what, if any, grudge the Germans had against the artillerymen, or why they did it.

Soon after this the prisoners were put on a train and taken to a lice-infested prison camp at Salonika. From there, they set off on a forced march of more than 200 miles through snow and ice to meet another train. Mr MacDonald, who was barefoot for part of the march, and the other prisoners helped each other along, scavenging barrows and wagons for those who could not walk. He remembers Greek civilians helping them by giving them food and water. "The German guards would shoot them in cold blood - as soon as they had passed us a hunk of bread or a bottle of water, they would be lying dead on the ground. "The Greeks were marvellous people. If I went over there today, I don't think I would come home."

At the march's end the men were put into cattle wagons for the journey to the prison camp. "We were crammed in so thick you couldn't lie down; you couldn't even breathe sometimes. Along the way we managed to brew up some tea with a few leaves somebody had, that had been used so many times they were just about useless. When we couldn't use them anymore we smoked them."

The prisoners eventually arrived at a POW camp near the Austrian town of Wolfsberg. They were de-loused, and in many cases handed back different uniforms. Some men still had no footwear.

## Dying like flies

Several days later, thousands of Russian prisoners arrived at an adjacent camp. “We were told that they were soldiers, but we investigated and found out that they were civilians put into uniforms for propaganda purposes, to boost the prisoner counts,” Mr MacDonald said. “They were dying like flies of starvation and lice, which were literally eating them alive.

“The Germans forced a lot out chaps, including me, to go over at bayonet point to go through the Russian camp putting bodies into coffins and carting them off to be buried. We spent day and night collecting bodies. The coffins were just for looks - as soon as we were out of sight of the camp, we dumped all the bodies into a huge open grave.”

“The Germans gave us what protection they could from the lice, but it would break your heart to see those Russians starving. They begged food off us, and it was nothing to see a group of Russians working somewhere eating roots, just grabbing anything they could to survive. Getting enough food was a problem for the British and Commonwealth prisoners as well. We lived on a half-pint bowl of soup made from potato peelings a day, and a small loaf of bread between five men.”

When they went out in working parties, the men would scrounge food from the countryside. “We’d get potatoes, carrots, even cut up a pumpkin. You were very badly treated if you were caught bringing food back into camp, but we used to do it anyway: we shared it to keep ourselves alive. Some of the farms we worked on began to look out for their dogs, cats and birds after a while!”

Mr MacDonald was eventually made head cook at Stalag 18a in nearby Klagenfurt. He and his helpers had to make do with some meagre ingredients. Most of their meat came from dead horses brought back from the Russian front. The best cuts had already been taken by the Germans, and what was left was often crawling with maggots. The cooks boiled up bones, meat and maggots together and added offal, sugar beets, potato peelings from the German quarters and paprika to make a thick soup.

After a while, Red Cross parcels began to arrive. Mr Macdonald said they saved many men’s lives. “It wasn’t much, but it was something. Without parcels I don’t think half of those men would’ve made it. It all started when a couple of us got British supplies from sympathetic guards. We wondered where the hell it was coming from, until we found out that they were stealing the stuff from Red Cross parcels. After intervention from the red cross, the parcels started coming through. I still donate to them today, because I’m so very grateful of what they did for us.”

Some of the supplies in the parcels had other uses than eating. The prisoners traded the chocolate with guards and Austrian civilians for radio parts, and within several months they had built a radio to listen to the BBC news in the evenings. We kept up to date with how the war was going every night, and even listened to Lord Haw-Haw (British traitor William Joyce, who broadcast Nazi propaganda from Berlin). We had to be careful who knew about the radio, though; there was always someone who would try to curry favour with the guards. “Within no time the Germans did find out about the radio, but the prisoners made sure that it was dismantled and the parts hidden to avoid the frequent searches made to find it. Even the Red Cross parcels came under suspicion. “They were always taken apart before we got them, to look for hidden messages or tools.”

Mr MacDonald put himself into a routine to keep himself going during the time he spent in the camp. “I think I must have walked more miles there than I ever have in my life. I walked miles and miles around the compound every day just to keep my body going. “My way to survive was ‘don’t work for the enemy if you can help it’ - things like leaning on your shovel when the guard’s back was turned.”

## Six stone

With the work and poor diet, Mr MacDonald’s weight shrunk from 18 stone to just six stone. In 1944 the Germans formed the prisoners into work parties to work on farms in the area around the camp. Mr MacDonald lived on the farm with 11 other prisoners, including Canadians, Britons, Australians, and a guard. Working from 4am to 10pm, the group cut timber, tended cattle, worked in a vineyard and helped the farmer to make schnapps.

A combination of the schnapps and the host farmer’s good nature led to some interesting experiences.

“Some of the men would come back purple in the face after getting drunk on the Austrian’s homemade wine. One of the Aussies was shot one night when he was drunk and tried to be smart to a guard. He was shot in the leg, and I had to run six miles to the nearest farm to fetch an ambulance - luckily he lived.”

Mr MacDonald learnt to speak, German, and found out that starvation was a problem for the farmers, too. They were only allowed to keep a certain amount of the food they produced: the rest was confiscated by the Nazis, who used it to feed their troops or rationed it back to the farmers, along with the rest of the population. “The poor farmers couldn’t even kill a chicken without permission; God help them if they did. We helped out by letting them know when the odd deer wandered onto the property so they could shoot it, but they still had a pretty hard time. The Austrian people were very good, very understanding. It was hard to imagine that some of the Nazis came from there.”

As time went on and the tide of war turned against Germany, Mr MacDonald began preparing plans for escape. “I’d always felt that it was our duty to escape. We were aware that the Germans were planning to move us up towards the Russian front and saw that it was time to move.

Mr MacDonald, another New Zealander, a Canadian, a Scotsman and an Irishman were the first to go. “We got guns from the Germans and the farm and bided our time, then went for the weak spots. We were quite lucky that the people in the area got behind us.”

Mr MacDonald and his companions marched to a nearby prison camp, bailed up the guards and demanded that they surrender. Most of the guards had been called away to fight as the war with the Soviet Union picked up, and the skeleton garrison that was left surrendered.

After the prisoners were released, they headed west, towards the American lines. “Some of the guards put on British uniforms and tried to join us, but we soon spotted them. “After several days, the released prisoners ran into an American patrol. “It was a great sight,” Mr MacDonald recalled. “They took us back to their camp and gave us a massive feed of beef, potatoes and pudding. After so long without decent food, it was just too much.”

Because of their ability to speak German and knowledge of the area, Mr MacDonald and another prisoner were sent out with an American team to track down fleeing soldiers and guards. At that time a number of Hitler youth groups were continuing to fight against the Americans, attacking patrols and sabotaging equipment. Mr Macdonald helped to capture several of them.

“They were nasty little boys - worse than some of the guards. They would stick a knife in you soon as look at you.” At the end of it all, Mr MacDonald and his companion were asked to go back to the USA, in recognition of the good work they had done.

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They boarded a US transport plane at Klagenfurt and flew to Marseilles. They were due to fly to the USA via England from there, but a sharp-eyed military policeman spoiled their plans. "About a minute before we were due to take off for England, this MP comes on board and order us off, because we weren't US citizens. We virtually looked like Yanks - we'd picked up the accents after working with them, and we had the uniforms - but he did it anyway."

Mr MacDonald flew to England soon afterwards to be checked out and repatriated. After landing at Croydon, he was taken to Margate in Kent for a medical check-up before being put on the SS Mooltan for the journey back to New Zealand.

The soldiers arrived in Wellington in late December 1946 to a large public welcome. They were granted leave on arrival, but Mr MacDonald and the other South Islanders were called back to board the Tamahine for Lyttelton. It was Christmas time, and many of the civilian passengers were not happy about giving up their berths for the soldiers, but the captain made them, Mr MacDonald remembered.

## Family waiting

The Tamahine docked on December 23, and Mr MacDonald immediately caught a bus to Blenheim, where his relieved family was waiting to meet him.

"Even after I was reported missing in action, presumably dead, they never gave up hope."

A large crowd was on hand to greet the soldiers when they arrived home at 7pm on Christmas Eve - just in time for Christmas with their families.

For Mr MacDonald, homecoming was not so happy. After years of starvation, the sight of a huge meal waiting for him was too much. "He ran back out the door when he saw it," his sister, Annie Neame, recalled. "My father found him down by the river, crying."

Mr MacDonald attributes part of the problem to a stomach complaint he has suffered from since he was seriously injured when he was hit by a truck in England in 1940. After a medical examination on Christmas Day, he was declared medically unfit for further army service, and was discharged in 1949.

His brother Tangimoana also had a distinguished career during the war, fighting in the Pacific. Mr MacDonald has a close connection with another prisoner in Stalag 16a - George Landon-Lane, another Wairau Pa resident who joined the NZEF's Second Echelon. Mr MacDonald worked for Mr Landon-Lane for several years as a young man, and Mr Landon-Lane mentioned him in a book he wrote on his prison camp experience, Barbed Embrace.

Mr MacDonald said the war may have been over for nearly 50 years. But the experience of being a POW was something he would never forget. He now takes great pride in being a member of the Maori Battalion Association Wellington branch. The only other local member is Noel Sadd, who joined the battalion as a reinforcement later in the war.

His proudest moment was joining other Maori Battalion veterans from throughout New Zealand to go to Melbourne in 1989 for that city's Anzac Day parade. The men received a hero's welcome, and the memory still brings a lump to Mr MacDonald's throat.

Another source of pride for him is his army number, 1249, which he reckons to be the lowest of any Marlborough veteran. The Maori Battalion Association is going through a revival at the moment, seeking new members. "There are a few of us left, and we're dropping like flies, but we all look after each other," Mr Macdonald said "Returned men are largely a forgotten group."

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