**Pukeahu National War Memorial Park and the national memorialisation of New Zealand’s Military heritage: Stories from ten years as Chair of the National War Memorial Advisory Council**

**Introduction [Slide 1]**

**The National War Memorial Advisory Council**

I was appointed Chair of the National War Memorial Advisory Council in 2009.The Council is established under the National War Memorial Act 1992. Its principal function is to advise the Minister of Arts, Culture and Heritage on all matters pertaining to the National War Memorial; although today the advice is usually provided to the Ministry of Culture and Heritage or to the Minister through the Ministry. Membership of the council is:

* a person to be appointed by the Minister:
* Two appointed by the Minister on the recommendation of the RSA: (one of these is usually the current RSA National President)
* A senior serving or retired officer of the Defence Force to be appointed by the Minister on the recommendation of the Chief of Defence Force: (this is how I was appointed)
* The chief executive of the Ministry of Culture and Heritage; although more often than not a representative attends Council meetings.

Unsurprisingly, with the exception of the Ministry representative, the members are not paid for their contribution to the operation of the National War Memorial or Pukeahu National War Memorial Park.

**Pukeahu**

Pukeahu National War Memorial Park commemorates more than 300,000 New Zealanders who served their country and the 30,000 who died. It was the government’s key project to acknowledge the centenary of the First World War, and despite some challenges, it opened in time for Anzac Day 2015.

Here is the layout of the Park. **[SLIDE 2]**

The initial planning for the Park, included elements that were shaped by the ‘social history’ focus of the historians involved. They wanted memorials to conscientious objectors, to strikers, as well as other civilian groups. And, throughout the planning, there was a regular push for a New Zealand Wars Memorial, in a prominent position at the Tory Street entrance.

The National War Memorial is located at the spiritual core of the Park. It has four elements of which three, the Carillon and the Hall of Memories, and the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior, are the most important. The fourth element, standing to the west of the Tomb, is to my mind a disruption to the formal and elegant lines of the other three elements. It is the so-called *‘The Man with the Donkey’* – more on this later on.

**The National War Memorial**

More than 18,000 New Zealand soldiers died in the First World War, and most were buried overseas. This was a immense and traumatic number of losses for a small country, and the families and friends of those who died, had no graves at which to grieve their loved ones.

In 1919 the government approved that £100,000 be set aside for the building of a national memorial in Wellington. It was to be built in a position where it would *‘be visible from any part of the city and from ships entering the harbour’.* In his Budget speech, Minister of Finance James Allen said: *’we can and ought to do something to perpetuate the memory of the men and women who gave their lives for the benefit of those of us who remain to share in the blessings to be enjoyed from what we hope may prove to be a lasting peace.’* **[SLIDE 3]**

However, I am unconvinced there is absolute clarity about the fundamental purpose of the NWM – and this touches on the question of whether with our War Memorials we are honouring only sacrifice to the exclusion of service – or are they honouring both. Here are two plaques at the front of the National War Memorial building that make this point. It’s worth noting that about 140,000 men and women were dispatched overseas to serve in fighting formations during the Second World War – of these, just under 12,000 were killed.

**[SLIDE 4]**

The Carillon was finally opened thirteen years later by Governor-General Lord Bledisloe on Anzac Day, 25 April 1932, in front of more than 50,000 people. **[SLIDE 5]**

Although the Hall of Memories adjacent to the carillon tower was part of the original design, it wasn’t to be completed for another thirty-two years – opening in 1964.

On Armistice Day, 11 November 2004, New Zealand’s Unknown Warrior was interred in front of the carillon after being brought home from Longueval, in northern France, where he had been killed in the First World War.

**The Carillon**

Today, the 74 bells of the Carillon, weighing over 70 tonnes, constitute a musical instrument which is played by a keyboard. The Carillon in the National War Memorial is the third largest such instrument in the world. **[SLIDE 6]**

Among the bells are those named after the grand philosophies that have shaped this country’s path into its wars in foreign fields, sustained its commitment during them, and provided a light to guide its navigation through the delicate state of affairs we call peace. These bells include the Aroha(Grace), Tūmanako(Hope) and Rangimārie(Peace) bells.

However, those bells ‘philosophical bells’, are outnumbered by the bells with names that mark the bloody battles of the First World War, and the names of those killed in those battles. At the time of its dedication, the Carillon had only 49 bells. They were provided by private donations – and are inscribed with the names of military services, units and particular battles. Among them there are 33 bells with the names of individuals etched upon them - donated by the next-of-kin of men killed in the War. I would like to talk about just five of these 33 bells to provide a sense of the tragedy and despair of war.

**The first bell of these bells is named ‘Suvla Bay’.**

Suvla Bay, to the north of Anzac Cove, was the site of a British amphibious landing on the night of 6 August 1915. The landings were part of the so-called ‘August Offensive’ - the final British attempt to break the deadlock of the Battle of Gallipoli. When it failed, activity at Suvla subsided into sporadic fighting, until the British withdrew in late December.

The inscription on this bell is:

*‘In Memory of Henry Barnard and Charles Valentine Barnard.*

*Given by their Mother,*

*Helena M. Barnard’*

Henry Barnard was 25 years old when he was killed on 12 August 1915. A Press report at the time of his brother Charles’ death in France, just over two years later, on 25 November 1917, read:

*‘News has been received of the death in action of Rifleman Charles V BARNARD, who was one of a family of fighting men. Six of the eight brothers composing the family have been or are on active service and the head of the family, Mr H J Barnard, is employed in the Defence Dept in Wellington. Of the brothers, two have been killed, two invalided home severely wounded, and two are still fighting. The late Rifleman Barnard was just 21 years of age at the time of his death….’*

**The second bell is not named.** It does, however, have an inscription:

*‘In Memory of Watkin Eldridge Lewis, Tom Eldridge Lewis,*

*and Samuel Eldridge Lewis.*

*Given by their Sisters and Brothers’*

Of the three brothers, Watkin was killed at Gallipoli on 8 August 1915. Tom died of wounds just one day after him - ‘*at sea off Gallipoli’*.

Their brother Samuel, was killed during the Battle of Colincamps on the Somme on 5 April 1918 - as the Germans *‘made a last desperate effort* (as part of Operation Michael)*to open the road to Amiens’ –* and beyond to the Channel Ports. He was 35 years old.

**The third bell is named ‘*Hebuterne* ‘.** Hebuterne is a farming village situated 15 miles southwest of the town of Arras(well-known in a World War 1 context for its tunnels) and about two miles north of Colincamps. For most of the First World War, Hebuterne was in the front line of the Western Front.

The inscription on this bell reads:

*‘In Memory of Raymond Shirley McHardie, Clarence Vivian McHardie,*

*And Cyril James McHardie.*

*Given by their Father: James McHardie’*

Raymond McHardie was killed in Belgium on 12 October 1917. Cyril was killed in France – almost three years after leaving New Zealand - on 22 May 1918.

As to their brother Corporal Clarence McHardie, his obituary reads:

‘*In loving memory of Clarence Vivian McHardie(Clarry) who was accidentally killed at Ashburton on the night of 27th February, 1923, in his 29th year….*

*Who would have thought who saw him that day*

*So light was his footstep, so bright was his eye?*

*At eventide God took his beautiful flower,*

*Ah, who would have thought how soon he must die?*

*None knew him but to love him,*

*None mentioned his name but to praise.*

*Inserted by his father, brother Lance, and Rhoda.’*

Clarence McHardie was on his way to his wedding when he was killed.

**The fourth bell dispels any myth that all of those who died in the service of this country in the First World War were of what may be characterised as ‘of British stock’. It is inscribed with the name ‘*Krithia’.***

The village of Krithia – about six kilometres north of Cape Helles at the southern tip of the Gallipoli Peninsula, sits at a point at which the Peninsular is about three and a half miles across. It was a key feature for the Allied Forces to take if they were to capture the neighbouring hill and so able to advance up the Gallipoli peninsula to the forts that controlled passage of the Dardanelles Straits.

Below the name Krithia is written:

*‘In Memory of Ateo Frandi.*

*Given by his Sister.’*

Ateo Frandi was born in Pisa in Italy in 1873 and, before answering the call to arms, he was a piano tuner in Wellington. He was 41 years old and single when he was killed on 8 May 1915 during the second battle of Krithia.

A newspaper at the time of his death reported, ‘Captain *Ateo Frandi, whose death in action at the front, was announced yesterday, came of a fighting stock. His father was a member of Garibaldi’s Army and fought in several battles, the last in 1866. Two of the Garibaldi’s sons are now fighting in the Dardanelles, and a youth is going to the front with reinforcements.’*

Of the other brothers of this family who served in the Army – two were wounded in action in France.

**The fifth bell is named ‘Flanders Fields’** and the inscription is:

*‘In Ever Loving Remembrance of Leslie Heron’*

*Only son of Harold and Annie Burnell Beauchamp*

Leslie Heron Beauchamp was the son of Sir Harold Beauchamp and Lady Beauchamp – and the brother of Katherine Mansfield. He was killed in France on 6 October 1915 while giving instruction in the use of hand grenades. One exploded in his hand and killed him – he was 21 years old.

Katherine Mansfield's life and work were changed by his death, and in a poem describing a dream she had shortly after he died, she wrote:

*‘By the remembered stream my brother stands*

*Waiting for me with berries in his hands...*

*"These are my body. Sister, take and eat.’*

These bells, and their companions, tell stories from a war fought far from our shores. In their tolling and their silence, they are reminiscent of the so-called ‘war to end war’ that started with the patriotic tinkle of music but ended with the dark silence of people contemplating its bloody cost.

**The Hall of Memories [SLIDE 7]**

After the Carillon was built, construction of the Hall of Memories was put on hold because of the economic depression of the 1930s, and then because of the Second World War. In 1955, the government set out to build a ‘simple but dignified’ building as a memorial for New Zealand’s war dead. This was seen as increasingly important to meet public expectations of memorialising war, following the Second World War and the Korean War.

Following several construction setbacks, the Hall of Memories was finally unveiled by Governor-General Sir Bernard Fergusson and Prime Minister Keith Holyoake on 5 April 1964.

**[SLIDE 8]**

Given the dominant role of the Army in the two World Wars, and the substantial cost it paid in its fighting, it is understandable that as the bells are dominated by Army stories, so too does the Army’s presence dominate the Hall of Memories.

At the northern end, the entrance point, is the Roll of Honour – contained in four books inside which are the names of the almost 30,000 New Zealanders killed in the country’s overseas wars; two books each in a cabinet either side of the entrance. Unlike in Australia, where they are relegated to the Roll of Remembrance with its solely civilian names, New Zealand’s Roll of Honour includes the names of Merchant Navy seafarers killed in both World Wars; although it’s very unlikely the list of names includes all of those killed in the two World Wars.

Among the saddest names in the Roll of Honour, I think, are those of Lance Corporal Rory Malone, killed in Afghanistan in 2012, and, Lieutenant-Colonel William George Malone, his great-great grandfather, who was killed at Gallipoli in 1915.

Six recesses, or mini-chapels, flank each side of the hall. Each has its own dedicated plaque of remembrance to the Army, Navy, Air Force and Merchant Navy. Six alcoves flank both sides of the Hall of Memories. All six on the eastern side acknowledge the Army. On the other side, there are two for the Navy, one for the Merchant Navy and three for the Air Force. Four alcoves, in the corners, also contain mounted wall plaques commemorating the conflicts in South Africa, Korea, Malaya and Vietnam. What is notable about this arrangement is that ‘Malaya’ references The Malayan Emergency which was from 1948 to 1960. When New Zealand became involved in Confrontation, 1964 to 1966, the country was called Malaysia. Worthy of further note is that there is no visible record of New Zealand’s military endeavours overseas post the Vietnam War – with the exception of some names in the Roll of Honour.

On the eastern side is a three-panelled Māori carving known as Tāhiwi. This was presented by Gallipoli veterans in honour of the Māori Pioneer Battalion of the First World War.

At the southern end is the sanctuary – at its central point stands Lyndon Smith's statue ‘*Mother and Children’ –* a statue depicting a wartime family giving one another comfort and hope in the absence of loved ones overseas. When Hilary Clinton laid a wreath in the Hall, during a visit as the US Secretary of State, she remarked that it was the most surprising and poignant statue she had seen in a War Memorial setting.

**[SLIDE 9]**

**Two ‘Flag’ stories**

**Tomb of the Unknown Warrior [SLIDE 10]**

The Hall of Memories and the Carillon are starkly British and Christian in their approach to memorialisation, as obviously evident in their design. However, the pohutukawa trees that frame them, position them firmly in New Zealand. And this transition from a solely British approach to more obvious uniquely New Zealand one, can be seen in the design of the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior | He toa matangaro and the aspirations of its designer who said:

*‘[The] tomb is an expression of the nation’s memory and a cross cultural language of remembrance [that] combines Maori and Pakeha ritual, symbolic, and visual elements…to express remembrance specific to New Zealand’s contemporary identity.’*

On 11 November 2004, after a service at St Paul's Anglican Cathedral and a 2.85 km slow march procession through the streets of Wellington, lined by about 100,000 people. The Tomb was sealed with a bronze mantel at 3:59pm. That march took a long time to complete and I still recall it well.

The base of the tomb is black granite inlaid with light grey Tākaka marble crosses. The crosses represent the companions he leaves behind, who also died in service of their country, but they are also symbolic of a star-laden sky, signifying the distance he has travelled to foreign lands.

Engraved around the base of the tomb is text of a karanga in both Māori and English, calling the warrior back to his homeland. A cloak of bronze, decorated with four inlaid pounamu crosses, alludes to the New Zealand flag.

**The Man with the Donkey [SLIDE 11]**

A bronze sculpture ‘The Man with the Donkey’ is a ‘tribute to all medical personnel, stretcher bearers and ambulance drivers who served alongside New Zealand troops in wartime’. Commissioned by the RSA, with sponsorship from Oceanic Life, it was unveiled by Henderson's son Ross on 20 April 1990. It is an anomaly in the National War Memorial precinct and, in my view, should not be there.

**Some of the memorials in the Park**

The memorials in the Park are supposedly provided by and recognise countries with which New Zealand has a long and close connection – the military thread being just one part of that connection. Consequently, the memorials define New Zealand’s [place in the world and our national view of that place. And, in this context, what is striking to me is that there is not a single memorial from an Asia country and the Pacific Memorial sits in isolation on the Park’s eastern flank.

Thinking about the memorials I would occasionally reflect on how far the sprit of reconciliation will take us towards German and Japanese memorials of come kind.

**[SLIDE 12]**

The German Government did present a memorial tapestry to New Zealand in 2017. As part of his visit to the National War Memorial in November of that year, the German President unveiled the tapestry gifted to New Zealand on behalf of the people of Germany. The tapestry, titled 'Flandern' (Flanders in English), is part of a series based on photographs of 14 First World War battlefield sites. Artist Stephan Schenk who was present at the unveiling explained how the work was a '"reminder of the untold misery and horror and was created to remember the victims of this inconceivable catastrophe of the twentieth century." It now hangs in the Parliament Buildings.

As to the Japanese, in 2014 a ceremony was held at the National War Memorial to honour seventeen New Zealand Coastwatchers beheaded by the Japanese during the Second World War. At the same time Massey University was hosting a Japanese ceramics exhibition in the old Dominion Museum building behind the Memorial. Signs advertising the exhibition were attached to lamp posts on the road adjacent to the Memorial and we asked the University to remove them on the day of the ceremony – which was done.

**The Australian Memorial [SLIDE 13]**

The Australian Memorial was the first memorial in the Park. It consists of fifteen rugged red sandstone columns represent the heart of Australia, the 'red centre, symbolised by Uluru / Ayers Rock. Each column stands on a band of the same red stone, between them bands of grey stone symbolise the New Zealand landscape: the interweaving is a perpetual reminder of the united destiny of the two nations. Inscribed on the black granite insets of seven columns are the names of the theatres and operations in which Australians and New Zealanders have served alongside each other. The central column is inscribed with the word ‘Anzac’.

Ironically, the sandstone comes not from Australia, as was originally envisaged, but from India.

The dedication of the Australian Memorial took place on 20 April 2015 in the presence of Tony Abbott, the then Prime Minister of Australia, and John Key.

**The United Kingdon Memorial [SLIDE 14]**

On 24 July 2017 the UK Memorial at Pukeahu National War Memorial Park was unveiled by visiting Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Boris Johnson; the third overseas memorial to be unveiled.

It represents the trunks of a Royal Oak and a Pōhutukawa intertwined to form one single leafy canopy, where leaves from both trees merge to create sense of shelter - giving the memorial its name: Whakaruruhau. Standing at the plaque, between the branches a silhouette of a single soldier can be seen, representing the union of two countries who stood side by side in two World Wars, and those millions who served in times of conflict, resolution and peace.

The Weta Workshop-designed and built sculpture was 13,000 hours and four years in the making.

**The Pacific Islands Memorial [SLIDE 15]**

Te Reo Hotunui o Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa, the Pacific Islands Memorial, represents New Zealand’s enduring friendship with the Pacific Islands and the service of Pacific Islanders in support of New Zealand in the two World Wars and later conflicts.

The design depicts a bronze conch shell, a symbol deeply rooted in Pacific cultures, which has a patina finish with remembrance poppies. It recalls the conch shell left in the Arras Tunnels by Kuki Airani (Cook Island) soldiers of the New Zealand Tunnelling Company and the New Zealand (Māori) Pioneer Battalion, who were stationed beneath the town of Arras during 1916 to 1918.

New Zealand loudly proclaims its status as a Pacific country, promotes an intimate and unique relationship with the smaller countries of the Pacific, and yet this memorial, out on the eastern margin of the Park, was unveiled six years after the Australian Memorial, on 27 March 2021, and was the eighth international monument at Pukeahu.

**Some final reflections**

Memorialisation is the process of remembering the past in a public way and in a particular context. In the case of our military heritage and at Pukeahu, it is about remembering our wars and conflicts overseas and those New Zealanders who served in them – and those who were killed in them.

At the centre of war memorialisation in New Zealand is The Ode of Remembrance – the words of which are specifically addressed by those ‘who shall not grow old as we that are left grow old’. And yet, many more New Zealanders completed their wars, cam home, and were ‘wearied by age’ – and some of them ‘were condemned by the years.’

Each year, the Veterans of the wars commemorated at the National War Memorial become fewer. The Anzac Day Dawn Service sees only a few Veterans on parade, and at the Korean, Malaya/Malaysia and Vietnam commemorative ceremonies just a small number of Veterans turn up. And, there are no discrete ceremonies to acknowledge the multitude of overseas deployments since Vietnam.

The future may well be that the National War Memorial and the Park will become the venue for wreath laying ceremonies with the sole function of ticking the government’s ‘we will remember them’ box.