Today I would like to pause and pay our respects to:

7864 Sapper George Boderick

George, a dedicated carpenter from 241 Tinakori Road, Wellington, New Zealand, enlisted in the New Zealand Army in October 1939. Initially assigned to the 27th Machine Gun Battalion (27 MG Bn), Headquarters Company, George underwent training at Burnham before embarking on his overseas journey with the First Echelon aboard the Sobieski in January 1940.

Although George missed the Battle of Crete, he soon transferred to the 5 Field Park Company, where he utilized his carpentry skills in the workshops section of this engineering unit. The unit trained near Suez until late 1941, preparing for their role in the upcoming North African Campaign.

George’s first significant combat experience was during Operation Crusader. Throughout this operation, he narrowly escaped being killed, wounded, or captured on several occasions.

George was also an avid rugby player and played as a half back in the renowned 2nd New Zealand Division inter-unit rugby tournament just prior to the Crusader offensive.

On November 10, 1941, George and the 5 Field Park Company moved to the Libyan border with Egypt, supporting Operation Crusader alongside the 4th NZ Brigade in its advance to Belhamed.

His diary entries from November 23, known as the Sunday of the Dead, describe his company's first encounter with intense German artillery fire. The following day, a close friend of George’s was wounded by shrapnel as the shelling increased.

The advance continued, and on November 25, a German Luftwaffe air strike damaged the company’s trucks and killed their mascot, a small dog named ‘Captain Box Girder’.

The next day, George and his comrades constructed a POW cage that eventually housed nearly 1,000 captured enemy soldiers. His diary notes, *“On guard over Jerry prisoners and a few hundred came along. Then got orders to take over some infantry company lines.”* This reassignment proved fortuitous as the guards of the POW cage were later captured by Axis forces.

As the 5 Field Park Company was repurposed as infantry to replace the 19th Battalion, George found himself in a moment of unexpected glory. When a group of German tanks and trucks, mistaken for South African units, approached their lines, one sapper boldly threw grenades, causing the tanks and trucks to retreat. One Panzer III tank was captured during this encounter. George’s diary recounts, *“Stand to at 6 and some Jerry tanks came along only a few yards from us. Thought we would have to fight but the tanks must have been lost and cleared off as soon as they know we were here. One tank broke down and the boys captured it - nine prisoners taken as well as trucks.”*

The fortunes of Operation Crusader shifted dramatically at Sidi Rezegh and Belhamed, prompting a withdrawal to Egypt for the 5 Field Park Company in early December.

Following the operation, George and the 2nd NZ Division were deployed to Syria. They returned to the desert in mid-1942 to counter Rommel's advance through Africa, participating in key battles such as the breakout at Minqar Qa'im and the decisive Battle of El Alamein.

George returned to New Zealand in 1943 on the Ruapehu Furlough.

In 1948, he married Mary Patricia O'Shaughnessy, and together they started a family. He continued his work as a carpenter in the Wellington region until his passing.

George Boderick passed away on 1st July 2002 at the age of 85, leaving behind a legacy of service and resilience.

He has been laid to rest Porirua Cemetery, Porirua City, Wellington.

RIP George

Thank you for your service

E kore warewaretia

Will never forget.