

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

555423 Capt. Dan **Calwell**

Born in Christchurch on 22nd November 1913 to Rachel (née McCammon) and William Arthur Calwell, Dan's early years were shaped by his father's career as a police constable, which took the family to Otira. It was there that his sister, Roa, was born in 1921.

His aptitude for engineering was evident from a young age. Excelling in arithmetic and mathematics at Greymouth Technical School, he later attended Christchurch Boys' High School and pursued engineering studies by correspondence. His commitment to learning led him to pass the first professional exams for the Associate Member of the Institute of Civil Engineers (A.M.I.C.E.), and he began his career as an Engineer Cadet with the Greymouth Harbour Board.

On 27th December 1938, Dan married the love of his life, Florence Louise Opie. Soon after, they embarked on an adventure, leaving New Zealand on 1st May 1939 for Fiji, where Dan took up a two-year appointment as an Assistant Civil Engineer with the British Colonial Government. When the Second World War escalated, his expertise was called upon, and he served as Assistant Director of Civil Engineering for Kiwi Force, tasked with constructing defences and airfields for the protection of the Pacific.

In 1941, the Calwells returned to New Zealand, where Dan joined the Wellington Harbour Board. Settling in Plimmerton, Dan balanced professional responsibilities with a growing family.

His military service continued in 1945 when he was called up, initially joining the 16th Reinforcements. However, due to his family situation, he was reassigned to the Featherston Prisoner of War Camp and later transferred to the 35th Army Troop, where he applied his engineering skills to vital survey work.

Dan's leadership qualities saw him promoted to Temporary Corporal and attached to the 10th Coastal Regiment. His service culminated in an Officer Cadet Training Course, after which he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant.

On 8th July 1946, he flew to Japan as part of Jayforce, where he played a pivotal role in the post-war restoration efforts. His expertise in engineering and surveying proved invaluable in rebuilding ports and civilian infrastructure. He was promoted to Temporary Captain while serving as a Works Officer.

Despite a call for his return when Florence and their children fell ill with scarlet fever and mumps, the army determined that Dan should complete his assignment. He returned home on 6th July 1947, was made Acting Captain, and was ultimately placed in the Reserve of Officers with the rank of Captain upon his discharge on 7th August 1947.

Dan's professional career continued to flourish when, in 1948, he took up the role of Harbour Engineer for the Nelson Harbour Board. Over three decades, his visionary leadership transformed Nelson's port and harbour. Through extensive deepening of the harbour entrance, construction of new wharves, and a 50-hectare reclamation, he turned the port into an industrial and transport hub, earning him the well-deserved title of *'The Man Who Built the Port.'*

After a lifetime of dedication, Dan and Florence retired in the late 1970s, moving from Nelson to Waikanae on the Kapiti Coast. They shared many happy years together until Florence's passing on 24th April 2001. She was laid to rest in Waikanae Cemetery.

Following Florence's passing, Dan relocated to Auckland to be closer to his sons.

On 23rd February 2015, at the extraordinary age of 101, Dan passed away. He was laid to rest beside Waikanae Cemetery, Waikanae, Kapiti Coast District, Public Cremation Garden B/ Row AGB/ Plot 60.

RIP Dan

Thank you for your service

E kore e warewaretia

Will never forget.