

BIRKENHEAD HERITAGE

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EVENTS

ANZAC Parade 2023 passes Farrington House



After the ANZAC Service at the War Memorial Park many families and senior members were welcomed in to view the many collections at Farrington House Museum

Sat. 13th May – 2 pm 44 Mahara Ave. at Farrington House Museum
Lee Urquhart – Auckland Historical Bottle & Collectibles Club member
Presents - Bottles of Birkenhead.

Sat. 10th June – 2 pm St Andrews Church 72 Hinemoa St. Birkenhead
Annual General Meeting 2pm / 2:30pm David Verran Presents –
Birkenhead Brass Bands Entry: Members \$2: non-members \$5 for hall hire.

Our appreciation for sponsoring printing to

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Farrington House Museum, 44 Mahara Ave
Opens 2-4pm 2nd & 4th Sundays:

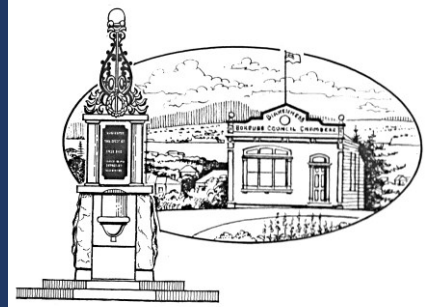
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May - June
2023

‘We will remember them’
- ANZAC DAY -

My father’s service medals provide a permanent reminder of his long active service during World War II. Called to report for Service at the outbreak of war, he was a member of the NZ Naval Volunteer Reserve. After 9 years of part time training he was close to completing his final three year term, and to be married. He spent his last few years here in Birkenhead, having written his memories of his War Service, published just before he died, and his 93rd Birthday in 2005.

Top: Black hat band ‘R.N.V.R., a crown & anchor symbol, New Zealand’ – printed in gold. Below hat band: L) Gold cap badge with white anchor, off Tropical Helmet (Petty Officer). Identity tags: 1st Name and home location: 2nd Wife’s name and address: Small black metal item, hot shrapnel picked up in Charing Cross Rd. London during air raid, 1941: Tie-glide with ‘ER II’ & crown symbol (post-war): NZNVR badge: Well-worn Neck Tag – name, no. & religion.



**Medals: Atlantic Star, Italy Star & 1939-1945 Star ‘For Service At Sea’
R.N.V.R. 10yrs. Long Service medal (with green, gold, green ribbon)
The Defence of Britain Medal: British War Medal and NZ War Medal.
Miniatures below, and material tags similar to the medal ribbons.**

World War II Service

James Ian Johnston 1940-1946

Father of the Editor, a brief summary.

Mobilised 16.3.1940. NZ Naval Draft 2nd Echelon, N.Z. Army Troopship *Aquitania*, **2.5.1940** sailed from Wellington via Australia, Indian Ocean, Suez Canal closed diverted via Cape Town, Sierra Leone W. Africa, to Greenock, Scotland **10.6.1940.**

Orders: Report to *HMS St. Vincent Naval Barracks*, Portsmouth to **Aug 1940.**

Served in the North Atlantic as Petty Officer, then Chief Quartermaster on Convoy Escort 17.8.1940 – 15.10.1941 (14mths.) on a converted merchant ship as a cruiser, *H.M.S. Alynbank*, based at Scapa Flow Orkney Islands, ship was rammed once, hit by a bomb which did not explode – removed by experts after careful return to docks.

Transferred to Minesweeper T155 *Inchkeith*, at Aberdeen Nov. 1941 with N.Z 1st Lt. Wilfred Becket – who he knew previously in Wellington, (later of Takapuna) - on sea trials/exercises with a submarine, then escort duties.

Ordered to Gourock early March 1942, the *Inchkeith*, joined by 3 sister ships to deliver to NZ. leaving 15.3.1942. Crossed Atlantic to Newfoundland, to Caribbean Sea ports, Panama, Long Beach Los Angeles, and Hawaii for coal refuelling at each port. Berthed Auckland, Devonport Naval Dockyard, 4.8.1942.

Two weeks leave with wife and son, (bn Dec. 1940), a period at Devonport Base; **5mths. at Worsler Bay Mine Station, Wellington** with his family nearby. Called to naval office for new orders, short leave then on 4th Oct. 1943 sailed from Wellington on *H.T. Nieuw Amsterdam* to San Francisco, train to New York, *Queen Mary* to the UK, for further officer training. Arrived Firth of Clyde, Scotland **2nd Nov 1943.** To **Royal Naval Barracks, Portsmouth**, then **King Alfred at Hove (Brighton)** for mine sweeping, various bases for signals, boat handling etc. for officer training. He graduated from all courses with 32 others (out of 80).

Next appointment as 1st Lieutenant, drafted to the **Mediterranean 1944 to end of WWII** on minesweepers (identified by numbers) based in Naples, Genoa, Sardinia and Corsica. After peace was declared **2.9.1945** the mines laid in Italian ports still had to be cleared and reported safe by the British Navy before Lloyds would insure any ships. During this on going service on minesweepers one boat in their fleet was blown up just ahead as they returned to their berths – killing instantly 27 Naval personnel. Returned to UK Dec. 1945 and finally sailed from Tilbury, UK for NZ on a 'brides ship' (which banned alcohol onboard) **arriving 6.4.1946,** to his son now over 5yrs. and daughter born Jan.1944, 15mths. old and his wife – to adjust to life with a family. He found his previous position had been filled by earlier returned servicemen. A difficult time of adjustment for families.

Original sites of local paha/pa beside the Waitemata Harbour

William Francis Hammond, surveyor, early resident with his second wife and family settled in Birkenhead in the early 1880's, his home and property was named Ravenhill. He helped establish community facilities – access across Little Shoal Bay, the first Birkenhead wharf, and designed the 1st Octagonal church at Zion Hill. In 1903 he laid aside his theodolite and recorded his observations on early Maori sites he remembered...

“Thirty years ago the chief population comprised a Maori settlement on the south side of Hellyers Creek, where I saw whares dotted about on cultivated plots, reaching from where the new (Beach Haven) wharf is situated to the chief's whare on the hill at the source of the creek. I was camped amongst them on a survey..., whence kauri was being floated out. I was told that 3 paha had been established by original tribes fronting the Waitemata Harbour (Shining Waters) viz.. Stoke's Point (Te Onewa Pa, Northcote Point); and the Hole in the rock, both commanding Little Shoal Bay as well as the channel; the third 3rd. at the mouth of Hellyers Creek (Tupo, the Devil's Back), which was strongly guarded as a final station of resistance against invaders from outlying islands to prevent their landing and becoming hostile.” Source Bugle 21.11.1959 – taken from the original survey map in 1887: copy held in BHS archives.

NB He omitted Kauri Point Pa; Te Matarae-a-mana (meaning Mana's Brow or Headland – for Chief Te Mana) above the cliffs at the east end of Rongohau [Kendall Bay]. Ed.)



‘Needles Eye’ Little Shoal Bay - 1910

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Visitors to Farrington House enquire where this is? – Needle's Eye Reserve is at the end of Awanui Rd, Birkenhead, the ‘Eye’ has eroded and the rocks L) now stand alone from the cliff.