70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF EL ALAMEIN

New Zealand National Service

Friday 19 October, 2012
El Alamein Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery
OFFICIAL PARTY ARRIVES

The Alert
*Private Thomas Baker, NZ Army Band*

KARANGA AND MAIMAI AROHA

The New Zealand Defence Force Māori Cultural Group

*Members of the official party are shown to their seats*

*Please be seated*

INTRODUCTION

*Chaplain Class One Lance Lukin, QHC*

*Principal Chaplain, New Zealand Defence Force*

OPENING PRAYER

In the Book of Ecclesiastes, Chapter 3, it says:

> There is a time for everything,
> and a season for every activity under the heavens:
> a time to be born and a time to die,
> a time to plant and a time to uproot,
> a time to kill and a time to heal,
> a time to tear down and a time to build,
> a time to weep and a time to laugh,
> a time to mourn and a time to dance,
> a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
> a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
> a time to search and a time to give up,
> a time to keep and a time to throw away,
> a time to tear and a time to mend,
> a time to be silent and a time to speak,
> a time to love and a time to hate,
> a time for war and a time for peace.
Today we gather for a time of remembrance, for a time of thanksgiving. We gather around the graves of our own, to give thanks, to those who have gone before us, to acknowledge the sacrifices made, and to pause and give thanks for the service given on behalf of a grateful nation.

We gather to pay our respects, and to dedicate ourselves once more to the ideals of justice and peace that were fought for across these sands, and across the many battlefields of war.

We gather together before God, with thankful hearts.

CALL TO REMEMBRANCE

His Excellency Mr David Strachan
New Zealand Ambassador to Egypt

We are gathered here today to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the second Battle of El Alamein, which was the climax of the North African campaign. In September 1942, after a summer of heavy fighting that had taken a heavy toll on both sides, the Axis forces under Field Marshal Erwin Rommel faced the British 8th Army, which included forces from Australia, India, New Zealand, South Africa and Greece along the Alamein line. The newly-arrived commander of the 8th Army, Lieutenant General Sir Bernard Montgomery, was determined to inflict a crushing defeat of such magnitude that the German and Italian forces would never be able to regain the initiative in North Africa.

At 9:40pm on 23 October 1942 the dark desert sky was torn asunder when 900 guns of the 8th Army opened the tremendous barrage that signalled the beginning of the Second Battle of El Alamein. Twenty minutes later the infantry assault by the New Zealand and three other divisions commenced.
Over the next week there was costly bitter fighting, but Rommel’s reserves were largely exhausted. The time was ripe for a decisive attack. Montgomery chose to switch his effort to the south of the battle line. On 2 November, in an operation codenamed Supercharge, elements of the 8th Army spearheaded by the New Zealand Division, which had been reinforced by two more British brigades, attacked in a south-westerly direction. In desperate fighting the Allies penetrated the enemy’s formidable defences.

The Axis forces were now in a desperate situation and embarked on a wholesale retreat that would eventually see them driven out of North Africa. The victory at Alamein was not gained easily or cheaply. The Allies had suffered nearly 14,000 casualties including 1,700 New Zealanders. During the course of the whole Battle for Egypt between 20 June and 21 November 1942 the New Zealand Division suffered more than 7,000 casualties, including more than 1,300 dead.

**COMMEMORATIVE ADDRESS**

*Hon Dr Jonathan Coleman*

*Minister of Defence*

*Please stand*

**HYMN**

*Whakaaria mai*

Whakaaria mai  
Tōu āripeka ki au  
Tīaho mai  
Rā roto i te pō  
Hei kōna au  
Titiro atu ai  
Ora mate  
Hei au koe noho ai
Oh Lord my God,
When I in awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds
Thy hands have made
I see the stars
I hear the rolling thunder
Thy power throughout
The universe displayed

Then sings my soul
My saviour God to thee
How great thou art
How great thou art

Whakaaria mai
Tōu ōripēka ki au
Tiaho mai
Rā roto i te pō
Hei kōna au
Titiro atū ai
Ora mate
Hei au koe noho ai

Please be seated

ORAL HISTORY READING

Major General Timothy Keating, MNZM
Chief of Army

Extract from Report on Experience by John Mulgan

I met the New Zealanders again, in the desert below Ruweisat Ridge, the summer of 1942. It was like coming home. They carried New Zealand with them across the sands of Libya.

They were mature men, these New Zealanders of the desert, quiet and shrewd and sceptical... Moving in a body, detached from their homeland,
they remained quiet and aloof and self-contained. They had confidence in themselves, such as New Zealanders rarely have, knowing themselves as good as the best the world could bring against them, like a football team in a more deadly game, coherent, practical, successful... perhaps to have produced these men for this one time would be New Zealand’s destiny. Everything that was good from that small, remote country had gone into them -- sunshine and strength, good sense, patience, the versatility of practical man...and they marched into history.

READING

Mr Watt McEwan  
Veteran of the North African Campaign

Psalm 91 (selected verses) This is known as the ‘Soldier’s Psalm’

Live under the protection of God Most High  
and stay in the shadow of God Almighty.  
Then you will say to the Lord, “You are my fortress,  
my place of safety; you are my God, and I trust you”.  
The Lord will keep you safe...  
He will spread his wings over you and keep you secure...  
You won’t need to worry about dangers at night  
or arrows during the day.  
You will not be harmed, though thousands fall all around you.  
The Lord Most High is your fortress.  
Run to him for safety,  
and no terrible disasters will strike you or your home.  
God will command his angels to protect you  
wherever you go.  
They will carry you in their arms,  
And you won’t hurt your feet on the stones.  
The Lord says, “If you love me and really know who I am,  
I will rescue you and keep you safe.  
When you are in trouble, call out to me.  
I will answer and be there to protect and honour you”.
READING “A SOLDIER’S POEM”

Cadet Warrant Officer Class Two Brittany Philps

Extract from Sidi Rezegh by Donald McDonald

But this is the Desert -- Earth’s bones to the old sun lying,
A fit place this for the ancient passions’ burning;
And men who were children in sweet green lands are dying,
Bone of their bodies to bone of the Earth returning.

WREATH LAYING

Official representatives to lay wreaths

Hon Dr Jonathan Coleman
On behalf of the Government and people of New Zealand

Mr Stewart Frame, DFC, together with Cadet Warrant Officer Class Two Brittany Philps
On behalf of the Veterans

Mr Robert Gillies, together with Cadet Under Officer Gareth Shaw
On behalf of the 28th Māori Battalion Association

Major General Timothy Keating, MNZM
On behalf of the New Zealand Defence Force
PRAYERS FOR PEACE

Chaplain Class One Lance Lukin, QHC

A prayer for peace
Gracious God,
As we gather in this place, which is in itself an ever present reminder of the grim realities of war, we pray for peace in our world. Prosper the efforts of all those who have laboured through the ages to bring understanding and reconciliation between nations, that all people may learn to live peaceably together, to the honour of your name.
Amen

A prayer for those who suffer because of war
O God of all mercies and comfort, we pray for all who in bereavement, disability and pain continue to suffer the consequences of conflicts and wars. We think of those who this day strive to see the dawn of peace where they live, and those who work to bring that peace. May they know your pardon and peace.
Amen

A dedication prayer
God of Peace,
As we remember and honour those who fought and died here, may we be reminded of their courage and sacrifice in the cause of justice and peace. Today we dedicate ourselves afresh to work for peace in our world, our country and our relationships with others. As we leave here, may the remembrance of those who fought and laid down their lives in this place inspire us: To live in peace, and to let peace live.
Amen
THE ACT OF REMEMBRANCE

Please stand

LAST POST

*Private Thomas Baker, NZ Army Band*

Uniformed personnel salute

*During the playing of the Last Post, flags are lowered to half-mast*

ONE MINUTE SILENCE

ROUSE

*During the playing of Rouse, flags are raised to their full-mast position*

Please remain standing
THE ODE

Mr Robert Gillies, representing the 28th Māori Battalion Association

E kore rātou e koroua wawe
Pēnei i a tātou kua mahue nei
E kore hoki rātou e ngoikore
Ahakoa pēhia e 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

Response:
Ka maumahara tonu tātou ki a rātou

Mr Hawea Grey, representing the RNZRSA

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.

Response:
We will remember them

Please remain standing
NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL ANTHEM

*Uniformed personnel salute*

E Ihowa Atua
O ngā iwi mātou rā
Āta whakarongo nā
Me aroha noa
Kia hua ko te pai
Kia tau tō atawhai
Manaakitia mai
Aotearoa

God of Nations at thy feet
In the bonds of love we meet
Hear our voices we entreat
God defend our free land
Guard Pacific’s triple star
From the shafts of strife and war
Make her praises heard afar
God defend New Zealand

*Please be seated*
CLOSING PRAYER

Chaplain Class One Lance Lukin, QHC

Ever-living God,
We remember those who you have gathered
from the storm of war into the peace of your presence;
may that same peace calm our fear,
bring justice to all peoples and
establish harmony among all the nations.

O God of truth and justice,
we hold before you those whose memory we cherish,
and those whose names we will never know.

Help us to lift our eyes above the torment of this broken world,
and grant us the grace to pray for those who would wish us harm.
As we honour the past and the sacrifices made,
may we also put our faith in the future;
for you are the source of life and hope and peace,
now and forever.

So today dear God, bless all those who serve
in our defence forces around the world;
come near to the families of all who have lost loved ones
in the service of their country,
and in the hope of bringing peace to our world.

Amen

Please stand
SONG

Now is the Hour

Pō atarau
E moea iho nei
E haere ana
Koe ki pāmamāo
Haere rā
Ka hoki mai anō
Ki te tau
E tangi atu nei

Now is the hour, when we must say goodbye
Soon you’ll be sailing, far across the sea.
While you’re away, oh please remember me.
When you return, you’ll find me waiting here.

Ki te tau
E tangi atu nei

Please be seated

BENEDICTION

Chaplain Class One Lance Lukin, QHC

Kei ngā tini mate, haere, haere, moe
mai rā i roto i te Ariki. Rātou ki a
rātou, tātou e tangi nei ki a tātou,
tēnā tātou katoa.

To the many that have passed on,
I bid you farewell, rest in peace with the Lord.
Bind those that have passed on,
bind those that lament their loss,
I acknowledge everyone.
God grant to the living, grace,
to the departed, rest,
to our veterans, honour and esteem
and to us and all of God’s people everywhere,
unity, peace and life everlasting.

Haere i runga i te rangimarie i runga
i te aroha me te ngakau
hihiko ki te mahi ki te Ārika.

Go now to love and serve all peoples.
Go in the love of God.
Go now in peace.

*Please stand*

**The New Zealand National Service concludes**
Karanga
A karanga is a series of cries; one of which seeks to penetrate the confines of the physical world in order to arouse the spirits of those who have passed into the other realm, so that they may be lamented and acknowledged. It also serves to greet and unite the living with each other and the occasion.

Maimai Aroha
A maimai aroha is a chant that expresses sorrow and regard for those who have passed away.

The Chief of Army’s Reading
The New Zealand writer Lieutenant Colonel John Mulgan, MC, served in the British Army in North Africa before transferring to the Allied mission that supported resistance forces in Greece. Mulgan who was best known for his 1939 novel *Man Alone* died in Cairo in 1945. His highly regarded war memoir, *Report on Experience*, was first published in 1947.

“A Soldier’s Poem”
Private Donald McDonald, a young Waikato farmer and amateur poet, enlisted in 24 Battalion of the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force in June 1940. He was wounded in the fierce fighting at Sidi Rezegh in December 1941. The following July, McDonald was captured during the First Battle of El Alamein. On 17 August 1942, Private Donald McDonald and 117 other New Zealand prisoners of war were killed when the ship taking them to Italy was sunk by an Allied submarine. A collection of his poems was published in 1944 and this verse is from ‘Sidi Rezegh’.

El Alamein War Cemetery
There are a total of 1,108 New Zealanders buried at the El Alamein War Cemetery: 1,053 in identified graves, and 55 in unidentified graves. Those buried here died at various stages of the North African Campaign in the Second World War. There are also 859 New Zealanders memorialised in the cemetery.