

RSA Cemetery, in the Kaipara Flats Cemetery, Kaipara Hills Rd

(At Kaipara Flats, go under railway bridge, then turn left into Kaipara Hills Rd and about 200m turn sharp right into the Cemetery).

There was a question the other day at our Women's Section Meeting of why is the RSA Cemetery all the way out at Kaipara Flats?

My father, Mansel Price, was on the RSA Executive at the time and the Executive was very much involved in its establishment in conjunction with Veterans Affairs and the local Funeral Director. I asked my Mum, Ona, the same question – why Kaipara Flats as it seemed a long way away???

The reason was: An RSA Cemetery must be in a public cemetery and must be interdenominational. It is governed and maintained by Veterans Affairs / Internal Affairs.

There are very strict rules governing who may be in an RSA grave or ashes plot, They also stipulate the standardised wording on the brass plaque, regiment and regiment number, rank, etc.

At the time, the three Warkworth Cemeteries were owned and maintained by the relevant churches – Roman Catholic (on the main road north), Anglican (on Church Hill, Percy St) and the Presbyterian (in McKinney Rd). This remains the same today except the latter is also now a public cemetery controlled by Auckland Council but it wasn't at the time (1982).

Kaipara Flats was the closest that met the rules and criteria and had room to establish an RSA Section. Hence the front section of the older established Kaipara Flats Cemetery was designated as an RSA Cemetery in approximately 1982.

The first interment in the RSA Section was in 1983. This explains why there are no interments of WW1, WW11 or other military veterans who died prior to 1983 – the RSA Section had not been established.

The majority of many veterans (men and women) who passed away prior to 1983 are in the local church cemeteries in family plots or the odd ones with specific veteran headstones, within the miscellaneous cemeteries within the area including Matakana, Leigh, Whangateau, Te Kapa to name a few.

Take a trip out to Kaipara, you will find many local Veterans. The names are the men and women who many were prominent in the district. You will recognise many of the family names.

Kaipara Flats RSA Section of the cemetery is one of 8 with RSA Sections in the Auckland region overseen by Auckland Council and Veteran Affairs.

Kaipara Flats is a pleasant little cemetery, on the top of the hill overlooking the Kaipara Flats/Tauhoa valley. Take a stroll amongst the other headstones and recall a lot of the older Kaipara Flats families some dating back many years, some back to 1921 who were pioneers of the Kaipara Flats district.

This is still a current working cemetery (if that's what you call it!!).

Noelene Price Quedley

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