



WAIOURU ARMY MUSEUM

17 October 15 saw 16 MGs from the Manawatu Club heading from all points of Manawatu, and also Motuoapa, Wanganui and Wellington to meet at Awastone, Mangaweka for morning tea. Not one of us appeared at Awastone with a top down. After all it has been a

typical spring season with days of gorgeous warmth and sunshine and others when the weather was dark, cool and windy. It was one of those days when at least the sun made some effort to peak through the cloud.



Hospitality at Awastone was at its usual high standard, with a lavish morning tea awaiting us when we arrived. We ate well and caught up with each other with great alacrity. Robert took the opportunity to announce the results of the recent Tour de Manawatu, when we had a rally of the truest kind, with maps, an itinerary and a list of clues to collect which ensured we all found our way around the Manawatu, in theory! Great opportunity for the winners (the best navigators) to be announced. Awastone

was also an opportunity to welcome new and prospective members.

On the dot of 10.00am, as instructed, MGs began to motor their way across the vintage Mangaweka Bridge, and out onto SH 1 towards Waiouru. Nice pockets of sunshine made the journey north very attractive as we all enjoyed being on the road again and appreciated our unique scenery.



At the Waiouru Army Museum we gathered together as a security officer handed out identity wristbands and introduced us to the special displays commemorating WW1. The displays were for all of us, a profound reminder of the extraordinary commitment both men and women made in the war, either on the battlefield, in military hospitals, both on land and ships, at military bases through war zones, and even at home tirelessly raising awareness and money to assist those in their fight for our

freedom.

After lunch at the Museum Café, we all (under Rachel’s guidance) drove in an orderly fashion into the Camp, after being checked out at the Security Gate. For those of us, who have vivid memories of a former community life in the township of Waiouru, it was a tremendous shock to see so many stretches of vacant land where once houses stood and families lived. At least, I guess, it could be agreed these stretches of land were being well maintained in a park like landscape.



At the camp military museum, we were welcomed by George Pycraft, curator of a massive shed filled with a collection of military vehicles, both large and small including tanks, surveillance vehicles, transporters, landrovers, motor bikes, portable camp kitchens and other paraphernalia. George with his great sense of humour had a large anthology of stories, and a passion for each vehicle, ensuring its restoration and ongoing care. Stories were related to the history for each item which for us brought to life

yet again, the patriotism of those who used, and sometimes designed the vehicles in the field, and the dangers they operated under. I was particularly fascinated with the portable field cooker with dual ovens – and the recipes displayed on the wall. Noted with wry amusement the menu which recommended a cigarette for dessert, provided by a camp hospital!



All too soon it was time to get on the road again – homeward. We all acknowledged George’s fascinating presentation and noticed that the



cloud had lifted sufficiently to take a photo or two of those mountains, after which some of us headed for the Gumboot Manor in Taihape for a late afternoon tea. For me going home, I took the scenic route over Ruahine Road, through Rangiwahia and Kimbolton – one of New Zealand’s most iconic journeys – reminding me again how lucky we are to live in this part of the world.

Thanks must go to Rachel, who put a lot of effort into organising a very successful day, which I am sure all my fellow journeymen would agree.