

Remembrance of Ettie Rout

An update by Margaret Sparrow for ANZAC Day 2025, documenting ANZAC Day events in 2023 and 2024



The New Zealand Remembrance Army (NZRA) is a volunteer-based charitable trust formed in 2018 by former New Zealand Army Major Simon Strombom, concerned at the poor state of many war graves. The mission of the NZRA is to restore and maintain the graves and memorials of NZ service men and women. As a result of outstanding work it now has 57 regional teams.

A major project in 2023 was to recognise the contribution of pioneering sexual health activist Ettie Rout. ‘Her efforts greatly reduced transmission amongst soldiers, saving countless lives which is what the NZRA recognises her for,’ said Simon Strombom, Managing Director. With the collaboration of her family the grave was refurbished and a plaque made to be unveiled on ANZAC Day 2023



On 22 April **2024**, a group of 400, including veterans, went to Rarotonga for Anzac Day, the Dawn Parade and to attend the unveiling of a plaque of gratitude on Ettie's grave at the Avarua Cook Islands Christian Church, Rarotonga on behalf of New Zealand and Cook Islands Remembrance Army. The master of ceremony was Sam Puati Samuel



Special keynote speaker representing the New Zealand Remembrance Army, Sergeant Suzanne (Su) Gingles had the honour of unveiling the “plaque of gratitude” and the laying of the first wreath on Ettie’s grave.

Wreaths were laid by:

The King’s Representative Sir Tom Marsters,

Member of Parliament Agnes Armstrong on behalf of the Cook Islands Government

Aotearoa New Zealand High Commissioner Tui Dewes

Australian High Commissioner Phoebe Smith

French Honorary Consul Patricia Barton

Cook Islands Returned Services Association (RSA) patron Makea Karika George Ariki

The Cook Islands RSA president Tom Annas

Cook Islands Women rep Nga Teao-Papatua

Ombudsman Nikki Rattle

Cook Islands WW1 NZEF Research Project Team – Cate Walker, Paul Morrissey and Paula Paniani
Representing the Aras Tunellers, Sue Baker Wilson QSM.



In 2024 the NZRA finally got Ettie's efforts recognised by the New Zealand Parliament and respectfully with members of her family present. On April 10, at a ceremony in the Grand Hall in Parliament, the NZRA presented a major art work to the Speaker of the House, a portrait of Ettie by former New Zealand Army Artist Matt Gaudie, for the Parliamentary collection. Students of Clifton Terrace Model School (Wellington) attended the event and received a print of the portrait, acknowledging her as a former student.



The portrait of Ettie Rout presented to Parliament.