

90 years of life well lived - happy birthday Charlie

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Mr Charles Henry Anderton will be celebrating his 90th birthday on February 15. To celebrate this milestone, Charlie, with his family and friends, will be celebrating at Oruawharo Homestead on February 13.

Charlie was born in 1920, to Arthur and Amelia Anderton. In 1923 Charlie and his elder brother Richard and sister Elsie moved to the corner of Drumpeel Road, Otane.

Unfortunately his mother Amelia died in childbirth with her third son, Hector. Hector went to live with an aunt and

uncle, leaving Arthur, Richard, Elsie and Charlie to make a new life for themselves.

"I don't remember too much about my mother



Charlie aged 4

as I was so young when she died.

"But I do remember the housekeepers brought into help in the house and look after us," says

Charlie.

"I especially remember a Mrs Hargreaves who liked to keep an especially close eye on me and it drove me bonkers. When I heard her call I would run off and hide in the maintenance pit in the garage and pull the wooden cover over and hide till the coast was clear."

From a very young age Charlie had a way with working dogs, a relationship that lasted more than fifty years.

"Dad let me train up some of the dogs. There was one particular dog I could walk to the top of a hill about a half mile away, walk home and then whistle for it to come, and it would wait patiently for the sound."

Charlie attended Otane Primary School and spent a few years at secondary school, but the academic

life was not exciting or exacting enough for young Charlie, whose love of the outdoors and farming pulled at him and still remains with him today.

"I couldn't wait to get to work and I got my first job with TBH Priest in Elsthorpe. From there I went to W Coops near Havelock North. The stations were bigger and they had cadets in those days. That is until money became tighter."

Charlie worked as a shepherd on stations such as Wellwood Reeves at Putarino, a 4000 acre property, and then onto Raukawa. It was at Raukawa where Charlie met his wife of 67 years, Isabella Edward.

WWII was raging and it wasn't too long before Charlie came of age and received his call up papers.

"My boss kept me back for a few extra months to get through shearing time. Isa and I got engaged and then I was sent down to Waiouru for elementary training, and then onto Opaki in Masterton.



Corporal Charlie Anderton

"I completed several courses in wireless, gunnery and driving. In fact I spent most of my time at

Waiouru on wireless and gunnery.

"It wasn't too difficult to adjust as you realised it was a new venture, I really missed my dogs though.

"For two years we remained in New Zealand because of the Japanese threat. America sent a number of troops to assist us, who pinched the girls, which angered the lads."

Charlie and Isa got married, then Charlie received his orders - he was to sail to Europe via Australia.

"We were on an adventure and we were on the Moulton, which creaked and groaned and the worst storm hit as we crossed the Bite. The stern would slowly move up and up as we rode the huge waves and then point down and down so

steep and we wondered if we would get back up.

We were with other frigates, one minute we could see just the tip of a coning tower as it disappeared down into a wave only to see it rise on up high above us.

"As we entered the Tasman things improved slightly, but there were a lot of sick men on that voyage."

On arrival in Italy, all the training Charlie had received on wireless and gunnery were for nothing for he was given the job of driving a bulldozer/tank and his job was to clear the way for the armoured troops behind him.

"I was driving a Sherman Bulldozer with a three tonne blade on the front.

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"My job was to go out into 'no mans land' and make a crossing to let the armoured guard behind me through. I worked at night and I was supposed to have a backup crew but they often never arrived and I invariably worked on my own.

"Jerry would blow up the bridges as they passed. There were huge stop banks and I had to push through to the river. We would drive in Churchill tanks with no turrets, on top of each other, so making the actual crossing tricky.

"Jerry always seemed to know within a chain or two where we were and they would keep the shells pounding, 210 pound 8" self propelled shells, and there was always the possibility of a Tiger Tank, which easily could blow us all up."

Charlie worked through the constant barrage of mortar shells that fell day and night.

The Sherman he worked on had a periscope to see where he was going but to do the job he had to risk putting his head up and getting it blown off.

"One other thing we had to look out for were the Teller mines which Jerry planted on both sides of a road or track. Driving over one could smash tractors/tanks to pieces.

"In our tanks we always carried petrol and water so we could brew up on our bengasie, tea or coffee. "Unfortunately I drove over four tellers, two on



Isa and Charlie Anderton, Charlie is holding the famous shepherd's crook especially made after his fantastic win at Kumeroa.

lucky - the perforation had begun to heal, which was unusual. Charlie is still partially deaf in one ear.

Returning back to his unit, the NZ troops pushed through into Trieste.

"We were walking into almost another war, this time with Tito's forces. We were a day late; the Yugoslavs got there first. The Triestrians would not surrender to Tito, but would to us. It became a NZ forces city.

"It was the first time I had come across an Italian city that wasn't ravaged by war. It was quite an experience. To get to a city that hadn't suffered at all was almost

to London then finally, after two year's away from home, Charlie boarded the Durban Castle back to Wellington, where he jumped on a train to Waipukurau.

Waiting at the station was Charlie's family and for the first time Charlie set eyes on his young 18-month-old son, Ross. "It was an emotional thing. "It was such a change too, from army life in khakis and now I was in civvy life."

Charlie took over the family farm in Otane and began farming on his own account. The small dairy herd of 26 milking cows brought him a top award

for a milking herd and to top up the purse he worked across the road for Molly Nester Bayliss during the day.

"We bought 60 acres next door when it became available and later sold the milking herd, and with this money we bought another 100 acres, which became a hassle when it came to moving the stock along the main road."

Charlie became chairman of Otane School and involved in the Otane Bowls Club. But Charlie's great passion for working dogs soon saw him begin to enter dog trials.

By 1960, Charlie and Isa sold the family block

and their other land to purchase Carlyon Station, a 1123 acre sheep and beef breeding and fattening property.

"When I bought the place I could see its great potential and by upping the PH level the place bloomed. "We lived there for 20 years until we sold up in 1980 and went into partnership with my daughter Judy and son in law, Don Macdonald, and purchased Mangatarata Station - 2524 acres." A partnership that lasted until Don and Judy sold up a few years ago and Charlie retired.

But Charlie Anderton's name became far more renowned around New Zealand farming communities as one of the best dog trial men in the country.

Charlie's dogs became very sought after as again and again they took the top prizes around the country. Then the ultimate happened when he came up against Gary Brennan. The Brennan bred dog was one of New Zealand's most sought after.

Charlie entered the Kumeroa Sheep Dog trials in 1973 with his four dogs Dick, Tim, Mate and Moss, all in four different events, the straight run, zigzag, long head and short head. He was up against the best, Gary himself, and Charlie wanted the Brennan Cup.

Not only did Charlie win the cup, but also all

his dogs won each of their class, a record that has never been broken since. "It was great, and I left my best dog, Wag, at home," smile Charlie.

To celebrate this incredible feat, a special shepherd's crook was made for Charlie and the names of his winning team of dogs are engraved on it. Charlie gave up dog trailing ten years ago, although he is still a patron of Takapau Dog Trial Club. In his lifetime he has won seven Hawke's Bay Championships in all classes.

Over his lifetime Charlie

has been president of the Pakeke Lions Club. He is a member of KEV (Kings Empire Veterans), a member of the Waipukurau RSA for many years and member of the NZ Founders Society. A Probus Club committee member, and he was awarded Sportsman and Super Sportsman of the Year in 1996 for is dog trail accomplishments.

And of course this brave man who faced danger and fear during WWII was also awarded the Military Medal for valour.

From all of us here at the CHB Mail, happy 90th birthday Charlie.