

## Page 2. Economic rehabilitation

### New Zealand and South African wars

As well as paying war pensions for disability or death, New Zealand governments have provided economic compensation to help veterans return to work after their military service. Traditionally, rural land was regarded as the most suitable compensation since it was assumed to provide both a financial return and physical and social rehabilitation. Some veterans of the New Zealand wars were given grants of confiscated Māori land. A small number of South African War veterans were also settled on farmland, while others were given preference for jobs in government departments.

### Fencibles settlements

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Some of the earliest soldier settlement schemes in New Zealand were the Fencibles villages of Panmure, Onehunga, Ōtāhuhu and Howick, all in Auckland. These were occupied between 1847 and 1852 by about 700 retired veterans of the British army and navy and their families. The Fencibles were intended to defend Auckland against attack by 'rebel' Māori. They were called to action only once, in 1851. A party of Ngāti Pāoa from Waiheke Island, whose chief had been arrested by mistake, landed at Mechanics Bay, Parnell. The war party returned home without incident.

train disabled ex-soldiers. Three artificial-limb factories were opened, to both employ and provide improved equipment for war amputees. Other disabled servicemen made furniture, souvenirs and other goods, sold through a chain of league shops around the country.

From 1969 the league worked with both ex-servicemen and civilians. In 1990 it changed its name to Workbridge, and operated as an employment service for people with disabilities.

### First World War

The Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act 1915 created a system to provide farm settlement schemes and vocational training to First World War veterans. Farmland was allocated by a ballot system, mainly to **Pākehā** soldiers, as Māori veterans were assumed to have tribal land already available to them. More than 10,500 men were assisted onto the land by 1924, with another 12,000 helped to buy or build houses in towns and cities. However, land for settlement was often selected regardless of the soldiers' own wishes or farming experience. Many of these farms were on marginal or remote land and they often failed to provide the returns their settlers hoped for.

### Disabled servicemen

The economic depression of the early 1930s condemned thousands of disabled New Zealand veterans to unemployment and poverty. The Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment League (later renamed the Disabled Servicemen's Re-establishment League) was formed in 1931 to provide veterans with rehabilitation and employment. Businesses were encouraged to employ and

## Second World War

The Rehabilitation Act was passed in 1941 to improve and coordinate the reintegration of Second World War veterans into New Zealand's post-war society. Many thousands of veterans received low-interest business, housing and furniture loans, and preferential allocation of state houses. Trade training was provided, especially in the building industry. Those choosing to study at secondary school or university could qualify for fee and book allowances, although only for career training and not for purely 'cultural study'.

A new Land Settlement Board aimed to build on the lessons of the earlier farm settlement scheme by settling only men with farming experience, and on economically viable properties. Almost 14,000 Second World War ex-servicemen were assisted to acquire farms by 1964, and buoyant export prices ensured that most were able to successfully develop these properties.

## Later wars

Since the Second World War, New Zealanders involved in overseas conflicts have mainly been regular military personnel. Successive governments have generally not provided them with economic rehabilitation, to encourage them to remain in the armed forces after their return to New Zealand.

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