

## 2 MINUTES WITH ..... PHILIP LOUIS HARLAND

Phil Harland is the "elder statesman" at the Rotary Club of Tawa which is officially celebrating its 50th year this month (delayed by Covid from this time last year). He could also be regarded as an "elder statesman" in this community, having first moved here 64 years ago. His has been a very interesting life as you will read in the following interview.



*Where were you born?* Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, England

*Where did you grow up?* South Africa (one year at age 5/6), England (before age 5, from age 6 to 13, and after age 17), USA (age 13 to 17)

*Where were you educated?*

Sherrardswood School, WGC, England  
Bancroft School, Worcester, Massachusetts, USA  
Mount Hermon School, N Mass, USA  
Victoria Uni, Wellington (early 1960s)

*How long have you lived in Tawa?*

64 years, living in the same house, but with various years away overseas. I lived at my wife's parents' farm near Wairoa when I first came to New Zealand in 1952.

When we moved into our house in Tawa in 1957 on arriving in Wellington, the likes of Collins Ave and Ranui Tce were gravel roads. We collected our own rainwater and had a septic tank. It was a while before we owned a car. I did a lot of walking in those first six years!

*What do you like about Tawa?*

Easy access to downtown Wellington;  
Variety of parks and recreation areas.

*What would you like to see improved?*

I would like to see direction walking signs from the Tawa Library corner to the "Tawa Lookout".

*What about family?*

With late wife Elaine (nee Little) from Wairoa, Hawkes Bay (we met and married in Suva, Fiji in 1949) had six children, three girls and three boys (all living in New Zealand – three are now pensioners), 11 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

*Work experience over the years .....*

Seven years, 1945-52, at sea first as a cadet on Red Ensign "Bela" Fleet Auxiliary, WW2.

Then, Third Officer (Second Mate) Blue Ensign, Royal Fleet Auxiliary "Wave Premier", Korean War.

Mid-1952 NZ Public Service in State Hydro Electricity Department, Tuai, Waikaremoana, Hawkes Bay.

1957 to Wellington Marine Department.

1958 to Department of Trade and Industry, Overseas Trade Division. That included a wide range of overseas posts – including New York, Kuala Lumpur, Toronto (Consul General & Trade Commissioner), Seoul (during the 1988 Olympics when I saw NZ win the rowing) – and in Christchurch and Auckland until retiring in 1989.

*What are your interests and hobbies?*

As a Rotarian for over 50 years this has been a major activity. Also have enjoyed golf. Gardening provides a never-ending hobby.

*Favourite sports team(s)?*

Rugby – Hurricanes  
Soccer – Phoenix

*Favourite musical group and/or individual singer?*

Louis Armstrong;  
Marlene Dietrich, singing "Golden Earrings".

*What is your favourite holiday destination in New Zealand?*

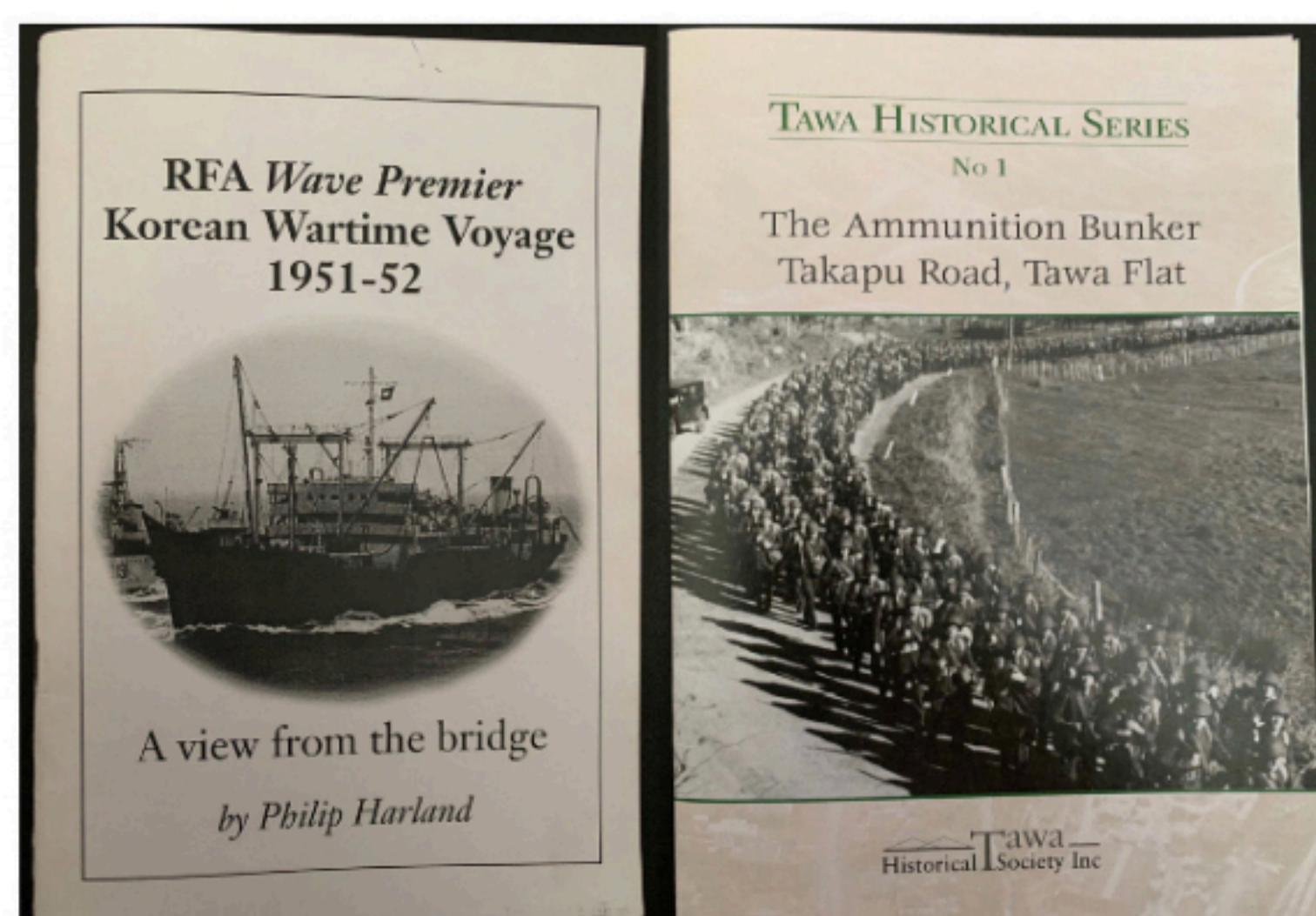
Art Deco, Napier.

*What accomplishments/achievements in your life give you the most satisfaction/pride?*

Established, through Rotary, the Tawa Historical Society in 2000 and was its first chairman. I am still on the committee.

In June 2000 published booklet about the RFA (Royal Fleet Auxiliary), "Wave Premier", Korean War.

And for THS, published a book about "The Ammunition Bunker, Takapu Road, Tawa Flat".



*What are two or three interesting things about you that local people may not know?*

1. I was a "Sea vac" sent at the age of 13 with other children from my school during the Battle of Britain because of the expected invasion by Germany. The ship travelled from Liverpool to Canada, and we were sent on from there to the United States. I returned to England on the troopship Rangitiki in July 1944.
2. My wife-to-be, Elaine and I, were engaged 11 days after we first met. Three days later we married!

(Compiled April 2020)