

Notes on Francis William Hay and Annie Osborne née Hamilton

(Parents of Daphne, Laurence, Glenys and Lynette Hay)

Francis William Hay born: 25 January 1908, Oamaru, Otago

Annie Osborne Hamilton born: 29 October 1908, Gore, Southland

Married: 2 January 1935, Timaru.

Children: Daphne Lorraine, born 8 February 1938, Taumarunui.
Laurence Osborne, born 1 December 1940, Auckland.
Murray Francis, born 7 December 1945, Dunedin; died 18
September 1946, Dunedin.
Glenys Esther, born 18 January 1948, Napier.
Lynette Dawn, born 5 March 1950, Hamilton.

Anne Osborne Hay née Hamilton died: 13 August 2002, Wellington, NZ.

Francis William Hay died: 14 December 2002, Wellington, NZ.

Francis William Hay's birth and early life

Francis William was born on 25 January 1908 in Oamaru, the third child of Francis Hay and his wife Edith née Baker. He began his schooling at Oamaru South, then continued at Wakefield and from 10 July 1916 at Tasman Boys' School, both in the Nelson area, before finishing his formal education at Timaru Main School between April 1917 and December 1922.

Frank then found employment in a local drapery shop. He continued as a draper's assistant for the next five and a half years until leaving Timaru for Wellington in February 1928 to train as a Salvation Army officer. During these years Frank was a member of the Timaru Rowing Club, as well as a bandsman and young people's worker in the local Salvation Army corps. The family home was at 119 King Street, Timaru.

In his application for Army officership, Frank states that he was converted 'about April 1916' i.e. when he was eight years old, in the junior corps at Timaru, and in 1923 signed the Articles of War, becoming a uniform-wearing senior soldier. However, Frank gives a fuller account in a 1995 interview with Bramwell Cook:

I think I must have been about 17 when that happened [i.e. I accepted the Lord Jesus Christ]. I remember going to a Sunday night meeting and feeling that somehow I had to go forward. I went forward and was dealt with but I didn't seem to grasp anything, but the next Wednesday, we had band practice night, I went to band practice as usual and they asked for someone to pray – we always prayed before band practice – and without – I often wonder how it was I got courage because I was a very quiet chap, hadn't a great deal to say... but somehow I felt I had to pray and I did; I prayed a very short prayer and I can still remember the silence there was after I stopped and sat down. Just for a moment or two there was absolute silence, as if they were thinking, 'Well, who is he trying to...'. But that was the beginning of

my real conversion because after that I got a bit of courage and took up different things at the corps.

Frank's decision to apply for Salvation Army officership did not come easily. In a testimony published in the *War Cry* of 7 November 1931 he describes how it happened:

I was just a boy when the first thoughts of Officership came to me. How heroic I thought it would be to offer myself as an Officer. As years went on however I built up other ideas for myself, and the thought of Officership would send me scuttling away, to try and forget about it in the depths of some exciting book. But though I might escape it thus during the day, the night time brought it back with renewed force as I knelt to pray. Many times in my struggles for peace with God I prayed, 'Lord, I'll be a good Soldier. I'll work hard in the Corps. I will give myself wholly to Thee, if only I don't have to become an Officer'.

.... At last victory came. No great surge of joy overwhelmed me, only a calm peace of knowledge that I was doing God's will possessed me....

Again, the interview with Bramwell fills out the story: It began when Frank, soon after his conversion, went forward again in a session of the annual young people's councils held in Timaru for Salvationists of the district. The person who counselled him asked, 'Have you ever thought of becoming a Salvation Army officer?' To which Frank replied that he never had.

She didn't say any more than that, but that question stuck in my mind and gradually gained a good deal of force until I felt – I wouldn't say I knew it was God's will because really I... wasn't in an advanced spiritual state at all. But the corps officers were Smith and Birks and they helped me and encouraged me and got me out to the platform at different times to give my testimony and it gradually grew. But I think that one of the greatest influences on my life – we had a huge big volume of *Pilgrim's Progress* and it also included *The Holy War* and I got hold of this book and read it and I think it was the foundation really of my spiritual life. I began to see that there was much more to it than I had ever thought about.

Frank's preliminary application for officership was endorsed by his commanding officer, Nellie Smith, as follows: 'Frank is a splendid boy, a good Salvationist, earnest and willing, and should do good work in years to come'. The territorial commander, Commissioner James Hay (no relation), wrote on the divisional commander's report: 'A nice lad – looks young; not a decided character but has making of an officer. Can come March. Press on case'.

Training college

And so it happened: on 23 February 1928 Frank Hay climbed the many steps of the Salvation Army Training Garrison, 33 Aro Street, Wellington, to take his place as a cadet in the 'Excelsior' session. On the train journey north, Frank had met another cadet heading for Wellington, Leonard Millar, and the two remained friends for life, Len being best man at Frank's wedding. Also, Captain George Thompson, the men's side officer, became Frank's good friend and mentor.

After 11 months' training, Frank was reported on by the principal, Ernest Hammond, in the following terms (punctuation, etc as in original):

Splendid developed man, health is satisfactory, is well set up, and goodly appearance.

Has not done as well as was hoped, with his class work, while the tests are satisfactory; he does not appear to have intellectually awakened.

Is a shrinking, shy lad, quite youthlike. Is hyper sensitive, I think this has interfered with some of the progress he should have made. Has a pleasant manner.

Developing much more freedom of late on the platform, is yet reticent; does not sing solos but is tuneful, and can lead singing well; has a little knowledge of music, plays brass. organizes his work well, is hardly resourceful but thinks about his work, and is initiative. has been brought up in the S.A.

Spiritual life lacking in fervour, but is good, and conscientious; has claimed a Clean Heart.

Will need encouraging, is certain of Call, has no desire other than Officership, should do very well on Field.

On the wider scene 1929 was a crisis year: for the world at large with the Wall Street Crash in October bringing in the Great Depression of the 1930s, and also for the Salvation Army. Even as the commissioning of the 'Excelsiors' was under way, the first ever High Council of the Army was meeting in London, concluding with the deposition of the General, Bramwell Booth, so ending the Booth family's dynastic ambitions. Many commentators predicted the end of the Army, and public support fell away for a year or so, but officers and soldiers generally remained loyal and committed to the Work – the Army's mission to save the world for Jesus.

First appointments and spiritual growth

On 7 January 1929 Frank was commissioned as a probationary-lieutenant and appointed to assist Lieutenant David Jamieson at Dargaville – an unhappy time for Frank as he felt that Jamieson was not a committed or conscientious officer, however after six months Jamieson left to get married. Eventually William Crichton was sent to help Frank and things went well; their friendship lasted until Bill's death in the 1980s. Over the next six years Frank held further appointments at the following corps: as a lieutenant assisting at Rotorua under Captain George Thompson, in charge at Karori and Cambridge, and as a captain in charge at Island Bay, Cambridge (again) and then Levin.

While at Rotorua Frank had a particularly intense spiritual experience as he recounts in his interview with Bramwell Cook:

In those days we had the Self Denial Appeal, and did all the collecting for the out-districts, and there was a chap by the name of Bro Whitley [who had a car].., so he was taking us out to collect; he drove, the captain was in the front seat and I was in the back.... and I got out my pocket New Testament and was reading it, and I came to John 7:38 about how the Holy Spirit is given: 'If any man believeth on me out of him shall flow rivers of living water'. And with that came a tremendous realisation – and I'm quite sure it was a visitation of God's Holy Spirit – the back of that car became a real holy place. I've remembered that so often during times of stress, in itself it was God's message to me..., those words were indelibly printed on my mind, and I'm quite sure it was God's Holy Spirit....

The corps work was not easy. Apart from collecting – an almost constant necessity – Frank records that he and his lieutenant would spend their time visiting 'from street to street'.

Courtship and marriage

While attending the Congress held in Auckland in 1933, Frank stayed with his friend from training days, George Thompson, now stationed at Newmarket Corps. Also staying at the quarters was George's wife's sister Annie, a young single officer stationed at Te Kuiti, not far from Cambridge where Frank was at this time. Frank took a liking to the attractive young visitor, and on the train journey home managed to sit beside her. But a divine nudge was needed if matters were to proceed:

Then after some time – I was still at Cambridge – I had been praying very earnestly to God for a partner, and one morning I had been thinking about it and it just seemed that God said: 'Quit your praying and go to Te Kuiti to see this young lady'. So I did. And I asked her if she would become my partner and she said 'Yes'. So that was encouraging, but in those days we weren't supposed to visit other corps, particularly with lady officers, and Sammy Hayes, who was then the DC in Auckland, he somehow found out and he gave me a real roasting for that.

On this basis, Frank applied to THQ for permission to correspond with Anne, and in June 1933 this was granted, with official recognition being given of an 'understanding' between the two. The relationship developed: in March 1934 permission for an engagement was given, and on 2 January 1935 Frank and Anne (as she preferred to be known) were married by Major Alfred Suter in the Timaru SA Hall. *[For Annie Hamilton's life before marriage see Notes on Annie Osborne Hamilton.]*

The documentation compiled at this time on the basis of which the territorial commander would make his decision re the marriage proposal is interesting. Frank's current divisional commander is reported as saying that 'the Captain is a fairly successful Officer, that he is good but terribly quiet and slow. Lacks initiative. Has had long talks with him and he promises to try and improve. The matter has his [the DC's] personal endorsement.'

Anne's DC was rather more positive about her: 'Says the Lieutenant is quite efficient and successful, is good, capable and very much alive. Has marked capacity for leadership. She is not too strong as far as health is concerned.'

Corps appointments

Two weeks after the marriage the happy couple arrived at their first appointment together – Papakura Corps, where they remained for 18 months before moving to Tauranga, again for 18 months, then to Taumarunui for two years, where their first child Daphne was born.

Anne and Frank were stationed at Eden Corps, Auckland, when WWII broke out, moved to Petone, and then were at South Dunedin when the war ended. Frank, as a minister of religion and a married man with two children, was not called up for military service. However, he did have an official role enforcing the black-out (and possibly the air-raid shelter) regulations in the neighbourhood of the quarters in Petone.

The detailed record of Frank and Anne Hay's officership is given in the separate chronology, but, in summary, of their 39 years of active service together, 21 years were spent in pastoral and evangelical work as corps officers, 14½ years as front-line social work practitioners, and 3½ in administration at territorial HQ. To the 39

year total can be added, for Frank, six years of service on the field as a single officer, and for Anne, two years.

Until recent days, life as a Salvation Army corps officer was difficult in that no remuneration was guaranteed – all appointment expenses had to be paid before officers were permitted to draw their weekly living allowance -- and so they needed to spend a good part of their time collecting from door-to-door or shop-to-shop, and in other fund-raising activities. Lynette recalls hearing Ann say that she was not able to visit her mother before she died as she and Frank were stationed at Taumarunui at the time and couldn't afford the train and ferry fares.

As a corps officer, Frank was not known as an inspiring meeting leader or preacher – his sermons were much recycled and invariably read from the page – but he was renowned as ‘a good visitor’, and this was much appreciated. Anne was the more engaging public speaker, with a strong, measured, elocutionary style (known to the children as her ‘platform voice’); when her health permitted she would preach regularly if not as frequently as her husband.

Cyril Bradwell, the official historian of the Salvation Army in New Zealand, has the following to say about Frank and Anne in *Fighting for His Glory* (1991), a history of the Wellington South Corps – the Hays’ final field appointment:

[p.98] Early in 1952 ... Major and Mrs Frank Hay became the commanding officers at Wellington South. They were experienced officers who led by example. Their demeanour spoke clearly of godliness and dedication, and evoked a warm response from their soldiers during their three years of command. The complementary abilities of the Major and his wife were appreciated to the full by the comrades, and the Corps responded to the unobtrusive style of leadership....

[p.102] The three year term of Major and Mrs Hay in command of the Corps came to an end in January 1955. They had been completely dedicated in their commitment to evangelism. Despite having no car and being dependent on public transport, Major and Mrs Hay were outstanding in their visitation and pastoral concern, and “South” comrades continued to have warm memories of their period of command.

International Staff College

In 1953, while still commanding officer of the Wellington South Corps, Frank was appointed to attend a session at the International Staff College, Sydenham, London, and was away from New Zealand for five and a half months. Anne had been unwell for some time, so headquarters appointed a retired officer, Brigadier Allan Hildreth, to oversee the corps in Frank’s absence, but the extra strain on Anne was not inconsiderable.

The staff college course lasted for seven weeks commencing on 3 September 1953, but because of the shipping schedule Frank arrived in London on 17 August, 17 days before the session began. He made very good use of this free time, visiting friends, churches and many of the usual tourist destinations. Two unexpected items on his itinerary were a cricket test match at the Oval (Australia versus England) and two prom concerts in the Royal Albert Hall. Frank had shown little interest in sport, and none at all in classical music up to this time but in his journal he describes the first prom concert as ‘thrilling... a soul-stirring evening, music ravishing’!

Frank seems to have found the staff college course informative and interesting, but also stressful; a number of times he confides to his journal feelings of inadequacy

and self-doubt. After three weeks, for example, he records: 'Still feel stirrings of jealousy and envy of others better ability to do things. Lord, give me victory!' And a week or so later: 'God is daily giving me victory & delivering me from the inhibitions which have been such a great hinderance [sic].... I believe God is going to use me and make me a fruitful vine.' After the course ended Frank had a further 11 days 'free' in London before his ship sailed; he finally arrived home on 22 December 1953.

It was the expected thing that attendance at the staff college was a preliminary to the officer concerned being given a staff appointment – either as a divisional commander or heading a territorial department – on return to his or her territory of service. That this did not immediately happen in Frank's case was probably at the Hays' own request, with Anne's poor health being the reason. Instead, Frank was appointed as assistant manager of the men's industrial home situated in Addington, Christchurch.

Social service

While this new appointment did not place the same obligations of leadership, pastoral care and public work on the officer-wife, Anne immediately threw herself into the heavy manual work involved in sorting, washing and ironing, for sale or charitable distribution, the vast quantities of used clothing donated to the Army.

Within months, on the retirement of Brigadier Leonard Tong, Frank became manager of the large enterprise, with its accommodation for alcoholics and other homeless men, court and prison work, and the associated paper and cardboard recycling industry. Over his 13 years as manager Frank worked to diversify the industrial aspects of the programme, introducing a confetti manufacturing business, and building a large shop from which could be sold not only clothing but donated furniture renovated by inmates of the home.

Frank enjoyed the challenge of this work with men needing a hand up to sobriety or independence, or a sheltered haven in which they could live out with dignity the remaining years of their difficult lives.

Territorial headquarters

But it was not to last. On 15 August 1968 Frank, now a lieut-colonel, was inducted into the post of Men's Social Secretary at territorial HQ, Wellington. This appointment involved setting policy for all of the Army's rehabilitative, residential and training programmes and centres for men within New Zealand, and dealing with government over funding and other issues, as well as liaising with other departments within THQ. It was not an appointment which Frank aspired to, but as was his wont he accepted it without question and gave it his best effort. Their quarters was at 639 Evans Bay Parade, Kilbirnie (the site now occupied by the local police station).

The arrival of Commissioner Harry Williams as territorial commander in 1971 set swirling a hurricane of proposals for administrative change, one of which was the amalgamation of the men's and women's social service departments. Frank offered to retire a year early so that this proposal could be implemented with Brigadier Beatrice Palmer moving into the leadership of the new department, and this offer was accepted with alacrity by Commissioner Williams.

Retirement – and back to Christchurch

Frank and Anne had been able, through careful saving over the years, to purchase a house for their retirement at 32 Bewdley Street, Spreydon, Christchurch, and in January 1972 moved into it – the very first house they had ever owned.

Frank had no intention or desire to short change the Army by his early retirement, and as part of his offer to the territorial commander had suggested that he again manage the Men's Social Service Centre in Addington for 12 months, so bringing his active service up to its full measure of years. This was agreed and undertaken, at the end of which, on 25 January 1973, for the first time in 45 years, Frank Hay found himself without a Salvation Army appointment. Neither he nor Anne remained idle for long, however. Soon Frank, humble as ever, took a job as 'tea boy' in an optician firm, while Anne laboured at the local Salvation Army charity shop, their plan being to have enough funds within a year or so to finance a world trip, a plan that never came to fruition.

Anne and Frank loved their Bewdley Street house and looked after it with pride, Frank especially developing the gardens and lawns, back and front, and keeping them in immaculate condition. However, in time the work involved began to seem too heavy, and a move was made to a smaller, semi-detached house on a back section with very little garden: Flat 1, 16A Ottawa Road, Wainoni, Christchurch. Here they stayed happily with their long-haired dachshunds for some years.

Upper Hutt

As their ages increased, Frank and Anne felt it wise to move into a situation where they could be better cared for as needed. When an independent living unit (17B) became vacant at the Army's Norman Kirk retirement home at 17 Hildreth Street, Wallaceville, Upper Hutt, Frank and Anne made the major shift north from Christchurch taking up residence in their new abode on 5 June 1989. As part of the change, Frank aged 80 decided he would no longer drive, and gifted his well-maintained Hillman Hunter to me, stationed at that time at the Salvation Army Training College, also in Wallaceville. Frank kept himself busy in the gardens around the unit, by supporting every meeting and venture of the local Salvation Army corps, and in walking to Upper Hutt to do shopping.

At some time in the late 1990s Anne suffered a number of minor strokes that left her unsteady on her feet and uncharacteristically uncommunicative. As would be expected Frank found this unsettling, especially the latter, as he had always relied on Anne to be the conversationalist. Eventually Anne moved into a room in the home, followed a year or so later by Frank, so finally both giving up their independence. Frank was still active as unofficial chaplain in the home, and took a keen and sometimes critical interest in its administration, especially in anything that he saw as detracting from its Christian ethos; this was not always appreciated by the staff.

Promotion to Glory

In 2002 a further move was decided upon, to Malvina Major Retirement Village, Johnsonville, for the sake of better professional healthcare for Anne, and a generally more salubrious environment. This move took place in August 2002 when Anne was already showing signs of pneumonia; she spent one night in her new room before being taken to Kenepuru Hospital, where she slipped into a coma and died on 13 August.

Frank soldiered on, but the purpose of his life seemed to have gone, and the various inconveniences and disablements of old age made him weary almost beyond bearing. On 13 December 2002 his grand-daughter Mary visited him in her master's academic gown and hood straight from her graduation, and that evening Wesley and Daphne, down from Auckland on official business, called to see him. The visitors found him alert and well, but during that night his life slipped away and he re-joined

his beloved Anne in Glory. Their ashes lie together in the memorial plinth in the Salvation Army section of the Karori Cemetery, Wellington, and their names can be seen one above the other on the memorial tablet.

Well done, good and faithful servants!

Personal characteristics

Frank Hay was a tireless worker. Apart from at meal-times (the family ate three meals together daily), he was rarely seen by the children, as he would be at work either in his office at home or out and about soon after breakfast, and was not often back home in the evenings until after the children were in bed. As allowed by regulation, he took one half day per week as 'free time' – Monday morning in his case – but for many years this was occupied by his doing the family washing.

In many ways Frank was the typical father of his time, rarely appearing to show interest in the children's progress (though I'm sure he was interested) or taking part in their pastimes and activities. This was highlighted for us children by how different he was when on our annual family holidays; in retrospect we would speak nostalgically of our 'holiday father'. These two- or three-week holidays together were always greatly looked forward to, and were a significant feature of our childhood.

Until the late 1950s Frank had no hobbies or leisure interests, but in June 1955 the family moved into the manager's quarters at the Men's Social Service Centre, Addington, a large villa set in a ½ acre section well planted in mature fruit trees, berry bushes, flowers, vegetables and lawns, as well as having a well-stocked fowl house. All of this required his attention, and under the tutelage of the elderly Mr Sampson (Kingsley's grandfather), and with help from an inmate of the home, he began to develop a deep enjoyment and knowledge of gardening. This saw him through difficult times in his later officership and well into his retirement.

Frank was a man of strict principles; this had positive and negative impacts on those with whom he was associated, especially his family. Positively, he was a man of integrity and without guile, who could be trusted absolutely; it was unthinkable to the children that their father would, or even could, do anything underhand or of doubtful honesty. He was not violent, vindictive, unpredictable or selfish. Frank provided a firm, reliable bedrock of trust upon which family life and the children's personal development was based, but he could best be described as a caring rather than a loving father.

On the other hand, his rigid adherence to abstract principles in even the smallest matter sometimes meant that others, often his wife, suffered the consequences. He could, for example, be generous to a fault from the meagre living allowance provided by the Salvation Army to its officers, believing that the Lord would provide if his open-handedness led to a shortfall in the family budget carefully calculated and managed by Anne. Or, having committed his life to God through service in the Army, Frank would not tolerate any questioning of decisions made by his superiors even if such decisions were clearly injurious to others. On one occasion he insisted that Anne paid from the household budget (rather than from corps funds) for a toll call to territorial HQ she insisted on making to query a directive moving the Hays to a larger and more-demanding corps appointment, a directive that he (Frank) was not himself willing to question on behalf of his chronically ill wife.

The children remember their mother saying on more than one occasion that there had been moments in her marriage when if it had not been wrapped in the Army Flag

tied down at the corners by her four children she might have had second thoughts about staying in it.

Like Frank, Anne Hay, also, was a person of high principle, but her principles were interpreted and applied in the context of love. In her relations with others, especially her children, she was always reasonable, understanding and humane. A chief mark of this was her sense of humour. She had a fund of jokes, stories and poems that we children loved to hear, and about which we could laugh together. But even more characteristic was her reaction when I would laugh at her for some old-fashioned or pre-scientific opinion she was voicing. Anne never took offence, was never hurt by my somewhat conceited mockery, but would gently smile and let me have my fun at her expense. I loved her for this selfless humility.

Children

- **Daphne Lorraine**, born 8 February 1938, Taumarunui; married Wesley Norman Rabbitts, Christchurch. Served as leading Salvation Army officers in New Zealand and Fiji. Children: Kathleen (Legg), Bronwyn (Burrowes) and Lynley (Knight)
- **Laurence Osborne**, born 1 December 1940, Auckland; married Margaret Evangel Major, 2 January 1965, Christchurch; MA (Hons), University of Canterbury, DipTchg. Diplomatic trainee, Dept of External Affairs, then served as Salvation Army officers in Zambia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and UK (IHQ). Children: Mary, Jeremy, Michael and Susanna.
- **Murray Francis** (see below)
- **Glenys Esther**, born 18 January 1948, Napier; married Terrence Heese, Christchurch. Served as Salvation Army officers in NZ. Children: Rhondda (Middleton) and Delwyn (Bennett)
- **Lynette Dawn**, born 5 March 1950, Hamilton; married Kevin Bennetts, Christchurch. Has served for many years as a leading social worker with the Salvation Army, Christchurch City Corps. Children: Mark, Brendon and Daniel.

Murray Francis

On 7 December 1945, while they were stationed at Dunedin South Corps, a second son, Murray Francis, was born to Frank and Anne. At nine months of age Murray caught meningitis and was admitted to hospital in great pain and distress. Anne and Frank were treated with scant courtesy or sensitivity by the medical staff, not being allowed to stay at the hospital, so were not present when their boy died on Wednesday 18 September 1946.

Murray was buried two days later in the Anderson's Bay Cemetery, Block 30, Plot 66. The grave was that of a 65-year-old widow, Mary Guhl (according to the burial record, but spelt Ghuls on the nameplate at the foot of the grave) of Caversham, who had been buried there in February 1916. The official cemetery records show that the grave is owned by the Salvation Army and is therefore considered to be a 'paupers plot'.

The Salvation Army, in what was probably thought to be a compassionate decision, moved the Hays two months later to Napier – far from the grave, and away from their network of supportive and understanding relatives and friends. Was the idea to help them forget?! Obediently, they went.

Lynette remembers asking her mother if she ever had any regrets that she hadn't spent enough time with Murray in his short life. Anne was very confident that she had no regrets, that she had fully loved and cared for Murray. She remembered how, because there was little warmth in the house in Dunedin, she would take him out and sit him on the front fence post so he could get some sun.

Anne often wondered how she would recognise Murray in heaven. Then a few months before she died she had a dream that greatly excited and comforted her. She dreamed that she got to heaven and a fine looking young man came up to her and said, 'Hello Mother, I'm Murray'. Frank, too, was very moved by this dream.

Glenys remembers a significant event in her father's final days:

Dad and the General

The General's Congress, October 2002, was approaching and Mum had just been promoted to Glory in the August of that year. Dad had not been all that well but we wanted him to be at the Officers' Councils meeting on the Monday morning with General John and Commissioner Gisele Gowans so that Dad could meet the General and be there when Mum's name was read in the Roll of Honour. This had all been arranged with the Malvina Major Home where Dad was resident.

Unfortunately, on the Saturday morning of Congress Dad took a turn for the worse and the home called us to say that we should come quickly. On arrival the staff indicated to us that Dad was near his end, so we sat on the bed and got his SA song book out and started to sing through his favourites. This was something Dad had always done for others in a similar situation. It was not long however before Dad began to join his voice with ours; the nurses said that his singing helped his intake of oxygen and he improved considerably as the afternoon went on.

I was very disappointed that Dad was not going to be well enough to be at the Officers' Councils and meet Laurence's General, however on the Sunday Commissioner Shaw Clifton approached me and asked if we would like the General to visit Dad at the home following the Monday morning Officers' Councils on his way to the Training College at Upper Hutt. I was delighted, as was Dad, and Malvina Major staff helped direct the visit as if the Pope himself was coming.

Terry and I preceded the Commissioners and the General to see if Dad was ready and there he was sitting in his armchair in full uniform, even his cap on his knee. (the visiting leaders expected to find a dying man in his pyjamas). Mrs Gowans kissed Dad, which he obviously enjoyed as he then asked Commissioner Helen Clifton if she would you like to kiss him too!

The 15 minutes spent in Dad's room with our leaders was a really sacred time for Dad, and I believe all of us. Shaw Clifton mentioned this as a special moment of Congress. We read and prayed, and General Gowans spoke of Laurence and his work in the General's office. I was just so grateful that our leaders were sensitive to this possibility as it meant so much to Dad and it is something I will never forget.