

Reserve Forces Day in 2009 will mark the 70th anniversary of the start of WWII

A special group of 18 World War II veterans who will be known as the "39ers" were honoured when Reserve Forces Day 2009 was launched at North Sydney on November 29. The veterans, whose minimum age is 88, were already serving as part time Defence Force Reservists when they were mobilised in September 1939.

The Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support, Dr Mike Kelly, was the guest of honour, while the RSL was represented by Southern Country Vice-President Dr Rod Bain.

The NSW Scottish Regt Assn Pipes and Drums led the parade of 35 regimental standards, which were dedicated by the Rev Dr Gareth Clayton, Principal Chaplain of the RANR.

The 18 "39ers" then took their places



The 39ers on the stage with Mike Kelly



39er John Burrell flanked by Major General Greg Melick and LCDR Mick Gallagher RANR

and were presented with a commemorative gold ribbon. Victoria Cross recipient Keith Payne from Mackay in Queensland then congratulated them.

The formal part of the launch took place in the Thomas Playfair Hall at Shore

School. The pre war defence scene of 1939 was set by Major General Warren Glenly, and the proclamation of war speech of Prime Minister Menzies was then played. Two "39ers", Lieutenant Commander Ken Sutherland (91) and Lt Col Ray Rudkin MC

(89), talked about their training before the war and fast mobilisation. Flight Lieutenant Colin Everingham covered the mobilisation of the Citizen Air Force in 1939.

Dr Kelly spoke of current reserve deployments 70 years on and then launched Reserve Forces Day 2009.



Dr Kelly is talking to Sir John Carrick AC KCMG, a former member of Sydney University Regiment before WWII.

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