

COLUMN FROM MAYOR TIM SHADBOLT

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I've spent most of this week nursing my Mum. She herself was a Nurse and during most of World War II she nursed American soldiers who had been wounded during the war in the Pacific.

Mum was born in West Timor in 1915. In those days Indonesia was a Dutch colony and her Father had been sent to Timor as an administrator. Trying to adjudicate during tribal disputes was a dangerous service and Mum was sent back to Holland for her education. It was a good education indeed and like many Dutch citizens she was fluent in five languages. Fortunately for Mum, her Grandmother decided in 1936 that Europe was once again on the verge of war and they immigrated to New Zealand.

Mum married Dad as a 'war bride' and a few days after the ceremony he was sent to Canada for training as a pilot in the Fleet Air Arm. For the next 4 years they were separated. After having two children they were separated once again when Dad was killed during retraining for the Korean War. Mum was devastated but she was a survivor. Her resilience in the face of adversity was her greatest strength. Once she lost all the fingers on her right hand in an industrial accident and within a month she was wanting to get back to work. She was a great believer in hard, honest work.

After the last elections I went running into her room, proud and excited. "Mum! Mum!" I called out, "I've just won my seventh election which means I'm the longest serving Mayor in New Zealand".

"That's all very well", she replied sternly, "but when are you going to get a proper job!"