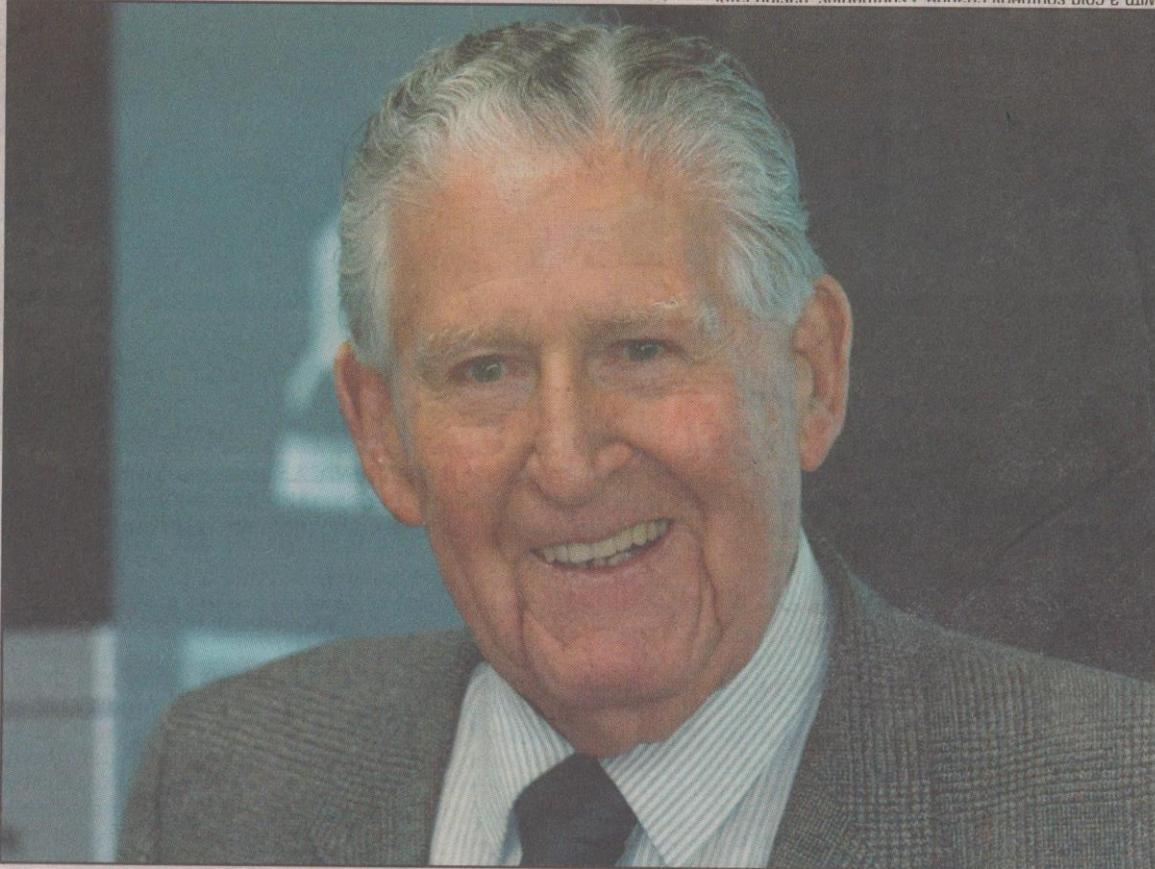




**FRED ALLEN, 1920-2012:** Fred Allen was captain in all 21 games, including six tests, he played for New Zealand from 1946-49. He is pictured above with skipper Felix du Plessis after South Africa's 12-6 win in Johannesburg in 1949. Allen went on to coach the All Blacks from 1967-77, winning all 14 tests in his tenure. Right, Allen after being awarded life membership to the New Zealand Rugby Union in 2006. Allen died on Saturday. He was 92.

NZPA, Rand Daily Mail pictures



# Fred Allen: A man ahead of his time

*30/4/2012*

# Kirky's tribute to All Black coaching great

RUGBY by John Hill

FORMER All Black captain Ian Kirkpatrick will be one of six pallbearers at Fred "The Needle" Allen's funeral service at Eden Park on Wednesday.

"I spoke to Fred's nephew Alex Carpenter and he asked me if I would be one of the pallbearers, along with himself, Waka Nathan, 'Pinetree' (Colin Meads), BJ Lochore, and John Graham. It's a tremendous honour and a privilege," said Kirky, who made his test debut for the Fred Allen-coached 1967 All Blacks in France.

"Wilson Whineray would have been another pallbearer but his hips aren't up to it."

Kirky, who scored a try on debut and went on to play 39 test matches, spoke to Allen on Anzac Day.

"I wasn't able to make it for his 92nd birthday, and he wasn't getting any younger, so when I was in Auckland I went to see him at the rest home (at Whangaparaoa).

"On Wednesday night he was OK but he got pneumonia on Thursday morning and never recovered. Alex rang me on Saturday morning. He said Fred went to sleep on Friday night and passed away in the early hours of Saturday, peacefully.

"We all knew it had to come some time but it was still a shock. Now we need to celebrate his life. He was a top man as well as an inspirational coach. He had been through so much in the war and was a man of integrity — a great man in all respects and one who will be missed.

Kirky said it was all about team for Allen. "I remember someone telling me that Fred dropped himself as All Black captain while in South Africa because he thought it would benefit the team.

"There have been countless stories written and said about him as a wonderful coach. Above all, for me, Fred was a man I had the utmost respect for on and off the field.

"He wasn't called Needle for nothing.

## TIPS FROM THE TOP:

All Black coach Fred Allen talks to members of the Poverty Bay squad, including Ian Kirkpatrick (pictured on the left side of the scrum), at a training session in 1974.

Gisborne Herald picture



There was one particular occasion when I copped the full force of his blast. It was before the France test in 1967. We were training one morning when Fred blew his whistle to stop the training. I remember thinking someone is going to get it.

"When he said 'some of you lazy buggers', or words to that effect, 'are pulling the chain', I thought it can't be me — I'm training like a maniac. Then he turned to me and said 'and you Kirkpatrick are the laziest of them all'. I'll tell you what, I found another gear I

didn't think I had.

"Apparently in his early days as coach of the ABs he was fond of telling Pinetree there was always the next bus out to Te Kuiti.

Kirkpatrick's selection for the All Blacks' tour of Great Britain and France was reported as a surprise. However, Allen's faith in the Bay man was quickly justified, with Kirkpatrick scoring a try in his first test against France.

His first official All Blacks game under Allen was in Canada on the way to Britain and France.

"I'd known about him when I was at

King's College and he was coach of the great Auckland side of that era, and I'd heard about his fiery reputation.

"Players weren't frightened of him as such but his presence was more intimidating than what I expected.

"I can't remember if he said anything specific to me before my debut on a terrible night in Montreal. It was under lights and it poured with rain. It was windy and bitterly cold, so I was probably more worried about how I was going to play, hoping like hell I wouldn't let the team down."

Kirky said Allen would have had no problems adapting to the professional era.

"He set the standard and was a stickler for players being properly dressed on and off the field — no socks round the ankles — but I believe he would have got the players of today to play for him.

"Fred understood that the game has changed — it's a lot more about marketing these days — but it would have been interesting to see how he would have handled the Sonny Bill situation and other aspects of the modern game.

"I have no doubt Fred would have been a successful coach no matter what era he coached in. He was a great motivator and a man ahead of his time."



Waka Nathan, Sir Brian Lochore, Sir Colin Meads and Ian Kirkpatrick after Sir Fred Allen's funeral service yesterday.

# Tributes flow for Sir Fred

by Patrick McKendry, NZ Herald

AUCKLAND — To the strains of Frank Sinatra's My Way, All Blacks coaching great Sir Fred Allen was farewelled in appropriate style yesterday afternoon.

At Eden Park, his "second home" according to his nephew Alex Carpenter, about 300 mourners paid their respects to Sir Fred, who died in Auckland at the age of 92 on Saturday. Former All Blacks Sir Wilson Whineray, Sir Brian Lochore and Sir Colin Meads spoke during the service, inside the stadium's North Stand, of Sir Fred's qualities as the man who coached the All Blacks 37 times for 37 wins, including 14 tests, from 1966-68.

"In the end, we just wanted to play for him because we believed in what he was telling us," said Sir Brian, who was named by Sir Fred as All Black captain during his tenure. "We believed in him as a coach."

Sir Fred, who served with distinction as an army lieutenant in the Solomon Islands and Middle East during World War 2 and was wounded twice in action, was known as a hard taskmaster who also had a softer side.

The tributes painted a picture of a man who believed in discipline and hard work but also someone who danced to his own tune. That's perhaps why Sinatra's song, which followed a rousing haka by King's College students, struck such a chord.

Sir Fred, who captained the All Blacks in all of his 21 games in the black jersey, had humble beginnings in Oamaru, the birthplace of another standout All Black, today's skipper, Richie McCaw. Sir Colin, who sat alongside Sir Fred during October's tense World Cup final at Eden Park, spoke of a man capable of giving fierce "barrages" to his senior players, but also someone who was generous.

He told a story about feeling like a "fish out of water" after being ordered by Sir Fred to accompany him to a women's fashion parade in Paris.

Sir Fred, whose background in the sewing industry and straight-to-the-point nature earned him the nickname "The Needle", later bought Meads a dress to give to his wife, Verna.

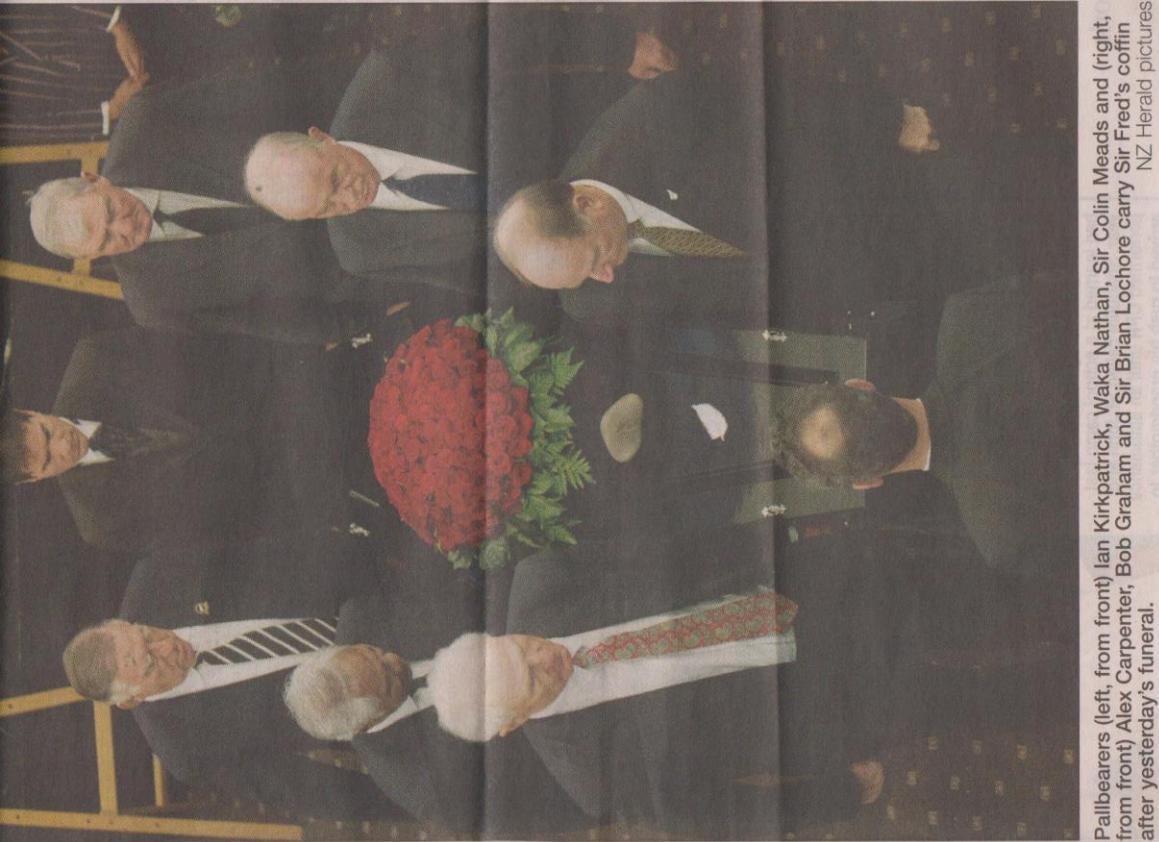
"He must go down as the best coach that world rugby ever had," Sir Colin said.

Among the other mourners were New Zealand rugby boss Steve Tew and former All Blacks Bryan Williams, Waka Nathan, Ian Kirkpatrick and Wayne Shelford.

Also there were Internal Affairs Minister Chris Tremain, son of the late All Black great Kel Tremain, and Labour MP Phil Twyford.

Sir Brian said the funeral was highly appropriate. "It was respectful. Everyone was there for a reason. They knew what he had done for New Zealand as a soldier, as a captain of the All Blacks, as a coach of Auckland and the All Blacks, and he was just a generally good man."

On the coffin lay a wreath of red roses, a silver fern and an original All Blacks cap.



Pallbearers (left, from front) Ian Kirkpatrick, Waka Nathan, Sir Colin Meads and (right, from front) Alex Carpenter, Bob Graham and Sir Brian Lochore carry Sir Fred's coffin after yesterday's funeral.