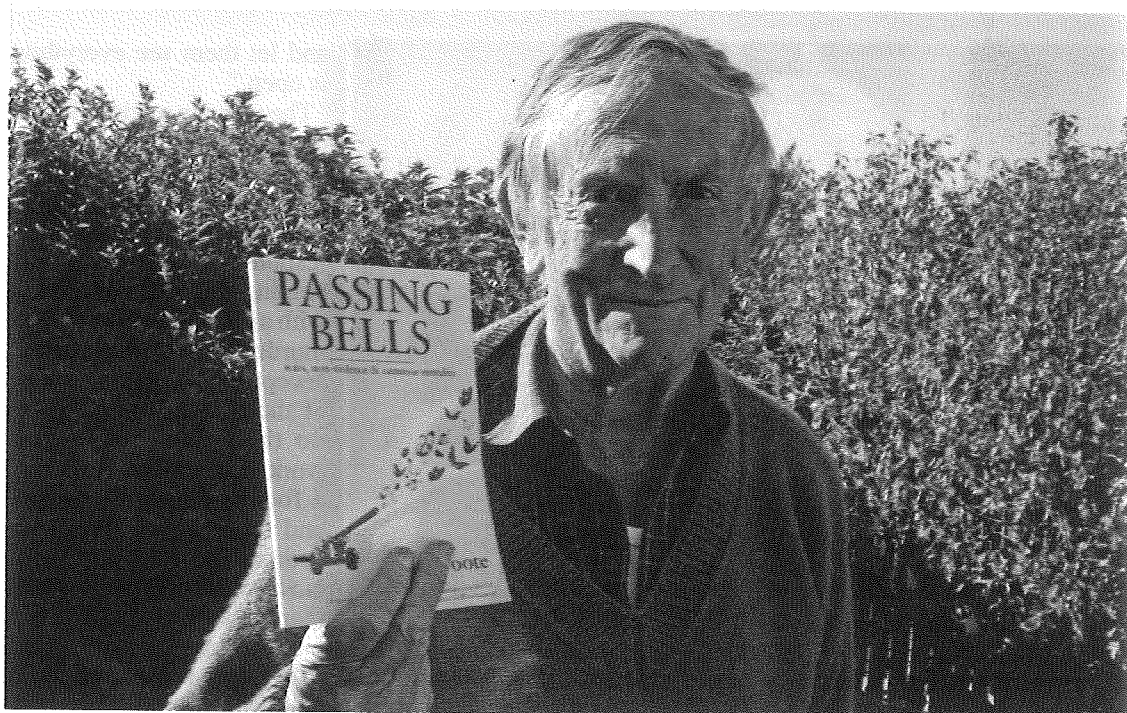


# Veteran peace activist writes 12th book



Will Foote with a copy of his latest book.

Chris Tobin

Veteran peace activist Will Foote has just written his 12th book and on his favourite topic – non-violence.

"I was looking for something I haven't covered before," he said at his Bryndwyr home last week. The book, *Passing Bells*, considers the human cost of wars, particularly those in which New Zealand has been involved and offers the suggestion that there are non-violent alternatives to taking up arms.

Mr Foote, 89, was a conscientious objector in the Second World War. How, then, does he view the growing prominence of Anzac Day?

"It's well and good that returned soldiers remember their fallen comrades but I think sometimes it's over militarised. Although it's meant to be a remembrance of no war, there's still a bit of glory attached to it. The soldiers don't believe that but the young people tend to get this impression."

He believed also the theory that New Zealand became a nation at Anzac in 1915 was incorrect.

"Going to a military disaster where thousands got killed: I can't go along with that. I think we became a nation when we went nuclear free and thumbed our noses at the United States."

Of his time as a conscientious objector, Mr Foote said he had not found incarceration in

camps during the Second World War as hard as his experience before this period.

"I was a sole teacher in rural Southland and appealed as a conscientious objector. The tribunal turned me down. One man said I was a Communist. It was all in the papers. One of the families at the school took their kids away and I was told I was not fit to teach. I was kicked out of a cricket club in Invercargill, not by the players but by the management.

"I'm not a religious objector. My objection is humanitarian and ethical. I don't believe you can solve anything by killing people. You've got to find another way."

Several months after going before the appeal board tribunal he had to appear in the Magistrate's Court. The judge there told him he was sincere but misguided.

He was taken away to spend the war behind barbed wire in camps in the North Island where he worked cutting scrub and flax.

After the war Mr Foote returned to teaching and remained active in the peace movement.

Will there be any more books?

"I don't think so but my wife says yes!"

Copies of the book are available from Flat 1, 52A Aorangi Rd, Bryndwyr. The cost is \$20 (\$15 each if two or more are bought).