Pat Duff was born in Edievale, South West Otago, in 1910. He died at Rotorua in November 1993. Pat completed a forestry degree in the early 1930s, the deepest years of the Great Depression.

Initially, he assisted his father with a short-lived country newspaper but by the time of the outbreak of war in 1939 he was employed by the Forest Service.

Joining the armed services, he was fated to be captured in the disastrous Greek campaign. Sergeant Duff and a like-minded companion refused to surrender with a large group who were under orders to do so. They slipped away, holding on to their arms in further defiance of instruction. Sadly, they were captured within days, trying to arrange an escape boat.

A long and filthy train journey later Pat commenced four years as a prisoner of war in Germany.

Repatriated in the closing year of the war, he soon renewed his forestry career and in late 1945 was assigned, at Rotorua, to Priestley Thomson. Priestley was then in the field preparation stages of planning the first comprehensive survey of indigenous forests. Headquarters for this enterprise was the fledgling Forestry Training Centre at Whakarewarewa. The centre was a short time later to be the nucleus of the Forest Experiment Station, forerunner of the present Forest Research Institute.

The first field work for the National Forest Survey was carried out by Forester Duff and Ranger Bob Lawn on the Maramuku plateau. They were pioneers of a project which spanned ten years and became something of a legendary exercise in forestry circles and beyond.

Pat Duff's association with the survey was soon to go from the early field work into the core of the wider scientific endeavour and community which formed the young Forest Research Institute. The necessity to refine volume tables for native tree species and provide statistical work for presentation of the large volume of raw data beginning to be generated by field staff of the survey led Priestley Thomson to initiate a mensuration section. He appointed Pat to lead it.

This move set the course for the following 28 years of Pat's working career. As a senior Scientific Officer he provided lengthy guidance of dedicated people who laid solid foundations for the present era of computer-based forest mensuration.

Pat was a great conversationalist. His interests were wide; his general knowledge and measured opinions commanded respect. Foremost among his outdoor pursuits was deer-stalking. Here he reflected

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