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NEWSLETTER No. 108

DECEMBER

~SEASONS GREETINGS~

2000

Our President and Executive send all members their best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

MOVE OF HQ:

Note the new location of NZPFOCA as above, with immediate effect. Amend your records.

LAST POST:

30265 Lt Col A.N. King

26 Jul 00 at Levin.

Last address - 3 Pigeon Grove, Woodlands, Waikane 6454

E-MAIL ADDRESS:

K.J. Avenell

ken.lnez.avenell@clear.net.nz

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

W.F. Giles

to: c/o NZMCA Mail Drop, PO Box 72147, Papakura 1730

G. Robb

to: 18 Diamond Head, Springfield, Tauranga

Lt I.E. Rollo

to: 14B Renown Rd, Raumati South

Mrs I. Boytor

to: Unit 1/947, Mt Eden Rd, Three Kings, Auckland

B.J. Calder

to: 2 Guildford Place, Tauranga

NEW MEMBERS:

439536 K.J. Avenell

15 Somerset Cres, Palmerston North (Associate)

Mrs Julie Jones

2/7 Hanlon Cres, Devonport, Auckland 9 (Lady Associate)

LIFE MEMBERS:

(a) For services to the Association as sponsor of the web site

Lt Col A.J. Rivers

w.e.f. 14 Oct 00

(b) On reaching the age of 80

R.H. Mitchell

w.e.f. 1 Feb 00

R.M. Urquhart

w.e.f. 22 Dec 97

Maj W. Weatherhead

w.e.f. 15 Aug 00

C.E. Batchelor

w.e.f. 1 Sep 00

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING:

This will be held at 1000hrs on Saturday 24 Feb 01 at Birkenhead RSA.

EDITORIAL

As space must be found for essential material, this transmission will be short. The outstanding development of the past year has been the growth of the website, as described in the report in this newsletter, which has established the reputation of our Association as a resource of gunner knowledge and history second to none. The Rivers partners deserve our gratitude for towing us into the information era of the third millenium.

"The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world" is an old quotation which is now becoming evident in all branches of our society. Though the ladies have not yet taken over the PFOCA, the reunion in Taupo showed signs of an effective wives' net which, in the interests of domestic harmony and the future of our gatherings, is probably a good thing.

Lastly, this year's get-together seemed to us the best yet, probably because it was the Editor's last effort before hanging up his boots. Salutations and farewell.

PRESIDENTS REPORT

I was elected to the position of President at the AGM in Taupo during November 1999. With the passing of the AGM and reunion dinner of 2000 I am now in a position to make my first annual report.

COMMITTEE:

The Committee has had a number of changes in the past year, with myself as President, John Rout as Secretary and John Barrett as Treasurer, the last two replace Jim Ross and Barney Harrop, who have both served the Association well and have our sincere thanks.

MEMBERSHIP:

The membership roll stands at 318 made up of the following categories —

Associate Members	47
Life Members	69
Honorary Members	6
Ordinary Members	196

The overall loss of members for the year was 7, of which 4 were struck off strength for various reasons. The biggest movement was the increase in Life Members, with 10 Ordinary Members moving up to the Life Members list on attaining the age of 80.

REUNION DINNER:

The Reunion Dinner, always the highlight of the Association year was held in Taupo Yacht Club on the 11 November 2000 and was a most enjoyable gathering. As in past years Wally Ruffell supplied a gun to be raffled. This year the winner was Col Tom O'Reilly who was delighted with his win. I believe the gun may be centre stage in the Commandant's office in Waiouru.

The thanks of the Committee must go to Wally for supplying this valuable source of revenue but more importantly for giving members the opportunity to gain a valuable piece of gunner memorabilia. Once again sincere thanks to Wally.

MEETINGS:

Committee meetings are held in the Birkenhead RSA every two months. Any points that members wish to raise can be sent to the Secretary, for discussion at these meetings.

In closing I would like to wish all members a Merry Christmas and good health for the coming year.

R.G. Blankley, PRESIDENT

OLD COMRADES' OWN WEBSITE

WEBMASTER'S REPORT — NOV 00:

The Association's website was launched on 5 December 1998 as a result of the AGM of 1998 and has run continuously ever since. It is updated with new material each month.

The Internet address for the Association website is — riv.co.nz/rnza/

The aim of the website is to reflect the objectives of this Association and to present New Zealand artillery matters to the world. It consists of history, recollections and opinions from New Zealand's professional gunners and gives an indication of the equipment, daily life, customs and traditions, organisational structures, and images of artillery from the 19th Century to the present during war, peacekeeping and peacetime, from a New Zealand perspective. At 800 pages, it is one of the largest artillery websites in the world.

Since the 1999 AGM, the website has had over 40,000 hits, with interest being shown from all over the world, from similar artillery associations, military installations, universities, schools, researchers, and individuals.

Several requests for assistance have been emailed to the Webmaster by visitors to the website. Generally, these are from people hoping to contact members of the Association, or from people wanting to find information about relatives (living and dead) who were NZ gunners. Several are from widows wanting to find men who served with their late husbands. The Webmaster has been able to answer most of these with help from members of the Association.

The overwhelming impression from web correspondence is that there is great support and respect for New Zealand's gunners around the world. It is intended that the website continue to operate along existing lines subject to the continued support of the Association.

Catherine Rivers, WEBMASTER

THE TAUPO WEEKEND, 10 TO 12 NOV 00

PART 1 — ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 11 NOV 00

Reports were received from Jim Gilbert (Bay of Plenty, Hawkes Bay) Roger Newth (Wellington, Marlborough) and Matt Crawley (Tauranga) in person, and by letter from Harry Honnor (Northland).

RESOLUTIONS:

The following resolutions were passed —

- (a) Approval of the Treasurer's report and financial statement.
- (b) Annual subscriptions to be unchanged.
- (c) Secretary's honorarium for 99-00 to be \$300.
- (d) Election of officers: All officers and Executive Committee members were reappointed, except for the following changes:
 Secretary: Capt J.B. Rout replaces J. Ross
 Treasurer: Capt J.H. Barrett replaces Mr D. Harrop
 District Rep: Maj T.G. Roche replaces Lt Col A.J. Rivers for Wanganui - Manawatu
 Executive Committee: Mr A.F.W. Powrie resigns, replaced by J. Ross
- (e) Website: The report of Webmaster Catherine Rivers was received and a vote of thanks accorded.
- (f) Votes of thanks to:
 - (i) J. Ross for his service as Hon Secretary
 - (ii) D. Harrop for his service as Treasurer
- (g) Next Reunion: This will be held at Taupo on the weekend 9-10-11 Nov 01.
- (h) A Christmas message is to be sent to CO and All Ranks NZBATT3 in East Timor.

PART II — REUNION DINNER

DEMONSTRATION 16FD REGT:

Through the kind offices of the Acting CO, Maj Chris Bath, and under the supervision of WO1 Paul Galloway, Master Gunner at the School, members were able to see a 105mm Light Gun and a Mistral Very Low Level Air Defence missile launcher at the Yacht Club before dinner. The differences between the 25pr and modern equipment, particularly in the drill of coming into action, were remarkable.

Also taking part were Maureen Alexander, Ray and Laurie Andrew, Doug Adams, Bill and Jasmine Beveridge, Bob Blankley, Graeme Black, John Blakey, Blackie and Shirley Burns, Tom Chapman, Matt Crawley and Rita, Mike and Elva Dakin, Dennis and Maggie Dwan, Ian Foster, Paul Galloway, Jim Gilbert, Hugh and Dianne Gibson, Bill and Emma Giles, Alan Henderson, Ron and Mike Hassett, Howard and Joan Jones, Jack Kearney, Ted and Nes Lile, Bill and Tui McLeay, Helen McMahon, Vic and Audrey Meyle, Brian Meyer and Linda, George and Patti Miln, Dick Mitchell, Bill and Estelle Morland, Roger and Lois Newth, Des and Bunty O'Connor, Don and Lorraine Potter, Bill and Joyce Powrie, David and Marie Roberts, Neil and Shelagh Rhynd, Jim and Ruby Ross, John Rout, Iris Rowntree and Gordon, Wally Ruffell and Lorraine and Gordon and Norah Weaver.

THE LOYAL TOAST:

Bob Blankley, Dining President, and Paul Galloway, Vice President, conducted the toast to the Queen, our Captain General.

THE REGIMENT:

Des O'Connor, apologising for being a renegade gunner (a mere 10 years RF service in the RNZA and 17 in the infantry) proposed the toast. He emphasized the strength of the 'once a gunner, always a gunner' principle which 'draws us all back irresistibly to the company of gunners. Undoubtedly it is the comradeship, good fellowship, loyalty, call it what you will at a level that is singular to the corps of Artillery'. He gave several examples, and described the Royal Tattoo he attended at the Horse Guards Parade, London in Jul this year, where the RA had the lion's share. Its motor cycle display team, "the world's fastest" gave a breath-taking dare-devil, criss-cross manoeuvre, then later the King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery carried out a similar feat with six-horse gun teams.

REPLY:

Col Tom O'Reilly in reply gave a wide-ranging commentary on the state of the Regiment and the Army in general. We hope to provide further detail of this in Newsletter 109.

ABSENT COMRADES:

Maj Roger Newth listed a "select group of Gunner Senior NCO's who... taught me how, why and when things were as they should be "both on his enlistment and later". Their experience and wisdom was invaluable to young soldiers who could not do better than use these men as an example to look up to and model themselves upon.

"During my almost 34 years in the service I met and served with many soldiers and Officers whom I was privileged to know and consider friends. A good number of those people are here with us tonight, and I say to them how proud I am to know you and to consider you my friends.

Sadly a lot of these people along with many of the earlier Instructors whom I have mentioned have passed on to the Great GunPark in the sky. I could mention names here, but would not like to miss any who are important both to me and to those here tonight.

I would ask you all to charge your glasses and drink the toast — "Absent Comrades".

UPDATE BY OUR PATRON:

Brig Ray Andrews, Patron of NZPFOCA and Colonel Commandant, RNZA briefed us on the exchange of loyal greetings between the Regiment (and those of 12 other Commonwealth artilleries) and the Captain General (Her Majesty) and the Master Gunner St James's Park on the occasion of Gunner's Day. He referred to the contribution to peace keeping of 16 Fd Regt, a high proportion of NZBATT3, about to leave for East Timor being gunners. Brig Andrews observed that relations with the serving Regt are strengthening, and recommended that our Assoc look into methods of increasing recruiting from that source.

Concluding, he thanked the outgoing Committee for their efforts, welcomed the new office-holders and bade us a Happy New Year.

PART III — CHURCH AND DISPERSE

CHURCH PARADE:

Once more Padre Bill McLeay conducted the service in the impressive atmosphere of the historic meeting house Te Tiki o Te Tamamutu. Lessons were read by President Bob Blankley and long-time Secretary Wally Ruffell. Again we had four good old hymns, and were grateful to Tui McLeay and organist Helen McMahon.

ONE FOR THE ROAD:

Support for the return home was imbibed in the Spa dining room, and paid for, as in past years, by the proceeds of the raffle of Wally Ruffell's brass model gun. Thus ended another enjoyable reunion weekend.

FROM AND ABOUT MEMBERS

MAJ MALCOLM NOWILL: was presented with a NZ Armed Forces Award by the CGS, Maj Gen Dodson at Trentham recently, we read in the Army News. Maj Nowill, who has served in the Sinai, Cambodia and Sierra Leone, is a Project Officer in the Directorate of Fleet Acquisition and Management at Logistic Executive.

MRS JULIE JONES: writes: "Many thanks for your kindness and for the sympathy from yourself and fellow members of the Old Comrades Assn. I was very touched by your words on Ron — he certainly loved his Artillery and his Army career, and would be delighted and honoured to know he was so remembered... Ron, and I as his wife, and our family lived the Army life for many years — 26, I think. The memories are rich and varied, of hard work and lots of fun. Above all, great comradeship..."

(Thanking Julie for this note, the Editor reckoned it expresses... the sort of basic idea for which the Association exists).

REIDAR PEDERSON: contributes a 1780 quote from George Washinton: "There is nothing so likely to produce peace as to be well prepared to meet the enemy".

(Unless, of course, a "benign strategic climate" such as ours makes this unnecessary, according to our pundits — Ed).

DARKIE FORRESTER: asks us to provide the last address in "Last Post" notices *(which we've now done — good idea)*. He's also acquired a DARKIE car number plate — with no comments from Black Power so far!

SEL BRYANT: provides much detail on early days in Waiouru, both post-war and in May 36, "when there was only an old shearing shed and yards". We wonder if he remembers Gordon Rowntree who came from Australia to bring his mother Iris to our reunion, and was Waiouru's "first paper boy and first postie?"

BRIAN MEYER: met Joe Fallon, Harry Crawford, Clarence Ormsby, Murray Broomhall and Alan Marshall (ex Medic with 161) in Brisbane on Long Tan Day, 18 Aug.

(Celebrating that action is a good ANZAC-based idea and thanks for your liaison with the Aust detachment, Brian — Ed).

THE ROY BARLOW MYSTERY

Alan "History" Henderson has provided the answer to the question of what became of Roy Barlow. Here is an abridged version: fuller detail is available on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website, or from the Secretary.

In Memory of

ROY BARLOW

Private

16245

20th Bn., N.Z. Infantry

who died on

Wednesday, 15th July 1942. Age 29.

(Served as RAEURN, EDWIN CHARLES).

Memorial:

**Grave Reference/
Panel Number:**

Location:

ALAMEIN MEMORIAL, Egypt
Column 102.

The Alamein Memorial forms the entrance to the El Alamein War Cemetery. Alamein is a village, bypassed by the main coast road, approximately 130 kilometres west of Alexandria on the road to Mersa Matruh.

When Brig Blackie Burns was informed of these details, he wrote —

"A sad ending to my enquiries concerning his fate after leaving Motutapu... His posting as a deserter was on my mind and I thought of doing something about it... However it may well be best to let sleeping dogs lie... It didn't occur to me that he might have been K.I.A. Seems that it happened the week following my capture back on the Alamein Line — probably in the same action that Norm Mitchell (and others) went into the bag when the tanks etc failed to turn up as ordered."

THE GUN.

By Wally Ruffell.

Continued from NL 107.

CARRIAGES: Carriages for the RML mountain equipments were constructed in a very similar manner to those for the field types. However, their elevating gears differed markedly. That for the RML 7-pr (Fig. 111) comprised a metal quoin or wedge operated by a screw attached to the carriage.

The gear for the RML 2.5-inch was similar but upon the quoin sat a wooden block secured by a pin as shown on Fig. 112.

Note on Fig. 112 one of the early attempts to control recoil, a rope connecting both wheels via a hook on the end of the trail.

CARRIAGE FOR 7 P° R M L STEEL GUN OF 200 LBS.

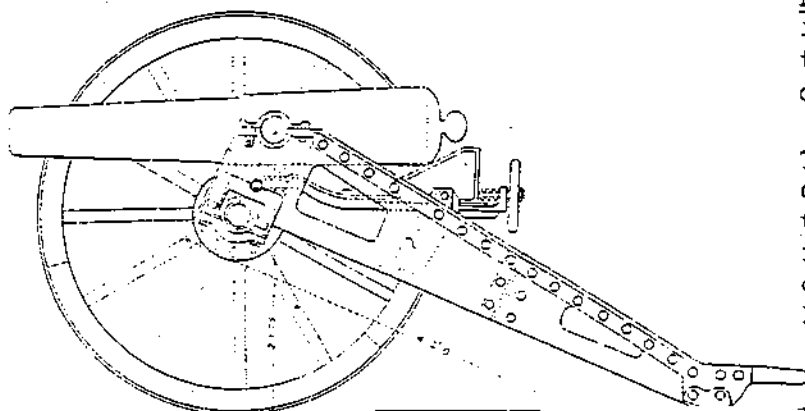


Fig. 111: Note the drawing is meant to show details of the carriage only. For details of the piece refer to Fig. 109.

Three mules were required to carry the equipment, one for the carriage (192 lbs), one for the piece (200 lbs), and one for the wheels etc, (about 200 lbs).

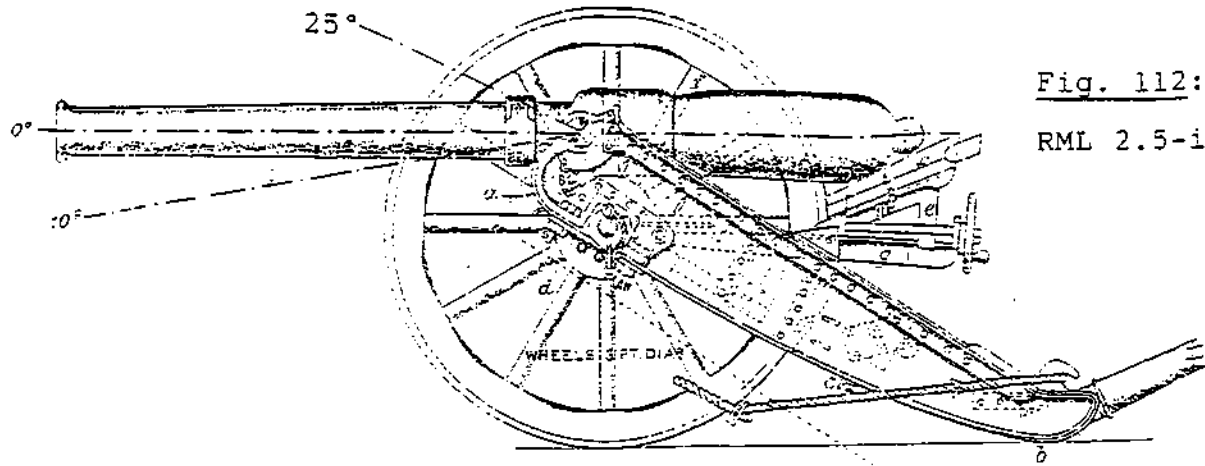


Fig. 112:

RML 2.5-inch Mk 1.

From the outside the Mark 2 looked identical.



Fig. 113: The Screw Gun.

Showing one that was captured in the South African War. Three Boer riflemen have been included to show the relative size of the equipment.

(To be continued)

OUR CORPS HISTORY

At the Taupo dinner, Alan Henderson, our "contract historian" explained that the book, rather than being a war history, will tell of the purpose and structure of the NZ artillery from the beginning, experiences of gunners on garrison and field service, and operational matters, particularly the development of doctrine and tactics under successive commanders with changing circumstances and equipment.

If you have information or anecdotes you think will be of interest to Alan, contact him on (04) 494-0628, fax at (04) 495-7212, or write him at History Group, Ministry for Culture and Heritage, PO Box 5364, Wellington.

STOP PRESS

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

T.J. (Josh) Collins

To: 426B Rotokauri Rd, RD 9, Hamilton. E Mail, kylina@free.net.nz