



# GUNNER NEWS



Royal New Zealand Artillery Association Newsletter

Issue # 172

December 2016

## Kia Ora & Welcome

Another bumper issue folks. I am somewhat mystified as to how this is happening but what I do know is that I have so much stuff to go into these newsletters that there is often articles left over and ready for the next one, so, I need some feedback. Let me know what you think—i.e. is the current newsletter too long? Would it be more preferable for it to be published two monthly with less pages or should we keep it as it is as you find it wonderful reading as you are trying to drop off to sleep.

This issue we say farewell to two very fine Gunners.

Firstly, Barry Dreyer is retiring as Colonel Commandant and I will deal with that later, but now I would like to thank, on behalf of the RNZA Association and its members, Skin Francis, who is stepping down as webmaster and general dogs body around the computer/internet side of communicating with you all. Skin comes from that generation of Gunners who, when asked to do something, says 'yeah, I'll give it a go', even though he knows nothing about the subject or even how to do it. You have done a dam fine job Skin so thank you mate.

I'm pleased to report that I have located the rest of the essay written by Ian Ahearn on the first Battle of Coral and have included part 2 in this issue. The final installment will come out next year.

I have also stolen some stuff from Gus River's website, from some Australian blokes (which is allowed) and from Mike Subritzky. I'm working on the basis that these people have to find me before they can charge me, so I'm in the clear.

And finally, I'm told that my last newsletter did not escape the clutches of the Military Censor, in the form of their email watchdog and it did not get through to serving Gunners because there was a wee four letter word, or two, in it. If you want to see the September issue send me an email and I'll send you the sanitised version.

Cheers. David Bähler

Skin comes from that generation of Gunners who, when asked to do something, says 'yeah, I'll give it a go', even though he knows nothing about the subject

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- And so much more you could shake a stick at it.



## HOWITZER BE THY NAME

thy kingdom come  
thy will be done

## I have been thinking

I have two abiding memories of Barry Dreyer that will stay with me forever.

The first occurred in 1972, in Malaya. I was a Sig in a FO party and we had stopped in the jungle, out the back of beyond, whilst we got our bearings and removed the leeches and other nasties that had attached themselves to our bodies after wading through chest deep swamps, when we heard this noise from behind us. We immediately went into a defensive position and I watched, mouth agape, as the CO of the Battalion came charging through the jungle, very closely followed by our BC, Barry Dreyer, drenched, glasses all fogged up, but a look of sheer determination on his face. He was joined by umbilical cord to his sig Nig Botica, closely followed by his stadia Paul O'Connor and bringing up the rear was wee Barney Bevan, who could be heard complaining loudly that if he had wanted to be a skin-diver he would have joined the navy. As an aside, the CO had apparently remarked that his BC's party had the best comms in the whole Battalion. Little did he know that Nig and Barney had somehow gained access to the 2/1 RNZIR sigs store before the rest of the Battalion did. My second memory is of a day on the Argo track in July of this year. We had been invited to observe 163 Bty as it conducted a LFX. The night promised to be extremely cold and the BC suggested I might like to accompany the Chief Clerk of the Regiment back to the Officers Mess for the night. I was in the vehicle, waiting to go, before he had finished his sentence. The following morning, we were told that there had been a 7 degree frost, but what most impressed the Gunners was that Barry Dreyer, as Col Comdt, had spent the night in the field with the Bty. "A bit chilly" he said.

Those two memories are indicative of the man. Those of you who have served with Barry will also have your memories. Barry joined the Army in 1962 and is finally retiring after 54 years of exemplary service to our country and our Corps. I speak for all ranks Barry when I wish you all the best for your 'retirement' and we thank you for the man that you are, for your service to our country and Regiment and for all that you have done for all of us. Would you please also pass on our sincere thanks to your lady, Judy, as she is the person who has always been in the background and provided the personal support that you needed to be the leader that you are.

You epitomise our motto: Quo Fas Et Gloria Ducunt – Where Right and Gory Lead. Well done faithful servant to our Guns.

Ubique

David B

## Last Post

Eisenhut, Calvin. 19 Jul 2016. Gnr 161 Bty, 16 Fd Regt RNZA Korea.

Jensen, Harry. 5 Aug 2016. Gnr 2NZE, WW2

Moeau, John. 11 Aug 2016. Gnr 16 Fd Regt RNZA Korea

Whiting, Frank. 26 Aug 2016. Major. Coastal & Field Gunner & NZ Navy WW2, Band supporter. Legend.

Kerslake, Robert. 10 Sep 2016. WO1. 16 Fd Regt RNZA, 161 Bty RNZA SVN.

Eatwell, Maurice Harry. 21 Oct 2016. Gnr, 35 & 37 Bty's, NZ Artillery, 2NZE, WW2.

Brocus, Bob. 21 Oct 2016. Gnr 4 (G) Med Bty RNZA

Bush, Barry (Mick). 22 Oct 2016.

Butler, Colin. 26 Oct 2016. Bdr 16 Fd Regt RNZA Korea

*They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old*

*Age shall not weary them nor the years condemn  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning*

*We will remember them*

*We will remember them*

'E aku rangatira o Tumatauenga kua wehe atu ki tua o te arai,  
haere, haere, haere atu ra ki ratou ma e whanga ana mo tatou  
katoa

Oh esteemed sir and warrior of Tumatauenga, join those that  
have left us; farewell, farewell and farewell. Go to them that wait  
for you.







The Poppy.  
 I am not a badge of honour,  
 I am not a racist smear,  
 I am not a fashion statement,  
 To be worn but once a year,  
 I am not glorification  
 Of conflict or of war.  
 I am not a paper ornament  
 A token,  
 I am more.  
 I am a loving memory,  
 Of a father or a son,  
 A permanent reminder  
 Of each and every one.  
 I'm paper or enamel  
 I'm old or shining new,  
 I'm a way of saying thank you,  
 To every one of you.  
 I am a simple poppy  
 A Reminder to you all,  
 That courage faith and honour,  
 Will stand where heroes fall.

1st Shankill Somme Association

## Presidents December Message

The Annual Report which I presented to the AGM on 22 October 16 is included later in this newsletter so I will not repeat it here, although I would invite all members of the Association to read through the report and reflect on what other ways we might be able to make ourselves more supportive and relevant to both the serving and retired gunner communities. If you've got an idea, raise it, but be prepared to help in implementing it, don't just leave it to 'someone else'. There is nothing worse for a committee than to be told 'you should do this or you should do that'. I urge all our members to embrace the term 'we'.

I am happy to report that since the AGM we have had a very successful introductory 'Mentor Session'; a group of retired officers sat down informally with the serving officers of 16th Field Regt and established initial contact. We hope to build on this contact in the coming year. A very sincere thanks to all those officers who took part in this session. Whilst the uniforms and fashions may change slightly, the issues and problems which we all face throughout our lives/careers are often remarkably common; what better service can we provide than to help others through our own experiences.

In relation to our need to operate as a 'we', WE need someone to step up to organise the 150<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of the establishment of 'D' Battery. WE have identified the weekend of 22 July 17 to be a suitable date, and whilst there is a lot of support from inside and outside Wellington, at this

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## Quote for the Day

"St Barbara of the Artillery Corp,  
 Be at the bursting of the doors of  
 doom,  
 And in the dark deliver us,  
 Amen."

*Irish field Artillery poem*



stage we do not have anyone to coordinate activities. I would ask anyone who would like to help to contact me **URGENTLY**. It is a great opportunity for a memorable reunion of 22 'D' Battery personnel.

Something from my Annual Report which I must repeat; our gratitude to Col Barry Dreyer for his outstanding service for the past six years as our Colonel Commandant. Barry's contribution to both the serving gunner community, and to the wider environment of association members and their families, cannot be understated. His personal knowledge of historical matters and his personal knowledge and support of veterans and their families have been huge contributions to our esprit de corps as a Regiment/Regimental Association. Barry, on behalf of all gunners, thank you.

Finally, I would wish everyone a safe and enjoyable festive season. Ask not what the Association can do for you, but what you can do for the Association.

Ubique

Tony McLeod, President, RNZA Association,  
November 2016

**A TRUE LEADER HAS THE  
CONFIDENCE TO STAND  
ALONE, THE COURAGE TO  
MAKE TOUGH DECISIONS, AND  
THE COMPASSION TO LISTEN  
TO THE NEEDS OF OTHERS. HE  
DOES NOT SET OUT TO BE A  
LEADER, BUT BECOMES ONE  
BY THE EQUALITY OF HIS  
ACTIONS AND THE INTEGRITY  
OF HIS INTENT.**

**WARNING: Canada is politically in-  
correct. We say: Merry Christmas,  
God Bless Everyone and In God We  
trust. We salute our troops and our  
flag. If this offends you...LEAVE!**

**IF A MAN SAYS  
HE WILL FIX IT,  
HE WILL.**

**THERE IS NO NEED  
TO REMIND HIM  
EVERY 6 MONTHS.**

## China admits 320,000 troops fought in Vietnam

**HONG KONG (Reuters)** — China has admitted for the first time that it sent more than 300,000 combat troops to Vietnam to fight against U.S. forces and their South Vietnamese allies.

The semi-official China News Service said today that China sent 320,000 soldiers to Vietnam during the 1960s. It also spent over \$20 billion to support Hanoi's regular North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong guerrilla units.

The agency report cited "The History of the People's Republic of China," published by the official State Archives Publishing House, as saying that more than 4,000 Chinese soldiers were killed during the war.

Fighting ended when victorious North Vietnamese tanks battered their way into the grounds of Doc Lap Palace in Saigon on April 30, 1975.

During the war China denied U.S. allegations that its soldiers were operating in Vietnam.

U.S. intelligence reports at the time spoke of U.S. combat units finding soldiers dressed in Chinese combat gear and wearing Chinese

insignia.

Presidents Johnson and Nixon were wary of allowing U.S. aircraft to bomb too close to the Chinese border with North Vietnam for fear of involving the Chinese on a larger scale.

During the 10 years of direct U.S. involvement, American troop levels reached over 500,000. Estimates of North Vietnamese Army units varied, but Hanoi maintained throughout the war its soldiers went only as volunteers to help the southern Viet Cong guerrilla movement.

Units from South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand fought alongside U.S. and South Vietnamese soldiers, with logistical support from Thailand and the Philippines.



**Whoever drinks beer, he is quick to sleep; whoever sleeps long, does not sin; whoever does not sin, enters Heaven! Thus, let us drink beer!**

**-Martin Luther**

## The Colonel Commandants reports:

Greetings fellow gunners. It has been a busy year for all, and 2017 looks even more challenging and busy.

For all serving and retired Gunners, and families, I wish you a relaxing and enjoyable Christmas break and festive season, and a very good 2017. In particular, I hope that all those serving the Regiment overseas in areas of risk and danger remain safe and healthy, and that they return to New Zealand and their loved ones safely. For those Gunners or family ill or suffering, we all hope you recover well and quickly.

I am writing this just a few days after Remembrance Sunday in the United Kingdom, when the RNZA Bronze Gunner gifted to the Royal Regiment of Artillery for their 300th Anniversary earlier this year, was finally presented. The presentation was done on our behalf by John Tulloch during the Royal Artillery Remembrance Sunday functions in London commemorating Armistice Day. Some of you will remember John as a Forward Observer with 161 Battery in Vietnam and subsequently as Adjutant 16 Field Regiment, before he returned to the United Kingdom and joined the Royal Artillery. We will produce John's notes and photographs on the presentation on our various Facebook pages and the Association website.

Importantly, the Band of the Royal Regiment of New Zealand Artillery has just returned from Australia, where they paraded at The Shrine in Melbourne at the main Armistice Day commemorations, at the invitation of the Victorian RSL and Government. From what I have seen they did a great job of representation for both the RNZA and the country, and they were certainly well received in Australia. They also performed at eight or nine other venues during the days they were in Victoria. They were taken to and from Australia by the RNZAF. Well done the Band.

While talking of the Band, they lost one of their great supporters and characters in September, the 101-year-old Maj Frank Whiting. Frank had joined the RNZA in December 1940 in 9 Heavy Regiment working his way through to Battery Captain in what had become 9 Coast Regiment, defending Auckland. With the Japanese threat to Auckland diminishing Frank decided to get closer to the War, joined the Navy as an Able Seaman and went to the United Kingdom. He went to sea with a cruiser squadron, was commissioned and then trained as a fighter aircraft direction officer on aircraft carriers. He had a short period on carriers before being sent to the Pacific to join the fleet there at about the time the war ended. He rejoined 9 Coast Regiment before transferring to the Regular Force as a coast gunner. He served as Ad-

jutant of his Regiment, and Camp Commandant Narrow Neck Camp. He was always a great supporter of the RNZA and our Band, regularly attending Band functions in Auckland right up until his death. I was very pleased to be able to speak at his memorial service on behalf of the RNZA.

October saw the annual reunion of your Association. Others will report on the weekend, but it was a very relaxed and enjoyable three days on the Northshore in Auckland, catching up with old friends and colleagues including our Australian guests.

During the weekend I was able to head away (with my *Stadia* of old, Paul O'Connor) to watch 11/4 Battery live fire mortars at the range on Kaipara South Head. The Battery was in fine form and enjoying their first live firing exercise for many years at their own local range.

Earlier this month I was able to visit 11/4 Battery's newly established troop in Linton Camp – 22 (D) Troop, RNZA.

The Linton visit was centred around the Cordite Cup, which was duly won by the Gunners, 4-1. The Cup is for competition between the RNZA and RNZAC over four sports and one Skill at Arms competition. Congratulations to all those involved over the three days of highly competitive activity.

I am coming to the end of my tenure as Colonel Commandant. It has been an immense honour and privilege to work with you all in furthering the interests of the Gunners. Our Corps has always been known for its professionalism, comradeship and ability to have fun. I do not think this has changed at all, and long may that last.

Once again, wishing you all the very best for the holiday break, and a prosperous and enjoyable 2017.

Ubique  
Barry Dreyer  
Colonel Commandant



Barry Dreyer presenting The Bronze Gunner to the Director Infantry Australia



### 30 Military Leadership Quotes

Those who command themselves, command others.\_*William Hazlitt*

Rank does not confer privilege or give power. It imposes responsibility.\_*Peter F. Drucker*

Leadership is an opportunity to serve. It is not a trumpet call to self-importance.\_*J. Donald Walters*

Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without strategy.\_*Norman Schwarzkopf*

I cannot trust a man to control others who cannot control himself.\_*Robert E. Lee*

Never give an order that can't be obeyed.\_*General Douglas MacArthur*

Whoever is under a man's power is under his protection, too.\_*David J. Schwartz*

A general never shows despair. He instills confidence in his troops. He leads them forward, even into the mouth of death.\_*Rick Riordan, The Throne of Fire*

Honour bespeaks worth. Confidence begets trust. Service brings satisfaction. Cooperation proves the quality of leadership.\_*James Cash Penney*

Great leaders inspire. They maintain a hopeful attitude, even in the face of discouraging setbacks, constant criticism and abundant opposition. People don't follow discouraged leaders. They follow those who persist with hope.\_*RICK WARREN, Ladies' Home Journal, Oct. 2008*

A good general not only sees the way to victory; he also knows when victory is impossible.\_*Polybius*

Lead me, follow me, or get the hell out of my way.\_*George S. Patton Jr., Patton Principles*

Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity.\_*General George Patton*

When we think we lead, we are most led.\_*Lord Byron*

It doesn't take a hero to order men into battle. It takes a hero to be one of those men who goes into battle.\_*Norman Schwarzkopf*

I am more afraid of an army of 100 sheep led by a lion than an army of 100 lions led by a sheep.\_*Talleyrand*

Tis skill, not strength that governs a ship.\_*Thomas Fuller*

The multitude who require to be led, still hate their leaders.\_*William Hazlitt*

Not all readers are leaders, but all leaders are readers.\_*Harry S. Truman*

In the military, I learned that 'leadership' means raising your hand and volunteering for the tough, important assignments.\_*Tulsi Gabbard*

Do what is right, not what you think the high headquarters wants or what you think will make you look good.\_*Norman Schwarzkopf*

Leadership is for those who love the public good and are endowed and trained to administer it.\_*Thornton Wilder*

Great leaders are almost always great simplifiers, who can cut through argument, debate, and doubt to offer a solution everybody can understand.\_*General Colin Powell*

Humanity needs heroic leadership from those who see all life as precious.\_*Bryant McGill*

My own definition of leadership is this: The capacity and the will to rally men and women to a common purpose and the character which inspires confidence.\_*General George Patton*

The day the soldiers stop bringing you their problems is the day you stopped leading them. They have either lost confidence that you can help them or concluded that you do not care. Either case is a failure of leadership.\_*Colin Powell*

If soldiers are punished before they have grown attached to you, they will not prove submissive and, unless submissive, then will be practically useless. If, when the soldiers have become attached to you, punishments are not enforced, they will still be useless.\_*Sun Tzu,*

Leadership to me means duty, honour, country. It means character, and it means listening from time to time.\_*George W. Bush*

To have reservations is to show true leadership. To have certainty without question, to lead people to battle with no qualms, or to prosecute without hesitation are qualities of a tyrant.\_*Laura Kreitzer, Abyss*

## A Soldiers Christmas Poem

T'was the night before Christmas.  
He lived all alone,  
in a one bedroom house.  
Made of plaster and stone.

I had come down the chimney  
with presents to give  
and to see just who  
in this home did live

I looked all about  
a strange sight I did see  
no tinsel no presents  
not even a tree

No stocking by mantle  
just boots filled with sand  
on the wall hung pictures  
of far distant lands

With medals and badges  
awards of all kinds  
a sober thought  
came through my mind

For this house was different  
it was dark and dreary  
I found the home of a soldier  
once I could see clearly

The soldier lay sleeping  
silent alone  
curled up on the floor  
in this one bedroom home

The face was so gentle  
the room in such disorder  
not how I pictured  
a New Zealand soldier

Was this the hero  
of whom I'd just read?  
Curled up on a poncho  
the floor for a bed?

I realised the families  
that I saw this night  
owed their lives to these soldiers  
who were willing to fight

Soon round the world  
the children would play  
and grownups would celebrate  
a bright Christmas day

They all enjoyed freedom  
each month of the year  
because of the soldiers  
like the one lying here  
I couldn't help wonder  
how many lay alone  
on a cold Christmas eve  
in a land far from home

The very thought brought  
a tear to my eye  
I dropped to my knees  
and started to cry

The soldier awakened  
and I heard a rough voice  
"Santa don't cry,  
this life is my choice;

I fight for freedom  
I don't ask for more  
my life is my god  
my country, my Corps

The soldier rolled over  
and drifted to sleep  
I couldn't control it  
I continued to weep

I kept watch for hours  
so silent and still  
and we both shivered  
from the cold night's chill

I didn't want to leave  
on that cold dark night  
this guardian of honour  
so willing to fight

Then the soldier rolled over  
with a voice soft and pure  
whispered "carry on Santa  
it's Christmas Day, all is se-  
cure."

One look at my watch  
and I knew he was right  
"Merry Christmas my friend  
and to all a good night."

*Submitted by Grant Hays  
December 1999*

## Reports from the RNZRSA Conference:

### Repatriation of Deceased Servicemen (and Dependants) from Malaysia

Over the past year, there has been a growing discussion in veterans' circles regarding the repatriation of deceased servicemen and some dependants who are presently buried in the Cemetery in the Terendak Garrison area, now a Malaysian Army base. This Cemetery is NOT a Commonwealth War Graves Commission Cemetery, and access to it for families requires prior arrangements with the Malaysian authorities.

At the Commemorative Service on Vietnam War day at the Michael Fowler Centre in Wellington, two very strong and heartfelt addresses were made in the presence of the Governor-General, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Veterans Affairs.

At the recent RNZRSA National Council, both the Prime Minister and Minister of Veterans Affairs spoke of the investigation, by the Veterans Advisory Board of issues in the repatriation of the NZ servicemen buried in Malaysia. The National Council then past the following remit:

That RNZRSA support the repatriation of the bodies of deceased service personnel and family members from Malaysia where NOK agree. This was carried unanimously.



## Excerpt from 'Twelve Days on the Somme'

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“‘Camp 34’ itself was a camp in name only- a few forlorn groups of rude tarpaulin-sheet shelters huddled together, as though they shrank from the surrounding desolation. One or two bell-tents were there, it is true, here and there, but even they looked unhappy as if they knew themselves to be insecurely at anchor in the rising sea of mud. Though even these few tarpaulin-sheets and bell-tents might have been sufficient shelter for the pitiful remnant of the Scottish Regiment that we were relieving, they were entirely inadequate for a Battalion more or less up to strength. Since no shelter had been prepared for us, necessity forced us to take steps to procure it for ourselves. In other words, we were reduced to looting, or in the more picturesque language of the ranks, ‘scrounging’ additional cover. With the grim determination of the British soldier, bedraggled men set off with the hearty approval, if not the verbal permission, of their officers to see what they could find. I am not ashamed to confess that, unofficially, I strongly encouraged the more experienced soldiers - who were therefore less likely to be caught – scour the dripping countryside for anything likely to improve the Company’s accommodation and even gave them permission to leave the camp to “visit the canteen, Sir.” Needless to say, that canteen was never discovered, but other valuable things were.

So far as I was concerned, the first incident was the arrival of the CO, imperturbable as always, though inwardly raging at the lack of organisation which subjected men going into battle to such experiences. Behind him, looking decidedly sheepish, stood my young servant, Briggs.

“I congratulate you on your servant,” the Colonel said casually. “Why Sir?” I queried.

“Well, as I walked into the very commodious trench shelter reserved for Battalion Headquarters, I saw your man walking out

the other end with the stove. And you hadn’t been in camp five minutes! A good boy that. But I’m sorry I could not spare the stove!” The Colonel smiled and moved on.

Every minute saw an addition to ‘camp stores’, the greatest triumph being the purloining, by Privates Purkiss and Kiddell, from under the very noses of the rightful owners, of a huge balloon tarpaulin which proved big enough of itself to house more than half the Company!

In less than a couple of hours I was satisfied that reasonably dry and warm quarters had been contrived for every man, of B Company at least. Meanwhile a hot meal had been issued from the cookers and the rain stopped. Spirits began to mount again and as a setting sun was wanly mirrored in the water-logged shell holes, snatches of song began to rise with the smoke of braziers from the improvised shelters.

Not least remarkable was the transformation of the bell-tent allotted for the Company Headquarters. On arrival this had flapped lugubriously on its sagging ropes over a patch of mud, but within the hour it had been pitched afresh, taut and confident in appearance; a neighbouring RE dump had provided enough new trench boards for a complete floor and a brazier had been lit.

The enlargement of that camp in so short a time is worthy to rank among the minor miracles of war.

The day closed with the issue of rum. The first stage of the relief was over.”

“Twelve Days on the Somme, A Memoir of the Trenches, 1916”. Sidney Rogerson. Greenhill Books. 1933  
Servant – British Officers had a servant, also known as a Batman. Ed’s note.





An old Doberman starts chasing rabbits and before long, discovers that he's lost. Wandering about, he notices a panther heading rapidly in his direction with the intention of having lunch.

The old Doberman thinks, "Oh, oh! I'm in deep trouble now!"

Noticing some bones on the ground close by, he immediately settles down to chew on the bones with his back to the approaching cat. Just as the panther is about to leap, the old Doberman exclaims loudly, "Boy, that was one delicious panther! I wonder, if there are any more around here?"

Hearing this, the young panther halts his attack in mid-strike, a look of terror comes over him and he slinks away into the trees.

"Whew!," says the panther, "That was close! That old Doberman nearly had me!"

Meanwhile, a squirrel who had been watching the whole scene from a nearby tree, figures he can put this knowledge to good use and trade it for protection from the panther. So, off he goes.

The squirrel soon catches up with the panther, spills the beans and strikes a deal for himself with the panther.

The young panther is furious at being made a fool of and says, "Here, squirrel, hop on my back and see what's going to happen to that conniving canine!"

Now, the old Doberman sees the panther coming with the squirrel on his back and thinks, "What am I going to do now?," but instead of running, the dog sits down with his back to his attackers, pretending he hasn't seen them yet, and just when they get close enough to hear, the old Doberman says .....

"Where's that squirrel? I sent him off an hour ago to bring me another panther!"

Moral of this story...

Don't mess with the old dogs... Age and skill will always overcome youth and treachery! Bull S..t and brilliance only come with age and experience.

The Devil rose from the flaming Pit to  
look on the fields of blood,  
And he watched the man-waves meet and  
merge in a frightful swirling flood;  
He heard the cries of the wounded rise and  
the guns' mad anthem swell,  
And a sobbing lad whom he helped to die  
groaned, "God! but it's just like Hell!"  
The Devil sank to his roaring Pit, and a  
cunning smile had he,  
For bursts and billows of flame were there  
as far as a fiend could see.  
"God burn the gunners!" he gaily roared,  
and chuckled with new found mirth,  
"This Hell of mine is a cosy place! 'Fore  
God, but it's just like Earth!"

*Lance Corporal Albert Martin, MM,  
served with the New Zealand Army in  
Western Europe during World War One  
and carried a newspaper cutting of this  
poem in his paybook. Unfortunately, the  
author's name was not retained with the  
cutting.*



*St Barbara—our Patron Saint*

*You can help us if you live near Wellington. See page 15*



## Gunner Stratton's 13th Jump

One sunny day in Raglan,  
the twenty sixth of May,  
the Battery had it's guns out,  
all gleaming on display.

The B.C. yelled "Get Ready Boys!"  
The planes are coming in,  
with Para-Gunners all onboard,  
the show will soon begin.

The first Herc dropped a streamer,  
to give them wind and berth,  
the second dropped Gus Rivers,  
and we watched Gus glide to earth.

The third plane dropped a Howitzer,  
all packaged in a crate,  
and then the Para-Dak flew in,  
'cause the show was running late.

Inside the Gunners hooked their chutes,  
and shuffled to the door,  
then launched themselves out into space,  
and counted up to four.

It was Gunner Stratton's thirteenth jump,  
and he was last in line,  
but as he shuffled to the door,  
he tripped upon some twine.

He tumbled out the aircraft door,  
and spun into a candle,  
then rigging lines and capewell clips,  
snagged his reserve chute handle.

And as he flew directly down,  
Sergeant Bill James yelled the score,  
"Kick out for God's sake, Stratton!",  
"You're heading for the floor!".

Gunner Botica yelled out to the stick  
"Steer Away! Don's coming through!",

He couldn't count his "right-left-right",  
and now he's in the poo!

The Paratroops were soon dispersed,  
and floated in the sun,  
as Gunner Stratton tumbled through,  
his speed now reached "the ton"!

Then as he closed with Mother Earth,  
he popped his second chute,  
but it hung there like a Christmas tree,  
and hooked around his boot.

When all at once Don gave a kick,  
and he tried to free his pack,  
then he ploughed into a big sand hill,  
and he landed on his back.

And as we watched in shrieks of awe,  
the wind deployed his chute,  
and dragged the poor unconscious sod,  
by the rigging on his boot.

It dragged the poor unconscious bloke,  
for nearly half a mile,  
with a stick of Gunners racing behind,  
running hard in the steeplechase style.

When finally they caught him up,  
all that he could say,  
was "If I ever find who packed that chute...  
the Airforce bitch will pay!"

She didn't pack me chute right mates,  
she didn't pack the handle,  
and when I jumped out of the door,  
I turned into a candle.

It was Gunner Stratton's thirteenth jump,  
and he nearly died that day,  
so the Battery went to the Raglan Pub,  
and we kept the ghosts at bay.

*Mike Subritzky, 161 Battery*





## How do you handle adversity?

Life is full of highs and lows. And it's during those lows that we are truly tested and we learn so much about ourselves. We may become angry, we may grieve, and we may even become depressed... but we can only hope to come out of these situations as a better, stronger person. And to make it through such dark times, sometimes we need the help and support of others. In particular, we may seek the advice of those who may have more experience and wisdom than us.

In the short story below, a woman had just been cheated on by her husband. She was obviously devastated and sought help from her grandmother. Read Grandma's response below. I think you'll find that it rings true for so many of us...

This is a good lesson for all of us, no matter what stage of life you're in. You'll see what I mean.

A young woman went to her grandmother and told her about her life and how things were so hard for her—her husband had cheated on her and she was devastated. She did not know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up. She was tired of fighting and struggling. It seemed as soon as one problem was solved, a new one arose.

Her grandmother took her to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Soon the pots came to boil. In the first she placed carrots, in the second she placed eggs, and in the last she placed ground coffee beans. She let them sit and boil; without saying a word.

In about twenty minutes she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. She pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl.

Then she ladled the coffee out and placed it in a bowl. Turning to her granddaughter, she asked, 'Tell me what you see.'

'Carrots, eggs, and coffee,' she replied. Her grandmother brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they were soft. The grandmother then asked the granddaughter to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hardboiled egg.

Finally, the grandmother asked the granddaughter to sip the coffee. The granddaughter smiled as she tasted its rich aroma. The granddaughter then asked, 'What does it mean, grandmother?'

Her grandmother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity: boiling water. Each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard, and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak. The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior, but after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened. The ground coffee beans were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water, they had changed the water.

"Which are you?" she asked her granddaughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg or a coffee bean?"

Think of this: Which am I? Am I the carrot that seems strong, but with pain and adversity do I wilt and become soft and lose my strength?

Am I the egg that starts with a malleable heart, but changes with the heat? Did I have a fluid spirit, but after a death, a breakup, a financial hardship or some other trial, have I become hardened and stiff? Does my shell look the same, but on the inside am I bitter and tough with a stiff spirit and hardened heart?

Or am I like the coffee bean? The bean actually changes the hot water, the very circumstance that brings the pain. When the water gets hot, it releases the fragrance and flavour. If you are like the bean, when things are at their worst, you get better and change the situation around you. When the hour is the darkest and trials are their greatest, do you elevate yourself to another level?

How do you handle adversity? Are you a carrot, an egg or a coffee bean?

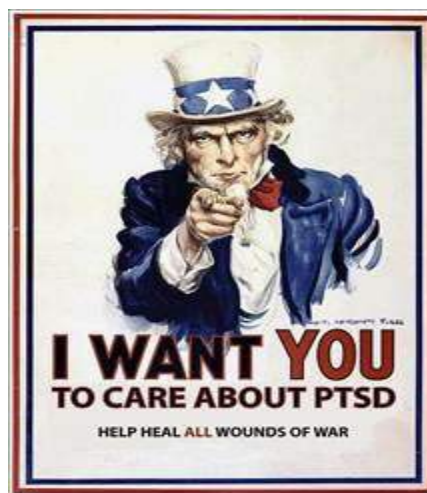
May you have enough happiness to make you sweet, enough trials to make you strong, enough sorrow to keep you human and enough hope to make you happy.

The happiest of people don't necessarily have the best of everything; they just make the most of everything that comes along their way. The brightest future will always be based on a forgotten past; you can't go forward in life until you let go of your past failures and heartaches.

When you were born, you were crying and everyone around you was smiling. Live your life so at the end, you're the one who is smiling and everyone around you is crying.

May we all be like the COFFEE.

Read more at <http://www.metaspoon.com/cheated-grandma-life-advice-carrot-egg-coffee/#i5oc0QmEaxxHi6F.99>



## Presentation of the RNZA Gunner Bronze

By Major JSM Tulloch MBE (late RA and RNZA)

The Colonel Commandant of the Royal Regiment of New Zealand Artillery (RNZA), Colonel Barry Dreyer, afforded me the great honour and rare privilege of presenting the Gunner Bronze, on his behalf and in his absence and on behalf of the Royal Regiment of New Zealand Artillery, to the Royal Regiment of Artillery in recognition of their Tercentenary year.

On the 13 November 2016, after the Royal Artillery Ceremony of Remembrance at the Royal Artillery Memorial in Hyde Park, I presented the Gunner Bronze to the Master Gunner St James's Park, General Sir Timothy Granville-Chapman GBE KCB within the imposing interior of Seaford House, the Royal College Defence Studies, Belgrave Square, London.

The Gunner Bronze was shrouded by the New Zealand flag, which was provided most appropriately by 94 (New Zealand) HQ Battery. I read out the Colonel Commandant's address, unshrouded the Gunner Bronze and presented it to the Master Gunner. He accepted it on behalf of the Royal Regiment of Artillery and then he gave a very gracious acceptance speech. He thanked the Colonel Commandant, the RNZA and all New Zealand gunners for this most generous gift. He espoused the strength of the Royal Regiment and the extraordinary ties that were held within the Commonwealth Artillery and that the sculpture caught the essence of strength, skill and determination of the New Zealand gunner. He also made kind reference to my Vietnam Tour of Duty and made comparisons to today's precision fires of computers and push button technology to adjusting fire in the jungle where compass, pacing, sound and expertise provided the same precision fires.

In attendance at the presentation were the New Zealand Defence Advisor, Brigadier Evan Williams and his wife, the Defence Advisors from Australia, Canada and the USA. Other senior officers present were Major General Neil Marshall OBE, Major General John Milne CB Chairman of the Board of Management the Royal Regiment of Artillery and Brigadier David Radcliffe OBE. Included amongst those present was Mike Wicksteed late RNZA. There were also many others present of all ranks with their wives and children. Regrettably Brigadier Williams and his wife had to suddenly leave after the presentation as news was coming in about the terrible

earthquake north of Christchurch.

After the presentation, many went up and observed the Gunner Bronze and several 'stroked' the head. Some of the guests had heard of Matt Gauldie the artist. They also enquired as to who was the model so I explained the sculpture was made from a black and white photograph of Gunner Teepu on active service in Vietnam in 1968. I mentioned that we had served together in Vietnam and in Papakura. But I stressed that the sculpture was representative of all New Zealand gunners throughout the generations.

After the presentation, everyone retired to the traditional and very splendid curry lunch produced by WO2 (RCWO) Meachin of 42 (Alem Hamza) AD Support Battery RA and his team of Army chefs. A brilliant finish!

The Gunner Bronze will be displayed, with the Colonel Commandant's address, at the Tercentenary Display within RA RHQ at Larkhill.





## MESSAGE FROM COLONEL COMMANDANT ROYAL REGIMENT OF NEW ZEALAND ARTILLERY

Master Gunner, distinguished guests, fellow Gunners and guests,

I regret that I am not here today but I am very pleased to be able to have John Tulloch present this Bronze Gunner to the Royal Regiment of Artillery, on behalf of the Royal Regiment of New Zealand Artillery. John was a Forward Observation Officer in Vietnam with 161 Battery RNZA in 1968/69 supporting 3RAR and then 9RAR. On his return to New Zealand, he became the Adjutant in 16 Field Regiment RNZA which was during my time in the regiment, and a very good Adjutant he was too.

The Bronze Gunner was created by Matt Gauldie. He is recognised as one of New Zealand's leading artists. Many of his works are in galleries and private collections worldwide. More recently he has been commissioned in Australia, New Zealand and by the Turkish Government to complete monumental bronzes for public place display. He is currently a serving member of 11/4 Battery RNZA.

The Bronze Gunner is representative of all New Zealand field gunners, fighting their gun in action with skill, strength and determination. It is one of only two that have been officially presented by the Royal Regiment of New Zealand Artillery.

Three hundred years is a long time for any organisation or trade. Few groups have had the distinguished and essential service provided by the Gunners, represented by all serving Gunners and those here today. This is a very important year for the Royal Regiment. Today, with this presentation, we recognise the long and loyal service of the Royal Regiment of Artillery, as well as the 173 years of Gunner history in New Zealand. Our first Gunner unit, the Nelson Artillery Company, was formed in Nelson in 1843.

Since then, the Royal Regiment of New Zealand Artillery has fought with distinction in all the conflicts New Zealand has been involved in; from tens of thousands of Gunners in the two great wars, through Korea, the Indonesian Confrontation, Vietnam, Bosnia and Afghanistan, to the joint fire

teams we provide today in Iraq.

The Bronze is presented with the very best wishes of all New Zealand gunners, past and present, commemorating the 300th year Anniversary of the Royal Regiment of Artillery.

Congratulations and best wishes from the New Zealand Gunners.

Ubique

Barry Dreyer

Colonel Commandant

Royal Regiment of New Zealand Artillery

13 November 2016

### David Bolam-Smith in Korea

In September of this year I visited South Korea and the southern city of Busan where the United Nations Memorial Cemetery is located. This cemetery is the only United Cemetery in the world where the bodies of the fallen soldiers remain to this day.



The Korean War claimed 34 New Zealand and 281 Australian soldiers. As an ex-soldier in the NZ Army,



a member of the RSA, World Peace Bell Association and a member of the Sonpa-gu Sister City Committee I organised a visit to the cemetery to place a Poppy on the NZ Memorial and to pray for the fallen soldiers and world peace. The warmth of the Korean peoples welcome and their gratitude to the NZ soldiers for their sacrifice was overwhelming.



## The Rhyme of the Ancient Bombardier

In the early 1970's the New Zealand Army invented 'Adventure Training'. Nowadays it is an extremely safe project, with all of the traps and snares worked out beforehand by professional Directing Staff. However back in the 70's, during 'our' period of Gunner history, Adventure Training was exactly what the name implied; serious adventure.

And a successful adventure was considered to be any activity where most of the participants (us) survived.

This wee poem was written against that original adventure training concept. In fact our much beloved officers, and more than a few senior NCO's, considered 'Adventure Training' a licence to create life threatening situations as close to actually being killed in combat as possible.

Now, in 1975, the CP Section of 161 Battery was deployed in rubber 'assault craft' down the flooded Whakatane river in an adventure training programme.

The events that followed have since become part of the folklore of 161 Battery; however one cannot let the heroes of this unfortunate incident remain unknown to history (16 men and 4 boats).

Unfortunately at the time it was written I failed to record their names, but the officers ... in charge was Lieutenant MacLeod, a Second Lieutenant we nicknamed 'Maori Joe', and the Senior NCO's were Bevan 'Glunk' Culhane and Matt Te Pou ... this then is their story.

Come gather round 'me hearties',  
I've a salty tale to tell,  
of Gunners sailin' dinghies,  
Thru' foaming, surging, hell.

Of 'Ahab' Mac, and Maori Joe,  
old bos'n Bev Culhane,  
and Matt Te Pou was there as well,  
four boats and gentle rain.

Chorus:  
So it's paddle down the river  
and don't be slow,  
we're gonna take the boats  
where a duck won't go...  
Floatsam! Jetsam! Gunners in the tide;  
the Whakatane river, is deep and fast, and wide.

The river flows, the wind it blows,  
the rain comes fast and thunder,  
White capped rocks and waterfalls,

the first boat goes asunder.

There's four men in the river,  
"I'm drown'in" what they yell,  
then Snow he pulls the others out,  
the waters cold as hell.

Chorus

We can't give up, we just won't  
stop,  
for it's nay been done a'fore,  
the first boat she's a'floundered,  
but we've still got three boats more.

So on we sail, past 'Ahabs' boat,  
just twelve men left are we,  
there's 'Radar' eating chocolate,  
his paddle on his knee.

Chorus

Young Maori Joe, his boat is next,  
it's sinking by the stern.  
Was it the rocks that claimed his  
craft?  
I guess we'll never learn.

There's 'water water everywhere',  
and not a drop to succour,  
into the tide went all their gear,  
followed by their tucker.

Chorus  
The river rushes onward,  
there's cliffs on either side,  
a log, it blocks the way 'me lads',  
the gorge is ten foot wide.

'Hey Mita!' push the bow down,  
and Wally raise the stern,  
we've got to fit her thru' the gap,  
there's death at every turn.

Chorus

Well it's eight bells ringin',  
and it's two boats still afloat...  
Is that a banjo playin'?  
or do I hear a goat.

A tearing sound, a boat's gone  
down,  
its hull is torn wide open,  
old bosun' Bev, his one boat left,  
he'll sail on I'm a'hopin.



Look at this .....



## Chorus

There's Bev and 'Radar', Pete and Wally;  
in the last canoe.  
There's a waterfall that's comin' up...  
'Ye Gods!' what should I do???

So: Leave the sailin' to the Navy,  
the walking to the Grunts,  
get back to Papakura...  
and clean those bloody guns!

Mike Subritzky  
161 Battery

*Ed's note: It is alleged that the YO involved in this escapade (who has since risen to dizzy heights in this Assn) was to be Court Martialled, not for attempting to drown his troops but because they were out of communication for a few days, holed up in a pub, however, a stay of prosecution was issued when it was discovered that the BC had actually signed off on the expedition. Makes you wonder how far that YO would have advanced without that protection eh?*



Your Assn needs your help. We are looking for someone to co-ordinate the 150th anniversary of the formation of 'D' Bty in Wellington to be held around 22 July 2017. Not a lot of work is involved but someone needs to lead. Contact Tony McLeod via [rnza.association@gmail.com](mailto:rnza.association@gmail.com)

## Medallic and Service Recognition in SE Asia 1967 – 1989

At the recent RNZRSA National Council, there was discussion of the clarification of information on the circumstances surrounding activities of NZ Force SEA in the later years of its stay in Singapore, including periods when troops were deployed to the RAAF Base at Butterworth, and when apparently, live ammunition was issued to and carried by NZ troops in certain areas of Malaysia where there was a threat from terrorists.

A remit supporting the medallic and service recognition for NZDF personnel in SE Asia be subject to a full reassessment was passed. Comment was made that this would be a lengthy process that would include examination of official (and at times classified) documents from NZ, UK, Australia and Malaysia and would involve, in the final stages, involvement of NZDF, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Cabinet, plus the Governments of the four countries. This is unlikely to be resolved within the next few years.

### “Afghanistan: The Soldiers’ Story”

Aaron Horrell who served in the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Bamiyan province of Afghanistan had permission to film events during his second tour (Crib 14) and recently released the video “Afghanistan: The Soldiers’ Story” – also shown on TV.

This is aimed at telling the story of the young men and women serving in Afghanistan, and covers the action at Baghak in some detail. This was the largest firefight involving the NZ PRT during its years in Bamiyan Province, and resulted in several deaths of NZ soldiers.

The DVD has a number of interviews with participants in this action and action sequences from that and other incidents. The DVD is now available to buy from [www.videosouth.com](http://www.videosouth.com) and is a very good picture of the activities of young New Zealanders in a very tense and risky environment.



## A Gunner's Story—Roger Newth

I enlisted in the Regular Force Cadets of the New Zealand Army from Auckland, in January 1956 at the tender age of 16 years and 2 months at Waiouru.

I completed my Basic training and was then sent to the Education Wing to do the School Certificate course. During this time I was used as the Regimental Bugler for the Army Schools as I had played a Cornet in the Foxton Band and a Bugle in the Boys Brigade. We also did some soldier training during this time and of course had to attend daily parades and inspections.

In my second year I began my training as an Instructor and spent 16 weeks on an Instructor's course with about 30 other personnel including 4 or 5 Cadets. After passing this course I was sent to various Schools around Waiouru as an odd-job man and then started my Artillery Training on a Field Artillery Instructor's course for 12 weeks. By this time the NZ Battalion for Malaya was training in Waiouru and in late November 1957 I went to march through Wellington with their Battalion Band prior to the Battalion embarking on the SS Captain Cook for Singapore and then Malaya.

I graduated into the Regular Force in Mid-December 1957 and was posted as an All Arms Instructor to the Northern District Training Battalion at Papakura Camp. Compulsory Military Training (CMT) was still going at this time and I was put in command of a 36 man hut with all the guys being 19 to 21. Of course they didn't know that I was just 18 and I certainly didn't let on! The intakes in those days was 12 weeks and after that intake was over I was promoted to Lance Bombardier and then sent on a Field Artillery Radar Operator's and Instructor's course at Waiouru for 12 weeks.

When that course was over it was back to Papakura where CMT had been cancelled by a change of Government. The Army then decided to re-form 16<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment (which had served in Korea 1950-1954) with the Artillery staff at Papakura making up the nucleus. We did lots of training and exercises with our guns and vehicles. I was promoted to Bombardier in June 1959 and sent on a Technical Assistants course in Waiouru (another 12 weeks!) in early 1959. At about the time I finished that course one of my contemporaries invited four of us to go to a Papakura hotel to celebrate his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. You can imagine his disgust when the barman refused to serve HIM because he reckoned he was under-age. (he was the only one of the five of us who WAS 21!!)

Training continued and we became quite expert at the drills etc required of an Artillery Battery and we were now 161 Battery

RNZA. I continued to be sent away on various courses and in early 1960 was introduced to the art of Gliding by a fellow by the name of Tony Tustin. I had never flown before and although an auto-tow on Ardmore airfield was quite hair-raising, I fell in love with Gliding.

All my weekends, and when we could manage it, Wednesday afternoons was spent with the Auckland Gliding Club. I progressed to the Solo stage and then converted progressively onto the EoN Baby, EoN Olympia and Slingsby Skylark 2 in rapid order.

In early 1961 the hierarchy at Auckland Gliding Club recognised the potential of some of us (there were about five of us Army types flying regularly) and started to use us as Safety Pilots and then as Instructors. Of course everything was going too smoothly and I was posted to Waiouru in July 61 as an Instructor at our Recruit Training Depot. After a year there I was promoted to Sergeant and was put in charge of running recruit courses with about 3 other junior instructor to assist. This was a very rewarding period for me, and I am still friendly with some of the recruits that I took on those courses. (During this

time I was travelling to Ardmore as often as I could to continue my flying and was classified as a 'C' Gliding Instructor in August 1962, and as a 'B' Gliding Instructor in January 1963).

In March 1963 I was posted to Burnham Camp as a Platoon Sergeant with what became 1 RNZIR and continued my flying with the RNZAF Gliding club at Wigram, on weekends and the occasional Wednesday afternoon.

Our battalion left for Malaya in November 1963 and I flew out in an RNZAF DC 6.

My time in Malaya was quite busy, we did lots of Exercises (all around the highest mountain in the area!) and I was sent on a Jungle Warfare Instructor's course at Kota Tinggi in Johore (we were stationed at Terendak Camp in Malacca State). Late in 1964 the Indonesians decided they wanted to take over Malaysia (as it had become) and sent 3 C130 loads of paratroops to deal with us. Only one made it and we were sent down to Johore to find them and take them in. It all worked out quite well and the Indonesian Paratroops were all accounted for quite quickly. I have to say that this job as an Infantry Platoon Sergeant on operations was quite the most satisfying time in my career in the Army. I had 28 guys in the platoon and a Platoon Commander who later got a Military Cross in Borneo with that platoon.

As usual, the Army had other ideas and in April 1965 I was sent home with no explanation (I found out when I got home that





NZ were going to send 161 Battery to South Vietnam and I was slotted as a replacement for the Battery Commander's Survey Sergeant). On my return to NZ I was posted to the RF Cadet School in Waiouru as a Platoon Sergeant and had to live in the Cadet Barracks (that was a real shock to the system and I really hated that!)

However, there was a light at the end of the tunnel as the Ruapehu Gliding Club was operating at Tangiwai with a Rhonlerche and a winch tow system so I was able to do some flying and instructing with them.

In about July 1966 I was posted to 161 Battery Depot in Papakura for training prior to emplaning for Vietnam in mid-January 1967. Whilst in Papakura I started power flying with the Auckland Flying School and soloed in 4 hours 40 mins and went on to do 18 hours there.

My service in Vietnam was very rewarding – firstly, all the training we did back home worked, and we only had to become acclimatised before we were fully operational, secondly, my job as the Battery Commander's Survey Sgt meant that we arranged all the fire support for the Infantry Battalion that we were in Direct Support of. Sometimes this entailed coordinating the fire of 6 inch gun Cruisers offshore, B52 strikes (36 X 750 pounders dropped is quite an awesome sight!), landing ships firing 5 inch rockets, Fighter bomber strikes (normally F100 Super Sabres), 8 inch and 175mm Artillery fire, 155mm Artillery, our own and the Regimental 105mm guns and 81mm mortars.

We also patrolled the area of our operations with the Infantry Battalion Commander and had generally three and sometimes four Forward Observers out – one with each Rifle Company. Our Battery was deployed with each of the Australian Infantry Battalions as they arrived in the country and I served with 5 Aussie Bns, 2,3 5,6 & 7 Bns. I was able to go on R&R twice whilst I was in Vietnam and both times went to Singapore (on Pan Am DC6B's) and on up to Terendak where there were still some guys from my platoon.

On the 31<sup>st</sup> January 1968 (the infamous TET day) I left Vietnam and returned to NZ where I was posted back to Waiouru as an Instructor at the School of Artillery, and then as a Radar SSgt and then Troop Sergeant Major of 1 Locating Troop (this unit used Radar to locate enemy mortars, ran a Meteorological Station for the Met Service, and conducted the Formation survey tasks for the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Brigade).

I was then warned for a posting to Vietnam as the Battery Guide for 161 Battery in May 1971. However, that was when 161 Battery was withdrawn - so I had all the inoculations etc for nought! I did a couple of fill-in jobs in Waiouru because I had already been replaced at Loc Troop and was then posted to Christchurch in August 1972 as the Battery Sergeant Major of a Territorial Battery there. Whilst there, there was a change of Government (again!) and the National Service Scheme that was operating was cancelled, so we ended up with a Battery of about 20 instead of the 120 that were on strength when I arrived there.

In early 1974 the Xth Commonwealth Games were held in Christchurch and 32(E) Battery had the job of firing the salutes for the opening and closing ceremonies and the arrival and

departure of HM the Queen. The staffing situation at the Battery improved slowly (helped by our participation in the Games) and the Battery became efficient although short on numbers.

I was posted back to Waiouru in May 1976 as an Instructor at the School of Artillery and was promoted to WO1 in April 1977. At this time I became pretty disillusioned with what the future held for me and applied for a Commission later that year.

I was Commissioned as a Lieutenant in November 1977 and posted (for my sins!) back to RF Cadet School as the Administration Officer! What joy!!! However I only stayed there for 13 months and then went, as a Captain, to Fort Dorset, in Wellington, as the Adjutant where I stayed until August 1981 and having become disillusioned again, took my release from the Army and bought a car-grooming business in Porirua and built a house in Aaron Court in Paraparaumu Beach. (During this time I had enlisted in the Territorial Force and was a Captain with Arty Tac in HQ 2 TF)

The business went well for a year and then Mr Muldoon brought in his Price & Wage freeze (I was just in the process of putting my charges up!) This of course meant that car sales fell to the lowest level in years and my business went belly-up! I re-enlisted in the Army in January 1983 and was posted to --- you guessed it, Waiouru!!

I served in various staff posts on the headquarters of The Army Training Group until September 1986 when I was posted to the Headquarters of Army General Staff in Wellington. I did not enjoy that posting at all and in April 1987 was posted to Defence HQ as a Major in the Support Branch. My job here was the purchase of Ammunition for the three services and civilian type vehicles (operational vehicles were purchased by the Services themselves).

I also had the responsibility for the supply of rations and fuel to the three services. This whole post was responsible for about \$20 Million per year, with an additional \$4 million for reserve ammunition stocks. The finance was very tightly controlled and consent had to be obtained for any purchase over \$20,000. The more finance required the higher up the chain we had to go for authority, sometimes as far as Cabinet.

As far as the ammunition was concerned I had to arrange contracts for the purchase of ammunition from 5.56mm up to 21 inch Torpedoes (from the US Navy, and that took some little effort!). We made purchases from the UK, France, Belgium, USA, Singapore, Israel and South Korea and I think some from Scandinavia. All in all a fairly satisfying posting but by then I turned 50 (mandatory retiring age) there had been a review of Defence organisation and they went back to single service purchasing of all those things that had been centralised – i.e. my job!

So, I again retired from the Army on 8<sup>th</sup> November 1989, the day before my Fiftieth birthday.

I have often been asked what I would do if I had my time over again, and I have to say that I would thoroughly enjoy doing it all again. Thank you all!

## New Home Wanted

She really could use your help!



This is Lexi, she's an 8 week-old German Shepherd, I bought Lexi as a surprise for my wife but it turns out she is allergic to dogs so we are now looking to find her a new home.

She is 39 years old, a delightful and caring woman who drives, is a great cook and keeps a clean house!!!!!!!



L-R: Barry Cooke, Danny McCort, Brian Meyer, Tony McLeod & David Bahler



WW2 Vets Lloyd Bell-Booth & John Foote



L-R: Lloyd Bell-Booth, John Foote, CO Ben Bagley, Mary & Tony McLeod, Lt Col Chris Mullane, Georgina Greville, Barry & Judy Dreyer, RSM Richard Theodore



Leadership is solving problems. The day soldiers stop bringing you their problems is the day you have stopped leading them. They have either lost confidence that you can help or concluded you do not care. Either case is a failure of leadership.

(Colin Powell)





Brian Meyer  
proposing toast  
to our partners



Tony McLeod &  
Willy Parker



An Australian  
Gunner AKA Kim  
McGrath



John Deazley



RNZA Assn Trophy presented to  
LBdr Mason Smith by Col Comdt



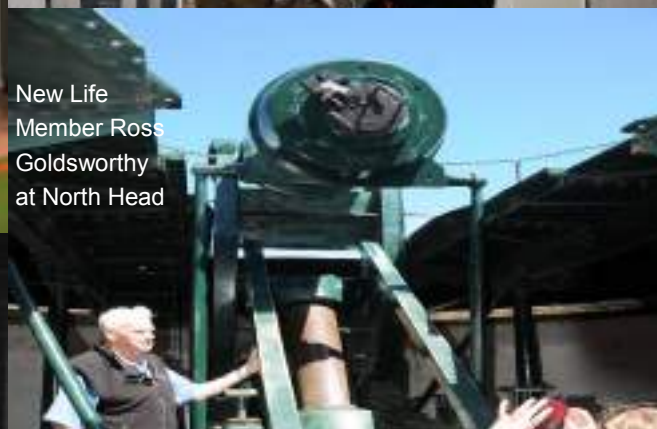
New Life  
Member Ross  
Goldsworthy  
at North Head



New Life Member Barry  
Cooke lays wreath at  
Memorial Service



Bernie McCort preparing to  
dance



Assorted Gunners at North Head







## ATTITUDE

It takes 43 muscles to frown and 17 to smile,  
but only three for proper trigger squeeze.



## Budget Cuts

They suck.

Paddy spies a letter lying on his doormat. It says on the envelope "DO NOT BEND".

Paddy spends the next 2 hours trying to figure out how to pick it up.

Paddy shouts frantically into the phone "My wife is pregnant and her contractions are only two minutes apart!"

"Is this her first child?" asks the Doctor.

"No", shouts Paddy, "this is her husband!"

An old Irish farmer's dog goes missing and he's inconsolable.

His wife says "Why don't you put an advert in the paper?"

He does, but two weeks later the dog is still missing.

"What did you put in the paper?" his wife asks.

"Here boy" he replies.

Paddy's in jail. Guard looks in his cell and sees him hanging by his feet.

"What on earth you doing?" he asks.

"Hanging myself" Paddy replies.

"It should be around your neck" says the Guard.

"I know" says Paddy "but I couldn't breathe".

An answer I can understand. An American tourist asks an Irishman: "Why do Scuba divers always fall backwards off their boats?"

To which the Irishman replies: "They have to go backward. If they fell forwards, they'd still be in the boat."

And saving the best 'til last ... Paddy rings his new girlfriend's door bell, with a big bunch of flowers. She opens the door, sees the flowers and drags him in. She lies back on the couch, pulls her skirt up, rips her knickers off and says 'This is for the flowers!'

'Don't be silly,' says Paddy, 'you must have a vase somewhere!'

## Anthem for Doomed Youth

By Wilfred Owen

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?

— Only the monstrous anger of the guns.

Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle

Can patter out their hasty orisons.

No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells;

Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,—

The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;

And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?

Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes

Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.

The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;

Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,

And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

Source: *The Poems of Wilfred Owen*, edited by Jon Stallworthy (W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1986)



### Emblem

A Panther Argent, spotted of various colours, fire issuant from the mouth and ears proper, gorged with a plain collar and chained Or. Field: Sky Blue.

### History

In July, 1965 the Regular Force Artillery Battery of 16th Field Regiment, 161 Battery was deployed on active service to South Vietnam where initially the Battery served under the operational command of 173rd Airborne Brigade, US Army, based at Bien Hoa. Later 161 Battery was relocated to Nui Dat as part of the 1st Australian Task Force. The Battery returned to New Zealand after almost six years of war in May 1971. The New Zealand military involvement in the Vietnam conflict was a most unpopular political decision, and here in New Zealand anti-war protests occurred almost daily throughout the major cities and larger centres of population.



In the small Waikato town of Raglan the citizens rallied to the call of one of the town's leading lights, Mr Douglas Arter who was heavily involved with all of the many and varied local organisations. The townsfolk adopted 161 Battery as their own and sent food parcels, letters, comfort packs, books, (New Zealand beer), and a host of other small touches which make life just a little more comfortable for the New Zealand fighting man. At one point during the war, 161 Battery managed to smuggle Doug Arter aboard an aircraft, and a (now) very famous photograph exists showing Doug and Lt. Hugh Weatherhead, RNZA "brewing up" in a Fire Support Base in South Vietnam.

Upon 161 Battery's return to New Zealand it was felt by all ranks that something of the town of Raglan should be adopted by the Battery as a symbol of friendship. The Battery Commander approached the Raglan County Council requesting permission to emblazon the Raglan Coat of Arms upon the Gun Shields of the unit's howitzers. This was considered a very appropriate distinction by the County Council, however it was thought that perhaps Lord Raglan would possibly need to give his consent?

### Lord Raglan

161 Battery then communicated with Lord Raglan who was very much in favour of the idea and personally approached the College of Arms on the behalf of 161 Battery RNZA. Permission to emblazon the full achievement of Lord Raglan's Arms was denied by Richmond Herald of Arms who explained to Lord Raglan that "it is contrary to the law of arms for you (Lord Raglan) to alienate your arms". Richmond Herald of Arms suggested that Lord Raglan grant 161 Battery the use of one of his supporters and this was readily agreed to by Lord Raglan.

### Supporters

The supporters of the Raglan Arms are (dexter) a Panther, and (sinister) a Wyvern. As there are numerous Dragons borne by British regiments as emblems, the Battery chose the Panther as its official unit insignia. It was also felt that the Panther was such a unique emblem that it would never be forgotten, nor the reason for its adoption. It was officially adopted and emblazoned on the gun shields on the 20th August 1972.

### Field

The Panther is normally displayed on a Sky Blue field. Within a Field Artillery Regiment there are normally three (or four) Gun Batteries. Each Battery has a brightly coloured "skirt" attached to its' individual Artillery survey director. The director skirt for 161 Battery is Sky Blue.

*Merry Christmas*

## ‘Go to Blazers’

*Reprinted from Gunner Issue 33 September 1973.*

‘Go to Blazers’ is one of the more polite terms used by Australians among Australians to signify that a particular presence is no longer required in the immediate vicinity. In Singapore the same phrase becomes a set of instructions to sundry bill collectors, barracks repair men, bus drivers, staff officers and all who wander into the 106th Field Battery, Royal Australian Artillery’s area with queries pertaining to the British contingent of 28 ANZUK Field Regiment.

The 1st Light Battery, Royal Artillery (The Blazers) have formed part of the illustrious Royal Regiment since Moses played winger for Jerusalem Hotspurs. They received their somewhat (to Australian eyes) spurious nickname when some Worthy Oriental Gentleman tried to seize the battery funds at the Battle of El Harishment. It is rumoured that the BK rallied the battery with the cry ‘*the money, my Gawd the money ... fight like blazes*’... or words to that effect.

The introduction is complete. The in-depth-study of ‘*What-it-is-like-to-serve-with-British-gunners-in-an-integrated-regiment-commanded-by-an-Australian- in-Singapore*’ can commence.

Personalities are the key to the character of any unit, especially the personality of those leaders of men common to all armies; the sirs, the officers. At the time of writing the BC of the ‘Blazers’ is an experienced, well travelled, much maligned officer dedicated to the finer things in life, that is sport and money in the Battery account. He has been heard to describe a certain infantry officers’ mess, which admits dogs but not women to their bar, as ‘Kinky’. The culinary art absorbs some of this gallant officer’s time; he has almost been to the edge of hysteria when his investigations into corned beef fritters revealed that 200 of the said delicacies were produced from one tin of corned beef ‘D’y’know?’

Part of any BC’s mandate is to plan and control exercises. BC ‘Blazers’ carries out this aspect of his duty with flair and flourish. An anecdote is in order. ‘Tis the Brigade exercise at Asahan Range; the Regiment is involved in displaying its wares to a fascinated audience of infantry. The scene: the CO paces nervously backwards and forwards across the front of a dreamily contented BC ‘Blazers’. The CO knows that the Regiment is to go into a training camp at the conclusion of the demonstration, but he is thinking of the ramifications of a drop short on the VIP tent.

‘Sir’! – BC ‘Blazers’. ‘Eh-uhh-yess’ – CO, ‘Sir about the

training period at Batu Pahat ...’.

A gleam appears in the CO’s eyes; at last a BC who is interested in what he was supposed to be doing at least two days hence. The CO staggers forward, adopts an attitude of prayer, his elbows on the FS table at which BC ‘Blazers’ sits, his chin cupped in his hands, his eyes alight:

‘Aahh yes BC, I’ve gone nap on some excellent ideas for the period’.

‘Supah Sir, supah but could you tell me how long we’re going to be there?’

‘Well I’m considering keeping the gun groups there for three or four days, you see then ...’.

‘Three or four days ... mmmm. Makes it a bit tricky. (The CO beams, it is obvious a master plan is forming). Tell me sir ... should I get three or four movies, if I get three we might ...’.

It is a low long cry of a soul in torment. The head sinks, the eyes dim, the CO has lost again.

The pen having writ moves on to that partner in crime of all BCs; the BK. Who is it that managed to make a tidy profit out of thirsty grunts on exercise? Who is it that can make a profit of 50% per month in Battery funds? Who is it that can be relied upon to produce the battery magazine in between bridge hands? BK ‘Blazers’ that’s who.

BK ‘Blazers’, by tradition takes no interest in the more mundane aspects of Army life. Among the more mundane he counts sport (tiring), exercises (the worst place to get cold tonic for the gin) and all other activities not directly concerned with raising cold hard cash. That is not to say that he is not fully aware of what is going on in the battery at anytime; it’s just that he hasn’t been given a time yet.

On to the FO’s, those vital links (some say missing links) with the Queen of the battlefield. 1st Light Bty RA has them in all shapes, sizes and nationalities. FO1 with his bush hat by Dior, greens by Gucci and his genuine South American Aardvark leather belt, takes his duty to the infantry seriously (whenever he can fit them in between sailing, squash, croquet and other pressing matters). A quintessential Pom.

FO2 is a dark horse; not much is known about this officer as he is rumoured to spend his time working. At what no-one is prepared to say. Your correspondent has been assured that this habit is due to him being some sort of colonial.

FO3 is an Australian ... it is thought.



Then there is the General Purpose Officer (GPO); the technical officer of the battery. There have been two of these splendid products of British gunnery who have performed admirably in the period covered by this report. The first managed to keep his identity disguised for some time by posing as a bean pole. Nothing escaped his eagle eye, mainly because that eye (in company with another) was perched some 188 cm from ground level.

The present incumbent of this previously lofty position was transferred from the IRA when the latter found that the British Army was beginning to win in Northern Island. Since his attachment he has striven valiantly to cause confusion and chaos by issuing such orders as *'Close up and spread out'*. Unfortunately most orders issued by the GPO are traditionally ignored, a factor not taken into account by the IRA Posting Staff.

Both the GPOs are firm believers in the value of FACE (the ballistic computer type not the Asian type). However like the Asian type they are always losing FACE when it pops a fufu valve or the gyro topples. It gives a whole new meaning to the phrase 'FACE down!'.

It is said the backbone of any Army are the senior NCOs. The senior NCOs of the *'Blazers'* are the backbone, thigh bone, shin bone and funny bone of the battery. They are ably led by the BSM who tells his officers only that which he knows will lead to no harm and will not confuse them. He is ably supported by his sergeants and TSMs whose talents vary from a very passable imitation of a heavy smoking, deep-talking personage of the Antipodean persuasion to the purloining of enough spares to build a fully functional L5 howitzer.

The gunners of the 1st Battery are a happy bunch of thugs despite the concentrated efforts of the BC to sport them into the ground. They are the source of the BK's profits; the despair of the BC's sporting hopes but the members of a tug-of-war team par excellence.

Such are the personalities of the 1st Light Battery RA (*'The Blazers'*). Put them together and what have you got. A battery second to one (One-O-Six Field Battery RAA that is), although that particular claim is moot – governed by the particular national bigotry one entertains.

The days of 28 ANZUK Field Regiment are sadly numbered. A chapter in the history of inter Army artillery cooperation is closing. If nothing else it has been fun and the memories and friendships cultivated should last for many years. In the years to come I would like to think of the *'Blazers'* gathered around the battery funds box, being led by the BK in that old favourite:

*There'll always be an England and England can't be free*

*It's going to cost you 10p more and 5% for me.*



## The Self Propelled 155mm “Doorknocker” or “Bunker Buster”.

Although designed primarily for indirect fire, during assaults on heavy fortifications, the M12s were sometimes used in a direct-fire role. During the Allied assault on the Siegfried Line and in city fighting in Aachen it was used to great effect. The troops gave the M12 its nickname “Doorknocker” thanks to the 155mm cannon’s ability to pierce seven feet of concrete at ranges up to 2,000 yards.

One battery alone was credited with destroying more than 50 bunkers in a few weeks. The vehicle was also dubbed “King Kong” by American operators due to the raw power of its gun.



The 155mm M12 was built on the chassis of the M3 Lee tank. It had an armoured driver’s compartment shared with the commander, but the gun crew was located in an open topped area at the back of the vehicle. Limited storage space meant that only ten projectiles and propellant charges could be carried on the vehicle, and it usually was accompanied by an extra vehicle to carry extra ammunition.

It mounted a 155 mm gun, a weapon derived from the nearly identical French 155 mm GPF gun of World War I vintage. Only 100 M-12s have been built: 60 in 1942 and a further 40 in 1943. During 1943, the vehicles were mostly used for training or put into storage. Before the invasion of France, 74 M12s were overhauled in preparation for combat operations. They were employed successfully throughout the campaign in North-West Europe.

A total of six field artillery battalions were equipped with the M12 155mm GMC in the summer of 1944: the 557th, 558th, 981st, 987th, 989th and 991st Field Artillery Battalions.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3OeUaJ0qX4>

## Eating in the fifties and sixties

Pasta was not eaten in New Zealand.

Curry was a surname.

A takeaway was a mathematical problem.

A pizza was something to do with a leaning tower.

All potato crisps were plain; the only choice we had was whether to put the salt on or not.

Rice was only eaten as a milk pudding.

Calamari was called squid and we used it as fish bait.

A Big Mac was what we wore when it was raining.

Brown bread was something only poor people ate.

Oil was for lubricating, fat was for cooking.

Tea was made in a teapot using tea leaves and never green.

Sugar enjoyed a good press in those days, and was regarded as being white gold. Cubed sugar was regarded as posh.

Fish didn't have fingers in those days.

Eating raw fish was called poverty, not sushi.

None of us had ever heard of yoghurt.

Healthy food consisted of anything edible.

People who didn't peel potatoes were regarded as lazy.

Indian restaurants were only found in India.

Cooking outside was called camping.

Seaweed was not a recognised food.

"Kebab" was not even a word, never mind a food.

Prunes were medicinal.

Surprisingly, muesli was readily available; it was called cattle feed.

Drinking water came out of the tap.

If someone had suggested bottling it and charging more than petrol for it, they would have become a laughing stock!!

But the one thing that we never ever had on our table in the sixties ..... Elbows or Phones.

## Happy Birthday to the USMC

10 Nov 1775, marks the beginning of the greatest fighting force the world has ever seen. To celebrate the Marine Corps' 241st Birthday, we looked at the top 10 things that make the Corps awesome.

1. “Be polite, be professional, but have a plan to kill everybody you meet.” — One of retired Gen. James Mattis' rules to live by.

*Marine Corps Gen. James N. Mattis addresses the audience during the U.S. Central Command change of command ceremony, MacDill Air Force Base Fla., March 22, 2013.*



2. Knife hands. These are so sharp they could slice birthday cake.

3. Guns, shouting, battle rattle. Just another day at the office.

*A Marine with the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit conducts gun drills aboard the amphibious dock landing ship USS Whidbey Island on Nov. 3.*



4. All Marines remember that day when they finished the Crucible and earned the honour to wear the eagle, globe and anchor.

*Recruits received their Eagle, Globe and Anchors during a ceremony that marked the end of the Crucible May 25, 2013, on Parris Island*

5. “We’re surrounded. That simplifies things.” Marines are the heirs to the relentless grit and courage of Lewis “Chesty” Puller, who as a colonel led his forces in inflicting huge casualties against the encircling Chinese forces in the Battle of Chosin Reservoir, for which he received his fifth Navy Cross. He retired as a lieutenant general and the most decorated Marine in history.





## THE BRONZE GUNNER

The RNZA Heritage Trust and the former NZ Defence Official Artist, Captain Matt Gauldie RNZA, have developed a distinctly Kiwi Gunner trophy of some impact and value with this wonderful bronze of a gunner in action.

This is a limited edition of fifty statues, each individually finished, signed and numbered.

As well as being a superb trophy, the statue represents generations of New Zealand Gunners, fighting their guns with skill, courage and determination.

Available with or without a brass cartridge case mount, we would encourage you to consider purchasing a trophy.

Matt Gauldie is recognised as one the country's leading artists and has many of his works in galleries and private collections. More recently he has been commissioned in both Australia and New Zealand to complete monumental bronzes for public place display.

This bronze combines his love of both guns and bronze sculpture into a superb collectors' piece.

To purchase contact : [rnza.association@gmail.com](mailto:rnza.association@gmail.com)



## Kids today

A navy couple arrived in Rarotonga on a stat flight, renting my neighbours house.

They told me while at Whenuapai airport a woman was struggling to control two lively boys running around the tarmac "come here come here" she'd call on numerous occasions.

When they landed in Raro, the boys true to their nature were about to run off - before they could take a second step the boys were on their tip-toes squealing as their mum had a ear twisted in each hand.

"You're not in New Zealand now" she said.

Thanks Denis



*Col. Lewis B. 'Chesty' Puller, commanding the 1st Marine Division in the Korean War, is photographed on Nov. 22, 1950*

6. The Ka-Bar is part Marine Corps, part Klingon, all bad-ass.



7. On Nov. 13, 2004, then 1st Sgt. Bradley Kasal fought to clear Fallujah's infamous "House of Hell" and rescue Marines trapped inside. He was shot seven times by insurgents and took shrapnel when he used his body to protect a wounded Marine from a grenade blast. A picture of him with two Marines helping to carry him out of the house became one of the most iconic pictures from the Iraq war. Now a Sergeant Major, Kasal received the Navy Cross in 2006.



*Navy Cross recipient Sgt. Maj. Bradley A. Kasal talks about leadership to hundreds of Marines on Camp Pendleton.*

8. Chuck Norris approves of the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program.

*Recruits of Papa Company practice sweeping their opponent to the ground July 1, 2015, on Parris Island as part of the Marine Corps Martial-Arts Program*



9. The Marine Corps offers even the most junior person frequent opportunities for face-time with senior leaders.



*Drill instructors from Fox Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, instruct a recruit to move faster at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego*

10. "Are you allowed to eat jelly doughnuts, Pvt. Pyle?" When retired Gunnery Sgt. R. Lee Ermey played the drill instructor in "Full Metal Jacket," he inspired countless Marines to see if they are tough enough to make it through recruit training. The movie and his performance are indelible parts of Corps lore.

*Retired Marine Gunnery Sgt. R. Lee Ermey takes a break for a smoke outside New River Air Station's Staff NCO club, in this May 15, 2006 file photo taken in Jacksonville,*



### First Battle of Coral 12th – 13th May 1968 - The Real Story – Part 2 – The Enemy Responds

Unbeknown to the Australians and New Zealanders, the deployment of 1 ATF into Coral had been watched by elements of 7th North Vietnamese Army Division (7 NVA Div.) and the enemy commander quickly decided to respond to this incursion. One battalion of 141 NVA Regiment augmented by 275 and 269 Infiltration Groups were tasked to attack Coral that night. It was a bold move that, along with surprise, would take advantage of the nascent state of the local defence preparations at Coral.

The NVA converged on Coral marching through the early hours of darkness and ultimately digging in a forming up place for the attack only 250 metres from the guns and mortars. The deployed infantry companies of 1 RAR detected the approach of the enemy to the FSPB. D Company 1 RAR reported a sighting of enemy at 1809 hours; a contact resulted with one North Vietnamese killed and one Australian wounded. At 1936 hours B Company 1 RAR fired at a party of enemy without any result. A Company 1 RAR reported the firing of two red flares which were acknowledged by two others and D Company 1 RAR reported green tracer being fired vertically into the air from different locations. These tracers were also noted by the sentries at the 102 Fd Bty gun position. Green tracer was a certain sign of enemy forces since the allies only used red tracer.

At about midnight the Mortar Platoon machine gun opened fire on three enemy soldiers who were sighted at the edge of the Mortar position. Stand to was ordered during which an enemy machine gun returned fire which caused the Regimental CP to accuse Jensen of firing at them; Jensen replied that he only had red tracer and that the incoming tracer was green! No further incidents occurred and *'stand down'* sent most of the gunners and mortar men back to bed as the machine gun sentries resumed their vigil.

At approximately 0215 hours the machine gunner of 12 Platoon, D Company 1 RAR, deployed in an ambush some 2,000 metres north of 102 Fd Bty, opened fire on a group of the enemy moving southwest towards Coral. Retaliation by the enemy was swift and deadly as a salvo of Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPG) exploded in the trees above 12 Platoon and in a blink of an eye eleven of the platoon became casualties. The 102 Fd Bty Forward Observer with the company, Gordon Alexander, quickly called in a fire mission and the tranquility at the 102 Fd Bty position was broken as *'Contact! Contact! Fire Mission Battery'* roared out over the tannoy system. The gunners tumbled out of their weapon pits and wrestled the six 2.2 tonne howitzers around to the north and began delivering their deadly 105 mm projectiles in support of the infantry company. *'End of Mission'* was received some twenty minutes later and the details of the final target recorded as a Defensive Fire task.

Bob Lowry had fired the mission but the Battery Commander, Major Gavin Andrews, probably reflecting the concern of the 1 RAR Commander, asked for the GPO and Ahearn was called to the CP. Andrews was obviously worried about the activity around D Company 1 RAR, probably reflecting Bennett's concern, and asked if the Battery could handle two Final Preventative Fire (FPF) tasks. Such a task involved guns being laid and loaded on the most likely target so that they could be fired immediately. It was agreed the Battery would have two FPF tasks, one using Number 1, 2 and 3 Gun laid to the east (B Company 1 RAR) and one using Number 4, 5 and 6 Gun laid to the north (D Company 1 RAR); a decision that would prove the *'value of luck'* in battle.

The decision to adopt two FPF tasks and the associated *'divided'* orientation of the guns resulted in some individual accounts of the battle describing their position as being located in *'front of the guns'* – in fact this was not the situation.

The gun detachments cleaned up the residue from the fire mission around their gun platforms and most returned to their personal pits; the detachment on Number 4 Gun stayed up, preferring a coffee and cigarette to sleep. This action would also have a bearing on the events that were to follow.

At about 0230 hours the Mortar Platoon position and 102 Fd Bty were engulfed in a hailstorm of RPGs, mortars and machine gun fire. Manning the machine gun in front of Number 6 Gun, Gunners Mick Grimes and John Schwartz could not believe their eyes as RPG and machine gun fire flashed over their heads into the Battery position. Grimes recalled: *'Johnny and I saw no more than 150 metres out massed ranks of (enemy) infantry just stood up and came forward.'*

They began engaging the NVA with their machine gun but the weapon jammed on three occasions and they fell back to their gun platform. The enemy followed up onto the top of the protective bund where desperate fighting took place. Grimes was *'stitched up'* by an NVA with an AK47 rifle, and was wounded in the hand but saved from the full effects by his Self-Loading Rifle (SLR) which took the full brunt of the burst. Second Lieutenant Matt Cleland, Section Commander, arrived at Number 6, emptied his pistol at the NVA then sprinted to his pit to retrieve his F1 Sub Machine gun. In the confusion the Australians dropped the M60 machine gun which had been brought in from the sentry pit.

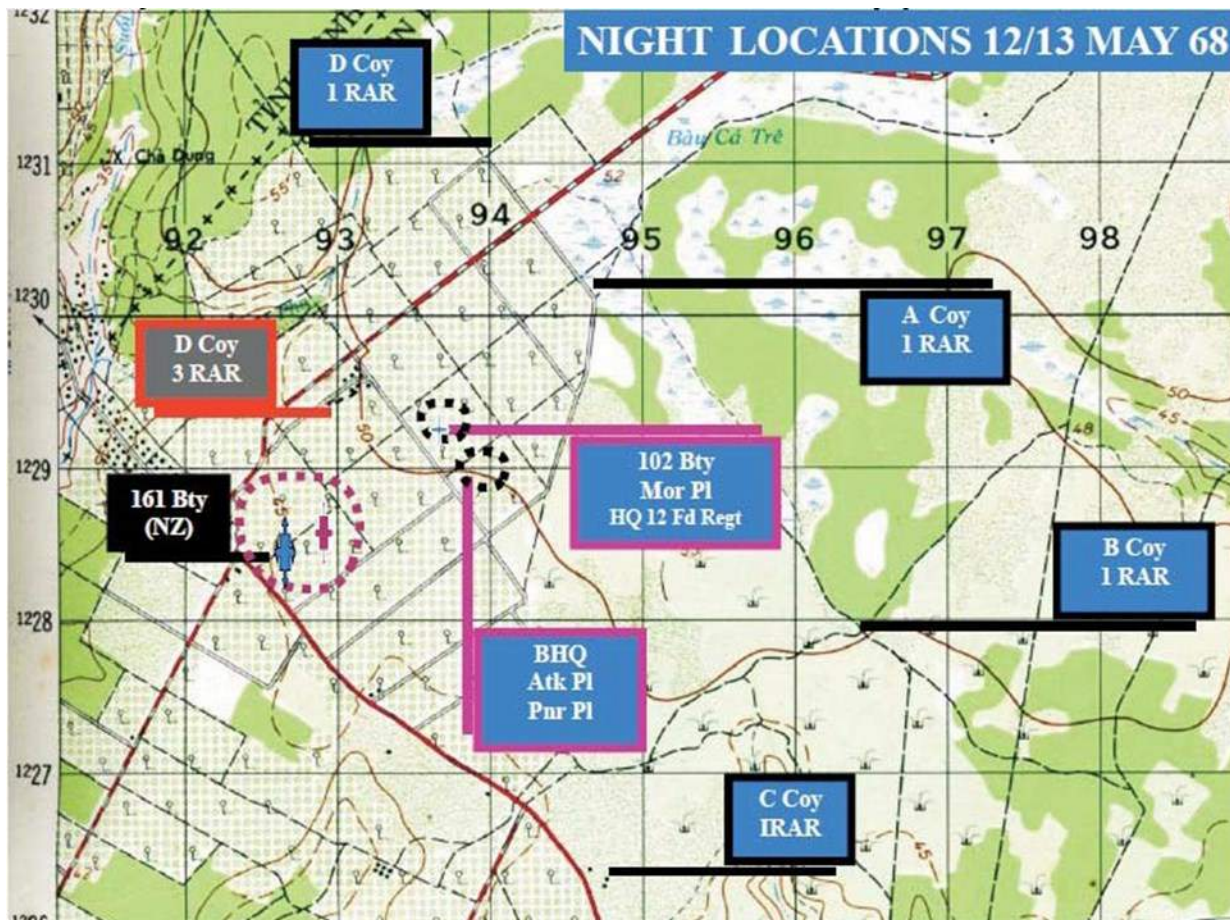
The NVA were now hurling grenades, and the Gun Sergeant, Max Franklin, ordered his detachment to fall back to Number 5 Gun. The Australian Gunners had no grenades to reply with against the NVA as they could only be released with the approval of the Regimental CO or 2IC (a consequence of an Australian officer being killed by a grenade in Nui Dat). Franklin took the howitzer's firing pin with him; a wise precaution that he failed to tell any of his officers about.

At the same time 2000 metres north, D Company 1 RAR had just completed a dangerous medical evacuation of their wounded via two lifts from US helicopters, and were observing a very large stream of enemy moving south towards the Coral position. The Forward Observer, Gordon Alexander, called for a fire mission: *'One four, fire mission battery'*. The reply from GPO Ahearn was, *'This call sign under ground assault'* to which Alexander could only reply, *'oh!'*

On Number 4 Gun the detachment, being the only gunners that had not returned to bed, quickly retrieved their personal weapons and as their machine gunner forward of the gun came scrambling back, opened with withering small arms fire on the enemy assault. The gun was one of the three that had been *'bundled'* hence the detachment was protected and the barrel was pointing north straight into the axis of the enemy attack; the NVA were assaulting into the mouth of a 105 mm cannon. Ahearn was asleep in his weapon pit and was woken by the barrage. He raced to the CP just as Sergeant John Stephens (Gun Sergeant Number 4) reported on the tannoy that he had opened fire on an assault to his front and that he was running out of small arms ammunition and requested resupply. To complete his report, Stephens requested permission to open fire over open sights, a last resort for guns under attack from close quarters.

Each gun was equipped with six Splintex anti-personnel rounds for use in a situation just like this. Each Splintex round contained 7,200 flechettes – fin stabilized projectiles similar to small arrows. The only problem was that the Battery had never fired the round before this night. Lowry and Ahearn turned to the technical instructions but could find no reference to the correlation between the time fuse setting and range. They decided on a setting of 0.05 seconds, as Lowry passed the order to Number 4 Gun and Ahearn ducked outside the CP to monitor the effect. The projectile was fitted with a tracer base and Ahearn watched in dismay as the two rounds fired appeared to malfunction as





**Night locations 12th–13th May 1968.** Note: The purple circular area shows the area to be occupied taken from Annex A to FragO No 6 to OpO 19/68. The purple cross is the location given for K Pad which B Company 3 RAR did not use and the reconnaissance parties did. The 102 Fd Bty position lies 1000 metres outside the original area.

they disappeared into the night. As it transpired these rounds were later found to have exploded over the NVA Reserves some 400 metres out from the perimeter. The fuse setting obviously needed adjustment so Lowry ordered the fuse to be set to 'muzzle action' and the results visited awful damage on the assaulting NVA.

Ahearn decided to leave Lowry in the CP and to set off around the gun position to see what was happening. The stressful situation produced unexpected reactions and Lex McCauley recorded in his book: Lowry was 'illogically' concerned 'because Ahearn was not wearing a shirt, so took his own off and gave it to him'.

At the CP entrance Ahearn met the Battery Guide, Warrant Officer Class Two Les Wheeler and briefed him to assemble an ammunition party and get a small arms resupply to Number 4 Gun. Leaving Wheeler to organise the resupply, Ahearn moved around the gun position to check on the each of the gun detachments and their guns. The first thing that he discovered was that due to the earth 'bund' raised around the three northern guns the incoming NVA fire was high and therefore movement around the position was feasible.

Ahearn found that all gun detachments were either standing to around their guns or, in the case of Number 4 Gun continuing to fire over open sights. The detachments of Number 5 and Number 6 Guns were manning the edge of Number 5 Guns bund and observing Number 6 Gun, which alarmingly was now in enemy hands. Ahearn instructed that Number 5 Gun was to be loaded with Splintex and laid on Number 6 and at the first sign that the

NVA were trying to move or turn the gun, Number 5 gun was to engage. Ahearn did not know that Franklin had the firing pin of the Number 6 Gun safe in his pocket making it impossible for the enemy to use the gun.

Returning to the CP Ahearn again met with Wheeler who had arranged the delivery of a small arms ammunition resupply to Number 4 Gun detachment and he suggested that additional Splintex should be provided to that gun. It was agreed that all guns except Number 5 would give up four of their six rounds and that additional high explosive (HE) rounds would be moved up to Number 4 Gun.

At the Mortar Line Jensen and his men were also under attack: 'The first warning of the attack came from Corporal Hickey, a section second-in-command (later killed in action), who alerted the Platoon second-in-command as the mortar attack began, and stated he was one of the piquet's and there were about 400 enemy 50 metres away and gibbering. This information was immediately passed to 1 RAR CP on the Battalion command net, and on the internal defence net to FSPB defence CP.'

The Mortar Platoon was over run immediately and Jensen called for fire from 161 Fd Bty and the 3 RAR mortars located with them. Jensen shouted to his Platoon telling them of the incoming rounds warning them to stay in their pits. He advised both the local defence CP and HQ 1 RAR of his situation but the latter needed three reports before they understood what was happening at the Mortar Platoon. The men of the platoon took





**Aerial photograph showing state of 102 and Mortars at of last light 12th May 1968.** Note: 1 RAR HQ is located to the south-east. The purple smoke is the 102 Fd Bty LZ. The bunding of the guns is incomplete with only Number 4, 5 and 6 Guns protected. The proximity of the Mortars to the guns can be clearly seen. The area to the left has been 'blanked' as it contained elements not present on 12th May 1968.

refuge in their shell scrapes; arriving last on the position at last light the men of the Mortar Platoon had not had sufficient time to fully develop their individual weapon pits. From their shell scrapes, the men of the Mortar Platoon began to engage the NVA with their personal weapons.

Near the Regimental CP, Lance Bombardier Andy Forsdike (HQ Bty) who was in charge of the machine gun team, heard '*loud rustling in the grass*' and telephoned the Regimental CP to request permission to open fire. His request was denied since the Regimental '*HQ was not sure what was going on*'. Forsdike then saw the NVA stand up close to his team then he recalled '*... everyone including the VC went to ground as a very heavy barrage of Mortar and Rocket fire came into the gun position.*'

The attack on the Mortar Platoon and 102 Fd Bty was simultaneous, not '*... through the mortar platoon and then onto 102 Field Battery*' as described by Bennett, the CO of 1 RAR. Both Bennett, and the 1 RAR after action report which recorded the event, were wrong in this observation; had the attack come only through the mortars in the first instance as claimed, the Gunners would have had more time to prepare and the immediate engagement of the NVA assault by Number 4 Gun would not have been possible.

Jensen and his men were trapped by the speed of the NVA assault, the main factor influencing Jensen's decision to stay and fight. It would have been possible for the men of the Mortar Platoon to pull back into the guns (two mortar men did just that) but such a move would have required the mortars and ammunition to be left behind as well as opening the way into the flank of the gun position. Jensen

thought the NVA appeared to be surprised when they hit the Mortar position; this view is supported by the effect of the fierce resistance which broke up the attack. There was also a lack of concerted effort by the NVA to carry a very valuable treasure trove of equipment away. It would appear that the Mortar Platoon had moved in after the NVA had conducted their reconnaissance for the attack and that their presence disrupted the NVA assault.

Down the track to the west of the Mortar Platoon, Forsdike and his team were in all sorts of trouble. '*Enemy swirled around Forsdike's men; the young bombardier's M60 jammed. He wrestled with it. Two men fell to his rear: one dead one wounded.*' The savage fight around Forsdike's machine gun was to leave two Australians dead and two more wounded.

The Mortar Platoon was also in trouble with the NVA '*... systematically firing at each pit, tent or sign of occupation.*' Casualties began to mount; Corporal Jock Witten was hit and Private Graham Stevens went to his aid but an RPG killed Whitton and wounded Stevens. The NVA had managed to seize an Australian mortar firing three rounds before Jensen's men stopped their efforts with heavy small arms fire. Jensen was subjected to scrutiny by '*... a big bare headed man in khaki, wearing a Vietnamese belt and a holstered pistol, hands behind his back, peering down at me. He just, strolled away but did not get far. I shot him.*'

Overhead the pitch dark sky was lit up by the mini guns and rockets of Cobra helicopter gunships. The gunships had been called in by the Fire Support Coordination Centre (FSCC) at HQ 1 RAR. Major Gavin Andrews, 102 Fd Battery Commander, was busy

organising artillery support from any American artillery in range. In all some nine batteries including 161 Fd Bty, were dropping rounds onto the immediate surrounds of Coral. All was now bedlam within the 102 Fd Bty position.

Number 4 Gun was still firing over open sights. It had expended 22 rounds of Splintex and had switched to High Explosive (HE). The comment in the Official History by Major Murtagh that the direct action fuses were set to 'delay' and *'The guns were depressed to fire the shell at the ground some 40 to 50 metres in front of the gun. The round ricocheted and exploded in the air, close to the ground and over the heads of the enemy'* is sheer fantasy. The barrel was close to parallel to the ground with just enough elevation to clear the bund and the detachment too busy to set fuses to delay. In fact so intense was the pressure that they fired at least two unplugged rounds (returned by the infantry next day) and one illuminating round that created some excitement. In all Number 4 Gun fired eighty four rounds over open sights.

Number 2 Gun was hit by an RPG that blew out its tyres and punctured the trail. One of the detachment was slightly wounded. Lance Bombardier Geoff Grimish *'was carrying a round to the (No 4 Gun) from his own position, and distinctly saw an NVA jump up onto the bund and aim an RPG, but ignored him, buoyed up with "a feeling of invincibility", and a split second later the NVA was gone; he had been standing directly in front of the cannon (No 4 gun) as it fired.'*

An RPG rocketed over the position and exploded in the ammunition bay of Number 1 Gun. The ammunition began to burn fiercely as the cordite in the cartridge cases caught fire. Sergeant Ray Dial the Gun Sergeant, tried to extinguish the flames but gave up and took his detachment a short distance along the road to the south, waited for the flames to die then returned to his gun. Ammunition continued to be delivered to the forward guns and Bombardier Riley, the 102 Fd Bty Transport NCO, drove the Battery Landrover backwards and forwards despite the heavy enemy machine gun fire that the vehicle attracted. The O-Sized bulldozer sat forlornly in the middle of the gun position riddled with bullets and shrapnel and leaking fuel.

Ahearn continued to move around the position, returning at intervals to the 102 Fd Bty CP to brief both Bob Lowry and, by radio, Andrews at the 1 RAR CP. Andrews gave an overview of the artillery and air support that he was coordinating and advised that 'Spooky' would shortly be on station. Ahearn also reported to the Regimental CP but no orders or instructions were issued by the FSPB Defence Commander save one; an order to throw grenades at the machine gun in the Number 6 Gun position that was causing the Regimental HQ some discomfort. Grenades and M79 rounds delivered from Number 5 Gun platform silenced the machine gun. The grenades had to be retrieved from the Battery stores before they could be used.

Neither Ahearn nor Jensen received any other orders or instructions from Murtagh, the Local Defence Commander. In Jensen's case this would have been difficult since his telephone connection with the Regimental CP had been severed. 102 Fd Bty CP had telephone communications with the Regimental CP throughout the battle but with the exception of the order to throw grenades no instructions were issued.

Communications were becoming a problem. The battery radio used for the Regimental Command Net had been hit and destroyed; one radio was on the Battery Command Net linking the 102 Fd Bty CP with the Battery Commander at 1 RAR HQ and the Forward Observers with the infantry companies. A third radio was on the 1 RAR Battalion Command Net allowing 102 Fd Bty to listen to exchanges between the Mortar Platoon and

HQ 1 RAR. Only two of the terminals, No 4 Gun and No 5 Gun, of the gun command tannoy system linking the howitzers to the 102 Fd Bty CP, were operating. The wire linking the system had been cut by incoming RPG and mortar rounds. The telephone line between the

Regimental, 102 Fd Bty and Mortar Platoon CPs was operative although the Mortars dropped off the line shortly after the assault began. At least two wounded gunners (Grimes and Nichols) were brought to the 102 Fd Bty CP and placed on the rear shelf, making life a little overcrowded.

'Spooky' made an appearance over the battle and announcing his presence by lighting up the battle with enormous parachute borne flares. 'Spooky' or 'Puff the Magic Dragon' was an AC 47 aircraft (military version of the DC3) fitted with 2 or 3 GAU-2A 7.62mm miniguns (Gatling guns) capable of delivering 6,000 round per minute. The sight of the red tracer streaming down from the heavens was a sight that many of the Australian soldiers would remember for life. 'Spooky', continued to circle 'hosing' the perimeter of the FSPB; adding to the rain of tracer from 'Spooky', the helicopter gunships continued to make their runs up and down the northern flank.

At this stage the infantry companies out in their ambush position began to call for artillery support. Although enemy fire was still coming into the gun position Number 1, 2 and 3 Gun began firing in support of them. Three section gun missions were fired during this period. Sergeant 'Skeeter' Humphries Number 2 Gun detachment performed extremely well since the gunners were required to manhandle its 2.2 tonnes under fire, in the dark with both of the gun's tires blown out.

The fight had been underway for more than two and a half hours and dawn was fast approaching. The situation in the Mortar Platoon was getting worse. The gun position had tried to contact the mortars by voice but those attempts only resulted in increased machine gun fire. The 102 Fd Bty CP could hear Jensen on the 1 RAR Command Net as he repeatedly called for Splintex to be fired across his position; the CO 1 RAR finally relented and agreed.

The Official History version of what happened next is pure fiction based on a misinterpretation of the military terms 'call for' and 'directed' and a misreading of those terms in an interview with Jensen. The Official History version deserves stating in full to reveal just how wrong it is:

*'In desperation Jensen saw the only option open to him was to direct the fire of the 90 mm RCLs onto his own position. He had been providing very clear reports of the situation and Bennett had no compunction into agreeing to the fire missions. Several times Jensen called for such fire. Bennett regarded this as the second critical period in the battle, when the enemy had actually achieved a break-in. 'Stay down', Jensen shouted to his platoon each time through the din, 'Splintex coming in'. 'He would then immediately call for fire, and the bangs quickly followed.'*

Certainly, Jensen had been providing very clear reports to Bennett while persistently calling for Splintex fire across his position but Bennett was reluctant to approve what appeared to be a drastic solution. 102 Fd Bty CP listened to the discussions on the 1 RAR Command Net and Jensen made several transmissions 'calling for' Splintex to be fired over his position. These calls were not fire missions as the Official History recorded; they were repeated requests to take a course of action. Furthermore, Jensen was not considering the fire from the 90 mm RCLs which belonged to the Anti-Tank Platoon. Jensen wanted Splintex fire from the 105 mm guns of 102 Fd Bty.

So, while quoting Jensen, the authors of the Official History misconstrued what Jensen was doing. There are a few considerations that highlight this misconception. An examination of the layout of the FSPB by the Official History authors would have revealed that it was physically impossible for the RCL of the Anti-Tank Platoon to fire over the Mortar Line as the latter was screened from the former by 102 Fd Bty guns. From his perspective on the ground in the Mortar Platoon position, it was abundantly obvious to Jensen that it was only the guns of 102 Fd Bty which could help relieve the desperate situation his platoon was in. The use of the RCLs never





**The 102 Battery, Mortar Platoon and Regimental CP positions showing the extent of the NVA penetration. Note that the three guns at the right of the photograph are pointing north while the remaining three guns are pointing east**

entered his mind and, furthermore, the RCLs were at the outer limit of their Splintex range (300 metres).

Another factor was that the RCLs only had eight rounds of ammunition for each of the two weapons to begin with and had they been firing for two hours at 'opportunity targets' as indicated by Second Lieutenant Les Tranter, they would not have had the ammunition to fire multiple fire Splintex missions near the end of the action. In short the version of the firing of Splintex over the Mortar Platoon in the Official History is pure invention.

These considerations and conclusions are supported by Jensen in his article in *Infantry* in 1973. Remarkably, Jensen's article was known to the authors of the Official History because it was quoted as a source in other areas in the Official History. In his article, Jensen recorded: 'At this stage the mortar position was engaged with splintex by 102 Field Battery. The accuracy of their fire was revealed after the contact. Some enemy had attempted to drag away a complete mortar (which they couldn't dismantle) and their bodies and the mortar were found about five metres from the mortar pit. Several splintex darts had penetrated the barrel and also about 20% of the ammunition on the mortar line'.

The authors of the Official History might also have researched the 1 RAR After Action Report which recorded at 0425 hours 13th May 1968: 'Gunnery from 102 Fd Bty were able to engage en with HE and splintex rounds and fired over the Mor Pl position.'

Ahearn also described the incident in his report on the attacks on 102 Fd Bty: 'At approximately 0500 hrs a request was made by the mortar position to fire splintex across their position. No 5 gun fired 5 rounds across the mortars which proved very effective.'

Yet another description of the event was recorded by Lex McAuley: 'For a long time there had been no contact between the mortars and the guns, but at last Tony Jensen acknowledged the call from Ian Ahearn, who had gone to No 5 gun pit in an effort to determine what had happened to the infantry mortar platoon and it was arranged that splintex would be fired across the mortar position. He called for his men to get down and the lethal hail from 5 rounds slashed overhead.'

In short the Splintex fired over the Mortar Platoon was fired by Number 5 Gun 102nd Field Battery and it was one fire mission comprising five rounds. The Official History account is totally wrong and the authors failed to refer to readily available sources to cross reference their version of events. Both Jensen and Ahearn met with Ekins, one of the Official History authors, after the publication of the Official History and pointed out the errors regarding the firing of Splintex over the mortars but Ekins declined to accept their eye witness account.

To be continued.....





Top Photograph: No 2 (Bravo) Gun of Sergeant Len (Skeeter) Humphry.<sup>33</sup>

Bottom Photograph: View from the left flank of 102<sup>nd</sup> Field Battery with No 6 (Foxtrot) Gun of Sergeant Max Franklin in the foreground. To the left rear is No 4 (Delta) Gun of Sergeant John Stephens and immediately behind Foxtrot is No 2 (Bravo) Gun of Sergeant Len (Skeeter) Humphry. These three guns were heavily involved in the battle with Bravo and Foxtrot being damaged during the battle and with Delta Gun firing 'Splintex' anti-personnel rounds over open sights at the North Vietnam Army (NVA) attackers. This photograph was taken after the initial attack as indicated by the development of sandbagging and overhead protection. The main NVA attack was from the left of the picture. Photographs provided by Colonel Ian Ahearn (Retd).



## It could only happen in Australia

*Ed's note: I stole this from someone in Aussie – one would hope it is only hyperbole.*

The role of the Australian infantry is 'to close with and kill the enemy'.

There are no ambiguities in that mission statement. In order to train for their assigned role infantrymen practice with guns and live bullets to shoot at targets shaped as humans. They lob grenades to practice blowing people apart. They use fixed bayonets on sandbags to hone their killing skills. They practice ambush drills so they can kill as many enemy as possible in one massive shoot-out. They are trained to be tougher, stronger and more courageous than their foe. And they know they must be prepared to die for each other.

At the end of their training day they come home to help their wives with the housework and their kids with their homework. Next day they resume their training in how to kill people.

They are aware that any enemy they are likely to face has a similar purpose. Some even practice blowing themselves up!

Seven years ago an army team was committed to clearing up a compound which housed a suspected insurgent in Afghanistan. It had to be completed in the dark. As they entered the close confines of the compound all hell broke loose. The troops took cover and called on the insurgent to stop firing and surrender. He answered with another hail of bullets. One of the troops got close enough to hurl a grenade through an opening before his mates stormed the room just as they were trained to do. When the smoke and dust had settled six people, including the insurgent and four children were dead.

Canberra was mortified when they learned that the commandos they sent to Afghanistan to kill people actually killed people. An officer who was trained to write reports and had mountains of files worth of experience was appointed to investigate. He recommended they be charged with manslaughter. A female lawyer dressed up as a Brigadier took up the issue and charged the men

The army judge who heard the case was a young lawyer who I worked with at the 1st Brigade in the early 1980s. He had worked with troops for decades and had a close working knowledge of what they were trained to do, their values and the pride they had in their uniform. He threw the case out. The Brigadier made a few cat-calls but to no avail. The commandos returned to their duties.

Canberra based defencecrats in Fort Fumble were incensed. They enlisted their own coffee-shop commandos and had a conversation - in their space - to deliberate on matters of such import as gender inequality and ethnic diversity in Commando Regiments.

The role of the Infantry was discussed. Was it too brutal?

Should it be 'to close with and counsel the enemy'? What if somebody took offence to being labelled as enemy? Should it be 'to close with and have a conversation with those opposite'?

Training regimes at the Australian Defence Force Academy were adjusted. Instructors were forbidden to raise their voices at young cadets to protect their self-esteem. Crusty old drill sergeants were dispatched to re-education camps. Red marker pens were banned as it was deemed to be too aggressive a colour for marking papers. Male and female quarters were to include an 'undecided' section in each barrack block.

The next challenge was to look at the dietary requirements of the troops, troopettes and undecided in the field which is defined as any space beyond the border of the ACT. It was here that all halal broke loose.

Combat rations were examined calorie by calorie. My Kitchen Rules staff were enlisted to join the conversation. Ministers, priests, rabbi's, Iman's, agnostics and organisers of the gay mardi gras congregated to bless and blaspheme menus. Bully-beef and dog-biscuits were subject to stringent OH&S checks and promptly banned. It was found that if a supply of bully-beef was ever captured and consumed by the enemy it could cause severe gastronomical upsets and trigger a class action. If our troops and troopettes ran out of bullets and had to throw dog-biscuits as a last resort they could cause significant injuries to their non-friends shooting back at them.

The psychological state of troops and troopettes at the time of consumption had to be considered. How did the past owner of that 20g piece of meat in that packet die? Was it shot? Was its throat cut? Was it a lethal injection or just old age. Was it given last rites? And by whom?

Surveys of troops, troopettes and the undecided to determine their ethnic origins were necessary to determine the proportion of rations required to meet their needs on operations outside the ACT. How many days each year should they spend amongst those on the other side who lived in suburbs like Boganville before returning to the safety of their PC bubble? So much to ponder!

In light of these considerations the recent decision of the Chief of Army to declare that 30 percent of combat ration packs must carry halal certification to cater for the 0.35 per cent of Muslims in his army makes a lot of sense. PC scribes are already drafting up his nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize. 'Combat ration balance' could well be their next international cause celebre!





### What is a Veteran?

A Veteran is anyone – whether on active duty, in the reserves, discharged or retired, who,

at one point in his or her life,

signed an open cheque, made payable to

'NEW ZEALAND' and to our Queen,

for an amount 'up to, and including my life'.

This is an honour.

And there are way too many people in this country today who do not understand that fact.



### Truisms ?

- I find it ironic that the colours red, white, and blue stand for freedom, until they're flashing behind you.
- I changed my password to "incorrect" so whenever I forget it the computer will say, "Your password is incorrect."
- Hospitality is the art of making guests feel like they're at home when you wish they were.
- Behind every great man is a woman rolling her eyes.
- Women sometimes make fools of men, but most guys are the do-it-yourself type.
- If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you.
- A question posed in a British newspaper: Are there too many immigrants in Britain ?
- 17% said yes; 11% said No; 72% said "I am not understanding the question please."

### Situations Vacant

Our Col Comdt, Barry Dreyer, is a founding trustee of the Auckland Coastal Defence Historical Trust.

The Trust holds the tourism rights to North Head and Fort Takapuna from DOC, the essential part of which is the keys to the various gunner tunnels.

John Hyde (the Chair of the Trust) has now negotiated tours from visiting cruise ships – about ten ships in the next few months.

We are very keen to increase the pool of available guides to conduct tours.

We do have a core pool and this group will provide training and knowledge.

Tours are limited to 16 plus the guide and will last about 4 hours for each group of 16.

The aim of the tours is to expand knowledge of the sites and the history of the defence of Auckland, as well as raise a small amount of money to help with the upkeep and restoration of the gunner locations at both sites.

If anyone is interested in becoming a guide could you please email Barry or John Hyde at;

Barry Dreyer [b.dreyer@clear.net.nz](mailto:b.dreyer@clear.net.nz)

John Hyde [john12nz@gmail.com](mailto:john12nz@gmail.com)



## RNZA Association; Presidents Report 2016

**Presented by Tony McLeod, President RNZAA, 21 October 2016.**

This year has seen further consolidation of the changes that we made to our Constitution here in this hall in November 2012, when full membership was opened to all those who have served as gunners and membership became FREE, the member being deemed to have paid his or her dues to the RNZA Association by virtue of their service to the RNZA. This was a fundamental change to our Constitution, our structure and how we should do business, and I am sorry to have to report that we are still only consolidating rather than actively building. I think we have definitely strengthened our 'nation-wide framework', with a very strong group now of Regional Reps and c'ttee at Large, but we still haven't 'fleshed out' the bones with large numbers of active members. This is the challenge ahead. How do we do it? We keep plugging away.

Activities. The Association was involved in or represented at the following activities through the year;

Ubique 300; In March the Royal Artillery Rugby Team toured NZ as a part of the Ubique 300 Celebrations. Unfortunately the timing did not allow a match against 16 Fd Regt, but the team played (and won) three matches and our 'Captain-General's' Battalion was on display at several locations in the North Island, including, to my great honour, my family lounge.

ANZAC Day; The 'Wreaths on ANZAC Day' initiative was continued for its 5<sup>th</sup> year this year; the aim of this initiative is to rejuvenate gunner networks at the 'local' level, with the Association paying for wreaths where 5 or more gunners are assembled (and photographed) in one location. There was however only one uptaker for payment this year.

Gunners Day; Major celebrations were held by 16<sup>th</sup> Fd Regt on the occasion of the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Royal Artillery, with dawn guns firing around the country, and large celebrations held in Palmerston North and Linton throughout the day. I had the honour to represent the RNZA at the Ubique 300 Celebrations in the UK, at the RA Review held at Larkhill with the Queen was the Guest of Honour. It really was a memorable and spectacular occasion.

The day was celebrated with dinners in Devonport, Papakura, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin and I would like to

thank the organisers of the various celebrations held on Gunners Day throughout the country, as this event (other than funerals) is the major activity which really does unite us in our common bond of service to the Royal Regt of NZ Artillery.

Funerals. Once again, funerals formed the basis of a lot of reunions through the year (see attached Roll of Honour).

### Support (Welfare)

Veterans Support Act 2014. In December 2014 the Veterans Support Act became law, for better and for worse. As a result of complaints from Association members about the way VANZ are implementing the new Act, a meeting of an 'RNZAA Veterans Advisory Group' was convened in Wellington in October 2015. This meeting came up with an Association 'Position' paper which was tabled at the Chief of Army conference by the Col Comdt in November 2015. The paper was processed by Army to Veterans Affairs and a reply was eventually received from the Director of VANZ Jacki Couchman. This reply was underwhelming; it failed to address the main issues and was considered to be 'patronising' in its manner. I will address this issue later in the meeting.

Support Advisers. I would like to thank our support advisers Mike Dakin, Peter Miles, Lindsay Skinner and Pat Duggan. Their ongoing willingness to help is very much appreciated, as their expertise is available to all members to help with advice on pension and other support matters.

Minor Support Initiative. In December 2015 Xmas Cards (and a small gift) were sent to gunners serving overseas at Xmas time. This is the 5<sup>th</sup> year we have made this small gesture, and we will continue it again this year.

Donations. I would like to thank all those members who made donations to the Association through the year (members making a donation in lieu of the previous annual subscription), and in particular the 161 Battery (SVN) Reunion organising C'ttee (under Woody Barrett) for their very generous donation to both the RNZA Assn and the RNZA Historical Trust (approximately \$3000 to each entity), which showed up in this year's accounts. Similarly I would like to thank the members of the Ch19, 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Div. for their generous donation, which will also be mentioned in the Treasurers Report.

Regional Reps. I would like to thank our Regional Reps/Committee at Large for the part they have played in keeping the Association alive throughout the country; Northland –John Os-

borne, Auckland Elected C'ttee Greg Thwaite, Colin Jansen, Peter Miles, Andrew Donnellan, Maaka McKinney, Waikato Hugh Vercoe, Barry Cooke, Chris Morris, Rotorua- Danny and Bernie McCort; Palmerston North- Tom Roche, Steve Harvey; Paraparaumu/Levin- David Bahler, Roger Newth; Wellington- David Weston, Lindsay Skinner, Rob Hitchings, Mark Ogilvie; Christchurch- Skin Frances, Paul O'Connor; Dunedin-Chris Dietrichs, Robbie Gardiner; Regimental- Catherine Dymock; Australia-Brian Jerry Meyer. The number and level of participation of these Regional Representatives shows just how much we have become a truly 'nation-wide' organisation.

I would like to say a special thanks to David Weston, not only for his role as Regional Rep but also his active participation as our RNZRSA delegate.

### Media

Website. Our website was launched in October 2012, it was enhanced in March 2014 (which amended the format, simplified the on-line membership registration process, and updated the membership list). I would like to thank Skin Frances for his work as our webmaster; this is a critical role in the functioning of the Assn.

Newsletter. We have certainly seen a revitalised newsletter with the appointment of David Bahler as Editor. A very big thank you to David.

Facebook. Many thanks to Colin Jansen who keeps a lively discussion going on our Facebook page. This is another critical 'tool' for the Association, and Colin's contribution is to be commended.

### Assistance to National Army Museum (NAM)

I must make mention of Grant Hays and Colin Jansen who have set up a monthly program of maintaining artillery equipment at the National Army Museum in Waiouru. Thanks to you both, and to the teams of willing volunteer workers who have made considerable effort to get to Waiouru for this very worthy cause. We are trying to work out how we as an Association can support attendees at these weekend working bees. Petrol vouchers seem to be most appropriate.

### Executive Committee.

I would like to thank your elected committee, who meet every

two months and whose work goes largely unnoticed, but without whom the wheels of the Association would stop turning. So special thanks to Bernie McCort (our Secretary/ Treasurer/ Chief Clerk), Greg Thwaite (Vice-President), Colin Jansen (our very enthusiastic Facebook Manager, Quartermaster and 'tiffy), Peter Miles (Support), Andrew Donnellan, Maaka McKinney

Lastly but by no means least, I would like to thank our Col Comdt, Col Barry Dreyer for his continued help and enthusiasm in all aspects of the Association's activities. Barry has been tireless in his support of all aspects of the RNZA throughout the country, he must have worked full time for the past 6 years in his role as Col Comdt. and I think he deserves more formal recognition for his services

``He kitenga kanohi, he hokinga whakaaro``

To see a face is to stir the memory``.





# ROYAL NEW ZEALAND ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION INC.

## 82 nd Annual General Meeting

Location: RSA, Bute Road, Browns Bay, Auckland

Date: 22 October 2016

Meeting opened: 10:41 a.m.

Chairman: Tony McLeod

Minutes Secretary: Greg Thwaite

### 1. Welcome

The President, Tony McLeod, welcomed the Col Commandant Barry Dreyer and 26 other members attending the Annual General Meeting, as set out in the attached **Schedule 1**.

### 2. Apologies

Apologies were received in advance, or at the AGM, from the persons on the attached **Schedule 2**.

**Resolution:** that the Apologies be accepted *Danny McCort/  
David Weston*

Passed **unanimously**.

### 3. Minutes

**Resolution:** that the Minutes of the 81st AGM as written and presented be approved *Tony McLeod/ Neil Rhynd*

Passed **unanimously**.

### 4. President's Report

The President presented a written report, and made the following point orally:

The Gunners Day event at Linton, which commemorated the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, was a success.

**Resolution:** the President's report be accepted: *Tony McLeod/Paul O'Connor*

Passed **unanimously**.

The following comments from the floor were made in respect to the President's report:

At both Christchurch and Wellington, as reported by Skin Francis and David Weston respectively, wreaths are laid by groups of Gunners, but no compensation is sought, as both groups use re-

trievable wreaths.

Brian Meyer commented that funerals are a frequent occasion for reunions, as shown by the turnout at the recent funeral for Colin McIsaac, and noted that two attenders there have themselves since passed on.

### 5. Treasurer's Report

The President and the Treasurer presented the annual accounts.

The following comments were added orally:

The draft accounts had been reviewed and approved by Craig Hewitt and Wayne Anker.

The funds held by the RNZAA in respect to 161 Battery in SVN were paid out to the organisers of the recent 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion. The organisers made a surplus at the Reunion; one half was donated to the RNZA Historical Trust for its purposes, and the other half has been donated to the RNZAA for its purposes.

By letter, Denis Dwane, Danny McCort and Fred Russell directed that the funds held for Chapter 19 of the 173 Airborne Division are henceforth to belong to the RNZAA and to be applied by the RNZAA for its general purposes.

To mark 100 years of RNZA combat support for the Australian Infantry and specifically the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, the Committee applied part of the funds donated by Chapter 19 to purchase a **Bronze Gunner statuette** for presentation to the Australian Infantry Regiment, which was handed over by the Col Commandant.

**Resolution:** the accounts be accepted: *Tony McLeod /Colin Davison*

Passed **unanimously**.

### 6. Elections

#### 6.1 Patron

**Resolution:** Barry Dreyer, the present Col Commandant, be appointed as Patron *Tony McLeod /John Deazley*

Passed **unanimously**.

#### 6.2 President

The President vacated the chair, to allow the Col Commandant to conduct the election for President. Tony McLeod indicated

willingness to continue in office. There was no other nomination.

**Resolution:** Tony McLeod be appointed President  
*Col Commandant/David Weston*

Passed **unanimously**.

Tony McLeod resumed the chair.

### 6.3 Secretary/Treasurer

Bernie McCort indicated willingness to continue in office. She cautioned that eventually a successor will need to be appointed. There was no other nomination.

**Resolution:** Bernie McCort be appointed Secretary/  
Treasurer *Tony McLeod/ Peter Miles*

Passed **unanimously**.

### 6.4 Committee Members

The following persons indicated willingness to serve in office: Andrew Donnellan, Colin Jansen, Maaka McKinney Peter Miles, and Gregory J Thwaite. There was no other nomination.

**Resolution:** Such persons be appointed to the Committee  
*Tony McLeod/ Ross Goldsworthy*

Passed **unanimously**.

### 6.5 Other Offices

The following persons were proposed for the respective offices:

Mark Ogilvie as a member of the extended Committee;

David Weston as RSA delegate;

Chris Morris as the Webmaster (replacing Skin Francis), and as Membership Secretary;

David Bähler as the editor of the newsletter.

**Resolution:** Such persons be appointed to such offices  
*Tony McLeod/Neill Rhynd-*

Passed **unanimously**.

### 6.6 Signatories

**Resolution:** Tony McLeod and Bernie McCort be the

bank signatories *Tony McLeod/Peter Miles*

Passed **unanimously**.

### 6.7 Honarium

**Resolution:** that the honarium remain at \$500 (payable to the Secretary/Treasurer) *Tony McLeod/Chris Morris*

Passed **unanimously**.

Danny McCort provided a brief explanation of the dedication shown by Bernie McCort in her duties for the RNZAA. Applause erupted as a unanimous appreciation of her dedication.

## 8. General Business

### 8.1 Welfare and Veterans Support Act 2014

Tony McLeod reported on the memorandum prepared by the RNZAA *ad hoc* committee as to the current operation of VANZ. A response has been received from VANZ, but it is viewed as patronising and unsatisfactory. A VANZ review is due in December, and various groups (led by persons such as Wira Gardiner, Red Beatson, and Andy Peters) are expected to participate.

The RNZAA approach is to provide to members a position paper from the *ad hoc* committee, to allow members to raise the matter with people of influence. The two key points are:

1. Contact with the veteran must be genuine, by way of face-to-face meetings as appropriate.
2. Assessment and rehabilitation planning must take a holistic approach, i.e. take into account the entirety of a veteran's circumstances.

Comments made from the floor were as follows:

The accident compensation philosophy is not the appropriate basis for dealing with veterans.

The Government might wish to transfer responsibility for veterans across to the accident compensation system (which might result in improved face-to-face contact).

VANZ is not acting in accordance with the Act.

Members of Parliament of all parties are appropriate persons to approach.

Discussion with Members of Parliament could be improved if

written proposed amendments to the appropriate law could be provided.

## 8.2 Report of the Col Commandant

The Col Commandant provided an oral report, covering the following matters:

The three limbs of the Regiment are serving soldiers, the RNZAA, and the Band.

16<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment is very busy at the moment, as shown by the inability to provide hospitality for Exercise Ben Cat, and the lack of numbers (only 16 in Linton) when the Royal Artillery rugby team was in New Zealand. The Regiment is in good shape, and the re-equipping is going well, with the solutions for the prime mover for the gun and counter-mortar radar expected soon. Six Gunners are serving in Iraq.

The RNZAA is in good shape around the country, with good turnouts. The energy of Tony McLeod and Bernie McCort, and of the Committee, is much appreciated.

The Band has arranged a series of sponsors (the principal one being Ryman Healthcare) so it is financially secure, and has appropriate uniforms. A Deed among the Band, the Col Commandant, and 16th Field Regiment regulates the connection with the RNZA. In November the Band will be taken by Hercules to Melbourne, to be the principal band at the ceremony on 11 November at the Shrine, as well as undertaking about 8 other engagements. The Ministry of Defence is providing lemon squeezers and uniform, and 16<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment is meeting some expenses.

Heritage Trust.

Its role is to identify general artillery assets, to be maintained separate from 16<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment.

Work is progressing reasonably well.

The major income flow comes from the sale of the Bronze Gunner statuette at \$1,100, of which \$350 is profit. A statuette is poured only when an order is received.

It is involved in refurbishing medals, including those of a World War I Gun Sergeant who served at Passchendaele and earned the Military Medal, and the Australian-born Pronto who fell in Korea, whose medals include the Military Medal, and those from World War II, J Force and K Force. It paid for the Bronze

Gunner statuette to be presented to the Royal Artillery as part of Ubique 300. It will be presented at the Remembrance Sunday Dinner in London on 13 November by John Tulloch, formerly a Forward Observer in Vietnam and Adjutant of 16th Field Regiment, with the involvement of the NZ Defence Attaché.

It is changing its form to a charitable trust, to facilitate fundraising.

It has funds of \$9,000, and to date has spent between \$8,000 and \$10,000.

The RNZAA newsletter is spread through the NZDF. Transmission may be blocked if it contains earthy vocabulary beloved of Gunners in the field.

Col Commandant, 16 Gunner veterans, and 12 serving Gunners flew to Canberra for the 50<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the Battle of Long Tan. A Bronze Gunner was presented to the Royal Australian Infantry Corps, in presence of Major General Mark Kelly and the Head of the Regiment, with the participation of the New Zealand Chief of Army, the High Commissioner, and the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives. The statuette will be held by the Corps, and not by any of the individual battalions. The connection with the Australian Infantry goes back to Gallipoli, when the howitzers commanded by Reg Miles (later Brigadier Miles) were first on the beach and fired in support of Australians: cooperation followed in World War II, Korea, Vietnam (161 Battery supported all the Australian battalions), Bosnia, and the JFTs in Iraq.

An oral history project is underway, with the involvement of David Bähler. The pilot scheme will start with the Battle of Long Tan. A Questionnaire has been drafted, to be used for the 4 or 5 veterans in the Levin area. If all goes well, the project will be expanded, and the Questionnaire will be adjusted, to include Operations Balmoral and Coral (and others) in Vietnam, then experiences in Bosnia, East Timor, and Afghanistan. The project is expected to take 5 to 6 years.

On 11 November, at about 1900 h, the History Channel is showing a programme about Operations Balmoral and Coral, as is Sky in Australia.

The book on Reg Miles is at the stage of bidding for money from trusts, in the region of \$30-\$40,000. The Government will match donations in a ratio of 2:1. The author has been arranged, and everything is organised apart from the money, with the expected completion of bidding being in February 2017. The cost



for the project is \$90,000.

After six years of service, Barry Dreyer is stepping down as Col Commandant, with a decision expected in December as to a successor. This is the best job he has ever had.

Comments from the floor:

Work is being done on the restoration of cannon in Waiouru, with a key involvement of Colin Jansen.

22D Troop has been formed within 4/11 Battery, consisting of up to 15 Gunners at Linton, including the sculptor Matt Gauldie.

The silver gun paid for by members of 4<sup>TH</sup> Medium Battery is held by the trust. Barry Cook, a former BSM, conveyed the dissatisfaction of Medium Gunners that the gun was not held in Hamilton, possibly with the City Council. Col Commandant's concern is the security of such silver, referring to the experience with 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Regiment silver, which had been dispersed, with one piece being held by a city on a shelf in a back room. The case for the gun does need to be repaired.

David Bähler recorded the respect that Other Ranks have developed for Col Commandant Barry Dreyer during his period of service, owing to his involvement with their daily activities.

### 8.3 Membership database

Chris Morris will be incorporating the website's work with the database, and wants to actively seek out names of Old Gunners.

Craig Hewitt noted the need to initiate contact with Old Gunners, so that they are aware of events.

The RNZAA has not been able to reach an arrangement with 16<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment by which the details of Gunners are notified to the RNZAA upon march-in.

Col Commandant provided to Bernie McCort the "Doomsday Book", being the Old Comrades Association tome that lists the passing of Gunners, which dates back to 1873. He had received it from the late Bob Kerslake, who had obtained it from the Estate of the late Jeffrey Waters.

### 8.4 Regional feedback

The rotation of the Reunion around New Zealand has proven a good policy, and has increased the response of Old Gunners. Tony McLeod expects that over time the national organisation will gravitate to Linton.

David Weston reported that the Gunners Day dinner in Wellington was attended by 65 people, and made a profit, with a service during the day at the National Memorial where a wreath was laid. St Barbara's Day was celebrated by an informal gathering in a suitable city location. He took the opportunity to report that Lt. Gen. McIver had passed away eight weeks previously.

Skin Frances reported that a Gunners Day Dinner was held at the Christchurch RSA, on a break-even basis, which he thought would have attracted 1 more than in Wellington. He raised the prospect of a Dinner being held in Dunedin.

Bernie McCort advised of an informal gathering in the Waikato for Gunners Day.

Greg Thwaite reported on two Gunners Day Dinners in Auckland, one of 46 people at Devonport, and another, smaller, less formal one in Papakura.

### RSA

David Weston reported on the activities of the RSA.

Communication between the affiliates and the Head Office is not very strong.

He attended as an observer at the National Council meeting. Points were:

- the Governor-General opened the National Council, showing an interest in the RSA;

- Prime Minister John Key attended, and spoke of: the heavy work load of the NZDF; the reputation internationally of the NZDF; the need to gather information and consider the prospect of repatriation of deceased servicemen from Malaysia;

The Minister for Veterans Affairs attended and spoke of: the centenary of the RSA; the grant, which is increased to \$350,000, an increase from the previous \$100,000, in recognition of expenses by the RSA.

The new National Support and Welfare officer is Mark Campaign, a former Army Warrant Officer, who is energetic, bright, and effective.

The relationship among the RSA, VANZ and the NZDF is improving, with regular fortnightly meetings.

VANZ is aware of communication problems and is looking to address them. When a veteran is in Wellington, a meeting with the case officer can be arranged, or a meeting with the duty case officer.

Bernadine Donnelly, with a background in CYPS, is due to become the new head of VANZ.

The former Governor-General, Lt. Gen. Jerry Mateparae, was awarded a Badge in Gold and life membership.

The Stratford RSA is in the process of being expelled; a unique event in RSA history. Lack of communications and some personality conflict exacerbate the situation.

The prospect of medallic recognition for service in S E Asia from 1967 to 1989 is under consideration, which will require 2-3 years.

Aaron Horrell has made a TV programme about the expedition to Afghanistan, which is now available on a DVD. It concerns the second tour in Bamiyan Province, when casualties were incurred. One casualty is Daren Tucker, who is the grand-nephew of Rei Pita.

Mark Campaign organised a support services seminar, which focused on services and was very good.

The following points arose from comments from the floor.

The book by Stephen Clarke *After the War* about the RSA is highly recommended.

The NZDF hierarchy feels some responsibility for the welfare of veterans who have incurred problems on active service.

Serving soldiers may be made aware of the RNZAA and the future benefits that it may provide if an understanding is embedded in the units in which they are serving.

## 2017

Tony McLeod noted the following matters coming up.

The sesquicentennial is due in 2017 for each of D Btry (Wellington) and E Battery (Christchurch). An event could coincide with Gunners Day and St Barbara's Day for them, respectively.

D Battery in Wellington had a dog lead, for the mythical mascot, which Colin Jansen has repaired at private expense. Some arrangement should be made to have it presented to 22D Troop. This initiative should be driven from inside Wellington.

Next year the RNZAA will try to reinvigorate the involvement with Exercise Ben Cat.

On 2-4 November a meeting with 16<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment Officers will explore a new route for the mentoring scheme.

## Other Matters

Danny McCort spoke of the great value of the service of the Col Commandant Barry Dreyer.

Danny McCort advised the passing that day of Barry Brokus, of 4<sup>th</sup> Medium Battery.

John Deazley raised the topic of repatriation, with particular reference to Adrian Thomas, a SAS man who died in South East Asia and is buried there. The Malay Veterans Association and the Vietnam Veterans Association both support repatriation. The Prime Minister is now aware. 32 or 33 soldiers are involved. The Ministry of

Defence is considering the matter back to 1948, which will delay resolution. A letter from the RNZAA supporting repatriation if the consent of the NoK is available, may be of assistance.

David Bähler reported that inquiries had been made of him as editor of the newsletter.

[The Col Commandant had left the AGM by this point, but subsequently has provided the following information: The Col Commandant has separately made a number of representations and had meetings with both Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Veterans Affairs on the repatriation of the two Gunners KIA on Op Ben Cat in 1965 – Al Don & Jock White]

**Resolution:** “The RNZA Association endorse the actions of the Malay Veterans and the Vietnam Veterans in their endeavours for repatriation of the Fallen in Malaysia where the Next of Kin so desires”

*John Deazley/Brian Meyer*

Passed **unanimously**.

Bernie McCort reported on the success of Q Store sales.

## 2017 AGM

This will take place in Linton, Palmerston North, in conjunction with 16<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment, with the support of the CO and the RSM. David Bahler, Steve Harvey and Tom Roche will coordinate.

In recognition of his energy and vision, unanimous applause broke out for Tony McLeod.

Mike Dakin praised the new spirit at the AGM's of the RNZAA. In previous years the AGM had been a short chat over a few beers by half a dozen aged gentlemen. He applauded the participation of the day, and in the future.

Meeting closed at 12:28 p.m..

## Schedule 1: Attenders

David Bähler  
Nig Botica  
Baz Cook  
Colin Davison  
Mike Daikin  
John Deazley  
Andrew Donnellan  
Barry Dreyer  
Catherine Dymock  
Skin Frances

Ross Goldsworthy (& Mem Goldsworthy)

Craig Hewitt  
Alastair Irving  
Tony Irving  
Colin Jansen  
Bernie McCort  
Danny McCort  
Tony McLeod  
Nev Merskey  
Brian Meyer  
Peter Miles  
Chris Morris  
Paul O'Connor  
Willie Parker  
Rei Pita  
Neil Rhynd  
Greg Thwaite  
David Weston

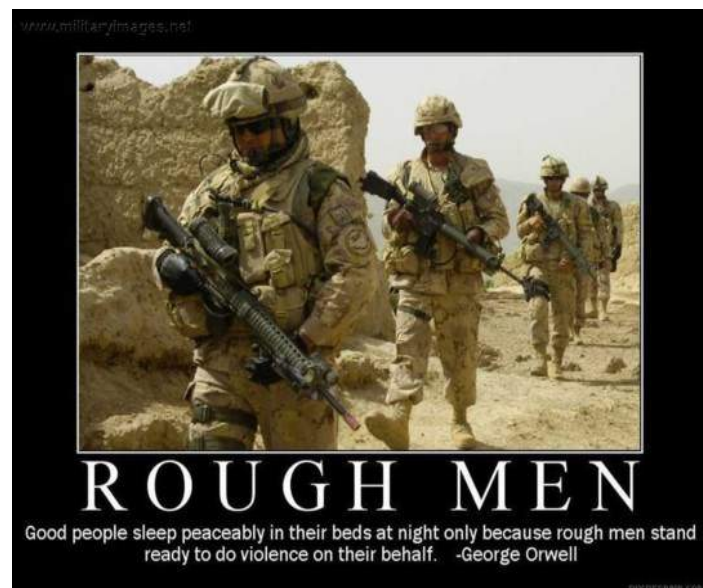
## Schedule 2: Apologies

### In advance

Ray Andrews	Peter Dawson
Denis Dwane	Rangi Fitzgerald
Peter Fraser	Peter Hansen
Kerry Lee	Selwyn Lilley
Russ Martin	Jack Mills
Gordon Revell	Catherine & Angus Rivers
Tom Roche	Wayne Searle
Clyde Stewart	

### At the AGM

Roger Newth	Mark Ogilvie
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## The Gilbert Commemorative Bty

Not many of us will know of the Gilbert Commemorative Bty that



operates out of the Hawkes Bay and who display horse drawn Artillery pieces such as this replica 18 pdr and Limber drawn by 6 horses.

The organisation is made up of a couple of brothers and their friends who restore aged military gear and then display it. They are not supported by funding so it all comes from their own pockets. They have named themselves after the last Equine Instructor employed by the NZ Army, James Gilbert, who enlisted in 1931 and saw service with the 2nd NZEF in Greece, Crete and the desert and through Italy. James Gilbert also rode at the Queens Coronation in London



in 1953. His sword is still used by the top YO in the Regiment today.





## How implementation of the Veterans' Support Act affects veterans today - October 2016

### Introduction

The Royal New Zealand Artillery Association, one of New Zealand's oldest veterans' welfare organisations, traces its origins to the earliest years of the country's permanent forces.

It represents all gunners, whether retired or serving. Our members include veterans from WW2, K-Force and Vietnam wars, and from every other deployment to the present day.

Many, but not all, are also members of Returned and Services Associations and K-Force and NZ Vietnam Veterans' Association. We are affiliated to RNZRSA to represent gunner interests.

Our policy on veterans' affairs is to work through the RSA network to the greatest extent possible, while cooperating with our sister associations. At the same time, as an independent entity, we act on our own initiative.

### Veteran Welfare Review

In October 2015, the RNZA Association released a report from its Veterans' Advisory Group (VAG), reviewing the effects of the new Veteran's Support Act 2014 (VSA), in its first year.

The Colonel Commandant RNZA, Barry Dreyer, presented the report to Chief of Army who referred it to Head of VANZ for comment. She wrote a detailed reply, which failed to address our concerns.

This year's review follows up matters that remain unresolved from 2015. We have focused on The Code of Veterans' and Other Claimants' Rights – The Code of Rights – and two areas in which we believe there are deficiencies in implementing the Act:

1. Contact, communication and consultation
2. Assessments and rehabilitation

### The Code of Rights

The code (*copy attached*) was published 12 December 2015, two months after our first report. The code formalised existing but contestable rights that were covered by common law, case law and 'duty of care' principles. In this respect, it has changed very little as far as veterans' expectations for 'a fair deal' go, but it has increased the certainty of rights being recognised without argument.

The code sets out eight rights, together with statements of how VANZ will measure its performance when delivering on each right. VANZ wrote these standards for itself, with the result that some are one-sided, weighted to VANZ's perspective and missing important performance criteria. Rights 2 and 5, for example, are about *contact and communication*.

#### **Right 2: You have the right to be treated fairly, and to *have your views considered*.**

We will treat you *fairly*.

We will *listen to you* and *consider your views*.

We will take into account... *any impairment you may have*.

#### **Right 5: You have the right to *effective communication*.**

*We will communicate with you* openly, honestly, and *effectively*.

We will respond to your questions and requests in a timely manner.

We will support you with interpretation services...

We will provide information *in a form that you can access*...

These rights, and **Right 4** apply to every veteran in their specific circumstances, and VANZ's actions must meet their needs in those particular circumstances.

The VSA is the source of all authority exercised by VANZ. It sets out the responsibilities and accountability of the General Manager of VANZ, whose decisions and directions must comply with the VSA. The Code of Rights must also reflect the VSA's requirements, but we think that VANZ's performance statements fall short in places.

#### Contact, communication and consultation

Our 2015 report noted that access to VANZ has become progressively more and more remote since the agency separated from Work and Income around 1997. Prior to that, a veteran could easily see a case manager in person to discuss their concerns. Now, VANZ avoids face to face meetings, forcing veterans to telephone or write.

Right 2 states that, '*You have the right... to have your views considered*'. VANZ will, '*... listen to you... consider your views [and] be responsive to any impairment you may have.*'

To meet its obligations under Right 5, VANZ undertakes to '*communicate with you... effectively, providing information in a form that you can access*'.

Deafness, strokes, phobias and neuroses are examples of physical and psychological incapacity that are obstacles to veteran contact and communication with VANZ. We raised this in our 2015 report. Replying for the Chief of Army, Head of VANZ wrote:

"We understand that veterans may have impairments which affect their ability to deal with us by phone, which is why we follow up our calls with letters and written information."

*This misses the point that veterans really do have physical and psychological impairments that really do prevent them from dealing with VANZ. The agency must 'be responsive to any impairment you may have', and 'communicate with you... effectively, providing information in a form that you can access'.*

"Manager of Veterans' Services... has assured me that Case Managers will endeavour to speak more clearly and ensure that the veteran can understand what is being said."

*Missed again – our point is that veterans are not being understood by VANZ. Communicating is difficult for many, due to their impairments and a lack of formal understanding. Communication is not just VANZ to vet, it is a two-way process.*

"Veterans and their families can also access independent support and representation"

*All of them? Imagine, for example, a vet living remotely in NZ with no kin and no RSA. Does VANZ have any responsibility to reach out to them, or to anyone else?*

"we provided training to RNZRSA Welfare Officers to enable them to provide 'on the ground' support for veterans who require face-to-face meetings"

*'... provided training...'. Recently? Was it one-off or continuing? Maintaining a supply that at least matches attrition rates across RSAs? If so, where are they? There is a difference between routine matters and complex issues, the latter taking more 'consultation'. Who is responsible, has the authority and is accountable for carrying out the required functions of the VSA?*

“Welfare Officers can assist in working as a liaison between the veteran and Veterans' Affairs.”

*It's true to a limited extent, they can fill that gap. But VANZ 'listens' just as badly to Support Advisors (to use their correct title) as it does to vets. Their diligence does not take away VANZ's responsibility.*

“Case Managers and the Enquiry Line are more than happy to discuss any wording that a veteran is unsure about, or a veteran can write to us and we will be happy to respond to his or her queries.”

*Again, access that meets the needs of the vet, not what suits a hallmark bureaucracy (a term we do not use lightly).*

“A veteran could seek a discussion at any time with their case manager”

*Or, rephrasing that: ‘A veteran may seek a discussion with their case manager in person, at any time’.*

“If you or any other veterans have concerns or questions, a case manager is **only a phone call or email away**”

*Good lord, have you been listening?*

**Right 4** ensures that veterans are able to have a support person or persons with them. VANZ undertakes ‘to welcome you and your support person, provided that everyone will be safe’. That is reassuring, as no vet wants to be beaten up by their case manager.

The wording of Right 4 can only apply *if and when people meet*; for example, when veteran and case manager are in the same physical space. If the Code of Rights intended that there would be no meetings, Right 4 would be unnecessary. Yet VANZ has made itself increasingly more remote and inaccessible for this purpose.

Veterans, whose circumstances require personal contact, must have the means and opportunity to *meet* with their case manager, with appropriate support persons present.

## Assessments and Rehabilitation

Assessments are arranged by VANZ to determine a veteran’s ‘total impairment’, the maximum being 100%. Compensation, rehabilitation, treatment and support needs follow from that.

The term ‘assessment’ appears 137 times in 52 sections of the Veteran’s Support Act. ‘Assess’, ‘assesses’, ‘assessing’ etc, are used 48 times in 30 sections. The various forms of *assess* are used in at least five contexts, such as entitlements, compensation, vocational rehabilitation, social rehabilitation, personal economic circumstances and partner’s position.

When reading the VSA, it is quite clear that *assess(ment)* has many different contextual implications. But there is no definition, or guide to usage.

We were not surprised, then, that we crossed wires with VANZ over assessing ‘total impairment’ for rehabilitation. We meant the way the veteran’s mix of all personal disabilities affects their daily living – the unique consequences of being impaired ‘like this’ in ‘these’ circumstances.

VANZ, apparently, means ‘the mathematical total of impairments’ as assessed by medical professionals, to be not more than 100%. Assessments, in this sense, are an administrative tool, used to determine economic costs and benefits, and to allocate available rehabilitation resources.

In 2015, our report listed the features expected of an effective assessment:

Complete overview of a veteran's injuries and other disabilities.



Show how multiple disablements interact and how this affects the veteran.

Define the veteran's needs and how these will be met.

Basis for communication, consultation, decision making and managing rehab.

Evidence-based benchmarks from which change and progress can be measured.

We believe, firmly, that VANZ has a statutory obligation to assess *all* qualifying veterans for maximum rehabilitation, including all reasonable and practicable treatments. Our belief is supported by the VSA, where the accountabilities of VANZ include:

#### General duties and responsibilities

Take all reasonable and practicable steps to assist a veteran to achieve *the maximum level of rehabilitation*. **s115**

#### Rehabilitation plan

Determine if the veteran is likely to need social or vocational rehabilitation, and if so, prepare an individual rehabilitation *plan in consultation* with the veteran. **s116**

#### Assessment of needs, and content of rehabilitation plans

Assess\* the veteran's needs for rehabilitation, identifying the veteran's needs and assessments to be done.

Identify services appropriate to those needs, and whether VANZ is responsible for providing services.

Assess\* a veteran's needs for social and vocational rehabilitation. **s118**

\* What do you think 'assess' and 'assessments' mean in these examples?

#### **Purpose of social rehabilitation**

Assist in restoring a veteran's independence to *the maximum extent practicable*. **s120**

Where any of these responsibilities conflicts with the Code of Rights, the VSA takes precedence.

#### CONCLUSIONS

We have shown that the Veterans' Support Act 2014 and the Code of Veterans' and Other Claimants' Rights require VANZ to deliver services and support at a level and in a way specified by both. In practice, delivery falls below the standards required by both the Act and the Code of Rights.

We believe that VANZ's policies and practices relating to contact, communication and consultation, and to assessments and rehabilitation, fall short of the VSA's requirements. Policies and practices must be reviewed and improved before VANZ can be considered to be implementing the VSA in accordance with its intent.

Specifically, VANZ must: Engage more directly with individual veterans, so that contact, communication and consultation meet individual needs and circumstances, not a generic 'one size fits all' model.

Clarify its interpretation and application of the many different meanings and uses of the *assess* family.

## RNZAA Q Store



**RNZAA Tee Shirt—quick dry & breathable \$45 incl post**



**RNZAA Pocket Patch - edged & ready for adding to jacket. \$20 each**



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**Polo Shirts – Dual logo. (Email Colin for available sizes before making payment) \$65 each**

To place your order or make enquiry contact Colin Jansen on email [rnzaaqstore@gmail.com](mailto:rnzaaqstore@gmail.com)

When making your payment, deposit or computer transfer to: RNZAA Account **38-9007-0694501-00** remember to state your name and "Q-store payment" in the reference fields so we know who and what the payment is for. Goods will only be dispatched or orders placed with our source of supply once your payment has been made, identified as received by the treasurer and a postal address provided.

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**Colonel Commandant** Colonel Barry Dreyer, 09 307 5692 The Colonel Commandant is an ex officio member of the Association

**President** Lt Col (Rtd) Tony McLeod, 09 4860910, 027 2698472

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Andrew Donellan, Peter Miles & Maaka McKinney

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**Subscriptions:** For those members wishing to receive a printed copy of the Newsletter a \$20 fee is payable. Please forward by cheque to The Secretary 18 Walford Drive, Rotorua 3010. Subscription **Associate Members:** \$20 per annum. Please send cheque to above address.

**Donations:** All charitable and welfare donations over \$5 are now tax deductible as the Association is a Registered Charity.

**Email Addresses:** Are you on the Internet? The Secretary may not be aware of your address. If you are not getting messages from the RNZA Association and wish to do so, please forward your address. Have you changed ISPs? Have you updated your Internet address? Some mail is being returned.

**Input into Gunner News:** Short stories, especially with accompanying photographs, are always welcome for inclusion. The Editor's email address is: [davidbahler@paradise.net.nz](mailto:davidbahler@paradise.net.nz) Please send as an attachment in MS Word format.

**Member Registration:** New members are most welcome. **ALL** Gunners are eligible for Full Membership, it is **FREE**, and automatic once a gunner has served in the Regiment for more than 3 months. Associate Membership is available to anyone who has been attached to an RNZA Unit or has had a close affiliation therewith, and to close family of RNZA Gunners and to Gunners of any nation around the world. Membership application forms are on-line at the new website: [rnzaa.org.nz](http://rnzaa.org.nz).

**Death of a Member:** If you know of the passing of someone who was a Gunner or a member please tell the Secretary. Where possible a representative of the Association will attend the funeral.

**Muzzle Flashes & websites items to Chris at:** [webmaster.rnzaa@gmail.com](mailto:webmaster.rnzaa@gmail.com)

**Secretarial/Treasurer matters to Bernie :** [rnza.association@gmail.com](mailto:rnza.association@gmail.com)

**Items for Gunner News to David at:** [davidbahler@paradise.net.nz](mailto:davidbahler@paradise.net.nz)

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