



NZ GUNNER

Royal New Zealand Artillery Association Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

BY SHAY BASSETT

Greetings fellow Gunners,

Next week I have the privilege of hosting 19 of our members when they join me in, not so sunny, Waiouru for a few days. The Commanding Officer of 16th Field Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Sandra Patterson, has kindly given permission to visit their live firing exercise for the day.

As it has been a number of haircuts since I got a good whiff of cordite, I have to admit to being increasingly excited by the chance of seeing the 'King of the battlefield' in action again. You can, of course, expect a more detailed report on events in our next newsletter – hopefully with photos that are not dominated by snow!

Moving on to the major social event of the RNZA Association calendar; your Committee recently met and confirmed final arrangements for our Reunion and AGM weekend in Trentham over the weekend of 27 to 29 October 2023. More detail is in the 'Warning Order' later in this newsletter, and has been published online as well.

The last, and hardest piece of the puzzle it seems, is getting the final costs for everything. Our objective (as always) is to just meet expenses, so as to minimise the financial impact on everyone who attends, and maximise people's enjoyment.

Once we have prices for each component of the weekend, the registration form will be emailed out, and posted on Facebook and the RNZA Association web site.

Traditionally the last Gunner event of the year is, of course, St Barbara's Day. I understand from 16th Field Regiment that they may be having a ball two days before, on Saturday the 2nd of December, and this will likely be when the award of Gunner of the Year (GOTY) will be presented to the worthy recipient.

As many of you will be aware, the GOTY trophy was gifted to the RNZA by our Association, so it will be great to see this tradition continuing and neatly closing off the year on a very positive note.

Q Store:

For a wide range of RNZA and gunnery items

<http://www.rnzaaQstore@gmail.com> - The
Association Q Store.

Contact Us:

RNZAA Website: www.rnzaa.org.nz

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Donations

Donations can be made to our account as follows:

Account name: RNZAA. Account number: 38-9007-0694501-
00 Reference: Donation.

You can claim tax credits for donations of \$5 or more when
the donation is made to an approved charity. The RNZAA
meets the charity criteria. Receipts for donations are
available.

Warning Order

**The Royal New Zealand Artillery
Association Inc
89th Annual Gathering & AGM**

Friday 27 to Sunday 29 October 2023

To be held at Trentham Camp

Friday: Meet and Greet

Saturday Morning: AGM

**Saturday Afternoon: Own time, with
some suggested activities.**

Saturday Evening: Semi-Formal Dinner

Sunday: Memorial Service

Single Quarters will be available

Rationing at JRs Mess

Booking details to follow

COLONEL COMMANDANT'S CORNER

BY BRIGADIER (RTD) PAUL SOUTHWELL

Gunner's Day 2023

I trust you all found an opportunity to join fellow gunners to commemorate Gunners day 2023. There was a strong gathering at the Waihi RSA, thanks very much to the organising skills of Chris Morriss. It was a great opportunity for Hugh Vercoe to tell us about how he and his team were progressing with the Waikato Artillery Museum project. (See below for more detail)

Barry Dreyer also updated us on the Brigadier Reg Miles Museum project in Spain. Brig Miles CBE, DSO & bar, MC, was the Commander NZ Divisional Artillery in WW2. He died in Spain having escaped from a German prisoner of war camp in Italy. Barry managed to eek a few more dollars out us and the good news is that the target has been achieved. Matt Gauldie, a previous Army artist, will create the bronze plaque of the Brigadier. It will be presented to the Museum in Spain in October.



The Waikato Artillery Museum

It was a great pleasure to meet Hugh Vercoe at the Waihi gathering. Hugh served in the Artillery for 17 years, the last six as Battery Commander 4 Mdm Bty. He also owned a finance company, a local newspaper, was a farmer, and Mayor of Matamata – Piako District for 15 years. As if that was not enough, about 30 years ago he bought one of his beloved 5.5-inch guns, thus sowing the seeds of his Waikato Artillery Museum. A strong team of supporters (among them, Jack Mills) joined him, expanding the building and developing the displays.

Jack tells me they are close to holding an official opening. The Museum is located at 502 Tauhei Rd, about 6 km north of Morrinsville. They will let us know the date of the official opening once it is determined. It would be great to see a good number of Association members attending, recognising the fantastic contribution to our Artillery history that Hugh and his team have been working on over many years. 🇳🇿

Band of the Royal New Zealand Artillery

Our Band is back in full swing with a busy program for the rest of the year. They recently played at the St John Investiture at the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Parnell where again the Governor General congratulated them on their fine performance.

The band will be playing on two occasions that association members might be interested in attending:

1. **Oct 15**, Commemoration of the Battle of Passchendaele at Auckland Museum starting at 1035 hrs.
1. **Nov 13**, Morning Melodies (Armistice day commemoration) at the Bruce Mason Centre, Takapuna, starting at 1100hrs. A very popular event and only \$7 a tkt.

If you can get along to one of these performances make a point of meeting some of the band members. Our band has a proud history of being the longest serving brass band in New Zealand.



Drum Major Neil Hilton meets Rt Hon Dame Cindy Kiro

Sgt Neil Hilton was a TF member of 11/4 Bty.



The band at the Holy Trinity Cathedral,

THE GREAT M101A1 HUNT

BY JOHN MCNICOL

Fellow Gunners

A huge thanks to Jonathan Doughty, who provided the details for the Morrinsville M101A1, being Carriage Number 10611 (we think.). We know this gun was in Morrinsville, but we didn't know the number, so that gives us another piece of the jigsaw puzzle.

It appears to be in good condition and is resplendent in its 16 Field Regimental Colours. Shay Bassett has also provided us with the details of the M101A1 held in Linton Military camp at 16 Fd Regt's line. Any information at all about the gun(s) that you know about in your district, the carriage number is on the oval data plate, please get in touch.



Memories of M101A1

My first contact with them was in South Vietnam in 1968-1969 during my 12 month tour of duty with 161 Battery - initially as a Section Commander for about 4 months then as a FOO supporting firstly 3RAR then 9RAR (totaling about 7 months, and then a final month back on the gun position as Asst GPO.

My second period was when I was posted as BC 32(E) Bty then 2ic 3 Fd Regt in Burnham in 1979 for a 2 year stint. At that stage, 32(E) Bty was the initial corps training unit for the RNZA (both RF and TF) gun-numbers, signallers and CP Operators. We used the M101As for gun-number training for all RF recruits and the TF recruits from all batteries (11, 22, 161, 31, 32 and 4(Mdm). For the 11 and 22 Bty people we included a short period (2-3 days) on the L5s but the 4 Mdm guys had to get their 5.5 experience "on-the-job" when they turned up at Hamilton!

While these guns were heavy and sometimes difficult to move, their ruggedness really made them ideal training guns because it was almost impossible to damage them when 'new' gunners were handling them!!

I am pleased to see that the wider RNZA is getting more interested in the various guns (our "Colours!") that are on display in different places throughout the country. David Weston (Major Rtd RNZA)

CORPS CAMP MEMORIES

I well remember the big Anti-tank shoot on that Corps camp in 78, that I think you southerner's won with your new guns? Our 22 Bty L5s weren't exactly well suited to AT firing, although they did have the low-lying configuration/mode and telescope sight for it.

Composite photo below that I took that day with my instamatic of one of our L5s firing in the anti-tank shoot, with a glowing tracer HESH round in flight Towards the target old car hulk ... well hopefully towards the target anyway... and a round hitting home at far right.

I remember one anti-tank tracer round not detonating on impact and ricocheting flying up into the clouds still glowing, to eventually land who knows where.

I was appointed BG for 32(E) Bty as a Sgt. We wanted to put all 6 of our guns in action to attempt to keep MVs consistent but we were short of gun numbers so our RF Cadre (the late) Sgt Jumbo (Frank) Rangiaho manned No. 6 throughout the live firing phase of the camp.

I was fairly new to the guns having come across from Dvr Op and Op CP roles so was still learning the ropes of gunnery under Jumbo's and BSM Ken Turner's "gentle tuition."



I remember a a muzzle prem round from 31(B) Bty firing VT where a large piece of shrapnel flew between Jumbo and me and set a tussock on fire. The piece was made into a Bty trophy but unfortunately I have no idea where it is now.

There was also a nasty accident on one of the L5s next in line from my gun at the anti armour competition when one of the detachment wore the full brunt of the breach block on his thigh

My own inglorious cock up in the anti armour competition occurred when I scored a direct hit with my first round then for some inexplicable reason, applied lead for subsequent rounds.

When the Col Cmdt asked what went wrong, I replied that I'd already killed that bastard!
Pete Dawson

We put our L5s down into the low anti-tank configuration according to the drill book, but were all around the target, the poor L5's jumping around. One of the 11(A) Battery guns didn't bother and fired an antitank round from the normal three legs cranked position. The poor L5 leapt around all over the place - the round don't go anywhere near.

Then up rumbles an M101A1, not doing anything special, just a great lump of metal sitting there - they got 4 target rounds out of 5. Their result was as memorable as the Gun Detachment's drill when they received the prize. - *John McNicol*

HEARING LOSS - THE SYSTEM WORKS

BY JOHN MCNICOL

Since becoming more active in Artillery Association affairs, I have become more familiar with the world of the RSA and Veterans' Affairs.

The rules state that..."you will have Qualifying Routine Service if you served in the NZ Armed Forces before 1 April 1974 — either in New Zealand or overseas.

Qualifying Routine Service recognises that before the introduction of ACC on 1 April 1974, service members were not covered for work-related injuries or illnesses. Because of this, Veteran's Affairs provide support to all those that served in the NZ Armed Forces during this time. You do not have to have had overseas service, home service counts.

I was conscripted into National Service in 1966 and called up for the 17th Intake National Service in August 1967.

Three months of Small Arms Shoots, with a dirty great SLR slamming into my ear, there was no thought or hint given that we should have any ear protection. Later on, in 1975, the first stirrings of Health and Safety arose. There had to be a mad scramble through the gun cages to unearth enough Ear Protectors to equip one detail on the firing line of that year's small arms shoot.

Forty-eight years later having suffered from diminished hearing all my life, I thought it was worth a crack and filled in the forms to Veterans' Affairs for hearing loss. That was a bit of a mission, and anybody contemplating the same route, I am happy to help out.

The way I read the procedure, I thought I had to have a Hearing Test to submit with the forms. That isn't the case, but I may have speeded up the process. In any event, I received an acknowledgment that my application was undergoing consideration, and settled down to wait.

Low and behold after a wait of almost six months, I received a phone call from a very pleasant chap who introduced himself as my recently appointed case manager. He informed me that my claim for hearing aids was approved.

Coincidentally, I received an email from Veterans' Affairs informing me that the Medical Board had made a determination that according to the information I provided, I was judged to have 15% whole person impairment rate. I got a small pension, backdated, which applies for the foreseeable future.

I made an appointment to see my audiologists who recommended a hearing aid for me. The audiologist sent his recommendation to my case manager who last week sent me an email to say that this was approved.

Two weeks later, I am wearing my new hearing aids and getting used to the difference.

So, the moral of the story is, don't hesitate to ask. The process is slow, but it does work.

The RNZRSA is also making a big push for welfare related matters too. If you have any needs at all, get hold of me and I will put you in touch with an RSA regional health offer.

How to apply

Current client:

Apply for a new condition using the Disablement Pension application form.

[Disablement Pension application form \[PDF, 1.2 MB\]](#)

Not a current client:

What form you use to apply will depend on when you served.

Qualifying Service before 31 March 1974 or in Viet Nam

[Disablement Pension application form \[PDF, 1.2 MB\]](#)

Qualifying Operational Service after 1 April 1974

[Veteran Support application form \[PDF, 896 KB\]](#)

LOST SEIGE GUN

BY OSCAR FRANCIS OF THE ODT

A group of local historians are looking forward to uncovering what they believe is a huge gun buried at a popular Dunedin playing field.

Otago Military History Group chairman Peter Trevathan said his research had led him to believe a siege gun New Zealand forces seized from the Ottoman army during World War I was buried under the Oval.

He said the howitzer, which was so huge it needed 14 horses to move it, was broken up and buried behind the Boer War memorial at the Oval in 1936. It was buried because it was too big to remove and melt down.

A recent ground scan of the field conducted by University of Otago geologists Andrew Gorman and Hamish Bowman had revealed between three and four anomalies which Mr Trevathan believed were pieces of the gun.

Mr Trevathan thought the buried gun was likely to have been captured in Palestine in September 1918 by the Second Auckland Infantry Battalion. The massive weapon had been publicly displayed in front of the Boer War memorial, flanked by two German-built field guns which had also been taken from Ottoman forces at the end of the war.



After World War I most reserve units had taken artillery pieces as trophies. These were gradually removed from public display in the 1930s because of increasing anti-war sentiment. Mr Trevathan's dream was to restore the gun to its previous position, now overlooking the intersection of Princes St and Andersons Bay Rd.

Before that could happen, the ground would have to be probed with metal rods to find the exact depth and location of any gun parts.

This would hopefully happen within the next month. If the physical survey was successful, the next stage would be to seek permission from the council to dig any gun parts up over the summer.



Full story and video can be found here

<https://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/search-lost-siege-gun>

22 (D) BATTERY - THE UNOFFICAL HISTORY

BY MARTY COOMBER

The most enduring memorial to the efforts of D. Battery in Wellington is undoubtedly the 24 Pdr Signal gun now at the top of Mount Victoria.

It is understood that the gun was acquired from Auckland, and the Wellington City Council arranged for a contractor to deliver it from the wharf side to the top of Mount Victoria, its final resting place.

However, the contractor, having taken the gun, which according to a stamp on the carriage itself, weighs over 21 cwt, as far as the top of Majoribanks Street, was unable or unwilling to take it any further.

D. Battery then stepped in and offered to take the gun on the remainder of its journey. The City Council gratefully accepted the offer.

Over the following few days, the Battery, led by Lieutenant Mathew M. M'Credie (in civilian life the proprietor of an ironmonger's shop) worked furiously to drag the gun up the steep hill. They had the use only of anchors and blocks and tackle, and manpower.

The only time that they had available was before and after work. After two or three days, when the gun had risen perhaps two or three hundred yards up the side of Mount Victoria, the work was allowed to lapse for a short time, perhaps because of Battery parades, or perhaps because the edge of keenness needed whetting.

However, after a further two days, the Battery recommenced its task, and by the seventh day, had raised the gun to the very top of Mount Victoria.

And finally on the 1st December 1877, one week after the commencement of it, the Battery achieved its object, and mounted the gun successfully on its present site.

In honour of the occasion the Battery fired a salute of seven guns at sunset. "A large crowd of spectators assembled to witness the conclusion of the work, and the Artillery Corps, especially those members who suggested the means by which the enterprise was carried out so well and successfully, were cheered vociferously.

The Band of the Corps was in attendance and played jubilant strains, as victorious company descended the Mountain".

It is understood that the City Council, without having to drastically increase the Rates that year, voted the Battery a gratuity of £25.

For many years after the noon time gun was fired by a member of D Battery each day, until the practice finally petered out shortly before the turn of the century.



Officers of 31(B)Bty at about the same time

70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMISTICE

BY PETE JACKSON PETE, SQNLDR

In the aftermath of the destruction of WW2 the United Nations (UN) was set up to provide a forum for nations to resolve their differences without resorting to war. The UN had its first real task when In June 1950 DPRK invaded ROK after the issues of who would control Korea, the North, or the South.

When the UN called for assistance, the New Zealand government sent several assets including the 16th Field Regiment (16th Fd Regt). 16th Fd Regt was established and made up of RHQ, 161st Battery, 162nd Battery, 163rd Battery and Signals Troop and was sent as New Zealand's contribution to the ground force, known as Kayforce. 16th Fd Regt was then attached to the 27th British Brigade of the 1st Commonwealth Division.

The most famous battle 16 Fd Regt was recognized for was the battle of Kapyong where they provided fast and accurate fire support for the Canadians, Australians and British. Between 1951 and 1953 the regiment fired more than 750,000 rounds, operating the 25 pounders gun.

In 2011 the Republic of Korea (ROK) Presidential Unit Citation was awarded to 16th Fd Regt for its service in the battle of Kapyong.

On the 27th July 2023 marks the 70th anniversary of the of the signing of the Armistice that ended the fighting in the Korean War. The Armistice was a temporary solution that was only to last a short number of months until a diplomatic peace treaty was signed. Unfortunately to this day an acceptable peace treaty has not been agreed by both sides upon meaning the Armistice has now lasted 70 years.



I happened to be in ROK as part of Operation Monitor during the 70th Anniversary and was able to participate in the ceremony. It was a large and moving ceremony where a large crowd attended from UNC, ROK, Korean war veterans from all involved nations, two from New Zealand and several nation government officials including the New Zealand Governor General and the president of ROK.

All countries that committed military forces to the UN in the Korean War are held in high regards by the Korean people and to this day most of these nations still have a presence in ROK in United Nations Command (UNC) and its Military Armistice Commission (UNCMAC).

While I was watching the ceremony, I reflected to the 26th of April 2023 where I was also able to attend the battle of Kapyong ceremony held in Kapyong valley itself. New Zealanders and Australians combined their ceremonies while the Canadians and British split into their own locations. At the end of our ceremony, we conducted a tour of one of the Australian positions where the fighting pits are visible today.

I was also surprised to see how large that the valley is and how spread out the nation's positions were from one another, from hundreds of meters to kilometers apart and they fought off a force three times their size. It just shows when likeminded and well-trained nations work together, they can do anything.

KOREAN PHOTOS



FROM THE Q STORE

BY Q - CRAIG HEWETT RNZAAQSTORE@GMAIL.COM

With King Charles our new sovereign, the Assn through Q has been proactive and have had the RNZA & RNZA Assn logo's modernised to incorporate the new Crown that was chosen by him.

The Assn has gifted the RNZA logo to the Regiments for their use if and when they chose to update their insignia.

All this work is thanks to Eliza Trapp a talented New York graphic designer whose husband is Mark Pedersen whom many of you will remember. Mark has had a very interesting and adventurous life working for the United Nations over the past 25 years.

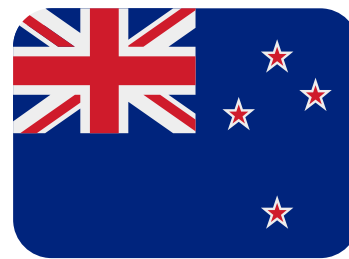
The Assn is in the process of updating our Q items including the Association Polo shirts with the new Logo.

We also have had the now disbanded Territorial Battery plaque designs duplicated and ready to be used in producing duplicate shields and commemorative Polo shirts.

<http://rnzaa.org.nz/the-rnza-association/the-rnza-association/q-store>



LAST POST



- MCKENZIE, Bruce Roderick. 819468, SSgt, RNZEME, 161 Bty Vietnam and 2 NZ Regt Malaya. Passed away in Bundaberg Australia on July 4 2023 at the age of 92.
- BURNETT, William Ross, (Ross). 973804, Gnr, RNZA. Passed away peacefully on June 16, 2023, aged 85 years.
- WILLS, Patrick Mervyn (Pat). 889401, Gnr, RNZA. Passed away peacefully on June 2, 2023 in Invercargill.
- LORIGAN, Kenneth Alfred, (Ken). 41956, Bdr, RNZA, 161 Bty Vietnam. Passed away peacefully at home in Te Awamutu on May 26 2023, aged 75.
- TE NANA, Hakuene (Huk). 41954, Gnr, RNZA, 161 Bty Vietnam. Passed away on May 2023 aged 78
- JOHNSTONE, Thomas William Edward (Tom): 283856, Gnr, 2 NZEF WW2. Passed away on Sunday, April 9, 2023, in his 105th year.
- FAIRMAN Phillip John. 38129, LBdr, RNZA, 161 Bty Vietnam. Passed away in Queensland Australia on Aug 24, 2022, aged 84.

WO2 Arthur Simeon (9 Coast Regt, 16 Fd, 161 Vietnam).

Arthur had served out on one of the Hauraki Gulf islands as a Coastal Gunner, but switched to Field Artillery to go to Vietnam.

He was BSM of 11(A) Bty from 1974 to about 1976. There were two other senior NCO's on the cadre staff, so Arthur managed to find time to improve his already impressive golf.

His predecessor in the post was Bill Giles, who had fought at Kapyong and Long Tan. His successor was Bill Cooper, who had been one of the solid band of Sergeants in Vietnam - *Gregory Thwaite*