



NZ GUNNER

Royal New Zealand Artillery Association Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

BY TONY MCLEOD

Well, the new year is now well and truly underway, and your committee has met in what is a sign for the future. The committee meeting was held at the Waihi Beach RSA, being the most central point for the part of the committee that is not Wellington-based. We are now very spread out; Myself and Greg Thwaite from Auckland, Chris Pearce from Coromandel, Chris Morris from Katikati, Craig Hewett from Edgecumbe, Bernie McCort from Rotorua, and we were very honoured to have Bryan Moles attend as the Wellington rep, and Heath Southcomb (RSM) attend by Zoom. We have decided we will only meet physically every second time, and conduct business by Zoom for the alternate time. Whilst gunner activity has been pretty light over the

past three months due to the Regiment being deployed on MIQ border duties, from the committee end, Craig Hewett has been very active in reviewing our Q Store holdings and sourcing new items for sale. It's been a big job and we are very grateful for Craig's efforts.

We have also now digitised Steve Newman's book, Vietnam Gunners, and we will be hosting this on our website in the very near future. It will be a wonderful research resource for anyone wanting to know about our deployment to South Vietnam. I had contact with Steve recently, and anyone who is interested in sailing would be fascinated, I'm sure, by his harrowing account of survival after the boat he was on sunk in a storm whilst in transit from Fiji to New Zealand in November 2019.

That's all from me for now, as I head off for a hip replacement operation, so I would just like to wish everyone well and see you on Gunners Day.

Tony McLeod
President

AGM ANNOUNCEMENT: TRENTHAM CAMP, 29-31 OCTOBER 2021

The 2021 AGM information has been confirmed. Please mark the following dates in your calendar.

- Friday evening, 29 October: meet and greet, WO/Sgt or Offr Mess
- Saturday morning, 30 October: AGM
- Saturday afternoon, 30 October: activities for attendees and partners
- Saturday evening, 30 October: dinner
- Sunday morning, 31 October: church service



LAST POST: BOMBARDIER RYAN JAMES BUCHANAN, RNZA

A MESSAGE FROM CHIEF OF ARMY, MAJOR GENERAL
JOHN BOSWELL

It is with great sadness that I acknowledge the passing of Bombardier Ryan James Buchanan, RNZA.

Ryan served in the New Zealand Army within the Royal Regiment of New Zealand Artillery for eight years, having enlisted into the Army on the 6th of March, 2013. Ryan undertook a number of appointments within 16th Field Regiment, in the Command Systems and Targeting areas. However, military life was a familiar environment for Ryan, having grown up on a number of Royal New Zealand Air Force bases.

Ryan was awarded the New Zealand Defence Force Service Medal with Regular Clasp. In addition, Ryan was awarded the Gunner of the Year title in 2020 for his high levels of Commitment, Courage, technical competency and leadership ability.

Ryan had a strong interest in sports. He played for both the Army and NZDF basketball teams as well as fulfilling the role of assistant coach when he was unable to play. In 2019/2020 Ryan was also training towards competing at the Invictus Games.

Ryan passed following a long battle with illness, maintaining positivity until the end. He demonstrated a strength of character, never admitting defeat. Ryan's passing is a loss to our Army Community and our thoughts are with his family, and all his friends and comrades from the Army, Air Force, and Navy.



LAST POST

BY RNZAA

- MORTON, Graham George (Jock). 208750, Bdr, 16th Field Regiment, RNZA, Korea. Passed away peacefully at Southland Hospital on Friday, 5 March, 2021, just short of his 91st birthday.
- NGARUHE, Hokimai (Buddha). Bdr, 4th Mdm Bty, RNZA. Passed away on 4 March, 2021.
- PACEY, Arthur, QSM. WO2, RNZA, Korea: RNZAF, WW2. Passed away in Marlborough in February 2021 aged 96. Arthur's gun fired the first round in anger for 16th Fld Regt in Korea.
- BELL, Malcolm Grant (Dinga). S41991, WO2, 161BTY, Vietnam, and 4th Mdm Bty, RNZA. Passed away peacefully with family by his side on Friday 5 February, 2021 at Rotorua Hospital aged 71.
- CHAPMAN, Raymond (Chappie). 33238, RNZA, Korea. Passed away peacefully on Wednesday, 20 January, 2021, at Hawke's Bay Fallen Soldiers' Memorial Hospital.
- MASKILL, Clarence Douglas (Clarrie). 206404, WO2, RNZA Korea. Passed away peacefully in Richmond on Saturday 16 January, 2021. In his 95th year.
- BOYLAN, Peter James. 44808, 161 Bty, RNZA, Vietnam. Passed away on 10 January, 2021 at home.
- GWYNNE, Tamati Rehua. 552391, Sgt, RNZA, Vietnam. Passed away on 18 December, 2020.
- WRIGHT, Warwick Barraud. Maj (Rtd), 3 Fd Regt, RNZA. Passed away peacefully after a short illness on 6 March, 2021, aged 73 in Lower Hutt.



GUNNERS DAY IN WELLINGTON

BY SHAY BASSETT

Fellow Gunners,

I realise it is some time off, and many things could change from now until then, but I have taken the liberty of arranging for a short commemorative service in the Lady Chapel at the Wellington Cathedral of St Paul on Gunners Day. As most of you know, I'm sure, in the past, we have done this in the Memorial Chapel below the Carillion. Unfortunately, when I checked with the Ministry of Culture and Heritage they confirmed that it will still be undergoing refurbishment in May — and for a good while after that.

The cathedral service will start at 1pm on Wednesday, 26 May, 2021 (in case you are a bit vague on the date) and Principle Chaplain Army Dave Lacey has very kindly agreed to lead the proceedings. Once over, those who are interested and able will be retiring to the rear bar in The Backbencher for a quiet ale or two, and a bit of storytelling I suspect!

It would be great to see you at preferably both, but either activity, and please do pass this information on to the hundreds of Gunners out there who I have missed.

GUNNERS DAY IN CHRISTCHURCH

BY SKIN FRANCIS

Fri 28 May: meet at the Richmond Club from 1630. Drinks and stories. Possible impromptu meal at the Club or nearby restaurants.
P.S. We're also sorting out gun detachments and tasks for the Queen's Birthday Salute at Rangiora on Saturday 5 June. Those interested can contact Skin Frances.

COLONEL COMMANDANT'S CORNER

BRIGADIER (RTD) PAUL SOUTHWELL

Ceremony for the 175th year of the New Zealand Army at Pukeahu National Memorial Park 24 March.

This ceremony was, without exaggeration, one of the most moving and well-choreographed that I have ever attended. It embodied the bicultural heritage of Ngati Tumatauenga with a Royal Guard of Honour, a firing party to honour the fallen, and a spine-chilling performance of the army haka.

The army band performed a musical tribute called Reverence, Reflection, and Remembrance. The spirit of the New Zealand warrior was recalled by four songs reminiscent of the major conflicts, culminating in the thunderous 1812 overture, with guns of 16 Fd Regiment leaving a gentle cloud of smoke to shroud the march on of the firing party. Admittedly New Zealanders didn't help the Russians defeat Napoleon in 1812, but any excuse to show off the guns.

A most touching part of the ceremony was the projection of photos of soldiers who had fallen throughout our history while the song for the fallen was sung. Of particular interest were those who fell in the last 30 or so years, as many of their family were attending as special guests.

Guests retired to the reception where the Minister of Defence, Chief of Defence, and Chief of Army spoke. Minister Peeni Henare talked to me of his grandfather, Sir James Henare KBE, DSO, LLD. Those of you who served in 161 Bty in Apr 1989 will recall we provided the guard of honour at Sir James's funeral at a Marae called Tumatauenga in Moerewa a few kilometres west of Kawakawa. At that time, the minister was 11 years old. He remembered well the attendance of the soldiers at his granddad's funeral. Sir James was CO of the 28th Maori Battalion in the last year of the war and had received the DSO for fearlessness, courage, and inspirational leadership in action. His personal mana was marked by a statesmanlike demeanour, a positive adherence to Māori values, and unfailing courtesy.

What is the Regiment doing?

Much of the Regiment's attention is still taken by their COVID-19 duties, assisting in the security of MIQ facilities, mainly in Hamilton. Individual courses continue, but opportunities for collective training and live shell practice are limited. The new CO Dean Gerling is well settled into the job and looks forward to introducing some new capabilities (locating), and to inviting association members to view an exercise later this year, all going well.

Between Messines and Passchendaele NZ Gunners take a serious pounding.

In the last newsletter, we looked at the battle of Messines in June 1917. Passchendaele, 17 October was the next major battle for the NZ Division. Between these two major offences, the gunners remained on the line supporting what they called normal activity, which for much of the time still saw an expenditure of 900 rds per day per bty.

It is interesting to note how artillery was used to deceive enemy intelligence. Mobile batteries were moved up and down the front to convince the enemy that artillery was being strengthened on a particular front, and, therefore, a major activity was being prepared. One bty "occupied" 12 positions in three days. Four positions were occupied each day with one gun in each position firing 250 rds per day. Observation and communication arrangements and targets selected gave the impression that a good deal of registration was taking place, thus convincing the enemy that an attack was about to be launched. The measure of a successful deception was the degree of counter bty fire that each position received.

In cases where counter bty fire was severe, the gunners would often be withdrawn to a safe area returning to recover what was left of their guns when fire died down. During action in the St Yves sector over a period of one month (Jun 17) one bty (11th Bty) had 11 guns put out of action, seven of which were totally destroyed.

One section of 18 pdrs (probably two guns at that stage) decided to locate in a small cottage firing through the windows, unfortunately enemy shelling set the building alight and ammunition exploded destroying both guns. Only three or four men escaped the burning ruin.

In an attempt to calm counter bty fire an order was given to reduce daily fire, however this did little to placate the German guns.

Gunners did get a short rest from time to time when Australian gunners would relieve them, but breaks were generally only a week or so.

The action between the battles of Messines and Passchendaele was in preparation for the third battle of Ypres, attempting to dislodge the enemy from high ground covering the Ypres salient. On 27 Jul the NZ gunners supported the NZ Division to attack La Basse Ville. The first attack supported by a small barrage captured the village but was driven back by counter attack. The village was retaken a few days later and this time held against counter attack. Barrages were generally prepared to defeat counter attacks in the same way we might use FPFs today.

These attacks, although considered minor by infantry standards, took an expensive toll on the artillery with significant losses to counter battery fire. The 15th Howitzer Bty having gone through the Somme and Messines without loss of one gun to shellfire lost a total of eight guns during the two months after Messines.

The New Zealand guns were relieved over 4–6 September, each battery taking out one section on the first night and the remaining two the following night. After time spent training and resting the artillery were moved on 20 September in anticipation of the main offensive.

ARTICLE FROM WINDSOR COURT RETIREMENT VILLAGE - 4TH MDM BTY

12 MARCH 2021

Yesterday we had the great honour of seeing two of our residents receive military medals for completing pre-war training. Through previous discussions with the RSA it became apparent that they had not received these well-deserved medals of honour.

The first pictured gentleman receiving the medals was Paul Mitchell, who is 85 years old and served in the 4th Medium Regiment for three years.

The other gentleman is Terry Dunlop, who is 84 years old and served in the 4th Artillery Regiment for three years.

Family and friends were invited to attend the afternoon ceremony and the RSA presented the medals. The local newspapers also came along to capture this moment in time.

Congratulations to you both, and wear your medals with pride.



4TH (G) MDM BTY, RNZA PROJECT TO PRESERVE THE HISTORY OF THE GUNS IN THE WAIKATO

An inaugural meeting was held at Hugh Vercoe's place on 31 January, 2021. Hugh was a past BC of 4 Mdm Bty.

Hugh outlined his proposal to preserve the History of the Guns in the Waikato over the last 100 years. As the participants get older and the memory is still sound, it would be better to gather any information old Gunners may have lying around to have a collection that is displayed and housed somewhere on a long-term basis.

He has proposed, and this was accepted with enthusiasm by the group, that he builds a purpose-built shed on the front of his farm at 544 Tauhei Rd, Morrinsville. This will be insulated and lined with shelves and display cabinets for the display of historical items. It will have electricity, sewerage. and water connected. Its location is adjacent to an unused woolshed, which can contain overflow displays as they are worked on, and a smoko room, etc.

The main display will be a 5.5-inch gun that Hugh has purchased from the Army Museum, and is presently stored on his property. He also has a wide range of memorabilia relating to his time as BC of 4 Mdm Bty, as did all the other participants that attended.

The project will be initially funded by a generous donation to kickstart the project. The building could be underway in the next couple of months. As the project progresses, we expect the building will be open to the public while there is work going on. We were introduced to a historian who is happy to come on board and help with the format of the material.

If you are interested in becoming involved with this project as working bees start or would like to be on our mailing list to obtain future information as the project progresses, please contact Jack Mills on jwmills@xtra.co.nz with your email address and contact phone number.



From the left:

Danny McCort, Hugh Vercoe, Wayne Waretini, Reg Gibson, Sherryn Johnson (Historian), Jack Mills, Barry Cook and Bernie McCort in front.

ERIK'S BOOTS

Erik Kristensen really wanted a pair of Aussie boots, and here's his story on how he got them.

I volunteered for service in Vietnam and left with 161 Bty on 10 July 1967. On arrival, I was told I was attached and served with 4/5 and 12 Aust Mdm Btys. I did about eight operations with the battery as an armourer. On one operation, the Bty had a large Q tent, and one day I was asked to help out in the Q. So, working in there I saw a bin of Aussie boots.

Now, these were far better than my New Zealand issue boots, so desiring a pair, I located my size and left one in a corner of the box of boots to pick up 'later'. I was on sentry on the M60 from 0200-0400hrs, so thought an early morning 'visit' to the Q would serve me well. Leaving the M60 I found the tent flap zipped and padlocked but managed to squeeze in between the tent pegs at the bottom. In total darkness I rummaged around and managed to locate one boot, only to find it tied to its mate at the bottom of the bin. Then crash-crash-crash we got mortared. I gave the top boot a mighty pull, freed it, scarpers out the bottom of the tent, and ran to my slit trench. I still have the boots today.



- Born: Denmark 08/09/1931
- Arrived NZ: 1950.
- 1957 CMT 16 Fd Regt
- Gunner 346809 Kistensen KEL
- 1958 16 Fd Regt promoted SSGT
- 1964 joined RNZEME Waiouru, attended artillery and tank shoots at range.

MATT GAULDIE PRINT MADE OF HIS PAINTING OF LT COL WILLIAM MALONE AT CHUNIK BAIR

Matt Gauldie has had a print made of his painting of Lt Col William Malone at Chunik Bair the evening before he was killed. Copies of this numbered and signed print can be ordered from NZ Remembrance Army by emailing newzealandwgc@gmail.com.

Cost for each print is \$250 including postage and packing in NZ, \$275 including postage and packaging for rural and Australia. Two-thirds of proceeds go back to benefit our veterans. NZ Remembrance Army Trust bank account is: 15-3971-0122354 -00.

Please state "Malone print" and include the address to send to.



16TH FIELD REGIMENT

BY THE RSM

Gunner of the Year

Each year the Royal New Zealand Artillery Association (RNZAA) gather in a different location around the country to hold their AGM followed by a dinner to catch up with friends, old and new. This year's dinner was held in October at Trentham Military Camp and in attendance was the RNZA Colonel Commandant (Col Comdt), Brig (Rtd) Southwell, the RNZA Regimental Colonel (Regt Col), Col Shaw, the RNZA Regt WO, WO1 Evan Kareko, RSM 16 Fd Regt, WO1 Southcombe, as well as other members of the wider RNZA community. This dinner also gave the opportunity for the RNZAA to present the Gunner of the Year Trophy (GOTY).

The GOTY trophy is donated by the RNZAA, and is available to all personnel of the RNZA whose contributions are an example to the unit, the Corps and the wider Army community and formally recognise Gunner performance within the RNZA Corps and encourage interaction between the RNZAA and serving Gunners.

Due to numerous commitments, the 2019 GOTY recipient was not able to attend the dinner in Taupo last year and the RNZAA were able to present the trophy to the recipients of both 2019 and 2020 in Trentham this year.

The 2019 GOTY was awarded to BDR (now A/SGT) S. Falemai, who showed strong leadership, upheld standards and was a role model to younger gunners when they lost one of their own, supporting them as appropriate. He is an ardent sportsperson and played on the 2019 Linton C Rugby team who reached their finals, participated in the 16th Fd Regt Sports week and competed against QAMR in the Cordite Cup playing volleyball and rugby. Whilst he was on his RNZA Weapons Sergeants course, Sgt Falemai was given the opportunity to be course manager for a Pinzgauer course in his capacity as an Unit driving instructor; this was to be held one week after he had completed the course. He juggled the double workload, putting in the hours and extra effort to ensure the best outcome for both, which he achieved by receiving 100% positive feedback for the Pinzgauer course and being awarded Joint Top Student on the Weapons RNZA Sergeants course.

The 2020 GOTY was awarded to BDR RJ Buchanan, a gunner who has used a health setback as motivation to

push his expectations further to achieve more.

Working hard towards his fitness goals has not only been beneficial to his health but also saw him gain a place in the 2020 NZ Invictus team, his determination, commitment and attitude follows him into his work and has a positive effect on his troop and the battery. Bdr Buchanan demonstrates a high level of commitment to the Corps by acting in an expected manner of a JNCO at all times, being clear in his expectations and holds members in his troop accountable for any lapses. He completed the Command Systems Sergeants course as a LBdr and his work ethic inspires his comrades, allowing them to put things into perspective and to focus on what is important during the tough times. He continues push the goalposts, not just for himself but also out of respect and pride for the Gunners image.

Both soldiers have gone above and beyond the values of the NZ Army and are worthy recipients of the award.

21 Gun Salute



16th Field Regiment (16th Fd Regt) conducted a 21 Gun Salute, at Point Jerningham, Wellington, on the 6th February, to commemorate the Anniversary of Accession of HM The Queen.

THE ONGOING OP UBIQUE CHALLENGE!

BY PAUL WELDRAND

Since our latest adventure to Trentham Military Camp and Pt Jerningham, the word of our work certainly seems to be taking flight! Our wee friend Molesy, posted several pics on Facebook of our toils at the Royal Artillery School back in good ole Blighty that received many accolades from several watchers around the globe! It's really good to show those outside of NZ how Kiwis do the business — who knows, my role as national coordinator may even become global coordinator! Haha...

To equally important stuff, a team of seven battle-hardened warriors made a trip to the NZ Army Museum in Waiohuru over the weekend 12–14 March to get stuck into a rather dilapidated 5.5 situated outside the WOs and Sgts Mess within Waiohuru Camp — pics to follow in the next newsletter!

Future taskings: much has been said in regards to the three pieces located at Burnham Camp. I do believe that waves are being made with regards to an opportunity to see members of the team travelling to assist in this much required work. Skin Frances is at the sharp end and doing his utmost to help our cause — watch this space for further movements in due course!

And finally, it has been extremely impressive to see how the Op Ubiq Mission has enabled us to put together such a passionate, hard-working team, (yes, even Danny McCourt had dirty boots on the last trip out). Each team member brings so much to the group, and each other. We can only grow in both numbers and strength whilst completing our aim of presenting the NZA Colours in their finest condition!

These photos are from our recent efforts in completing ongoing maintenance on the saluting battery guns at point Jerningham. The Op Ubiq effort is essential in ensuring these pieces remain fit for purpose. Well done team.

Paul Weldrand, Op Ubiq, National Coordinator
Tel: 027 542 1952





LANCE TOMPKINS: GUNNER AND JURIST

BY GREG THWAITE

In a recent amble on Auckland's North Shore, my path took me to the gates of Takapuna Primary School. On either side stands a pillar. Together they record the names of one woman and 107 men from the area who enlisted for World War I. Some of the men are remembered in local street names. Such as Commander Sanders VC DSO.

Behind the pillars grows a sturdy oak tree that commemorates the Coronation of King Edward VII (1901). Another commemorates the Coronation of his son King George V (1910) [the grandfather of our current Captain-General]. The site is an oasis of British Empire loyalty.

In 1914, the area was predominantly rural. As proof, in 1910 the Takapuna Cooperative Dairy Company had opened a facility in Devonport, on the north-west of Mount Victoria. The enlistments must have strained the economic capacity of the area.

One name that leapt out to me was "A L Tompkins". My grandfather had served in the Artillery in France with a Lance Tompkins. A man then aged about 40, he and the youthful Lance Tompkins were Junior NCO's together in 1 Battery. Within the RNZA there existed a spirit of good feeling and friendliness that animated all ranks, as recorded in 1919 by its CRA Brigadier-General Johnston.

After a medical discharge from France in 1917 owing to illness at Gallipoli, my grandfather repatriated to New Zealand rather than return to his ancestral Yorkshire. He was allotted a farm in Ohaupo, in the Waikato.

Lance Tompkins returned in 1919 and, having qualified as a solicitor in Auckland, moved to Hamilton. He started a law firm with Mr Wake. Their firm of Tompkins Wake endures: a prestigious firm in the Waikato these days, with an office in Auckland.

My grandfather became a client of the fledgling firm. He certainly needed a new solicitor. His pre-War solicitor had stolen his life savings while he was on active service abroad.

My grandfather had a high opinion of his new solicitor. My father told me his father used to say, "That young Lance Tompkins, they'll make him a judge one day."

Last year, by chance I had met his son at the café in the High Court. Sir David Tompkins QC is a retired Justice of the High Court, and also an Old Gunner. He told me a little of his father's legal practice. Last month I met him again at a book launch in Auckland. He confirmed that his father was indeed the man from Takapuna.

Internet research revealed more about the activities of Lance Tompkins. An article in the Dominion newspaper told of his experience in the War, as discovered in a battered old brown suitcase.

After he and his wife had passed away, the family home had been sold. The new owners found the suitcase in the attic while installing new wiring. Inside were memorabilia from the War. One was a diary from 1918, the last year of the War. Some photos had been retained.

The new owners contacted the family. The family followed up by tracing his footsteps through France and Belgium in 1918, and comparing his diary with the History written by Lt. J Byrne. The daughters even managed to meet the daughter of a young Belgian woman, at whose home in Belgium Corporal Tompkins was billeted on the march to Germany.

The memorabilia record some aspects of the campaign in France which are well known to us. Trenches. CB fire. Mud. Barrages.

The Battery had a procedure for replacing casualties on the gun line. Somebody — likely the BSM — seems to have kept back a group of gun numbers. As a man was removed from a gun, a replacement was sent forward.

This practice recalls the firm belief of Lt. Col. Frank Hopkinson (a veteran of Korea and of Vietnam). He was adamant that drills be uniform across all gun crews, to ensure ease of replacement.

The memorabilia also record some aspects which are perhaps less well known. Horses were used extensively, to pull guns, and to perform the relentless task of moving ammunition to the guns. Aircraft had developed into part of the battlefield, and were attacking ground forces, and being attacked themselves. "Corporal" was an Artillery rank.

The German frontline began to crumble in August 1918 Static trench warfare was replaced by a rapid

advance eastwards, crashing through German defensive positions.

One of the photos shows a line of guns in a flat landscape in September 1918. The guns are in action, shelling the Hindenburg Line. On either side of the closest gun a neat line of cartridges is set out. Two men stand to the rear. A gun number cradles a round preparatory to loading it. Two men sit on the trails, behind the shield. The gun layer is Lance Tompkins. A timeless Gunner image.

He had become a casualty by the time of the Armistice on 11 November 1918. So he missed the last battle, at Le Quesnoy, on 4 November 1918.

He was posted back to the Battery, and joined the march into Germany. The New Zealand Division was allocated as garrison to the city of Cologne, on the banks of the Rhine River. Originally a pivotal city in the early Roman Empire, for centuries its dominant building has been the cathedral. Having myself lived in Cologne, I can affirm its splendour and interest as a city and a port.

The two parts of Cologne are joined across by the Rhine by the Hohenzollern Bridge. It still stands. The Gunners brought their cannons across that Bridge.

Shortly beforehand, the German Artillery had hauled their own cannons in good order across the same Bridge, back into the heart of Germany. Local boys ran alongside the horses in greeting.

The intactness of the German Army in November 1918 was the genesis of the "Stab in the Back" mentality of fervent nationalists in Germany. It was an irritant that helped ignite World War 2.

Still, the history records that the majority of the citizens of Cologne were friendly enough to the Gunners. The amiable people of the Catholic Rhineland even now feel little affinity to their sterner fellow-Germans to the east in Prussian Berlin.

By late 1918 various factions within the German nation (particularly, Bolsheviks) were engaged in armed conflict. The NZ Division was a welcome bulwark for the Cologne citizenry. Similarly, in 1945 the NZ Division provided a bulwark in Trieste for Italian civilians, against the Bolshevik Partisans of Tito consolidating in the hinterland.

The men enjoyed performances at the Opera House. The History refers to men's interest in German opera, but I suspect that the sight of girls was a parallel interest. In the city the cafés were open, and outside the city was opportunity for trips along the Rhine River. The Gunners had limited time there, before a rapid demobilisation began.

He suffered two of the pangs of war. One was illness arising from a gas attack. New Zealanders were first exposed to gas attack in 1916, The History records from time to time that gas shells were falling on a gun position. Over a period the Gunners developed masks and drills to counter the use of gas.

Another consequence was damaged hearing. He was too close to a gun which was fired without warning.

In World War 2 he returned to the Guns as a Battery Commander. A Waikato Gunner, naturally he served in 4th Medium Regiment.

What of his legal career? Well, They eventually accepted my grandfather's prophecy. Some 15 years after my grandfather had passed away, in 1963 the 68-year old Lance Tompkins was appointed as a Justice of the High Court.



NEW YEAR'S EVE, 1952

BY GREG THWAITE

This is the late Canadian artist Ted Zuber's painting, "New Years Eve." It shows soldiers of the Royal Canadian Regiment resting up in the tunnel dug into the Hook feature that was adjacent to the enemy-held Ronson, and thus was called "Ronson Tunnel." Ted was a sniper. He was in the tunnel for a short time on New Year's Eve, 1952. The safety pin came out of a grenade that was carried by one of his comrades. It exploded, wounding several, including Ted Zuber. The Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry had been relieved on the Hook a few days earlier.



It was New Year's Eve, 1952

My company was relieved from the front by a company of The Royal Canadian Regiment. I went with some friends from our A echelon to visit British comrades at the Royal Tank Regiment's installation, which was a half hour's hike down the main supply route. That was memorable. We bought beer for our poor British friends and drank it with them in one of their squad tents. One, who had been on duty during the evening meal, had gone to the mess tent to get his late dinner. He came in with a mess tin with warm broth that contained a few scraps of boiled potato, possibly a bit of carrot, and infinitesimal little bits of chicken. Who could not feel sorry for him, and for them, with such a pathetically skimpy, no doubt bland meal on such a special night?

Finally, with one of the troopers singing "Any Old Iron, Any Old Iron, Any, any, any old iron?" their regimental sergeant major came in, bellowing furiously. He raged that Canadians were in the private quarters of his men, and so forth.

One of our fellows, Private Murray, who was with the Regimental Police, shone a flashlight on him and followed him with the beam as he returned to wherever he had been when we disturbed him.

We thanked our British pals and head down the road. My very good friend, Leo Kerwin, was with us. He had given up the front lines to serve with Murray on the Regimental police, quipping about it, "I thinks I will take me chances from Aechelon."

Along the way, we found two of our men hiding in the ditch. They were toting two cases of beer. We added them to our group and kept slogging along.

Then we saw yellow flames in the middle of an open field. It was about 100 yards distant from the wire that held the minefield warning plaques. We challenged whoever was sitting around that fire. We got a nasty response. Two of nasty responses, from two bold New Zealand voices.

We ordered them to douse the fire and come out onto the road.

They challenged us to come in and make them do it. When you are young and it is New Year's Eve and you have been imbibing many quarts of the excellent Asahi beer, there seems no such word as foolish. We boldly crossed the warning wire and made for the fire.

The two Kiwis were sitting on the frozen ground, looking ghastly miserable.

"Are you crazy?" one of us demanded. "Don't you know you're in the middle of a mine field?"

"So are you, mate!" boomed a strapping soldier, who stood more than six feet tall.

His friend, in his late 30's, or maybe older, grumbled something. He was a short man.

We soon learned the tall one was called – as many tall men were – "Lofty." The short one was called, "Typhoon."

"Do you know the front dips back here?" I asked.

"This fire can be seen at the front."

They cursed some about let the enemy shoot at us.

We opened the first case of beer and added its wood to the fire. Before long we were all cheering, challenging the enemy to fire shells our way. We invited them to leave with us, but they doggedly refused. They were going to sit their until their lives ended, they explained. Their comrades had come out celebrating with them, then ran off and left them stranded far from their Royal New Zealand Field Regiment's battery.

We did manage to trudge back to the C Company headquarters tents at A echelon. Lance Corporal Walter Polkosnik from Edmonton was in charge there. Private Burnam, the company driver mechanic was also one of the miscreants, as was Private Blackwell, a driver. Leo Kerwin, from St. John's, Newfoundland was with us, wearing his pistol, as was his sidekick and fellow RP, Private Murray. Murray's brother had been killed in March that year, when his platoon held the Warsaw position, just off of the Hook position.

The Warsaw had fallen into enemy hands since then, and I had led many patrols out there.

We joined hands and circled the smelly diesel oil fueled stove and sang Auld Lang Syne. We had waited to hear all of the allied guns fire along the front. Our timing was off by half an hour, so we had sung in the New Year early.

The other fellows went trekking again, seeking ways to get some memorable moments from the last 30 minutes or so of 1952. I was very tired, so I lay back on a cot and waited to hear the guns.

Soon, two sergeants I knew came into the tent. They said they desperately needed to get to Seoul and had a three-quarter ton vehicle, but no papers. One of them had a vehicle order form and asked if I could find somebody to fill it out and sign it.

In the middle of the night sentries who look at vehicle papers wouldn't know one name from another, and so I filled in and signed the document. I had no authority to sign for anything, of course, but the sergeants were deliriously pleased. They rushed to the vehicle and went roaring off.

I never heard the guns go off. I fell asleep shortly after the sergeants left.

I awoke, still in the tent the next morning.

Up on the line, the Royal Canadian Regiment had sent a night patrol out onto that Warsaw feature. On the way back, a snipe had fired in the darkness. The last man had been hit in the back. It was about five minutes after midnight, and so he was the first Canadian killed in action in 1953.

Canadian Press correspondent Bill Boss wrote an article about the incident for the Canadian Press. That is how I found out about the sad incident.

In my mind, I still walk many times to that dreaded Warsaw, and to the Ronson, the other enemy feature that was adjacent to the Hook. This morning, on December 31, 2020, I did a lot of thinking about the Korean War. I realize that I probably have done it every day for the past 68 years.

WHAT IS WELFARE?

BY BERNIE MCCORT

In introduction, I served with the RNZA for a period of eight years. I am married to a veteran, and I am his main caregiver and administrator of all things welfare. Last year, I was part of the RNZAA team that gave an oral submission to the Parliamentary Select Committee. My part was to give a view from that of an ex-serving soldier and partner of a veteran. My main focus is ensuring that a veteran's needs are treated holistically and fairly.

Welfare

A noun:

1. The health, happiness, and fortunes of a person or a group (this is the ground level basis of the RNZAA).
2. Statutory procedure or social effort designed to promote the basic physical and material wellbeing of people in need (this is evident in our formal submissions).

In reading these definitions I would add “emotional wellbeing” to number one.

We are a unique group of people who have come from wide and varied backgrounds and have been thrown together by the “Green Machine” into a very unique situation that is not found in any other work situation. It throws us together and makes us depend totally on each other — we have each other's backs.

Even though we may move on once we leave the army, that comradeship and bond never goes away and can be picked up at any time. This is what reunions and gatherings to celebrate/commemorate are all about.

We tend to put a focus and conversations on what help we can or cannot get from Veterans' Affairs in terms of monetary or physical help. But this is only part of the story.

Don't wait until someone is in crisis, poor health, close to ending their days, or when you're attending their funeral — touch base with your mates, send a text, make a phone call, meet up for a drink or a coffee. Pop in when you are in their town. Say, “Giddy / Kia ora — was just thinking about you!”

Operation Ubique — although focusing on the refurbishment of the guns — has produced a huge byproduct of this group. This has been the comradeship of gunners over a number of eras, both TF and RF, and not necessarily dependent on how much work a person can do.

For example:

- Several of this group have helped Fred R and Danny McC with transportation and just plain keeping an eye on them. This just makes my heart sing. Contact Paul Weldrand who is the national coordinator of this group.
- The idea of “adopt a fellow gunner” is a great concept.
- Pat Duggan has a group in Rangiora, they call themselves “The Cartel”. They meet on a regular basis — check out the Facebook page.

If someone is in crisis, or needs assistance of some sort, just be there, listen, and help them to get in touch with the relevant organisation or agency. If you don't know who this is, there are a number of fellow gunners in this organisation who can help with this information.

We can no longer rely on the RSAs, etc., to be the go-to place for a catch up. This also may not be appropriate for our younger veterans. Simply grab a coffee, sit on the beach, go fishing, etc. Perhaps include families.

Everyone's service is unique to them, not what was harder or easier in this situation or that conflict. Our army is constantly evolving, as is our world and our veterans.

I have never served on a gun line, but consider myself to be an integral part of the RNZA as a chief clerk and sig operator.

To end — a quote from Winston Churchill:
“If we do not look after our veterans we will no longer have veterans.”



WELFARE NOTES AND DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR

BY BERNIE MCCORT

There will be Welfare seminars organised by Veterans' Affairs to be held at the following locations:

- Whangarei: 25 March, 1000hrs–1400hrs. Forum North Te Kotahitanga Exhibition Hall, 7 Rust Ave, Whangarei (more details on our Facebook page)
- Gisborne: 29 April – timings and venue TBA
- Hamilton: 27 May – timings and venue TBA

The RNZAA will be represented at each of these forums as we have done in the past. Get along to connect with a wide range of organisations, no matter when or how you served.

If you are over 65 and you have a Veterans Gold card, and you have more than 70% disability with Veterans' Affairs, check that your partner's card (if over 65) has a Community Services Card on it – they are entitled to have one, and it appears that it is not done automatically in every case.

Register yourself for the next RNZAA Reunion/AGM to be held in Trentham. You never know who you might meet up with.

BOOK REVIEW: THE BORNEO GRAVEYARD 1941–1945

About 'The Borneo Graveyard 1941–1945'

This book portrays the horrific story of Borneo during the Japanese occupation of 1941–1945. Thousands of Australian, British, Dutch and Indian POWs, internees, locals of Borneo and Javanese ramusha perished in Borneo during this period.

Allied POWs, who were sent to various POW camps in British and Dutch Borneo, were to die of maltreatment, malnutrition or execution. Many were forced to walk Death Marches in the jungle which came to a horrifying conclusion. Internees of several nationalities were held in internment camps and suffered dreadfully. The local populace also suffered; torture, executions and massacres occurred and malnutrition was endemic. At great personal sacrifice, however, they helped the POWs and internees. The secretive Z Force gathered intelligence and trained local guerrilla fighters who exacted a heavy toll on the Japanese forces, whilst local tribes took their final revenge. In 1945, the Australian military engaged in bitter fighting to liberate Borneo.

This book closes with the convalescence of survivors at Labuan, followed by the repatriation of British POWs and internees, and the dreadful wall of silence experienced by so many on returning to the UK.

This book is a tribute to the strength of character and bravery of those who endured the Japanese occupation.



About the author

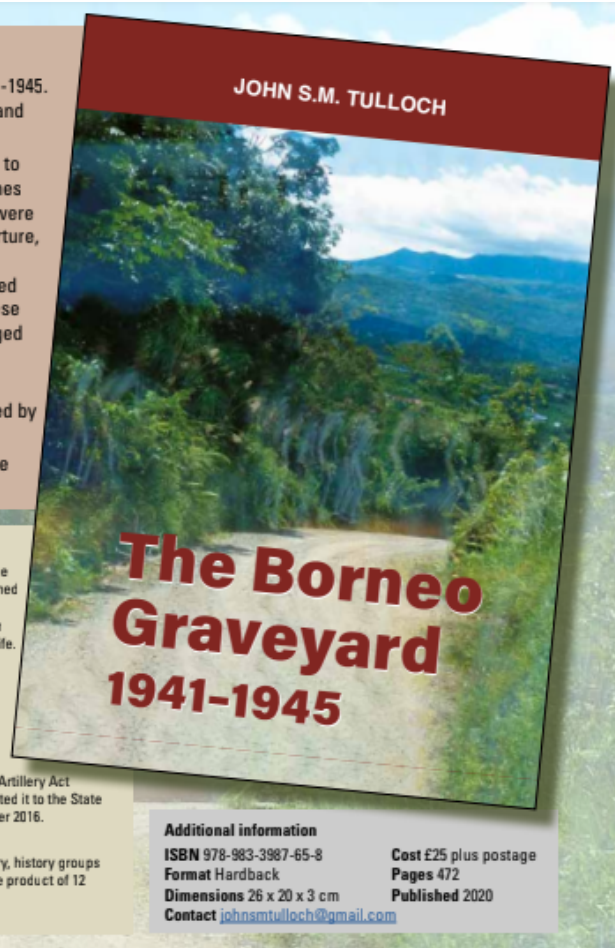
John Tulloch was educated at Victoria College, Jersey, CI. His military career began in 1965 in the New Zealand Army. He attended Officer Cadet School Portsea in Australia, and was commissioned into the Royal New Zealand Artillery (RNZA) in 1966. Whilst serving in Vietnam with 161 Battery RNZA from July 1968 to July 1969, John developed his jungle warfare expertise. This, along with his nine years' service in the New Zealand Army, would become such an important part of his life.

John transferred to the British Army and Royal Artillery in March 1973 and completed two Northern Ireland tours, followed by a two year secondment to the Sultan of Oman's Artillery in 1978. He later commanded 137 (Java) Battery RA, which included a tour in the Falkland Islands in 1982. From 1994 John began advising and instructing for the next 21 years on the British Army's Jungle Warfare Instructors' Course (JWIC) in Brunei. He also supported major jungle exercises in Belize for 10 years.

Retiring from the Army in 2003 and becoming a MOD Civil Servant, John continued to instruct on JWIC until May 2015. He instigated and organised various commemorative projects in Sabah, including SABAH SALUTE, the Royal Artillery Act of Remembrance in Sabah in August 2011. He researched and created the North Borneo Roll of Honour and presented it to the State of Sabah in March 2016 and to the Royal Artillery at the Service of Remembrance in Hyde Park, London, in November 2016.

John was honoured with the MBE in 2003 and the Royal Artillery Medal in 2011.

An author of several articles about the Vietnam War and Borneo, he also gives talks on these subjects to the military, history groups and schools. Since retiring from the Civil Service in 2015, John began writing 'The Borneo Graveyard 1941–1945', the product of 12 years of research. This is his first book.



Additional information

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BOOK LAUNCH: THE DIARY OF SGT L FRANCES – A NEW ZEALAND GUNNER'S ITALIAN CAMPAIGN IN WW11

Leonard Edward Frances, 1920-2010, service number 024360, was commissioned in New Zealand in 1942, but was one of many 'dehydrated' officers who reverted to ranks for active service. He was a sergeant by the end of WWII and served throughout the Italian Campaign with 6th Field Regiment, initially under Steve Weir. Within 6th Field, he was always in C Troop, 48 Battery.

The core of the book is his diary from June 1943 to Jan 1946. There is an additional section on the war, called 'A War Apart', and a postscript about the family's lives from 1946. There is an added 'Roll Call', which lists many of the men Len served with/knew during the war, mostly with service number attached for ease of further research by family members. There is a glossary of military terms, and several essays on the NZ Division in Italy, and the 25-pounder. These are added to make the book as user-friendly as possible for non-military readers.

The launch of this publication will be held at Solway Showgrounds, Masterton at 11am on Saturday, 24 April.

The entrance to the showgrounds is from Fleet Street entrance, following signs to the Farmers' Market (held each Saturday. The location is under the prominent wooden grandstand (officers' mess during the NZ Army use of Solway). All are welcome.



RE-ORGANISATION OF THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY — 2020

BY DAVID MORRIS, PRESIDENT,
4RAR/4RAR/NZ(ANZAC), ASSOCIATION NSW/ACT

AUSTRALIA: The Australian Army will undergo a massive reorganisation in the next eight years which will see additional combat brigades raised, a dedicated rocket artillery and missile brigade raised, an existing brigade refocused to digital warfare and the Army Reserve structure completely reconfigured with units equipped with next generation weapons and situational awareness capabilities.

The new expanded 21st Century Order of Battle is revealed in the Land Operational Concept Document which outlines Army's plans for a 2028 Army Objective Force.

Initial analysis reveals an augmented force that retains the vast bulk of existing combat manoeuvre elements, but with a new Joint Fires Brigade to control in the incoming NASAMS 2 Ground Based Air Defence entering service next year (Project Land 19 Phase 7B), the Long Range Fires Rocket Artillery and Long Range Missile capabilities to be acquired under Project Land 8113 and the Land Based (Anti-Ship/Strike) Missile System to be acquired under Project Sea 4100.

The three existing Combat Brigades will expand to four, with major rerolling of entire Brigades and the raising of a (fifth) high readiness Total Work Force (integrated Reserve) combat brigade with substantial combat power in Western Australia to finally redress the ground combat imbalance in the western third of the nation. Major changes include the splitting of the Palmerston NT/Edinburgh SA based 1st Brigade into two separate Brigades with substantial rerolling of individual units. Under the proposed 2028 Army Objective Force, 1st Brigade will remain in Darwin and rerole as an amphibious/littoral/light combat manoeuvre element with the existing 5th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment (5RAR), 8th/12th Regiment Royal Australian Artillery (8/12RAA), 1st Combat Engineer Regiment (1CER), 1st Combat Signals Regiment (1CSR) and 1st Combat Service Support Battalion (CSSB), but be augmented with a re-raised 4th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment Amphibious (4RAR) in Pre Landing Force configuration.

The Army's 10th Force Support Battalion will re-equip with new Littoral Manoeuvre - Light vessels to replace the in-service LCM8 and eventually field the Littoral Manoeuvre - Heavy amphibious platforms which will be concentrated at Larrakeyah Barracks in Darwin with a detachment operating from the unit's existing Ross Island Barracks in Townsville.

1st Brigade's Edinburgh Defence Precinct based 7th Battalion Mechanised Royal Australian Regiment (7RAR(Mech)) and 1st Armoured Cavalry Regiment (1AR - Armoured Cavalry Regiment) will form the foundation of a fourth combat brigade designated the 9th Brigade, rerolled as a heavy armoured combat manoeuvre element.

Augmenting 7RAR and 1AR at 9th Brigade will be 9th Regiment Royal Australian Artillery (RAA), the former warehouse for the Army Reserve's 81mm mortar equipped Light Battery units which will become regular and re-equip with the next generation 155/52L AS9 Self Propelled Howitzer and its supporting AS10 Armoured Ammunition Resupply Vehicle and 9th Field Squadron Royal Australian Engineers who will be equipped with the next generation Heavy Armoured Capability Systems (assault support).

The current Army Reserve 9th Combat Service Support Battalion (9CSSB) logistics unit and 144th Signals Squadron will be augmented with significant full time personnel to support the 9 Brigade Operations.

Both the Lavarack Barracks Townsville based 3rd Brigade and the Gallipoli Barracks Brisbane based 7th Brigade will retain their current order of battle, but re-equip with new weapons, situational awareness and sensor systems as they enter service.

The Western Australia based 13th Brigade will be transformed almost completely with a single infantry unit, a Royal Australian Engineers Construction Squadron, an ISR element equipped with Hawkei Protected Mobility Vehicle - Light and a 155mm Artillery Battery equipped with M-777A2 Lightweight Towed Artillery and support units.

Other major changes in the proposed 2028 Army Objective Force are the complete reorganisation

of the existing regular 6th Combat Support Brigade which will be re-roled as a digital warfare brigade focused on Information Warfare, Signals Intelligence, multi spectrum Intelligence and an entire Regiment of the cryptically designated '9358'.

The 6th Combat Support Regiment will see its existing 16 Air Land Regiment (Ground Based Air Defence) transfer to the redesignated 8th (Joint Fires) Brigade and the 20th Surveillance and Target Acquisition Regiment Royal Australian Artillery (RAA) will be transferred to the 16th Aviation Brigade.

The Tasmania based 12th/40th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment will be re-roled as a Regional Force Surveillance Unit specialising in lower latitude operations.

Special Operations Command will group its units within a new configuration designated Special Operations Brigade with the same structure (minus 2 Squadron Special Air Service Regiment) with an additional Army Reserve Commando Company being raised in South East Queensland within the 1st Commando Regiment structure.

The 2nd Battalion (Amphibious) Royal Australian Regiment will retain its current role as a Pre Landing Force, but may be returned to 3rd Brigade for administration purposes.

More to follow as we get a clearer picture of the proposals under the 2028 Army Objective Force.

SAILING VESSEL ESSENCE

BY STEPHEN NEWMAN

Background: experience and the yacht

I was asked to join my sister-in-law and brother-in-law (Pamela and Stuart Pedersen) on their Bavaria 47 Ocean class Yacht "SV Essence" in March 2019 for their return passage from Fiji sometime in early to mid – October 2019. The invitation required me to qualify on the Advanced Sea Survivors course run by NZ Coastguard. I qualified on this course in May of 2019. This course is a mandatory requirement for a passage by a NZ registered Category 1 Yacht – where at least two persons, in a four to six person crew, must be so qualified; along with other mandatory professional qualifications for both the skipper (Stuart – Qualified: Ocean Yacht Master, Radio Certification, Advanced Sea Survivor) and crew (Pamela – Qualified: Coastal Skipper, Radio Certification, Advanced Sea Medic).

My own experience consists of sailing/racing small yachts (Junior Cherub, Laser, Hobiecat16, and Kestrel 18) from the age of 13. I also crewed a UK Army 55' Nicolson Yacht "HMSV Kukri" on the Fastnet race in 1989 and more recently have crewed for my brother on his commercial catamaran – a Leopard 42. I am also a qualified Boatmaster.

In Fiji we all met Bruce Goodwin, who was a late call-up to the crew as a replacement for another friend of Pamela and Stuart's, who was originally slated as passage crew. Bruce is an experienced and qualified Ocean Yacht master, who has completed upwards of four crossings from NZ to the Islands as a skipper on his own boat.

SV Essence was a high specification boat (Bavaria 47) that Stuart and Pamela purchased direct from its German manufacturers in 2000 and had shipped direct to New Zealand. Shortly after receipt Pamela, Stuart and their two children embarked on her for a two year journey around the world – which turned out to instead be a seven year odyssey. Since their return to NZ SV Essence has been kept well maintained and well used – with Stuart also satisfying a competitive sailing need by racing Tornados and spreading his deeply felt love of sailing by teaching yachting for the Bay Of Plenty Sailing Trust to disadvantaged children.

SV Essence was certified as attaining Category One status by NZ Coastguard/NZ Yachting earlier this year after a 'beyond requirements' refurbishment (60k+) and thorough testing of all parts of the yacht and requisite declaration/assurance of crew competence to the requisite authorities. The boat was definitely immaculate and well set up.

The Passage: first days and key decisions

I joined SV Essence in Fiji on 5 October and Bruce joined on 6 October. With Bruce's arrival and the passage crew therefore complete, Stuart briefed us on his requirements as the skipper (i.e: duty watches, 8 minute horizon scan on watch, no leaving cockpit underway without a pair of eyes on you at all times, no entering cockpit/top deck without being tethered, log duties, etc.) and on the yacht's safety

equipment (locations) and their deployment (e.g. Man overboard drills). He checked we had personal safety equipment and ensured (in my case) that it fitted. Stuart then discussed the weather reports from Predict Wind (which provides four weather models), Bob McDavitt's tailored service and Gulf Harbour Radio. I largely tuned out of the discussion as complex weather models were beyond my knowledge and I was satisfied that Stuart, Bruce and Pamela were having a robust discussion around the forecasts and determination of when we should depart Fiji for NZ. There was no imperative for us to leave in order to be back in NZ by a specific date.

The long-range forecast apparently included the possibility of a depression impacting the East Coast of NZ in the next 9 – 10 days. This was explained to me as worrisome as this usually meant a significant storm. The departure discussion noted it would be unlikely for us to have a full fair weather passage and the biggest question really was where did we want it? Off NZ? Mid-way? Or near Fiji?

Taking the six streams of advice into consideration it was decided that on am 7th Oct we would sail from our harbour location to Denerau (Port) to stock up with fresh produce and to out-process Fiji Customs. This we did, with us out-processing at 1600 and setting sail for NZ with a short transit delay overnight in Momo Bay for the night to enable a daylight passage out of Fiji.

On 8th October the passage to NZ commenced in earnest, with tethers attached and the duty watch system (2.5 hour watches each – less one extended watch of four hours in early afternoon) implemented. Stuart organised the watch system so that the less confident watch-keepers/boat handlers were buffered by either him or Bruce at the start or end of their watches to allow sail handling decisions to be discussed and implemented. The flow was Stuart, myself, Bruce, Pamela, Stuart and on again.

We had an uneventful first few days of the passage, making a steady 7 to 7.5 knot average on an easy reach from approximately 14 – 18 knot steady NE wind. We steadily drew away from the *Predict Wind* vessel plots and were pleased to see that we were on track for a quick crossing in reasonable weather and on track for a Port of Tauranga arrival about Wednesday week. We kept track of the weather as we sailed with two downloads a day of *Predict Wind* data via an Iridium phone download, and the amusement and views of *Gulf Harbour Radio* weather and news advisory at 0730 each weekday morning.

On Thursday 10 Oct the weather models began to worsen for the NZ North East coast and we noted that our current heading required only minor adjustment from Tauranga to a closer possible destination of Opuia, Bay of Islands arrival.

Gulf Radio on Friday raised the weather ante with a firm assessment that the oncoming storm was going to be very bad. They advised another yacht planning on heading to NZ from New Caledonia/Vanuatu to plan on not arriving off the coast of NZ Monday through Wednesday next week. With that grim advice Gulf Radio signed off for the weekend (the station being provided as a “hobby” by two retired volunteers, with a wealth of sea knowledge). That day's *Predict Wind* forecast amplified this grim warning with at least two of its weather models now showing winds of 30 Knots + hitting NZ on Monday 14 Oct. By Saturday am three of the *Predict Wind* models showed winds of 35 knots with the fourth model also aligning with the other three post midday. The worsening weather forecasts resulted in the decision early on Saturday to abort heading to Tauranga and to instead make a hard out drive for Opuia, with the expectation we would be in Port before the full force of the storm arrived. Saturday and a bit of Sunday saw the engines engaged to push SV *Essence* along to about an 8 knot average in light NE winds and a glassy sea.

The Storm: preparation

On am Sunday 13 October the boat was prepared for the heavy weather that we expected to impact us about 0400 on Monday morning. Preparations included rigging the No. 3 reef on the mainsail and modifications were made to the main rigging so that the reef could be put in place from the helm (as opposed to having to venture on deck to deploy it). Floor boards were bolted down and some (with lighter stores) taped down. The drogue was readied and placed ready for deployment in an aft deck hatch. Fishing rods and other dunnage was removed from the topside and in the cabin(s) crockery, books etc. were secured in hatches.

For the bulk of Sunday SV *Essence* sailed direct for Opuia under a No. 2 reef, full genoa and from early afternoon with the addition of a fully drawing storm jib. The No. 3 reef (cutting the mainsail area to 30%) was deliberately applied on Sunday about 1700 hours in the last of the full daylight, so that any issues could

e resolved before darkness fell. The genoa remained deployed and was progressively reefed in as the winds began to steadily pick up from about 2300 hrs. Ultimately it was fully furled early on the Monday morning as the wind strength increased and as the boat began to lurch more with the growing seas. This meant only the main was up with a No. 3 reef and the storm jib deployed at 0400.

By 0600 SV Essence was experiencing in excess of 40 knots of wind and frequent gusts of over 50 knots. It was apparent that neither Pamela nor I had the capability to take a spell on the helm as watch keepers and Bruce accordingly dressed in full storm gear to join the similarly attired Stuart in the cockpit about 0730. Steerage from the autopilot was ruled out by Stuart as the beam sea and 'surfing' potential meant it likely that the auto-pilot would disengage - with potentially disastrous results. The decision was made that the boat would be hand-steered by Stuart who at times would be relieved by Bruce.

The Storm: foundering then abandoning SV ESSENCE

Expecting to help pull any ropes as needed, I was fully kitted in my storm gear and life jacket from 0600, when sleeping in my cabin had proven too noisy and bumpy. I sat in the saloon on a seat that afforded me a partial view into the cockpit and from where I was able to respond to any summons on deck. I could see that both Stuart and Bruce had double tethered (short and long tethers used) themselves to the boat.

As the morning progressed we noticed both the wind and waves ever increasing and the increased lean on the yacht. At about 0945 we experienced our first 'knock-down' and kept ourselves calm by dissecting it. We discussed whether the angle of lean should reflect the mast being at 0° when vertical, or at 0° at horizontal. Pamela insisted that 0° should be at vertical - and that the knockdown was therefore about 77°. We recorded this in the log. We also tried other humour, such as my idea that we could read to each other or play Jenga; I even got my i-Phone out and shot two silly videos and then placed the phone back into my storm coat, disappointed that the videos didn't reflect the size or strength of the storm. Shortly after the first knockdown, Pamela tried NZ Coastguard on Channel 16 of the radio but, was unable to establish contact and we surmised we were still out of range.

At about 1050 hours we experienced a second knock-down and recorded this at 80°. By now the wind gauge was frequently topping out at 60 knots. At about 1145 hours Pamela again tried NZ Coastguard and this time succeeded in raising them. Calmly she passed both our boat's name, location, course (destination) POB and confirmed no pets/animals were on-board. She

requested Coastguard to advise Customs that we were heading for Safe Haven in Opuia as opposed to Tauranga and that they be advised we would in-process at the Customs dock in Opuia that afternoon. She described the weather conditions as very rough and worsening, and that we had been knocked down twice. NZ Coastguard requested we establish a two hour radio schedule to check on our progress. Pamela countered this by insisting that the weather was bad and deteriorating and that a 'one hour on the hour' schedule was a better option. Coastguard agreed and we confirmed our first scheduled call would be at 1300.

The seas continued to mount with the yacht pitching more frequently. On being questioned by Pamela as to how I was coping/enjoying the sail, I said I felt fine as we had two excellent skippers at the helm and I felt safe with them there. At 1225 the yacht lurched and shifted rapidly onto its leeward side. What I first thought was a serious knockdown began to rapidly spiral worse.

Being wedged into my saloon seat at the table I recall suddenly staring down at the leeward saloon windows feeling the yacht sliding on its side down the waves. Shortly after this I fell towards the windows as I heard a booming noise and believe that I saw both windows explode out of the leeward side of the yacht. This was followed by a tumbling sensation and sudden inundation of water into the cabin. I felt I was fully immersed and thought that somehow I had passed through the windows, if not through the side of the boat. I remember struggling in the water trying to push my head up, and arms and legs out, and felt nothing but water and debris brushing me. I was convinced somehow that I was out of the boat.

We'll be continuing this series in the next issue.

NEW Q STORE LAUNCH

CONTACT: RNZAAQSTORE@GMAIL.COM



Back in the store: Royal NZ Artillery Table Runners

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Q Store Price List

As at 1 April 2021

Item	Price
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Name Tag	POA
Beret Patch	\$5.00
RNZA Lapel Pin	\$15.00
Once a Gunner pin	\$35.00
RNZAA Bumper sticker	\$6.00
13 Tac Sign	\$6.00
43 Tac Sign	\$6.00
Kiwi Bumper sticker	\$6.00
Artillery Tie. Polyester	\$20.00
Artillery Tie. Silk	\$35.00
Operational Tie	\$10.00
Table Runners	\$55.00

* There is 1 x 2XL Tee Shirt left in stock.

Please note.

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When placing an order email the Quartermaster with the items you are wanting and they will notify you of the cost plus postage. Once the funds have been receipted then the Q items will be dispatched to your address.