

ESTABLISHED 1934

NEW ZEALAND PERMANENT FORCE OLD COMRADES ASSOCIATION (INC)
Known as the

ROYAL NEW ZEALAND ARTILLERY COMRADES ASSOCIATION

Secretary/Treasurer.

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NEWSLETTER No. 123

August 2004

ROUTINE ORDERS

URGENT

When paying subs, reunion fees etc. please make the cheque payable to NZPFOCA, which is our official name and the name of our Bank Account. At the AGM last year it was decided that we should be 'KNOWN AS' the Royal New Zealand Artillery Comrades Assn because the NZPFOCA did not indicate that we were a Gunner organisation, but that did not alter our official title.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

For those in arrears please contact me if your inability to pay is due to some misfortune – our Rules allow us to waive subscriptions for a short period.

LAST POST:

I do not have any reports of postings to the Big Gun Park.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

John Murray to 27 Beazley Cres, Tikipunga WHANGAREI. John is a concrete Gunner from around '51-'56

Neville Fisher to 51A Great South Rd PAPAURA

John (Woody) Barrett to 5 Max Short Drive PUKEKOHE

Brig Ray Andrews to 34 Crocus Place, Remuera, AUCKLAND

Murray Ruffell (Wally's son) to 5A Raniera Place, ROTORUA

Joe Fallon to 2/10 Rosewood Cres, Margate, Qld, Australia 4019

John Wasson to 3 Banks Pl Shepparton, VIC, Australia

Don Allison to Kate Sheppard Rest Home, Lakeside, 417 New Brighton Rd, CHRISTCHURCH

NEW MEMBERS:

Gordon C Revell 126 Onepu Rd, Lyall Bay, Wellington 6003.

Peter Baker PO Box 10-045 Te Rapa HAMILTON. Peter and I did a survey course in 72 and our claim to fame was getting a Landrover to the top of 'Greentop'. That was only because we found a narrow natural bridge across one of those nasty little Waiouru streams.

RESIGNATIONS:

Margaret Bennetts

Margaret Catchpole, I was able to write to her and remark that Stan and I were on first name basis. He called me Graeme and I called him Sir!

LIFE MEMBERS

Roger Wylde (personally I don't believe his date of birth, how can you be that old and yet look so young)

COMING EVENTS

WARNING ORDER FOR THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION

As previously advised the Reunion this year will be the weekend Friday 5 to Sunday 7 November. The format will be much the same as previous years with the confirmed costs as follows:

Spa Chalets per 2 people \$100. Each extra person \$10

Spa Studio per 2 people \$75. Each extra person \$10

Breakfasts \$10 per person. Bowling Club dinner \$35 per person; buy own drinks, Port supplied.

If numbers allow (minimum 20 @ \$25.00 per head), there will be a buffet dinner on Friday night at the Spa. If numbers do not allow there will be Spa bistro meals as per the menu board.

The buffet menu is as follows:

Meats: Chicken, Beef, Ham on the bone.

Veg. roast: Potato, pumpkin, kumara.

Veg. boiled: Carrots, peas.

Mushroom sauce/gravy

Salads: Lettuce, seafood, red coleslaw, cucumber and tomato.

Bread rolls

Desserts: Pavlova, cheese cake, ice-cream.

SPA HOTEL ACCOMODATION IS TO BE BOOKED THROUGH THE SECRETARY. OFFICIAL BOOKING AND REPLY FORM FOR THE WEEKEND AND SPA ACCOMODATION IS ATTACHED ON THE LAST PAGE OF THIS NEWSLETTER.

The Raffle

As with previous years if you can provide a prize for the raffle it will be greatly appreciated. Remember the proceeds of the raffle help to defray the weekend's costs e.g. taxis, port, Bowling Club bar staff, etc. Already Tony Tustin has made a beautiful model cannon, Henry Salt a very generous contribution, Bob Blankley cannon key rings and I will provide my normal selection of 'Mother's Finest Preserves'!!!

SOME VERY INTERESTING REFLECTIONS FROM PREVIOUS NEWSLETTERS

A certain soldier once said 'We trained hard, but when it seemed we were beginning to work as a team we would be reorganised. I was to learn later in life that we tend to meet any new situation by reorganising, and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralisation.

Pretorius First Roman Legion, AD 65. Truly saith the Sage, there is nothing new under the sun.

So what has changed?

CONTACTS

Peter 'Tibbo' Tibbett invites those of you who are 'on-line' to visit the Australian Gunner Old Comrades web-site at <http://tibbsau.com/gunners.html>. A very tidy website that is well worth visiting. Also you can email him on tibbs1@tpg.com.au.

As an aside, have a look at what they call themselves. Nothing wrong with 'Old' is there?

John Osborne, Commandant of the Armed Constabulary Re-Enactment Society and the NZ Society of Gunsmiths. Website <http://gunsmithsociety.com/>. John has been a power of strength helping people, and myself, enquiring through our website about guns and cannons. He is very happy to help with queries and can be contacted on jcosborne@xtra.co.nz.

Following is an excerpt from 'The Police Bulletin Dec 1983':

John Osborne was born in Inverness in 1941, father was a RN submarine skipper and with his early years so close to the smell of cordite and gun oil his interests quickly turned to weapons. In addition, the Osborne family had been involved in the manufacture of guns and bayonets since 1760. John and wife Anne began collecting shotguns bearing the family name but in the late 1960's saw his direction change to Police and Military history.

Early appeals to the Ministry of Defence were ignored due to a disinterest in the past. John was dismayed with this and the flow of artefacts off shore, at the same time bureaucracies were destroying valuable records and artefacts. Fortunately, Maj Gen Hassett came to realise what was happening and under his patronage the idea of an Army Museum materialised. Gen Hassett had had earlier correspondence with John and appointed him as weapons history adviser to the Museum. Of course due to all this going on John and Wally Ruffell became colleagues with a common passion.

My, and now our, association with John came about from my plea for help in the last Newsletter for information regarding the Armstrong Rifled Muzzle Loading 6 pounder. This was requested by the 1st Michigan Light Artillery. Sherwood Young's wife Marie suggested Sherwood put me on to his very close friend John Osborne. The 1st Michigan Light Artillery now have the plans to build their guns thanks to John. As an aside for those who do not know, Chief Inspector Sherwood Young was our guest speaker at the 2002 Reunion, is the NZ Police Historian and now our Honorary Historian.

Notice of Motion AGM 2004

As your new Secretary, I am not prepared to sit idle and watch the Association slowly loose membership and finally die. I mentioned in the last Newsletter that it is my intention to submit a Notice of Motion at the 2004 AGM to amend, mainly Membership, in our Rule Book.

Briefly, all mention of RF will be removed. Life Membership will be for those who have rendered valuable service to the Assn over an extended period, (current Life Member and those who turn 80 before the AGM will not be affected). Immediate family of a Life or Full Member will become eligible for Associate Membership and the Rule where membership is terminated through being in arrears reduced from three years to two. However, the Secretary must inform members that their membership is in jeopardy.

At present, the 'Notice' is being fine-tuned with input from the Committee and members. If anyone out there would like to see and comment on my 'Notice', please do so by contacting me at the address on top and I will send you a copy as it is to date.

FROM AND ABOUT MEMBERS

Sel Bryant writes about ANZAC Day 2003 and 2004 in the City of Geelong, Australia, that there were a number of post WWII veterans and veterans from conflict in the Ukraine. Many of them were offspring of past vets and really swelled the parade, full of pride for Australia.

Sel (at 90+) finishes his letter with this “ . I enclose a small cheque to at least cover the postage on my Newsletters.” A very kind gesture I might add.

Col. Howard and Joan Jones have sent us a donation that they do not want acknowledged. Well I am sorry but something like that is acknowledged, thank you so much it really is appreciated.

Iris Rowntree writes acknowledging Brig Graham Birch's appointment to Col-Comdt. Iris is keeping busy with needlework, craftwork and pot plants. In addition, Iris has sent us another donation “to help keep the home fires burning”. *Thanks Iris I bought a bag of coal!!!* Not really.

Henry Salt writes from Australia and included a very generous donation to go towards raffle prizes and for that Henry, as with Col Jones and Iris and Sel, you are all wonderful people.

After total knee replacement surgery on both knees together I suffered an illness that was explained as my auto immune system being in total disarray, No. 3 daughter prescribed Echinacea Tea, which cured the problem. So I have a drink twice a day. After a small dinner party a son in law asked me “Would you like a hot drink Mr. B?” “Yes please Percy, a cup of tea.” “Would you like ordinary tea or Euthanasia Tea?” Need I explain the hysteria that followed?

With so many of us now suffering various indecencies from our GPs, a new challenge has been heard: “Halt, who goes there, friend or finger?”

Auckland traffic problem solved. On a given day call out all the traffic, cars, trucks, motorcycles, everything. Once the gridlock is complete, pour concrete over the lot and start again.

‘Ministerial Responsibility’. “I am responsible but not to blame!”

Alistair Ross writes regarding ‘Needling the Ockers in the Trans-Tasman Rivalry’ During 1969 the ‘Trans- Tasman Rivalry’ was alive and well just as it remains today. In Vietnam, we took every opportunity to score points off our Aussie counterparts. We had many things in our favour. Our ‘drip feed’ personnel replacement system ensured that we always had ‘in country’ experience....(the Australian system of replacing complete units and sub-units did not produce the same level until fairly late in their tours of duty)..we had the bonus of ‘Kiwi ingenuity,... and we hadgood old fashioned cunning.

Throughout 1969 and into 1970, 161 Bty (30 on the Net) was never beaten to report ‘Ready’ in Regimental missions. We did what was needed to hold the edge over our sister batteries. When in Nui Dat, we would often keep a ‘listening watch’ (on the many tank radios not featured on our NZ Equipment tables...but obtained over time by various means with enthusiasm by very enterprising Kiwi gunners) to what was happening within gun range around the Task Force area. If something sounded a little promising, we would often predict data and lay-on...just in case. If it came up....Arty Tac would initiate:

"Enterprise this is 95 Fire Mission Regt, ...Grid..... , Tgt description,At my command.... Adjust Fire,..... Over".

10 would read back:

"This is 10, ...Fire Msn Regt, ...Grid...., Tgt description, ...At my command... Adjust Fire, ..Out".

In good ABCA Fire discipline 20 would:

"20,Roger, Out".

We (of course) would come back:

"30,...Roger....READY, ...Over".

This infuriated Arty Tac and the Aussie Batteries who did not believe we could possibly be 'Ready'. It also confused the hell out of 40 (the US 155mm A Bty 2/35 Arty) our follow-on callsign, who could not see how manual plotters could beat their FADAC computer!....(That part was really easy ...our FBA plotters had names like McCowan, O'Connor, Litten...Culhane)....and although their FADAC was probably fast.....for them,..... the efficiency in gunline communications, and most other things... were not. (In early 1970, an American 'work study team' came to see how we could possibly be faster than their technology).

The first time we did this, the Arty Tac duty officer was immediately on the landline demanding the GPO. He berated us and indicated he knew we could not possibly be 'Ready' and.... if we did it again...he would show us up by ordering us to 'Adjust Fire!'We waited with baited breath for the next opportunity....!

It came. In response to the Fire Orders, we replied:

"30 Roger...READY, Over".and before 40 could even acknowledge....Arty Tac came back:

"95...30 READY, 30 FIRE, Over"we (of course) replied:

"30 ...FIRE,....SHOT,...Over".....

"95....30 SHOT....Out".....came the meek reply.....!!

We had another coup over Arty Tac with Fire Orders. The Regt was engaged on a Regt'l Mission from Nui Dat. One of the Battalions was being lifted out in Coy groups from Kangaroo Pad by choppers, and the guns were required to stop firing while the choppers overflew the gunlines. We were at 'Fire for Effect' when Arty Tac came up:

"Enterprise this is 95, CHECK FIRE, Over"

"10 CHECK FIRE, Out"

"20 Roger Out"

"30...Say again all after CHECK, Over"

"95 I say again all after CHECK.....FIRE, Over"

"30 ...FIRE....SHOT.....ROUNDS COMPLETE, Over"

We had not fired of course.....but there was so much noise and activity going on Arty Tac thought we had and was in complete turmoil with the prospect of a momentous disaster. The Duty Officer was on the phone,the 2ic (affectionately Known as Microbe 98) was en-route to sort us out!

It was with pleasure that we told them we had not in fact fired...that we were making a 'professional' point. We showed them their own Bible AT VOL3 Pam II etc and pointed out from correct fire discipline...." CHECK FIRING"...not..."CHECK FIRE"....the precise wording developed just to overcome such little communications misunderstandings.

It felt soooooo.... good!

Not only did that feel good, the man had open heart surgery on Friday 6 August and phoned me on Saturday 7 August. He spoke as if he had had a manicure, but did remark that the heart they did find (now that is a miracle in itself) was nice and red, not the black one that he is accused of having.

D Grant Box (I never knew the D stood for Dennis, lucky for him) is progressing after major surgery after which he decided (without authority) to contract peritonitis. A very unwell boy to start with but on Friday 6 Aug when I visited, although bedecked with hoses, wires, tubes and an oxygen mask, was able to ogle at an attractive nurse who walked by. When he saw I had been watching him he gave a weak but definite thumbs up!!!

HAVE I MENTIONED THAT THIS YEAR IS OUR 70TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION?

Here is one for our Historians:

There is the 'quickstep' and the 'goose-step', what is the 'Peninsular Step'? The only clue I will give is that it is military. Give me the correct answer at the Reunion and you might receive a prize.

Here is a lovely little quip from the pen of **Alistair Ross**:

You say it can't be done
I say that is not true
I say it can be done
But not by you!

Then there was the School of Artillery SNCO who had a sign above his desk that read:

'I am not hard of hearing, I am ignoring you!'

When Blackie Burns was posted as CO The Army Schools it was suggested the sign be removed.

There was a steam pipe trench dug along the road by the old School of Artillery so the ever-enterprising Spencer Cocks and the above SNCO put a small bridge across it, complete with totally ineffective handrail. Spencer attached an appropriate sign 'THE BRIDGE OF SIZE'. He was told to remove it and behave!!!!

Des O'Connor writes about Cassino where their enterprising 'Gun Tiffy' decided to make productive use of his spare time by manufacturing a still. He used some of the stock from an Italian family's wine cellar, of course the Italian grandfather was incensed at the irreverent treatment of his precious wine. The product was used to fortify that already marked for consumption but the percentage was never accurately. Fortunately for the more indulgent of them officialdom soon learned of the enterprise and closed it down.

I wonder if Doggo Downs got up to that sort of trick in Vietnam. The things young Gunners get up to can be quite surprising.

Andrew Lister writes from Tunisia where he lives in El Kantaoui a nice resort area about 160 kilometres South of Tunis. I work in Kairouan 80 kilometres further inland so drive out in the morning and home again in the evening. Kairouan is famous for its Grand Mosque, the fourth most holy for Moslems. The area is mostly semi desert and temperatures will soon be in the region of 48 centigrade.

Andrew is about 30 km south of two WWII battle sites Enfidha and in particular Takrouna. There is also an immaculate Commonwealth Cemetery in Enfidha with 117 New Zealanders buried there.

Tunisia is quite stable unlike our neighbours to the West, Algeria, and the East, Libya although we have been "visited" by Al Qaeda in April 2002 when one of their bombs killed 19 German tourists in the South of the country.

Prior to coming to Tunisia I was in Tanzania for one year and prior to that a number of years in the former Soviet Union, both Kazakhstan and Russia.

Mike Subritzky writes that his book *Kiwi Gunners in War and Peace* is available from Brian Riggir Publishing, PO Box 8099, Tauranga at NZ\$23, posted. In addition, there will be a NZAVA reunion Queen's Birthday weekend 2005. Contact him at kusza@xtra.co.nz

I have run out of space and wind again, I need empty space at the bottom because of the Registration Form over the page.. The next Newsletter will have a brief input from the **70th ANNIVERSARY REUNION and AGM**, (I wonder why that suddenly went Bold).

For those of you who are going to the Reunion I look forward to renewing old friendships.

2004 REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

Please complete and return to the Secretary by 30 September 2004

(DUPLICATE. RETAIN FOR YOUR INFO)

Cheques must be made payable NZPFOCA

Name: _____ **WILL / WILL NOT be attending**

(Negative replies will be accepted as apologies for absence from the AGM)

I will be accompanied by: _____

(Please include first name)

I require accommodation at the Spa Hotel for nights: _____

State Chalet or Studio Unit _____

There are only 10 Chalets and 10 Studio Units

I enclose \$ _____ for _____ persons at \$35 per head for the Dinner.

(DO NOT enclose payment for accommodation or Spa meals – settle on departure, with the Hotel)

I will notify those requiring accommodation at the Spa whether or not they have been successful.

Transport will be arranged from and to the Spa Hotel, and Acacia Bay if required, for the evening functions on Friday and Saturday.

I require transport from and to the Spa Hotel / Acacia Bay YES __ NO.

The Following meals are available at the Spa and please indicate the numbers attending:

Friday night Buffet if numbers allow (minimum 20. \$25 per head) or Bistro Meal price as advised on the blackboard menu
pay at the bar: Number _____

Saturday Breakfast: **Number** _____ Sunday Breakfast: **Number** _____

Breakfast costs will be added to your Hotel Bill.

If you are not able to drive you may bring a driver / companion who is welcome to take part in all Reunion activities except for voting at the AGM.

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