



*Established in 1934 as:
THE NEW ZEALAND PERMANENT FORCE OLD COMRADES ASSOCIATION (INCORPORATED)
Now officially renamed as*

THE ROYAL NEW ZEALAND ARTILLERY OLD COMRADES ASSOCIATION (INCORPORATED)

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NEWSLETTER No. 130

June 2006

ROUTINE ORDERS

LAST POST:

20152 Capt Donald C Allison. Christchurch 10 December 2005

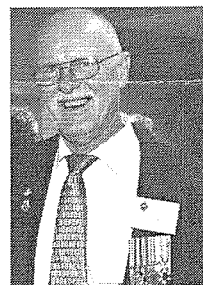


Don Allison

NEW MEMBERS

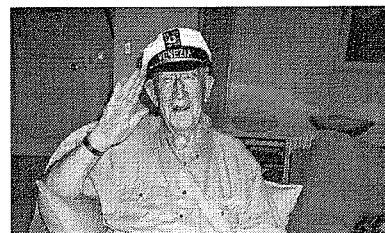
Phil Hollingsworth from Australia. I have very pleasant memories of, **Phil**, he was one of my Battery Commanders at 'A' Battery NSTU Waiouru. One thing he did not like was when I marched offenders in front of him I had a bad habit of stamping my foot and in a loud voice report "Accused and Escort **SIR!!**" There were many times I saw him visibly wince, not my fault that he stayed too long in the Mess the night before.

Phil at the 161 Battery Reunion
last year



Ted Holmes was noted as joining in the last Newsletter and since then daughter Esmé sent me this pic.

Ted Holmes



Cyril Hill from Hastings. **Cyril** commenced his service in CMT with 10 Coast Regt eventually promoted to gun sergeant and then went on the 16th Field Regiment in Korea where he was once again a gun sergeant.

Richard 'Spike' Jones joins from Milford. **Spike** served in Vietnam 1965 on No 4 gun and later as a Driver. He then went to 16th Field Regiment.

Ian 'Hitch' Hitchiner joins from Papakura. **'Hitch'** was a battery surveyor with 161 Battery, Vietnam, in 1969. Later he did a long spell with 1 Locating Troop where I had the pleasure of working with him for two years. Also he had a tour with 28 ANZUK in Singapore as a regimental surveyor.

Jan Rout has joined from Papakura. **Jan** as most of you will know is the widow of Captain John Rout our previous Secretary. The Routs and the Blacks were very close families, at one stage living next to each other in Waiouru where my four daughters were great friends with Jan's **FIVE** daughters. I always thought it was the smell of cordite that caused daughters, but then Ted Sweet as an Ammo Tech had seven sons!!!!!!

I am personally delighted that **Jan** has joined and all we have to do now is coax her into attending a Reunion.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

Nil

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Many subscriptions have been received and I thank you, the arrears are now below \$700 which is great. Again, to those who have not yet paid, if you are computerised and on the Internet we now have 'On Line' Banking available. If you wish to use this facility please bank into the following account.

The Royal New Zealand Artillery Old Comrades Association Inc. 123042 0229763 50.

You may wish to advise me that you have done this but it is not essential as I 'log on' daily.

If you are not 'On Line' then please do not forget your subs. Receipts will be issued and mailed out with the next Newsletter.

STRUCK OFF FOR NON PAYMENT OF SUBSCRIPTIONS

This is probably the first ever Newsletter where there are no members struck off. However, you know who you are, there may be three next time but I honestly hope not.

FROM AND ABOUT MEMBERS AND INTERESTING REFLECTIONS

❖ Recently the Corps lost one of its sons from 161 Battery Vietnam, Wally Addison. Wally had fallen on hard times and died in Australia a lonely man, however, many organisations including Veterans Affairs NZ and the Australian RSL came to the party to help out with the funeral expenses. Wally, of his own choosing, was not a member of the Old Comrades and kept very much to his own, but I am proud to say that a number of ex 161 Battery and Old Comrades also reached into their pockets to assist the funeral expenses with \$930.00. A great effort. Sadly, because of the time I could only contact those who had e-mail addresses otherwise I have no doubt the figure would have been much greater.

❖ **Eldon Bryant**, immediate Past President of the North Queensland Gunners Assn sent me some pages from the Townsville Bulletin, Monday April 24 2006, which covered their ANZAC Day Services and the Battle Diary from Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan March 2002. Excerpts of which I will share with you. I appreciate they are not our own soldiers and not Gunners, however, it may help to illustrate what is going on in these distant places where our own people are.

Acting on intelligence gathered by Australian SAS and Special Forces from Germany, Denmark, France and Norway, Afghan fighters joined coalition warplanes to attack hundreds of suspected al-Qaida and Taliban holdouts near Gardez in eastern Afghanistan.

About 100 Australian SAS personnel were directly involved in the Operation which was later described as the most important offensive of the Afghanistan Campaign against al-Qaida and the Taliban. The SAS were hailed by US officers for their proficiency and stealth in slicing in behind enemy lines to gather information on Taliban strongholds.

Australian forces were tasked by the Commander 10th US Mountain Division to secure and form a southern screen position within the battle area. The screen was tasked to provide close observation of the enemy defensive position and to develop cut-offs to prevent enemy forces from withdrawing through the Australian Area of Responsibility. In very hazardous conditions Australian soldiers, organised into small patrols took up special observation points and established their cut-off positions along the likely enemy escape routes. As it transpired, the area occupied by the Australian Forces and their OPs turned out to be critical in the conduct of the intense battle that raged for eight days.

An Australian patrol operating with Afghan Forces came under withering enemy mortar and small arms fire as they advanced south towards enemy defensive positions. The patrol, despite the extreme danger, observed and later reported several al-Qaida - previously unidentified - positions that were later engaged and destroyed.

During the Operation two Australians and 80 US soldiers landed by helicopter straight into an ambush by 1000 al-Qaida fighters, after being pinned down for 18 hours Signalman Martin Wallace was able to relay intelligence to enable air strikes to hit the enemy's positions and allowed the unit's evacuation. He was later to receive the Medal for Gallantry.

After writing the above I received the latest copy of Army News and there is a book review by Maj Neil Bleasdale "Not a Good Day To Die – The Untold Story of Operation Anaconda" by Sean Taylor Penguin 2005. I am sharing Neil's review with you because no doubt there are some who do not receive the Army News but who may wish to obtain the book after reading the review.

It was Clausewitz that described the components of war as "danger, exertion, uncertainty and chance". Yet having read Sean Taylor's book, one could be forgiven for thinking that war was actually about error, mistake and calamity with a good dose of individual heroism thrown in for good measure.

Not a Good Day To Die is a thoroughly researched book about the US-planned and led fix and destroy operation against al Qaeda and remnant Taliban Forces in the Shahikot Valley in Eastern Afghanistan in 2002. As intimated by the book's sub-title *The Untold Story of Operation Anaconda*, the mission was less than a total success. The main effort provided by local forces never got to their start line; the first contact was fatal blue-on-blue; the air-assault troops seized the low ground of the valley floor (as planned), leaving the surrounding high ground to the enemy (unplanned) who were in far greater numbers, better organised and better equipped than was expected, and who did not react as predicted by the US planners. The (American) phrase "turkey shoot" comes to mind, except this time it's not the Americans who were doing the shooting.

Naylor could have written a sensationalised "blame and shame"-style book. That he chose not to is to his credit, and it is what makes this book a must read.

The basic layout is chronological, following the operation from concept through planning and then into execution. The writing style moves at an appropriate pace – slowly at first, until the reader becomes familiar with the extremely confusing command arrangements, and US terminology and jargon (though if you have read a Tom Clancy novel recently this shouldn't pose too much of a problem), then finally starts moving at a cracking pace as the author keeps us abreast of each of the various components during the different stages of the actual fighting in and around the valley.

Naylor keeps the narrative flowing as the story moves between the various command levels and introduces new characters at appropriate times. And even though I sort of knew the outcome before I started reading the book (the curse of a publisher's marketing hype), Naylor skilfully leaves the reader to come to their own conclusions as the mission unfolds. At times in the planning stage I found myself saying "oops, that's not good", or "uh, oh danger!", but through Naylor's skill as a writer my criticism was never condescending and I was virtually compelled to read on to see just how accurate my predictions were.

If there is a criticism of *Not a Good Day To Die*, it's that it is a bit light on logistics, and on control and coordination. Whilst it is accepted that combat sells books, it would have been a more rounded book had these mundane, yet no less important, aspects received their due.

Wellington described one of his battles as "a close-run thing". Operation Anaconda lay in the balance for most of the time the Americans were in the Shahikot Valley. S planners attempted to stack the odds in their favour. Yet they failed – miserably. That the US got away with it was due to the leadership and courage of their NCOs and company officers. Yet, having read *Not a Good Day To Die*, I was left wondering how different the outcome would have been had Al Qaeda not had so many ammunition failures or even just one or two NVGs. War is indeed characterised by danger, exertion, uncertainty and chance.

- ❖ **Andrew Lister** sent me a book of graffiti copied from toilet walls and restaurant walls some of which I will share with you.

A lady was walking past a pet store when a parrot said "Hey lady! You're really ugly!" The lady was furious and continued on her way.

On the way home she passed by the pet store again and the parrot once again repeated what it had said in the morning. So she approached the manager and said if it happened again she would sue him and kill the bird. He apologised profusely and promised he would make sure the parrot didn't say it again.

The next day she deliberately passed by the store to test the parrot.

"Hey Lady!" it said.

"Yes?"

"You know!!"

- ❖ **Lt Col 'Pappy' Patchin**, our member from the United States sent us the following message prior to ANZAC Day. **Pappy**, as a Sgt, was attached to 161 Battery for a period in Vietnam.

Gentlemen:

In 1967 I had the honor of traveling throughout North Island with some of the finest soldiers in the New Zealand Army. All professionals and some legends. I rode with them to scheduled services in cemeteries, RSAs and memorials. I have always remembered the simple phrase "Lest we forget".

I have been a member of numerous committees for our Memorial Day Services, May 30th, locally and in

other states, also our Veteran's Day remembrances on Nov 11th. I was a member of our local Korea and Vietnam Veterans Memorial constructed in downtown Syracuse. The simple inscription reads "FOR THOSE WHO SERVED AND THOSE WHO DIED LEST WE FORGET". You know where I got it.

On every ANZAC Day I remember the men I served with in Vietnam and those I met while at Waiouru and other bases in New Zealand. Some were World War Two, some like "Paddy" Sands won fame in Korea and those that rose to high positions of responsibility like Piers Reid, Denis Dwane and so many of the OR's that became Sgts Major or Warrants and passed their knowledge on and helped develop skills in young soldiers. I picture the men of Gallipoli where Kiwis became a true national force; the men of the Western Desert, the Italian Theater and the Southwest Pacific in World War Two fighting to defeat the Axis; Gunners in Korea and Vietnam fighting along side Allied forces to defeat the spread of communism. I picture my friends, still living and those now at rest.

Bless you and them. My compliments and greetings to all who may remember me.

Please place a poppy on my behalf and include my thoughts and thanks for them when you say "Lest we forget" on ANZAC Day.

Truly,

Charles "Pappy" Patchin

Associate Old Comrade

Thanks Pappy, and your own poppy is included with this Newsletter. 'Jack' Black.

❖ And again from **Andrew**.

What is the zebra's favourite song? -- "The Lion Sleeps Tonight"

❖ **Douglas Callander MNZM**, National Secretary NZ K Force Assn, spoke at the unveiling of the New Zealand Korean War Memorial at the UN Cemetery, Busan (formally Pusan) 19th November 2005. To remind you of the commitments that our forces made I share part of the speech with you.

On the 25th of June 1950 the Korean People's Army invaded South Korea. The United Nations Security Council responded swiftly calling on members to assist.

HMNZS Tutira and Pukaki left Auckland on 3rd July. Later the Government decided to offer a ground force and throughout New Zealand volunteers stepped forward eager to serve. They were driven by the desire to represent and honour their country. A sense of adventure was among them and a determination to meet whatever challenges were in store with good New Zealand hardiness and integrity.

K Force left for Korea on 10th December. Over the next seven years 6000 New Zealanders served in Korea; 1300 with the six frigates of the Royal New Zealand Navy, 4,700 with K Force and two from the RNZAF.

As history tells us the Republic of Korea was quickly reclaimed. The subsequent invasion of North Korea by the United Nations Forces on 9th October 1951 was met by strong Chinese resistance and conflict continued until the Armistice on 27th July 1953.

My introduction to Korea and the realities of war was here in Busan. My reaction was one of utter shock at the plight of the refugees – shelters made of cardboard boxes, no fresh water or sanitary provisions.

Starvation was rife. There was nowhere else for them to go.

The I passed through Seoul and the devastation was not a newspaper photograph any more, but very very real. Buildings were smashed, and of those left standing few had a roof.

I think all of us remember the severe climate. I grew up in Southland, but memories still remain of the snow and cold wind from Siberia. The frozen ground, and trucks driving over the ice on the Imgim River. In summer there was heat and dust. All the time there was still an enemy not too far away, and for the unwary, minefields, snakes and rats.

But the children still waved and smiled at us, giving an indication of the spirit which rebuilt this country.

Furthermore the Korean Government and people have never forgotten us. When we see the Korea of today it makes our service here seem well worthwhile.

We had set out with high hopes, excitement, and some degree of apprehension. We returned home with a new understanding of what it means to serve one's country, and the price of knowing we had played our part to the full.

Not all of us made it. 45 New Zealand servicemen lost their lives in the Korean War. Here lie 34 of those men and here are commemorated two seamen with no known grave.

All who served gave years of their lives, their skill, their strength, their courage. But our fallen brothers gave their futures. We mourn them to this day.



Doug Callander MNZM

Wally Wyatt MNZM
(Treasurer K Force) who
sends us 'K Force Dispatches'

❖ **Harry Haitana** writes about his mate **'Nig' Nepia** a Driver Operator in 161 Battery Vietnam 1965. Sadly Nig passed away recently so **Harry** wrote the following story in memory of Nig.

I knew Nig well, starting a friendship with him, Chris Cooper, Willie Walker, Jim Naera and John Hudson and other guys who were with 1 Armoured Regt RNZAC when I was posted to Waiouru. Eventually we all served in Vietnam. Willy of course being with the OP during the battle of Long Tan.

Nig was with the Battery OP party when we eventually met up in Nui Dat. I remember too that he did a stint driving APCs on loan to 1 Aust Cav RAAC, when they lost some of their APC crews, and returned to the Battery prior to coming home to NZ.

I left NZ and travelled to Viet Nam on HMAS Sydney with Lani Paerata, Dave Sergeant and Brian Varney, our mission was to deliver two further 105mm Pack Howitzers to 161 Battery, as they upgraded to a Six Gun Battery. Lcpl Sergeant was our leader

On board the Sydney we shared the same Mess Deck with 1 Aust Cav RAAC personnel, who invited us to attend their APC driver training course. We drove their APCs from Australia to Vietnam, passed the course, but never moved an inch, everything was on assimilators, except for live firing that was carried out over the stern of the ship. Arrived Vung Tau Loaded onto LCTs and stormed up the beach (just like D-Day) with four Landrovers, half a gun each, and miscellaneous stores, and not a clue where we were supposed to be going. Aussies had their problems at the beachhead and were not overly concerned with 4 x Kiwi atts and dets so we just cruised around until we saw the smiling face of a Maori SSgt who pulled us over. Turns out to be the BQMS of 161 Battery, George Anderson, fresh on the scene from Bien Hoa, carrying some instructions to join a convoy that would deliver us safely to Nui Dat, where we would meet up with the Battery. Brilliant tactics I thought, until George explained that the Battery was still up north, and we would be required to secure the Battery Position in Nui Dat.

Really brilliant. Three ex grunts and a truck driver, with three SLRs, a suspicious looking thing called a Heavy barrel SLR a quarter master armed with a non issue Pistol, two unassembled Pack Howitzers, four Landrovers, four one ton trailers, miscellaneous stores, and Aussie Starvation Ration Packs, now we can head North to take on Charlie in the Phuoc Tuy Province.

Simple plan: Surround the enemy, show them our fire power to show them we mean business, show them our rations so they can see we would be able to eat well for months and they would die laughing.

Arrive at Nui Dat secure the Battery Position, dig shell scrapes, sort out sentry roster and prepare to defend our position and fight to the death, or at least until the Battery arrived. Two days later the Battery advance party arrived, one of the first people I recognised was Nig Nepia. I wouldn't trade that experience for anything.

❖ From **Cactus Jack's Restaurant and Bar**, Ashburton. A young man came home and was greeted by his wife in a very sexy nightie. "Tie me up," she purred "and you can do anything you want.

So he tied her up and went golfing!!!!!! *Sorry girls, anyway the next one is for you!*

Never let your man's mind wander – it is too little to be out alone!!!

What do you do when you boyfriend walks out – shut the door!!

❖ **Reunion 2006**

Although the Reunion is still a way off I will run through the programme that is being planned.

Friday 10, Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 November 2006 at Taupo.

The Weekend

Register in at your accommodation during Friday afternoon

Friday mix and mingle at the Taupo RSA 4.00pm to 6.00pm

Friday night dinner and drinks at the Spa.

Saturday Breakfast at the Spa.

Saturday AGM at the Spa 'Old Dining Room' 10.00a.m..

Saturday Formal Dinner Taupo Bowling Club 6.30pm for 7.00pm.

Sunday Breakfast at the Spa

Sunday Church Parade in the Spa Meeting House 9.30a.m.

Sunday 'One for the Road' or tea and coffee in the Spa bar after the Church Parade.

Accommodation, use your own accommodation if you wish

The Spa Hotel

10 Studio Units, one double and 1 single bed. \$65 per night for two people.

15 Chalets, two separate rooms with double and single beds \$95 per night for two people.

All Spa accommodation is to be booked through me.

Meals at the Spa in the Bar Restaurant

Full breakfast Saturday and Sunday 7.30am, \$10 per head, this will be charged to your room.

Friday night smorgasbord from 7.00pm, \$25 per head, charged to your room.

The Spa Bar will be open on Friday and Saturday nights.

Taxis

Friday, Taxis will collect members from Spa and Acacia Bay at 3.30pm and deliver them to the RSA.

Friday, Taxis will collect members from RSA and deliver back to Spa and Acacia Bay.

Saturday, Taxis will collect members from Spa and Acacia Bay at 6.00pm and deliver to Bowling Club.

Saturday, Taxis will make return journey when called for, about 9.30pm

AGM

AGM and Balance Sheet will go out with the next Newsletter August 2006. Notices of Motion must be in the hands of the Secretary 14 days before the AGM.

Formal Dinner

Saturday 6.30pm for 7.00pm

Minimum dress, jacket and tie, miniatures.

There will be a Sherry Table and Port will be provided. Table wines are 'user pays'.

Our Guest this year is John and Ann Osborne. John is from the NZ Society of Gunsmiths, the Commandant of the Armed Constabulary Re-Enactment Society and an authority and collector of small arms and guns. Ann comes from a family of gun and bayonet makers.

Church Parade

We have been given permission to attend the Church Parade wearing footwear.

Full size medals and again the minimum dress is jacket and tie.

Raffle

We will run our normal raffle to defray costs so if you have any items you can spare for the raffle table please bring them along. I will provide my normal supply of 'Mother's Finest Preservatives'.

In the next Newsletter I will lay out the menu for the smorgasbord and breakfasts.

I have included a reply slip for Reunion 2006 with one half to be retained by you. Although I will do the same again in the Aug Newsletter, those of you who are definitely going to attend please fill in and return. That will help me in my planning.

- ❖ One hot day a farmer was going to have a swim in his farm pond and thought he would collect some fruit on the way back so took a bucket with him. As he got close to the pond he heard the sound of young ladies enjoying themselves in the pond and as he approached realised they were 'skinny dipping'. One young lady saw him and called out that they would not get out until he had gone away. Holding up the bucket he replied "Oh, I won't be a minute, I have just come to feed the crocodile!!"

- ❖ **Marie Roberts** kindly loaned us some of David's writings and I will share bits and pieces with you.

David has joined Compulsory Military Training and has started his journey into the unknown.

January 1955, the Auckland Railway Station and the confusion of hundreds of young men, some drunk, some defiant, some bewildered and some seemingly unmoved. A collection of unidentified soldiers in uniform whose job it is to get this unruly mob onto a train and into Papakura Military Camp for 10½ weeks of compulsory military training under the provisions of the 1949 Act. The train seems to be made up of the oldest carriages the railways could find, it is suspected that they have been left in an exposed area of the railway yards for several weeks with all windows and doors open. The birds may have left but they have left something.

On arrival at Tironui Station a soon to be familiar chorus starts up "Get a move on". It seems that a demand to detrain had preceded this somewhat rude and oft repeated shout. It seems better to appease these uniformed people who now appear, in the main, to wear two chevrons so off we go with a minimum of protest to be bullied and pushed into a formation universally known as "three ranks". More loud commands requiring us to "BY THE LEFT. QUICK MARCH". By the left of what? It takes little time to catch on to the idea that "Left, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, etc." refers to the sequence in which the feet are placed on the ground, it takes a deal of concentration to comply with this requirement when the character preceding you is totally without coordination, this then gives the two striped uniformed types the opportunity to scream loud and exotic threats that in the main refer to one's ancestry, or lack of it and infer uncomfortable intrusions into the more private portions of the body.

A general forward movement prevails with an almost unbroken chorus of instructions, threats, recitations of obscure pagan prayers and questions addressed to the Almighty as what the two striped one has done to deserve this collection of imbeciles being wished upon him.

When we are finally halted (stopped??) and the calling of names ceases another, and more commanding voice tells us that we are now in B Company and that he, the voice, is the Company Sergeant-Major and we, the innocents, shall shed our long and greasy tresses and get a haircut like what is revealed as the lemon squeezer hat is removed to reveal a stubble of hair standing in military precision at no longer than ½ inch per strand. Ye Gods no one can surely expect any self respecting young man about town to do that to his hair, can he? Oh yes he does, him with the Germanic name and physique that resembles a beer barrel set on two milk bottles. It will be hard to learn to love this man.

More shouting, and gradually we are split into groups that have been pre-assigned to designated accommodation known as Huts and each under the command of a two-striped person. My lot are on their

way to Hut 10. Prior military service in the School Cadet Corps results in one of the innocents addressing our two-striped person as Corporal ! Mistake ! B Company is really B Battery of the Northern District Artillery Training Wing, Royal New Zealand Artillery and only bears the indignity of being called a Company for the basic training phase, which we are about to enjoy. Our military education is furthered, two-striped persons in the illustrious Royal New Zealand Artillery (RNZA) are addressed and referred to as BOMBARDIER they are NOT Corporals because corporals are in other corps and without actually saying it there is a distinct inference that corporals are lesser beings. The general tone of this brief but loud dissertation indicates that our BOMBARDIER is a devoted apprentice to the Sergeant-Major with the Germanic name.

Now we receive a short introductory lecture, our hut commander is a BOMBARDIER, he will look after us during our basic training, he will provide guidance that seems directed at arranging our incarceration in the military prison if we do not obey all orders, he will also commit assorted unnatural and violent acts upon our bodies if we stray from the paths of righteousness. Those of a more gentle nature are showing the first signs of distress.

Off we go again where the ritual shouting once again starts and in what is apparently a most unsatisfactory manner we march to the Company Q Store., This establishment is presided over by a laconic and cynical Bombardier who views our arrival as an intrusion on his afternoon and with as much ill-grace he can muster thrusts a bundle of mysterious items into our individual arms after extracting from each man his name initials and NUMBER,

"What number?"

"The number on your registration card, Stupid."

"Oh that one, I thought it must have some use."

"SHUTUP. Sign here and GET OUT."

"Yes SIR."

Another lesson in military education. It seems that Bombardiers are called Bombardier and not SIR, officers are called sir and no self respecting Bombardier wants to be confused with one of them.

Back in the Barrack Room we try on various items of clothing

"Excuse me Bombardier, where do I go to get changed?"

"Where do you think, to the men's changing room of course"

"Where is it please Bombardier?"

"Beside your bed"

"But I can't get changed in front of all these people"

"You can't WHAT, dear God what have I done? Why me?"

We have been to dinner!!!!!!! well?? By 5.30 p.m. we are out of the mess room and back in the hut. Time to take a stroll. Ten steps and a shout from that Orderly NCO who seems to have been lying in wait.

"Where are you lot going dressed like that?" Dressed like that is in the issue denims and our own footwear.

"For a walk Sir"

"Don't insult me I am called BOMBARDIER, I'm not an officer and you are not going out of your barrack lines without a hat on"

'But we haven't got a hat yet, BOMBARDIER

Then you're not going for a walk are you'

And poor old David is approaching the end of his first day as a CMT Recruit. His story goes on but I have not read where he is a Regular Force NCO and doing to them that was done to him. The Germanic named WO2 was of course Fred Schroeder and one of the two striped persons was none other than me. Oh dear how sad never mind.

David's story goes on until the end of Corps Training but it is too long for this Newsletter. I had to chuckle as I read through the various pages, I never really knew how the poor guys felt being yelled at about two hours after leaving Mum's apron strings.

❖ **Les Pye** sends us this snippet of his life in the Army.

Though RNZAC by affiliation during my service as an RF Cadet and RF member, my links with RNZA go back to Northcote College in 1947 when a 40 mm Bofors detachment was raised under supervision of the late R A (Bob) Harris. Others assisting in that period were the late Jack Osmer, Henry Salt and Butty Drummond. The Bofors resided at the college for that year. In due course I became a gun sergeant and the crew chalked up a win for the college in the Imperial Daughters of the Empire Shield. Among the crew were twins John and Chris Dickson, John later to command 3 Fd Regt whilst Chris sailed into international yachting prominence. Our annual firing practice was from the cliff top behind the then Takapuna Grammar School. 1948 took me off the 40 mm to become the College Unit CSM until April, when I left to become a clothing cutter prior to enlisting as a RF Cadet that July. Perhaps if DRNZA had gotten to me before DRNZAC (Lt Col Dennis Caughley) I may have become a "pure" gunner! March 1953 found me at 161 Bty having been put through the arty sig trade to qualify me for secondment to K Force, then replaced in late April for attachment to 1st Royal Tank Regiment. During my 161 Bty stint, two things of note happened. The first being duty Battery sig for the upper register demonstration and the other, leaving Blackie Burns' orderly room, five pounds lighter and a severe reprimand, the crime, a bottle of beer outside the canteen area! On the last couple of nights of that war my crew extracted two 2RAR diggers and six US Marine casualties of the "Hook Boulder City" area.

Commissioning in 1969 as G3 Armour, I was buttonholed by D Arty (Don Kenning) and convinced that I could be the Administration Officer for another tour with 161 Bty, which by this time had now earned me a title of "Instant Gunner". To close, arising from that casualty clearing action back in 1953, I can vouch for the accuracy of 16th Field's fire by being in the box seat. Forty seven years later in Canberra, I was to meet the 2 RAR MMG Sgt and one of his two casualties. Brian Cooper was awarded the MM for his actions on the night of 24/25 July 1953. Brian has since put me in touch through the net, with ex-USMC MSgt Charles Owens. Platoon sergeant of Coy H, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regt.. Both continually shout the praises of 16th Fd Regt. Complete surprise occurred in February 2005, to find I had been appointed to Honorary Membership of the 2 RAR Association for services to 2 RAR. A short time later, on the proposal of Charles Owens, I was accepted as a member of the 1st Marine Division USMC Association on the same grounds, both honours that I hold dear to me.

I had to chuckle about the live shell practice being held on the cliff top behind Takapuna Grammar School, ITY Johnston tells me about when the Mediums used to shoot here in Hamilton the gun position was about where the Dinsdale Roundabout is now with the target area where the Mormon Temple is. Then John Valintine reminded me of when the twin 6-pounders at Fort Cautley used to fire at a target being towed up the Rangitoto Channel. Could you imagine that today, you would be lucky if you got permission to fire a BB gun.

❖ **Stroke**

There are three vital signs to look for if you feel someone is having a stroke:

- 1. Ask the person to smile.**
- 2. Ask them to raise both arms.**
- 3. Ask them to repeat a basic sentence.**

If they cannot do any of the above, get them to Accident and Emergency immediately and if you have erred then you have erred correctly. If you don't want to do that then learn CPR, and could you really and honestly say you would give **me** mouth to mouth, some of you ladies out there I would pretend to be dying and all of you guys I would be on my feet so quick!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

- ❖ I was walking down the road the other day when I saw a friend with a dog close by. I asked "does your dog bite?" His reply was "no" so I bent down to pat the dog and got bitten. "I thought you said your dog does not bite!"

"That's not my dog!!!!"

❖ **Medium Gunners and interested Gunners.**

Hugh Vercoe, Mayor of Matamata/Piako, an ex BC of 4th Medium Battery and a member of the Old Comrades has obtained a 5.5-in gun which is currently being refurbished and is to be put on permanent display at Memorial Park, Hamilton. The Freedom of the City Parade, Dedication of the Gun and Formal Dinner will be on Saturday 2 December 2006. Any ex Medium Gunner or interested people are welcome and should contact me so that I can put you on the roll to keep you informed of progress in the planning of this event. There is a strong chance that HE Gov Gen will attend or at the least Min Def.

- ❖ **Toner Cartridge** for a Panasonic KX-P6300, KX-P6500, KX-PS600 Printer. I have one of these cartridges, brand new, and it is of no use to me. Is there anyone out there who could use it?

- ❖ **Gunner's Day 2006.** I had the pleasure of attending Jeff Waters Gunner's Day Dinner in the Papakura RSA this year. The only way I can describe it is 'A Command Performance'. The meal was as good as you would receive anywhere, the Waiter Service by the local School Cadet Unit was of the highest standard, wines plentiful and the RNZA Band at its normal standard – Excellent. The whole evening was a credit to all involved and not the least the Papakura RSA. I hope our Reunion this year goes off as memorably, all it needs is a bit of planning and then it is over to you to complete the weekend by attending.

- ❖ Two salesmen were stranded at night in the middle of nowhere and approached a farm house where they asked if they could stay the night. The lady explained that she was a widow and would they mind sleeping in the barn. Not a problem, and in the morning continued on their way.

Nine months later one receives a letter and after reading it says to his mate.

"Remember that night nine months ago when we were stranded and stayed in the barn at the widow's farm."

"Yes I do".

"And in the middle of the night did you sneak up to the house and have it off with the widow?"

"Well, yes I did".

"And you used my name".

"Well, yes I am afraid I did and I apologise". And looking a bit guilty asks why, what is in the letter?

"The letter is from her lawyer telling me she has died and left everything to me!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

Take care out there

God Bless you all.

