



# The New Zealand Gunner

Official Journal of

The Royal New Zealand Artillery Association (Inc)

Founded 1934

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June 2009

## It's our 75th Anniversary and Reunion!

The Royal New Zealand Artillery Association was formally established on 10 July 1934, at the Masonic Hotel in Devonport. This year's annual reunion is our one chance to mark the occasion.

### The Dates

Friday 30 October to Sunday 2  
November 2009

### The Place

East Coast Bays RSA, Browns Bay,  
North Shore City

### The Programme

**Friday** – check in, mix and mingle  
happy hour, buffet meal at RSA

**Saturday** – morning visit Passchendaele exhibition  
at Fort Takapuna, afternoon at leisure, evening  
Reunion Dinner.

**Sunday** – Parade and Remembrance Service,  
Annual General Meeting, disperse about 11 am.

The Band of the Royal Regiment of New Zealand  
Artillery will play on each of these three days,  
including the Parade on Sunday morning with, we  
expect, 11/4 Battery, 16 Field Regiment, RNZA.

- You need to think about being there, *now*, if you want the best air travel deals, and to book into the recommended accommodation, *North Shore Motels and Holiday Park*. [see *Muzzle Flashes 4* the link].
- The Park is only ten minutes from Browns Bay and transport will be available to and from ECB RSA events. Booking your travel and accommodation is in your hands - *do it now!*
- Registration is \$80, which covers the buffet meal on Friday and the formal dinner on Saturday. (If you won't be eating at Friday's buffet, deduct \$20.) *Don't pay until asked in September.*

The early signs are that this will be a bumper reunion, with members coming in from overseas as well as from all corners of NZ. *Don't miss out!*

For those wishing to play golf, a round could be organised for Saturday afternoon.



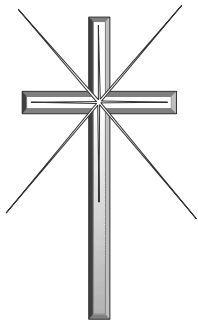
This special reunion will be worthwhile only if *you* are there. So that we can estimate numbers, and to give some point to the Reunion committee's efforts on your behalf, *please contact the Secretary now* to let him know that you are likely to be there.

Email [RNZA.Association@gmail.com](mailto:RNZA.Association@gmail.com) or write to 37a Palliser Lane, Browns Bay, North Shore 0630, with your guess at the number of people attending with you, your need for transport from/to the airport, and accommodation requirements, if any. *This does not commit you any way to attend the reunion.* Formal registration will begin at the **end of September.**

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[Above photo from the Alexander Turnbull Library via John Osborne].



## 1. LAST POST - We Will Remember Them

*Deacon K, Hitchner I, Osmers E, Rowntree I, Stewart JHV, Weatherhead W*

**DEACON, Kenneth Milton.** Died in Australia 9 June 2009. Ken (Padre) was born 30 August 1940 in New Plymouth NZ. He joined the NZ Army in Sept 1964 and took his discharge in Aug 1969.

Ken was originally RNZASC coming into the Gunners with the initial deployment of 161 Bty to SVN. He was a Driver/Gun Number for Arthur Simeon's Gun Crew and aspired to driving our US Deuce and a half (Ammo Truck) called *Sorrow on the Rocks*. In 1970 he joined the Australian Army (Corps of Transport) as an Air Despatcher and served in SVN in that role in 1971. He remained in the Air Despatch role until he retired as a WO2 in 1995. Ken was a good natured guy who got on well with everyone. He always said that the best period of his life in the Army was with 161 Bty in Vietnam. He always looked forward to coming from Sydney to Papakura on ANZAC Days and reunions associated with 173d Airborne Brigade (US). He will be sadly missed by those Gunners who knew him.

**HITCHNER, Ian Frederick.** Ian (Hitch) passed away suddenly on 29 June 2009 at Papakura Hitch marched into Andrews VC class, RF Cadets, in January 1966 and graduated to RNZA May 1967. He served in Viet Nam with 161 Bty for 12 months from October 1969, during which time he was attached to D Coy 9RAR FO Party. After Viet Nam, Hitch was posted to 1 Loc Tp, 161 Training Wing Papakura, and 28 ANZUK Fd Regt in Singapore.

**OSMERS, Eileen.** Eileen passed away peacefully at the Mountain View Rest home on 9 April 2009 in her 87th year. She was the dearly loved wife of the late Jack.

**ROWNTREE, Iris:** Iris passed away peacefully at Te Mana Hospital on Friday 8 May 2009, in her 93rd year. She was the loved wife of the late Ian.

*Iris was a Life Member of the Association and a keen participant in its activities. She will be remembered for her warmth and friendship*

**STEWART, John HV.** Hooky died on 23 September 2008 at Dunedin. He was a stalwart of the Assoc who used to come regularly to Taupo with Davey Jones. Hooky served with 14 Lt Ack Ack 2 NZ Div then went to 5 Fd Regt joining 47 Bty. 14 Lt Ack Ack shot up and sank a German E-Boat on the North African Coast and Hooky swam out and rescued a beat up and drowning German. John graciously bequeathed the sum of \$1000 to the Association

**WEATHERHEAD W.** At Christchurch January 2009.

The President and Members extend their condolences to the family of:

**Lillian RIVERS:** 17 June 2009. Devoted Mother and Mother in Law of Angus and Catherine.



## 2. NEW MEMBERS

**McKINNEY, Maaka.** Maaka served the guns between 1991 and 2004. Upon completion of basic trg, he was posted to Bravo Gun, Echo Troop, 161 Bty, Papakura. 2 years later he was promoted to LBdr and posted to the newly formed 163 Bty, Easy Troop, Charlie Gun. 4 years later Maaka was posted to the newly formed G Troop, 43 Air Defence Battery (LT) as a Detachment Commander for Delta Missile Detachment C/S 31D. His next posting which was in 1999 was as Cadre NCO, 11A Bty, Auckland.

Here he was promoted to Bdr. 2001 saw him posted back to 163 Bty, Easy Troop as the Gun Sgt on Charlie Gun. 2002 Maaka was promoted to A/Sgt and deployed to B Bty, 1st Royal Horse Artillery in Bosnia serving on the AS90 155mm SP. On completion of this TOD he was posted back to firstly HQ Bty, Linton as the Regt Tpt NCO then to the Regt Trg Wing as Trg NCO. Maaka then took his discharge after 14 yrs service.

**GALLAGHER, Rion.** Rion from Yarram in Australia and 161 Bty SVN 1966 and 1968 has rejoined the association

**BURKE, Margaret E.** Margaret is Mgr Support Services, Pension Advocacy, Health and Welfare for the Auckland RSA. She has given and continues to give close care and attention to every case she handles, many of which are gunners. Margaret gives valuable support to the RNZA Association through advice and consultation on health, welfare and pensions.

## 3. 75th Anniversary Coffee Mugs

We have some great coffee mugs for you in the Q Store – cobalt blue, with the Association's logo and '75th Anniversary 2009' on them in gold. A set of these will look great on your table when visitors call, you might like to have your own special mug, or present a gift set to a mate. Single mugs are \$16 each; at \$54, a set of four mugs saves you \$10 on the price of four singles. *Post and handling extra.*



See them in colour at [www.tinyurl.com/RNZA-mugs](http://www.tinyurl.com/RNZA-mugs). *Limited edition, order now!*

#### 4. *LETTERS TO THE EDITOR*

##### *Colin Stanbridge writes:*

The following relating to Lt Col John McCrae who wrote Flanders Fields may be of interest to members.

He served in the South African War as a Gunner Officer in the Canadian Field Artillery. In 1914 although an internationally famous pathologist he went to France as 2IC 1<sup>st</sup> Bde Canadian Field Artillery. He wrote his renowned poem at 7.30am on 3 May showing it to the Bde RSM as soon as he had finished it.

The Canadian Department of Defence decided Major McCrae should be in the Medical Corps and he became Temp Lt Col CAMC on 1 June 1915. He was still therefore with the guns when he wrote his famous poem.

His parting words on leaving the wagon lines were: "Allinson all the goddamned doctors in this world won't win this bloody war. What we need is fighting men".

The above, written by a Lt Col Allinson RCA who was the RSM to whom Lt Col McCrae showed his poem, came into my possession some years ago. Two of the articles in the March 2009 edition of The New Zealand Gunner brought back very vivid memories to me.

##### *David Weston writes:*

Firstly, the obituary for Major Graham (GJ) Williams – I first met Graham in Waiouru in 1966 when I joined the RF and was posted to NSTU as a Platoon Commander.

At that time Graham had recently returned from his first tour with 161 Battery in Vietnam, as the initial GPO, and then as an FO, and was the Battery Commander of A Battery NSTU. We kept bumping into each other over the next 18 months or so, as I spent time at the 161 Battery Depot in Papakura, and seemed to be forever in Waiouru for exercises or for the Reinforcement Officers course at the School of Artillery.

In early 1969, Graham arrived back at 161 Battery in Nui Dat, this time as Battery Captain. During my last couple of weeks in country (in late May) I was sent back to the Battery base to pack up, and to undergo the medical treatment for malaria we were all put through before we came home. During these few days, Gunners' Day came round, and the then BC Major John Horsford sent the 3 members of the Battery who celebrated their birthdays on the 29<sup>th</sup> May back to Nui Dat to celebrate (John Tulloch, the late David Lough and the late Jack Keinzley).

Graham had organised quite an event to

celebrate this day, which included a number of RNZAF strike pilots who were serving as Forward Air Controllers (FACs) with the USAF at the time – I remember being introduced to "Flaming Greenies" that night – a shot of Crème de Menthe that had been lit – quite a skill to drink it without singeing your hair and eyebrows or burning your lips or nose!!

Over my last few days in country, the recently replaced 2ic of 4RAR (ANZAC), Major Tony Mataira was staying in the Battery lines awaiting his flight back to Singapore. Tony was a well known bridge player of some skill, and he organised the 12 Field Regiment medical officer to join Graham and me for an evening's cards. By about 11pm, Graham and I had won a small amount of money from the other pair, and they insisted on having a chance to balance the books the following night. That 2nd night the play was much more serious, and went on until early in the morning (around 2am as I recall) and ended with some US \$20 in MPC being handed over to Graham and I – later we heard that several 82mm mortar bombs had been fired into the northern end of the Nui Dat base that night but we had been too involved in our cards to hear them! Graham was a consummate bridge player of the "mathematical type" – he followed the detailed bidding and playing methods based on numerical chances – and demonstrated his amazing logical mind in a very convincing manner over these 2 nights of cards – which was the last time I played bridge seriously (some 40 years ago!)

A truly amazing Gunner and friend!

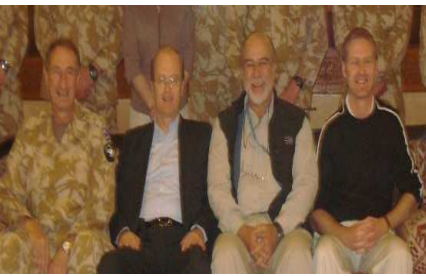
The second story involved Wally Steward – and his absolute passion for food.

During my sojourn in 161 Battery Depot we spent a number of periods in the Hunua Ranges doing All Arms training including patrolling and jungle lane shooting. During one of these periods, the exercise was a "platoon on platoon" search and destroy type operation, and Wally was the Umpire with my platoon. With him was a very young signaller, Mayne Manson I think, and early on in the exercise, Wally produced a bright red onion – I seem to remember a story about him finding it but I can't be too sure about the facts! Anyway, one evening soon after dark, as we all settled into our quiet night routine, there was a great kerfuffle from the hoochie of the umpire – Wally had cooked up this onion with his dinner, and Mayne couldn't stand the smell any longer – as I recall he moved in with a couple of my guys for night and was prepared to risk the chance of getting rained on rather than sleep in the same hoochie as Wally and the results of the onion dinner! Wally seemed to be at a loss to know why Mayne should be so concerned!

Thanks for giving me, and I'm sure others, the chance to recall times, events and Gunners from the past – keep up the good work!

**Tom Reilly writes:**

I would like to pass on my greetings to the Comrades and to thank you for the kind words in the Newsletter on the passing of my brother. I am now back in Kabul, Afghanistan enjoying the fresh and often freezing breezes off the Hindu Kush mountains. This is my second time here. The Region and this country holds a certain fascination for most who have been here. I was here in 2002-2004 based on the border in the town of Jalalabad but also spent time in Quetta, Pakistan and Herat, Afghanistan. From here I went to Sudan and spent most my time there in West Darfur and South Sudan. In 2005 I moved to Nairobi and spent 2 lovely years there looking after such countries as Eritrea, Somalia, Ethiopia, Yemen and Rwanda. In August last year I returned to Afghanistan but this time to Kabul as the country adviser. There is no doubt that the situation here is deteriorating. When I was here last time I could follow the 'footsteps' of ancient and not so ancient armies through the Khyber Pass. Sadly this is no longer possible since the Pass was closed as a result of constant attacks by Taleban. I am not alone here there are many Kiwis here mostly Ex Army. They are working either for the United Nations or for Private Security Companies. I also keep closely in touch with our lads with NATO ISAF. The senior officer here is Lt Col Mike Beale son of Kelly Beale. They



are about to change. I have included a couple of photos for you. The first is taken on the occasion of the visit late last

year of the Ambassador in Iran and Brig Nev Reilly our Defence Attache in Saudi Arabia and of course the NZ Defence Team here in Kabul. For those who think this is all work and no play? Well I was fortunate enough to be Angelina Jolie's escort for a



couple of days late last year. She is our G o o d w i l l Ambassador and her security fell into my hands so to speak. An extremely onerous task, he he he. It is winter here and while it hit 40 in summer

well winter is at the other end of the scale. The first photo was taken at the summit of the Salang Pass at 13000 feet. This road was built by the Soviets in the 60s and eventually known by them in the 79-89 war as the 'Road of Death'.



Finally what I really do...sit around drinking endless cups of green tea with Pashtun Tribal Elders. A little like being with Maori elders except these guys shoot you if they don't like you.



Spring has arrived and the blossoms are out. In normal countries this would be a time of an enjoyable however for us it signals the escalation of fighting around the country. That said I am well and wish the same for you all.

**Roger Pearce writes:**

Neil Bradley's article about Wally Steward really struck a cord and stirred up a few memories for me, too.

I first met Wally in November 1963 when he and I went down to Nelson to learn to fly helicopters. We were both AOP pilots and had been posted to the UK Army Air Corp in Malaysia for a couple of years (to replace Ray Andrews and Chris Brown). However, this time the Brits wanted rotary pilots as they were replacing their Austers with Bell 'Sioux' helicopters. There were no military choppers in NZ in those days and as the cost of undertaking training in UK was prohibitive the DRNZA, Jack Spring, tracked down the only rotary wing instructor in NZ, one John Reid a WW11 fighter pilot ace and test pilot who ran Helicopters NZ Ltd. After a month in sunny Nelson learning to fly the Bell 47G Wally and I departed for Malaysia with my wife, Jann and two pre-school sons plus a load of troops in an RNZAF Hastings. The Hasting was configured for paratrooping, was not sound-proofed and neither was it pressurised so its ceiling for passenger carrying was 10,000 ft, ensuring a bumpy trip over Australia. It is interesting to record the flight times: Auckland to Richmond (Sydney) 8 hours, Richmond to Darwin 8 hours and Darwin to Singapore 11 hours.

When we arrived at 656 Sqn AAC we were told the Sioux had yet to arrive and were re-trained on the Auster 9. Wally was a consummate pilot and had no trouble converting back to fixed wing

and then, a year later back to rotary. However, his height and weight did impose limits on the loads he could carry and at one stage he was put on a strict diet to get his weight down. His first thought on arrival was to order a car that would reflect his aspirations (no doubt stemming from his Sandhurst background), nothing less than a forest green Jaguar XJS. However, he missed out badly when he said to Jann "I am glad Roger is married as you can wash my socks". Yeah, right!

Wally and I were posted to Borneo on 3 month tours during the 1964/65 period of Indonesian Confrontation, in '64 flying the Auster 9s and the following year the Sioux. At the end of '64 I was lucky enough to land a month flying Austers in Hong Kong which must have been the plumiest job ever, especially as an Irish Guards loaned me his flat near Kai Tak airport.

November 1965 I was posted to Vietnam and Wally followed in January. We were ostensibly attached to Don Kenning's 161 Bty but in reality to Co A/82 Airborne, the Dallas Cowboys, a Huey helicopter unit in direct support of 173 Airborne Brigade Group. The US Army's attitude to flying differed markedly from any previous experience in NZ with the RNZAF and in Malaysia with the AAC. Here it was all get up and go! During lulls in operations Wally and I would be taken out by the unit's instructor pilot (Mal Koehn, a cigar chomping drawling Texan) and shown how to handle the Bell Iroquois (Huey). We both 'graduated' in short order and were assigned to operations. These were mainly combat assaults (up to 100 Hueys on occasions) or resupply. In April 66 one of the 173rd battalions operating in War Zone D found itself surrounded by a large NVA/VC force and was running out of ammunition. Wally was assigned to carry out an air drop of ammunition which entailed flying over the centre of the battalion and at very low speed throwing boxes out the door. I was flying in one of the gunships tasked with laying down suppressive fire to cover his approach. However, the 'Cong' could see him coming and opened fire, shooting a number of rounds into the belly of his Huey, rupturing the fuel cells but fortunately not hitting Wally or the other three on board. Luckily he made it to a village a few Ks away before he ran out of fuel. The unit recommended Wally for a commendation which he richly deserved but this was turned down by NZ Force HQ the reasons being that we were not 'officially' on flying duties but also because of the policy at the time regarding foreign decorations.

Wally and I returned to NZ in mid '66 and were posted to the Light Aircraft Flight, NZAAC, part of 3 Sqn, RNZAF at Hobsonville (where we were denied any access to the RNZAF Hueys). He

was subsequently posted back to The Guns as Neil mentions. After flying to oil rigs from New Plymouth he joined the British Arm Air Corps and became a test pilot during the development of the AAC's new helicopters. He made Lt Col. He did not marry the GG's daughter but has an English wife, Manya, and a grandchild.

*Lyall McGregor V/Pres Queenstown RSA writes:*

We had a huge attendance for this years march and Service.



42 Dodge Weapons Carrier and Willys Jeep Queenstown Anzac Day

*Julie Jones writes:*

I love receiving *The Gunner* – info and nostalgia, and the great kicks out of reading about or seeing photographs of old pals, Ron's and mine. Looking back, the camaraderie was so wonderful - we had lots of fun!

I wonder if maybe you would like to pop this photograph in the next issue? It is the Northern Regional Golf Team 1976. The boys were in Christchurch, doing their thing. Love the hats!

**PS** Ron had a get together with Darkie Forrester and his wonderful wife at that time Ethol, he was spoilt rotten.



Back Row (L-R) Lcpl John Filmer, WO11 Ted Hobman, WO11 Ron Jones, SSgt Lorry Frith and Sgt Ian Wills.

Front Row (L-R) Maj Terry Wallace, WO1 Dick Kiddie, Sgt Vince Ankie, Maj Bruce Poananga.

*A member of Hugh McKinney's family writes:*

I am contacting you in the hope that you can help in my research to trace my father's tour of duty World War 2. I contacted the NZDF Archives & his

records of his overseas service were purged along with many other NZ soldiers. The information I have is:

*Hugh McKinney*

*Joined the NZ Army in 1940; he was a Sergeant*

*He was in the 9th Heavy Regiment based at North Head Auckland; he is recorded as being a Bombardier & Gunner*

*He had an accident at North Head & was put on the X (ii) List on medical grounds*

*It is at this point that we lose him*

*He was sent overseas on 12th of OCTOBER 1942*

*He returned to New Zealand on the 26th of November 1943*

*We do not know where he was sent*

*He was discharged from the NZ Army on the 5th April 1946*

*His medals were lost so we can not trace his movements through them, do you have any idea if names & recipients of medals were recorded?*

*We would be grateful for any help or direction that you can give us [Please contact the Secretary]*

## **5. THE BALLAD OF WAIOURU** *(Sung to the tune of Vi Vala Company)*

*I'll sing a song of the camp on the plains*

*Vi vala Company*

*A beautiful ditty a pleasant refrain*

*Vi vala Company*

*It's hydie, hydie, hydie ho*

*Vi vala Company*

*Sing you blighters, let it go*

*Vi vala Company*

*This camp's bloody awful slow*

*Vi vala Company*

*Now when you get to Waiouru*

*Vi vala Company*

*The day you were born you will jolly rue*

*Vi vala Company*

*A lousier place you can't recall*

*It makes you bloody well want to bawl*

*Miles and miles of nothing at all*

*Vi vala Company*

*The temperature is fifty below*

*Vi vala Company*

*A bloody great mountain all covered in snow*

*Vi vala Company*

*Stuff the mountain, stuff the snow*

*Stuff the lousy wind that blows*

*Stuff the whole damn bloody show*

*Vi vala Company*

*Those bloody instructors are at it again*

*Vi vala Company*

*And we're the poor blighters they're trying to train*

## **Vi vala Company**

*One says stop, one says go*

*One says yes, one says no*

*What we're to do we're stuffed if we know*

**Vi vala Company**

## **6. BAND OF THE RNZA**

Our Band has its 144th AGM on Tuesday 14th July 2009 at 8.30pm in the Band Rooms, cnr Morrin and Homestead Rds, Panmure. All are welcome to attend and encouraged to do so. [See *Muzzle Flashes* for further details]

## **7. WITH 16 FD REGT ROYAL ARTILLERY IN KOREA 1950-1951 [Final Part]**

**By The late Col Ralph K.G Porter OBE**

Little did we expect the swiftness and massive weight of the Chinese attack when it fell on 6 ROK Division at about 2230 hours, 22 April. Although intelligence reports during April had pointed to an imminent communist offensive, the enemy succeeded in complete tactical surprise.

The offensive was mounted across I and IX Corps sectors of the Eight Army front. The right flank of 6 ROK Division was pushed back in confusion. Communication with the forward regiments of the Division was lost which effectively prevented 16 Fd Regt providing any artillery support.

By 0300 hrs 23 April, 6 ROK Div had fallen back, giving up considerable territory. The guns were placed on an hour's notice to move and before long it became evident that the enemy was pressing the Division in great strength.

The command arrangements within the Division appeared to collapse and shortly we saw small groups of ROK soldiers passing through the gun area. By 0400 hrs these groups had become an almost continuous stream of demoralized soldiers.

Rather than risk the guns we withdrew down the Kapyong Valley and redeployed just SW of a village called Mukrun-ni about 6 kms north of Kapyong. We were in our new gun area by 0800 hrs, 23 April, but not for long. At 1000 hrs, IX Corps Commander ordered the regiment back up the valley to once again support 6 ROK Division, who were reported to have stabilized their position.

So, with 1MX accompanying the Regiment for protection we moved about 12 kms up the valley. The new gun area was occupied by mid afternoon. When liaison was finally established with HQ 6 ROK Div, no clear picture of the situation could be gleaned, as the HQ staff had little idea of where their units were and in any case, lacked adequate communications with them.

We provided some supporting fire using a US Army observer light aircraft, but before long the ROK units began withdrawing. The tell-tale signs of ROK soldiers running down the road appeared and clearly the Chinese had regrouped and were now pressing the forward ROK units. 27 Bde authorized the Regiment to fall back at about 1900 hrs and following the firing of harassing fire task on the main approaches to our gun area, the batteries were progressively brought back out of action. When each battery reached the road they were joined by a company of the Middlesex and, with the infantry riding on the tractors, trailers, guns and battery vehicles, we returned to the area which we had left some 8-9 hours earlier.

As we moved slowly south down the valley, in the dark our column became mixed with a stream of ROK soldiers and vehicles hurrying to the rear – complete chaos. Not far behind and probably mingling with the rear elements of this column were the forward elements of the Chinese advance guard. We deployed to the rear of HQ 3RAR and astride the road Mukun-ui – Kapyong.

About this time the Chinese assault on B Coy 3RAR began. As there had been no time to survey this position, the Regiment was restricted to observed fire for any targets close to our own troops and this was to limit the fire support we could provide that night.

Before long the enemy penetrated along the road behind B Coy position threatening HQ 3RAR and 16 Fd Regt. In the event the Chinese by-passed HQ 3RAR and set up a blocking position on the road to the south. By about 2300 hrs it was decided that the guns would have to move again and the regimental reconnaissance parties with the CO and 2IC moved off to prepare a new gun area behind 1MX at Kapyong. This would have to be surveyed at night – not any easy task.

In the meantime, with the guns at 15 minutes notice to move, 163 Bty provided close support for 3RAR, while the other two batteries engaged targets on the approaches to the Bde position. I had lost communication with my CO's Tactical HQ and the reconnaissance parties, and by about 0200 hrs I became concerned over the safety of the guns. Still unable to communicate with my CO, I decide that the two batteries not providing close fire support to 3RAR should withdraw to the new gun area.

162 Bty moved at 0245 hrs followed by 161 Bty. 163 Bty continued to answer calls for fire but when small arms fire broke out immediately in front of 163 Bty, I ordered the Bty to move at 0315 hrs. By about 0400 hrs the regiment was in action again at the new position.

During the morning 24 April we continued to provide fire support for 3RAR. With the guns

surveyed and on a regimental grid, we were able to bring the fire of all 24 guns to bear on targets in the 3RAR area. One of my problems became the re-supply of 25 pounder ammunition. The 29<sup>th</sup> Bde battle of Imjin River and our own consumption had depleted the stock of ammunition forward at the airhead at Seoul. Our transport platoon had to load directly from aircraft at Kimpo involving a turn around of some 80 miles. The ammunition was flown in from the Commonwealth Base in Japan.

Late on the afternoon of 24 April 3RAR completed a difficult withdrawal through 1MX. The weight of the Chinese attack was now switched to the Canadians who were holding the left flank of the Bde position. That night (night 24/25 April) the left companies of 2PPCLI came under heavy and sustained attack. At one stage our guns engaging a Defensive Fire (DF) task were ordered to fire continuously at rate SLOW (2 rds per gun per minute). After some 15 minutes I was constrained to halve the rate of fire to conserve ammunition. However, this slower rate could not stop the wave of assaulting Chinese, so we had to go back to rate SLOW.

It was then that the Chinese overran a Canadian position, so the BC with 2 PPCLI (Major Dinty Moor) called for a DF (defensive fire) to be fired on top of the Canadian position. During my gunnery training I had often heard of this, but it was for real that night. The fire achieved its purpose, the attackers were cleared out and the Canadians leapt out of their slit trenches unharmed to counter attack. In this action lasting about 40 minutes we fired some 2300 rounds. Altogether that night we fired about 10,000 rounds, plus additional fire from US artillery which by now had been placed under our control.

During the late afternoon of 24 April the 213<sup>th</sup> Armoured Support Battalion, the 61<sup>st</sup> Artillery Battalion and an 8in Howitzer had been moved forward. This gave us six more six gun batteries of 105mm guns and four 8in howitzers to employ on fire tasks. I thus had a total of 64 guns available. We achieved technical control by attaching a New Zealand officer with communication to each US battalion and the howitzer battery, to relay and interpret fire orders on the regimental net.

On 25 April we continued to engage the enemy but the Chinese thrust south was spent. So ended the battle of Kapyong. The Chinese thrust south had been stopped by the Australians and Canadians. 3RAR and 2PPCLI were awarded a US Presidential citation and 16 Fd Regt the Republic of Korea equivalent. At midnight on ANZAC Day 27 Commonwealth Brigade became 28 Commonwealth Brigade, shortly after 1 A7ASH and 1MX were replaced by 1KOSB and 1KSLI.

## Changing roles

Here I handed over the appointment of Adjutant to a classmate, Captain Peter Joplin and went to command 'A' Troop 161 Bty. I then enjoyed living and working in succession with the King Shropshire Light Infantry (KSLI), the King's Own Scottish Borderers (KOSB) and 3 RAR.

We did a lot of patrolling across the Imjin in June and July. The Commonwealth Division formed at the end of July, and for the remainder of August we continued to patrol across the Imjin – often in battalion strength. Our patrols were often up to 13 kms north of the river probing up to the main Chinese defensive lines in the area of Hill 233. During some of these patrols and just after the Division was formed, I was able to call for a 'divisional target' adjusting and controlling the fire of 72 guns – the first divisional target fired.

## Replacement

The New Zealand Government had earlier decided that 16 Fd Regt would not be replaced as a unit, instead personnel would be replaced progressively. A time limit was also put on regulars so that more could be rotated through the Korean theatre. My turn came at the end of August when after a short leave in Tokyo I returned to New Zealand on reposting to Fiji. I was sorry to leave but I had the satisfaction of having been part of a Regiment which after a modicum of training had become the most efficient and experience Regiment of the Commonwealth Divisional Artillery.

*The author, the late Colonel RKG Porter OBE, was a graduate of the Royal Military College, Duntroon. On the outbreak of the Korean War he was appointed Adjutant 16 Fd Regt RNZA. He was on the instructional staff of RMC 1959-62. From 1968-71, Colonel Porter was planner in the Military Planning Office, and Deputy Head Defence Staff, NZ High Commission Canberra 1976-79.*

## 8. FORWARD OBSERVER'S LAMENT (Sung to the song 16 Ton, by Tennessee Ernie Ford)

You climb up the mountain in the rain.  
You study the map and then the terrain,  
All you see is the rain and the mud,  
The radio's dead and the first round's a dud.  
You shoot 16 rounds and what do you get?  
No registration and soaking wet.  
S3, don't you call me cause I can't wait - -  
Someone stole the wire to my double E8.

You look for the RP and it's easy to see,  
1000 yards from your OP.  
You multiply one by the sensing in mils  
And the rounds come out on the distant hills.

You shoot 16 rounds and what do you get?  
No registration and soaking wet.  
S3, don't you call me cause I can't go - -  
I sold my soul to the FDO.  
My buddy takes it easy most every day - -  
They bring him pills on a sterile tray.  
His last command was "Roger, wait" - -  
Then the rounds fell in on OP 8.

He shot 16 rounds and what did he get?  
A padded cell and he lives there yet.  
A Purple Heart hangs over his head,  
And the sun shines through the hole in his head.

This is the end of the FO's song - -  
Some say a man can't go wrong,  
But they've never been on an old OP  
And suffered the mistakes of the FDC.

## 9. COURAGE AND FEAR: Lord Moran's Unique Contribution. Final Part By Sir Martin Lindsay of Downhill Bt CBE DSO.

When I was very young I thought that the wild young officer who was always in trouble would be good value in battle; but now I would opt every time for the steady, reliable type, the sort of man you would choose to be a trustee. For I learnt to agree most profoundly with Lord Moran's dictum that "*a man of character in peace is a man of courage in war*".

Of leadership Lord Moran wrote: "*all the fine things in war as in peace are the work of a few men*", and "*the honour of our race is in the keeping of but a fraction of her people*". By 1945, over the Army as a whole, that 'fraction of her people' was too thinly spread. It was always our experience that when the leaders became casualties an attack would peter out. The cause of this was primarily that so many of those with most initiative, the volunteers, had been creamed off into Airborne Forces and the Commandos.

*Anatomy of Courage* is a study of leadership, of "*the men [who] had the stuff of leadership in them, they were like rafts to which all the rest of humanity clung for support and for hope*". As a regimental Medical Officer who spent over two years in or near the trenches and lived in the battalion HO dug-out or mess, Lord Moran had had a unique opportunity of judging what motivates officers and how they wore under stress.

The greatest common denominator in the character of officers who fought was surely pride. They served in the spirit of St. Crispian's Day, with the knowledge that the point of danger was the place of honour, and it was their pride which would



have made them refuse any offer of alternative employment, and which brought them back to their units after recovering from wounds.

But I have often wondered where the latter-day private soldier drew his strength to stick it, and never found a really satisfactory answer: the youth who typically was conscripted into the Army, posted overseas after a few months training, drafted to an unfamiliar regiment and only a few days later found himself in battle. He had never heard of Henry V, his response to discipline and duty was supposedly less sure. I can but testify that in the last war he had an excellent understanding of why Britain chose to fight. But Lord Moran gave at least a partial answer when he wrote, over and over again, that a man must come from "good stock", meaning no doubt a sound home with, perhaps most important of all, a sensible upright mother.

War throws up three kinds of failure: those who try hard but cannot measure up to the challenge; those who avoid trying by deserting, but without any concurrent vicious conduct; and those who desert to commit murder, arson, theft or rape. The first class, in which there were only a few, were rightly treated with toleration, as being no worse than unsuitable material; they were sent elsewhere. The second category, the shirkers, were regarded more as a nuisance. During the last part of the last war every division always had up to fifty men awaiting court-martial for desertion; they were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, which was no great deterrent since it was well-known that they would soon be let out. Of the real criminals I have no figures, but in all national forces they were not a negligible number.

One would not dispute Lord Moran's contention that the criminals, and indeed most of the deserters, doubtlessly came from bad stock. But we regimental officers must take some blame for the failure of at least a proportion of those who were no worse than shirkers. We sent them too quickly into battle, before we had impregnated them with our own *esprit de corps* which, as Lord Moran has written, is the greatest prop to courage whether in the ship, the squadron or the regiment. Typical of his testimony in this respect is: "*Loyalty to a fine battalion may take hold of a man and stiffen his purpose,*" and "*These men had resolved to do nothing to besmirch the name of the Regiment, however fearful they might be in their hearts.*" . . . "*this was their source of strength, their abiding faith, it was the last of all the creeds that in historical times have steeled men against death.*"

I for one would confirm this view and avow that by far the greatest single factor in a soldier's morale is regimental pride, based on centuries of tradition. On D Day twenty-seven officers and five

hundred and sixty-five men of 1st Bn. The Gordon Highlanders had landed in Normandy. By the time we reached the Rhine, nine months later, we had lost sixty-seven officers and more than nine hundred men in battle. For my part I have no doubt how the battalion faced the enemy's fire sweeping across that wide, sullen river, the Rhine, on that dark night thirty years ago. We never wavered because, in the last resort, we were Gordon Highlanders, we were the Highland Division.

The fighting man will for ever be greatly in Lord Moran's debt. For he has taught us more about ourselves than we ever knew. And, perhaps more important, he may have taught the generals too!

*This article appeared in the British Army Review No 57 in December 1977*

#### **10. Lt Col NICK GILLARD, Chief of Staff, New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team, Afghanistan reports in:**

The NZ PRT 14 with its small contingent of gunners has now reached the two month mark. Needless to say we have established a good routine albeit at a high tempo.

The Afghan summer has been slow in coming and we are still experiencing heavy rain storms in mid June. This is often a double edged sword. Very positive in that the wheat crop is the best in 20 years and water storage as at its capacity. Therefore there will be no drought or food shortages this summer. Conversely the rains bring floods that have a devastating effect on the Afghans and it remains difficult for us to deploy throughout the AO.

The NZPRT works within the construct of three lines of operation: security, development and governance. These are underpinned by consent and force protection. The consent of the people of Bamyán remains a critical factor in a counter insurgency campaign that all ISAF forces in Afghanistan are conducting.

The PRT has continued its patrol forward campaign with the bulk of soldiers living in the AO with the local population.

The Liaison Officers are the key asset in these organisations. WO1 Bushy McLean fills this role in the west of the AO. In Afghanistan the length and colour of your beard is an indication of wisdom. Bushy's beard is suitably long and grey so he is considered a wise old man indeed.

The LO's provide that vital link between the district and village (shura) leadership and the PRT. They have become experts at providing guidance on how to apply for funding for projects and conducting quality control of those projects under

construction.

They do this in conjunction with the provision of security patrols and the training of the local police. A far cry from being the RSM of 16 Field Regiment.

My role as Chief of Staff (COS) is not different from being the CO of the regiment. Our Senior National Officer (SNO) has responsibilities throughout the country and overall command of each of the missions in theatre.

The COS essentially commands the New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team (NZ PRT). With a multi national staff of over 200 military and civilian personnel, and a significant operating budget there are many parallels.

The usual command issues are evident from operational and logistical planning to career management and discipline. Time as CO has prepared me well for this new role.

Gunner's Day 2009 was a relatively quiet affair with only three serving and one ex gunner (now a sapper of all things!) on the establishment. Despite that we ensured that our infantry friends were made well aware of what day it was. I hope that your Gunner's Day was an enjoyable one.

There is a distinct feeling over here that not many people in New Zealand are aware of the role of the NZ PRT in Afghanistan and it seems that those who do believe that we are on a peace keeping mission.

The term Provincial Reconstruction Team can be misleading. We not building schools etc. Rather we are facilitating Afghans the ability to rebuild their own nation via security, governance and development.

We encourage an Afghan solution rather than any alternative offered by insurgent groups. Be they criminal or ideological. Therefore by definition we are involved in a counter insurgency campaign rather than monitoring and separating belligerent parties (the definition of peace keeping or peace enforcement).

As with any counter insurgency campaign it is about winning over the people and denying the insurgent the ability to influence or coerce. Therefore it is my request to you to let people know what it is that NZ troops are doing in Afghanistan.

In the strongest traditions of our predecessors the average kiwi soldier is a professional capable of adapting to any task. He / she enjoys the physical and mental challenges of an operational environment.

We miss our families but are determined to get the job done. Nothing has changed from those who proceeded us.

I look forward to updating you again in the future.

*Nick Gillard*

## **11. BLOODIEST CLASH OF VIETNAM WAR FOR ANZAC SOLDIERS [The EVENING POST 20/8/66]**

**From Richard Long, NZPA Special Correspondent in South Vietnam**

PHOU C TUY PROVINCE, Aug 19.1966 - Australian soldiers today counted 205 dead Vietcong in a battle lashed rubber plantation in Phouc Tuy Province, where last night they fought their biggest battle since the Korean War.

Kiwi gunners were directly supporting the infantry in the fierce clash. Australian casualties were 17 killed and 29 wounded. Three outnumbered platoons of Australian riflemen, about 120 men, fought back while being raked by a hail of fire. They were pinned down by a Vietcong force estimated to contain nearly 800 men making a sweep through country east of the Australian Task Force area.

The company had only "a handful" of ammunition when relief arrived. The New Zealand forward artillery officer with the Australian unit, Captain M.D. Stanley (Auckland) called in the artillery fire from every gun in the Task Force. Artillery fire together with air strikes from Super Sabre and Phantom jets dropping high explosive bombs as well as rockets and napalm hit the Vietcong positions.

The Australian Delta Company of Sixth R.A. R. were pinned down for three hours and were nearly completely surrounded from all directions except their right rear. Australian headquarters immediately sent in a reinforcement company by armoured personnel carriers and this ran into another unit of the Vietcong force trying to close Delta Company's one avenue of escape.

The carriers attacked with their 50 calibre machine guns, killing 25 of the enemy. The rifle company deployed after the withdrawing enemy force and killed several more in a running fight through the rubber plantation. A fierce tropical storm hit the area as the battle developed and the infantry units crouched as long as they could in mud as they were down to their last few bullets when R.A.A.F. helicopters swooped low over the treetops and dropped ammunition supplies directly into their positions.

Captain Stanley had to call artillery fire practically all round Delta Company's position. Kiwi gunners were working in mud pools as they continued to pour in fire when the heaviest tropical storm of the monsoon season hit the area.

Two New Zealanders were knocked over by lightning. Gunner Ken Deacon (Inglewood) [See Last Post] was dazed and thrown several yards while manning the Kiwi switchboard. He was treated by the battery medic and recovered a few minutes later. Staff

Sergeant Steve Day was knocked over by lightning while standing on a steel mesh plate. He was also dazed for some time.

The task force artillery pounded 3000 rounds into the battle area. At times when it appeared that Vietcong were about to try an assault, Captain Stanley ordered by radio "just keep them coming" to provide a curtain of fire between the Australians and the encircling enemy force. When the badly hurt Vietcong force began to withdraw after dark the fire was continued on their suspected escape routes. Australian officers said the well equipped enemy force appeared to be the same one which mortared the task force a few nights previously. The enemy were well equipped with mortars. 50 calibre machine-guns, recoilless rifles, automatic weapons and grenade launchers. They were well supplied with ammunition as they kept up what Brigadier O. D. Jackson describes as a massive fire fight.

The Brigadier, Commander of the 1st Australian Task Force, said it was obvious the Vietcong "had been out to get the" Australians.

## 11. GUNFIRE AT LONG TAN: The FO's Story

By Maj M.D. (Morrie) Stanley, M.B.E.  
This article was 1st published in the RAR Assn magazine "Duty 1st" in 1994.

Until May 1966 1RAR, 105 Bty RAA and my unit 161 Bty, RNZA were attached to the U.S. 173D Airborne Brigade at Bien Hoa. In May/June 1966 5RAR and 6RAR arrived in the theatre to establish the 1 Australian Task Force Area at NUI DAT in Phouc Tuy Province.

As 161 Bty was to be in direct support of 6RAR, I was assigned as FO to D Coy from the time 6RAR assembled on the beach at Vung Tau. The sojourn on the beach ended when we occupied the base at Nui Dat. From then on my two radio operators and I, the three Kiwi gunners, shared the heat and mud with D Coy. We had D Coy laundry numbers and were involved in all of their activities. By August 1966 our party was virtually part of the establishment.

The circumstances preceding the battle of Long Tan, the course of it, and the outcome, are now fairly well known. Indeed, many of us know more about the battle now than we did at the time. This, then, is my recollection of experiences as D Coy's FO at Long Tan.

I can recall on the morning of the 18th of August, getting ready to go on a patrol with D Coy. We assembled near the perimeter of the Task Force and walked out into the tactical area. The mission was to relieve a much smaller patrol from B Coy

which had been out for some time searching for a VC mortar base plate position from which an attack had been launched on the Task Force base.

The movement to the rendezvous with the B Coy patrol was uneventful and simply done, as was the hand over of information between the two patrols.

When we arrived at the rendezvous I spoke with the FO who was with the B Coy patrol, Captain Pat Murphy, another New Zealander. He briefed me on the situation as he understood it, he explained where we were, about the track system and the understanding of the next line of movement that might be followed and then we had a very comfortable lunch.

After that Maj Harry Smith, the Company Commander, decided on the method of advance with his platoons. It was my role to stay with the Company Commander all the time, no matter where he went I was to stay with him, so that I could provide any advice or support that he wanted. I needed to know how he was manoeuvring his platoons. I also needed to know our location, what direction the platoons were and how far away they were from me.

The initial contact began with the chatter of small arms fire. It was quite exciting and was regarded as something to be expected, although not something which D Coy had often come across.

At that time Company Headquarters was not directly involved in the contact at the front from where the sound of rifle and machine gun fire was coming. I was keen and enthusiastic to apply gun fire into the area where I knew that it would be useful. However, at that time we received VC mortar fire from the south generally and into the area where Company Headquarters was waiting. Harry Smith decided that we would move away from that place very quickly. He did not need to emphasise any orders on that occasion; we simply moved. It was obvious to us that the enemy was not observing that fire because it became ineffective.

After that, Harry Smith appreciated that 11 Platoon, which was in contact, was getting into trouble. I could hear the voices on the company command net and knew that Harry Smith was trying to have 10 Platoon assist 11 Platoon. That was not totally successful.

There came a time when neither Harry Smith nor I could perform our role while we were moving and, if we could not perform our functions, then the platoons would be in greater trouble. So it was decided to stop and establish some firm ground with one of the platoons. It was in that place .....

**To be continued in the next issue of The NZ Gunner**

## *Behind the Lines: The Editor's Page*

*Patron* Col (Rtd) Donal R KENNING MBE 06 358 2849  
*Colonel Commandant* Brig (Rtd) Graham BIRCH MBE 07 548 1193

The Patron and Colonel Commandant are, *ex officio*, members of the Committee

*President* Frank HOPKINSON 09 446 0944

*Secretary/Treasurer* Mike DAKIN 09 475 5227  
37a Palliser Lane 021 078 5850  
Browns Bay RNZA.Association@gmail.com  
NORTH SHORE CITY 0630

*Committee* Barry DREYER (VP)  
Kelvin 'Spike' JONES  
Joe PANOHO  
Bill STEWART  
Alan TAYLOR  
Jeff WATERS

*Committee Members at Large* Graeme BLACK  
Bob KERSLAKE  
John MASTERS  
Brian Jerry MEYER (Australia)  
Paul O'CONNOR

*The NZ Gunner Editor* Marie ROBERTS 07 348 4659  
PO Box 5118 Fax 07 348 4639  
ROTORUA WEST 3044 dgroberts@xtra.co.nz

*Webmasters* Angus RIVERS arivers@riv.co.nz  
Catherine RIVERS crivers@riv.co.nz

*Website* [riv.co.nz/rnza/](http://riv.co.nz/rnza/) *Blog* *Muzzle Flashes* [kiwigunners.blogspot.com](http://kiwigunners.blogspot.com)

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**Input into *The New Zealand Gunner*:** Short stories, especially with accompanying photographs are always welcome for inclusion. The Editor's email address is [dgroberts@xtra.co.nz](mailto:dgroberts@xtra.co.nz)

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