



The New Zealand Gunner

Official Journal of

The Royal New Zealand Artillery Association (Inc)

Founded 1934

Issue # 143

September 2009

'Now is the Time for all Good Gunners to come to the Party'

Yes, our 75th Anniversary reunion is shaping up to be outstanding – but only if *you* turn out for it!

It's easy to register. Return the form (*below*) or go online to *Muzzle Flashes* – today.

Your committee is preparing to give you, your partner and mates a great time.

You will be welcomed at East Coast Bays RSA, Browns Bay, Friday afternoon 30 October, then enjoy the mix-&-mingle (light music in the background) and buffet meal.

On Saturday morning 31 October we visit *Passchendaele: The Belgians have not forgotten*.

This exhibition by the Passchendaele Memorial Museum features photos, movies, music, information and artefacts from the battle fought 92 years ago.

It follows the journey of New

Zealand soldiers from Gallipoli through Flanders to Passchendaele, highlighting the memories that live on in Belgium today.

At leisure in the afternoon; bring your golf clubs if you want to play around.

Saturday night, we have our semi-formal dining-in, with music from the Band of the Royal Regiment, and table service by members of the City of North Shore Cadet Unit. (Before that, of course, you'll want to take tickets in our raffle, drawn right after dinner).

On Sunday, 0830hrs, we march a short distance from the RSA

to the beachfront memorial. 11/4 Battery joins us, two Light Guns in tow, with the Band setting the pace.

During the Memorial Service, a Minute Gun fires to mark the minute of silence.

After morning tea with our serving gunners and Band, there's the AGM, ending at about 1100hrs.

VERY IMPORTANT
See over for Notice of Annual General Meeting and Election of Officers and Executive Committee, 2009

[Newsletter Index on page 11]

Registration for 75th Anniversary Reunion and AGM

Your initials & name: _____ Name for label: _____

I will be accompanied by: _____ Name for label: _____

Address for mail/email: _____

Please get me *from* the Airport _____ hrs Thu, Fri or Sat/ Please get me *to* the Airport by _____ hrs Sunday

I have arranged accommodation at (*Please state, if public*): _____ Phone: _____

I require transport to all events: [YES] [NO] I am able to transport visitors to events: []

Due with registration: \$80 *per person*. I have [*enclosed*] [*paid on-line*] a total of \$ _____

Notes

- If you are unable to be at the buffet on **Friday** night, *deduct \$20.00*
- Mail: RNZA Association Reunion 37a Palliser Lane Browns Bay **North Shore 0630**
- Internet Banking : The RNZA Assn Inc Account # 38 9007 0694501 00 (make sure you are identified as the payer).

1. NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Royal New Zealand Artillery Association (Inc) , East Coast Bays RSA, Bute Road, Browns Bay, North Shore City
Sunday, 1 November 2009.

Agenda

- President's report
- Presentation of accounts
- Election of President, Secretary and Treasurer
- Election of Executive Committee
- General business

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 2009

The affairs of the Association are administered by the Executive Committee elected at the AGM:

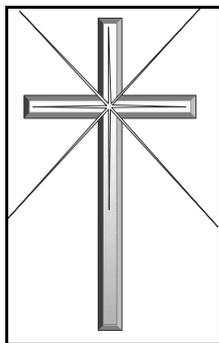
- President;
- Vice President [*elected by the Executive Committee*];
- Treasurer;
- Secretary; and
- Up to six members

See the back page for a list of current committee members

The Committee, at its meeting on 27 August, recorded its concern at the rising average age of its members. The age range is 64-83 years, with an average close to 70 years. Health of some members is also a concern.

The Committee recommends that younger members come forward now to ensure continuity and familiarity with the Association's affairs. Nominations are accepted at the AGM.

Note: Mike Dakin is not available for re-election as Secretary/Treasurer, but is available for the Committee.



2. LAST POST

The Committee is not aware of the passing of any of our members between July and August 2009.



3. NEW MEMBERS

BOTICA, John F. JB served the guns between 197/1974 (RF) and 1974/1976 (TF). He was

posted to 161 Bty and 22(D) Bty. Since leaving the Army JB has had a variety of jobs including spending time in Australia and Tonga. Currently he and Reena reside in Auckland.

BOYD, Archie Altona. Pipi Served with the RNZ Navy between 1943 and 1957, then he joined the NZ Army from 1961 to 1969, serving with the corp of RNZ Sigs. Pita served the guns with 161 Bty in Vietnam in 1966 as the Tpt NCO. On leaving the Army he working as a teacher and has spent time overseas in South Africa and Norfolk Island. Pipi lives in Blenheim.

HOLTHAM, Arthur James. Jim (Red in Korea) served in the Army twice, 1946 to 1948 with J Force and between 1950 and 1952 with the guns (162 Bty) in Korea .He was the driver for the Bty Captains of vehicle K1. On leaving the Army Jim worked on a number of power projects here and in Australia. He and Lorraine live in Palmerston North.

FOLEY, Norman Edward. Little Barbed Wire joined the Army in 1965 as a RF Cadet, on graduating

he was posted to the School of Military Engineering and into the Corp of Engineers. He remained in the Army until 1985. Little Barbed Wire served the guns with 161 Bty in Vietnam in 1968 as a Fd Engineer. He and Irene live in Oamaru.

NATHAN, Richard Alfred. Rick was in the NZ Army between 1966 and 1986, serving the guns from 1966 to 1968 including a tour with 161 Bty to Vietnam (67/68) on Echo Gun. He then joined the infantry (RNZIR). He played softball for the Army and Combined Services. He currently plays golf and has a handicap of 15. Post Army he has worked in the building industry, including working on the Springhill Prison. He and Janet currently live in Te Kauwhata.

PITA, Te Ra. Ray served the guns between 1965 and 1975 (TF) with 1 Loc Tp. He tells of being detailed on one exercise to dig the toilet hole so he dug the deepest and biggest hole he could and it was used instead as the Command Post for 1 Loc Tp. Ray and Edith live on the North Shore,

4. LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

⇒ Parts for a L5 Wanted

Just a quick note to ask the membership again for help in the

restoration on an L5 Pack Howitzer that followed me home, and befriended my Jeeps. The old girl is missing many parts so if any Old Gunners know where any L5 components can be obtained (Short of robbing an RSA Gate Guard) please contact me. Also any associated gun stores and equipment found on the gun position that may have been liberated as a souvenir and now surplus to your requirements are required to complete the display of the L5 as seen in use by 161 in South Vietnam. I can be contacted on

0274-512-068

or e-mail worldwar2jeep@orcon.net.nz

I must admit it is wonderful fun getting to know the L5 again after so many years, and even though it's been 20 or so years since 16 Fd ceased using them, it's all come flooding back as if I had been stripping and assembling them the whole time except that now it all seems heavier.

Regards Colin Jansen

⇒ **AIR OP HISTORY – Now is the Time**

From the early 50s until late 70s a number of NZ Army officers trained as light aircraft and helicopter pilots. In the mid 60s a unit called the Light Aircraft Flight was established (as part of 3 BSS, RNZAF). The only reference to this rather unique band of aviators is a very short paragraph on AOP pilots in the history of the RNZA.

Unless something is done now this rather special bit of NZ Army's history will be lost so I am trying to construct a roll of pilots (and the ground crew who supported them) as a first step to writing a brief history.

So, to any former pilots or ground crew out there: please email me your name, regimental number and dates you were posted to flying duties and, if appropriate, your attachment to 1 Light Aircraft Flight. If you can, please add the names of others who served with you (and their contact details if you have them). If you have any photos or other material you think might help please mail it to me at: 47 Simla Crescent, Khandallah, Wellington, 6035.

My email address is rojann@paradise.net.nz - Telephone: 04 970 2113.

This is a first step. Having a list of names I'll be in touch to ferret out any anecdotes that could add interest.

Thanks, Roger Pearce

5. HISTORY OF THE RNZA ASSOCIATION

The first meeting of this association of gunners was on 10 June 1934 in Devonport, in the Masonic Hall. The original title, the Past and Present New Zealand Artillery Association reflected the desire to form an association of serving and recently released gunners. There was a need for organised welfare for those who were not already provided for as WW1 veterans. There were also a significant number of policemen who had previous Armed Constabulary service but were no longer in the Armed Forces.

Within a month the Defence Officials' opposition to serving men being part of an organisation led by ex-servicemen, the meeting on 18 July 1934 saw a name change to the New Zealand Permanent Force Old Comrades Association. As many of

hostilities because there was no Social Welfare on which to retire as we do today. The NZPFOCA continued to gather ex-regular gunners during and after the Second World War and published regular newsletters to spread the word and promulgate the proceedings of their meetings.

In 1948 the three branches of the army were abolished and reformed as seventeen functional Corps, one of which was the Regiment of New Zealand Artillery. The association was incorporated in this year. The referendum of 1949 was followed by an expansion of the regular elements to cope with the influx of Compulsory Military Trainees under the Army Act 1950. This was also the first time that the term The New Zealand Army was used officially. The resulting artillery units within the Divisional organisation provided the NZPFOCA with a huge pool of potential members. The Army Act 1950 set service engagements at 20



Attendees at one of the many AGM's held

the ex-servicemen at the meeting had also been in Permanent Forces and Armed Constabulary this name was chosen to include as many as possible. The emphasis was still on those who needed help in the depression so that fund raising and welfare distribution were the Association's main activities.

Old Comrades was a British term for past comrades in arms. It was used to emphasise the bond of service amongst those who were released from service at the end of

years with extensions beyond retiring age for rank in most senior NCO brackets. Welfare was now rarely required and although a generation of members was created by the support of CMT [1950 to 1958] and National Service [1962 to 1972], regular service remained a prerequisite to membership. Camaraderie continued to be the focus of meetings.

Many members still had WW2 service but that predominance began to change with the addition of short service Vietnam War veterans, 1965 to 1972. Besides the political

moves, the 1960's had seen many changes in conditions of service including shorter contracts. By the mid 1970's TFV units were at very low manning and gradual reduction of artillery units led to a number of changes including female recruits to both RF and TF. The exception was 4 (G) Medium Battery with more gunners at Annual Camp in 1974 than the total TF component of 16 Field Regiment. That year 4 Mdm Bty had also attested the first women into the TF and began training the Gunners (W) as signallers. One of the originals was subsequently commissioned.

From the demise of the office of Director Royal New Zealand Artillery in 1990 the NZPFOCA newsletter became the only source of periodic Regimental news for non serving gunners. Add wide changes in society to the usual military reorganisations and by the turn of the century it was clear that the Association also needed to change. Numbers were dropping and some Old Comrades had been part of the Association longer than they had been in the service of the guns. Old took on a new meaning so at the AGM in November 2003 the name of the Association was changed to Royal New Zealand Artillery Comrades Association. Membership was extended to all ex gunners and to the personnel who had been attached to RNZA units, in recognition of the mixed nature of post war unit establishments. This included non regular personnel such as Territorial gunners who were also admitted for the first time.

At the AGM on 3 Nov 2007 the name again changed to *The Royal New Zealand Artillery Association (Incorporated)* in the expressed hope of attracting more serving gunners now that Regimental manning is low both in territorial and regular units. So the intent of the original group of gunners has been fulfilled and the RNZA Association is now a focus for all serving and non-serving gunners.

Article supplied by Kerry Lee.

6. 75th ANNIVERSARY REUNION GREETINGS

My greetings to you all and best wishes for an enjoyable reunion in Auckland next month. I hope to see a lot of familiar faces there.

About 1971/72 when I was DRNZA I was asked to a meeting of The Old Comrades' Association in Taupo. I asked the WO1 RNZA who were the Old Comrades - his reply "Gunner Mafia run by retired Warrant Officers". Since that time we have seen many changes and a new name for the organisation, The RNZA Association. We have come a long way from those early days and I trust that the organisation will go from strength to strength. Remember - once a Gunner always a Gunner.

Regards, Don Kenning, Patron

Congratulations to our Association on achieving this milestone anniversary. The past 75 years have been ones of continuity and evolution.

What started out as an association of ex-servicemen drawn from the Armed Constabulary Field Force, the Torpedo Corps, the Submarine Mining Corps and the RNZA Permanent Force, primarily with a welfare focus, (the Great Depression was at its height) has evolved into a much wider membership base encompassing all gunners and attached personnel; serving and retired, regular, emergency force and territorial.

With this has come the name-change to the much more inclusive RNZA Association. Interestingly the Association has also moved back into the welfare field through its linking up with the RNZRSA, and its recent initiating of submissions on members concerns to relevant government agencies.

What has not changed has been the Association's Newsletter, published occasionally since 1934 and regularly since 1968. We have

been most fortunate in having had a most dedicated, proficient and enthusiastic set of editors over the years.

I thank them all for the long hours of voluntary work they have put in to producing such fine publications that keep us in touch with our mates as well as covering historical matters, updating us on what the serving Regiment is up to, and general Association matters.

In addition to the newsletter we have the splendid website mastered by Catherine and Angus Rivers and the more recent blog site, *Muzzle Flashes*, coordinated by Mike Dakin. These methods of communication breathe new life into our Association and go a long way to maintaining its relevancy.

A grateful acknowledgement also goes to our Committees, past and present, for their ensuring the well being of the Association. Without their efforts over the past 75 years we would not have survived as we are today. To our Presidents, Secretaries, Treasurers, Committee Members and Regional Representatives over the years, a great big thank you and very well done.

I look forward to catching up with many of you at our Anniversary Reunion at Browns Bay later this year, and joining you in celebrating this occasion.

Quo fas et gloria ducunt

Graham Birch, Brigadier (Rtd)

Colonel Commandant RNZA

I wonder how many of the 30 people who attended that inaugural meeting in Devonport on 10th July 1934 to form the 'Past and Present RNZA Association,' (later changed to 'The New Zealand Permanent Force Old Comrades Association'.)

ever thought that a later President would be sending greetings and that a 75th Reunion would be held. Even more significant is the fact that 149 members attended the first reunion

later that year, especially as ladies did not attend until the early 1970's.

How many of you readers are planning to attend this year?

Your Committee continues to struggle to recruit new members, and although 24 have joined us 10 others have gone to God's Gun Park. Even more of concern is the fact that we only have approximately 7 serving members with none joining us this year. Only 1 of your committee is under 65!

Please put your thinking caps on how we can remedy this problem so that the President in 2034 (NOT ME) will be wishing our successors 100th Birthday Greetings.

I look forward to meeting you all again at the reunion but please remember to excuse my poor memory for names.

Frank Hopkinson, President

7. GUNFIRE AT LONG TAN: The FO's Story (Part 2 of 2)

It was in that place where the wounded and members of the other platoons were gathered to establish a company defended area. My most intense recollections are of that final position.

Soon after initial contact, Harry Smith and I agreed on the grid reference of our location and he requested fire support. Battery Fire Missions were

fired at some distance from the known position of 11 Platoon. Later, I upgraded the fire to Regimental Fire Missions when the situation had deteriorated and there were obviously large numbers of VC confronting us. At the time my response was instinctive and not based on firm information about the

size or location of the enemy force.

The rain started late in the day as usual, but soon developed into a tremendous storm. This deluge and the fact that our final position was on a slight reverse slope were two factors in our favour. Rain and the intense gunfire caused this area to be shrouded in smoke, steam and fog.

This helped me because my judgement of distance was assisted by the observation (or lack of it) of flash against this screen and the enemy were silhouetted, as were our own troops.

I realised how important it was that my communications remained effective and that the guns were able to maintain the constant and accurate fire that they were called upon to produce. I needed the comfort of knowing that my Battery Commander (Harry Honnor), an experienced gunner, was on the end of a radio, and could provide constant support for me. On one occasion I actually reported on that net that the situation was too

remained effective. Although we could not hear all messages, all our transmissions were heard at Nui Dat. My operator, Willie Walker, was able to keep the set operational

under the most trying conditions

until the battery collapsed at the end of the battle. He seemed to be concerned only with the radio and I with my map.

I wondered whether the fire which was called down was an over-violent reaction to the situation because there was no way of knowing the total size of the enemy force at the time. I had seen several groups 20 to 50 strong moving about between the rubber trees. I have since found out and now believe that the fire was justified. 108 men of D Coy had engaged about 1500 VC.

I have been asked how I was able to direct the fire. It was essential that I knew my location, and that I knew the direction of the platoons and roughly how far away they were. I tried to have my map

oriented with the north point on the map facing north, then I looked towards the noise of contact and small arm fire. That was the only way I had at that time of determining the grid reference at which to open fire on. It was difficult to tell the distance the leading troops were from me, so the safety factor was that fire was opened some considerable

distance, even up to 1,000 metres, away from where we were. Adjustments were made to move the gun fire closer. On one occasion I was told on the company net that it was too close. I actually screamed a number of times over the radio net the word "stop". This was because I could not hear many of the acknowledgements from the



Loading a L5 into an APC.

confused to use the guns and it was Harry who suggested I engage another grid reference and adjust the fire from that position. That stabilised me at the time.

Fortunately my radio communications on the artillery net

gun area when transmitting fire orders. Normally the artillery observers will give fire orders and will receive the acknowledgement. When I screamed "stop", the guns had to stop and they did. Another

occasion when the guns had to stop and they were stopped for me, was when a helicopter was despatched to resupply small arms ammunition into the company area.

Sergeant Bob Buick took command of 11 Platoon after his platoon commander was killed. When he requested artillery fire on his own position I spoke with him directly on the company radio net. He had apparently assessed that with about 10 men left out of 28, they could not survive more than another 10-15 minutes.

Even though he insisted, I declined. He advised me later that the fall on shot continued to be 50-100 metres from him and amongst the VC.

Everyone in the company was running short of small arms ammunition. I had some for the Armalite and Willie had some, but we did not have a particular use for it. We were too busy. Jack Kirby, a very fine Company Sergeant-Major, came to me and said, "Excuse me, Sir, have you any spare ammunition?" I could not understand why he should act in such a polite way. I told him to help himself from my pack and he did that. He said, "I am leaving you one magazine". He also left Willie Walker with one.

In the later stages of the battle when we were all in this base of ours with the wounded, members of the platoons had joined us, and there were far more people around in the Company Headquarters area. But it was at that time there were two incidents, one which impressed, and one which worried me.

Most of the men were young, of the age 20 or so. One man I heard saying "steady, aim, fire". I think that was an example of what makes a soldier tick. After thorough training and even under stress he

knew what was required and that is how he did it.

It was just at that time, in fact just after Jack Kirby had collected ammunition, that I was very concerned because the VC had started attacking from a different direction. I ordered the removal on one battery from the Regimental Fire Mission and applied it in that area. Jack Kirby saw it as well and we were very worried that we were going to be done. It did not deter Jack, he just went around collecting ammunition and distributing it.

The arrival of the relief force seemed to signal the end of the battle and, later Harry Honnor



suggested that harassing fire in depth continue throughout the night.

When the battlefield was cleared the next morning an eerie silence pervaded a scene of utmost devastation. The men may have been mentally and physically exhausted after their ordeal but they continued their duties at Long Tan until it was time to return to the Task Force base at Nui Dat.

A Digger from D Coy later recalled: "It got to the stage where we all thought that there was no way we could get out of there. The only help we seemed to get was from the artillery. Every time the enemy troops got close to us it seemed that a salvo of artillery would land amongst them, just in time. We didn't have all that much ammunition anyway, and we were using our fire properly and not

wasting it. When they did build up and move in quickly it was always the artillery that kept them out of our way."

I am proud to have been with D Company 6RAR on that day.

**Article written by Maj M.D.
(Morrie) Stanley, MBE.**

8. Lt Col NICK GILLARD, COS NZ Provincial Reconstruction Team, Afghanistan reports in:

At the time of writing the the 14th rotation of the NZPRT has reached the five month mark of the deployment. From an operational perspective we have successfully completed the security Conops for the Afghan Presidential and Provincial Council elections held 20 August. We did experience several security incidents including small arms and RPG attacks however in relation to other provinces ours was a relatively quiet day.

Our Conops was conducted in co-operation with the Afghan National Army (ANA), Afghan National Police (ANP), National Directorate of Security (NDS) and the Independent Election Commission (IEC). These Afghan agencies had the lead for security and we provided planning advice, outer cordon security and basic logistic support. The result of the election remains in the balance given the need to finish counting ballots and investigating claims of electoral fraud. A Presidential Run-Off remains an option and we are postured to support this. We have had our rehearsal. Unfortunately so have the insurgents!

Autumn has arrived literally overnight. Here in the Hindu Kush (2600m of elevation) day time temperatures have dropped from over 30 degree's to 20 degree's on average. It is getting close to zero at night. The first snows are probably only a month away. It certainly is a land of extremes. The wind blows a

lot so its often like being in Linton!

WO1 Bushy McLean remains deployed in Yakawlang District as the LO. He now has the nick name of the Mayor of Nayak (the district centre). His enthusiasm and passion for improving the lives of the people there is evident. His beard is suitably wise looking with lots of grey showing through. With the Afghan association of beard length to wisdom he has fitted in well. For those of you who are unaware he has recently been selected to be the next Formation RSM at 2 LFG in Linton.

Given likely RTNZ dates this will be my last post from Bamyan. I have enjoyed sharing some of our experiences with you. It has been my pleasure to work with a vast array of service personnel on this mission. I have even enjoyed working with the infantry again. Our Prime Minister has just announced a further commitment of 3-5 years for the PRT in Bamyan. There is no doubt its size and composition will change. The provision of security remains paramount but the scope to include civilian and military specialists in such diverse areas as agriculture, law, education etc is how Afghanistan will grow. We have helped create the environment to build a lot of schools, health clinics, government buildings and police stations now we have to help fill them with the right staff.

For example, we now have attached to the PRT a US MP Platoon. These soldiers specialise in training the ANP in such diverse areas as rules of engagement to traffic duties. A mixture of community policing and para military skills will provide the basis of increasing ANP competence. With that will come the trust of the people of Bamyan that their police force is capable and credible.

On RTNZ I am posted to London as one of our military advisors. It is a three year posting that my wife says she fully deserves! I will look forward to reading the NZ Gunner whenever it is published

Nick Gillard

9. U-BOAT FAR FROM HOME – The epic voyage of U862 to Australia and New Zealand. (Part 1 of 2) by David Stevens

In late 1944, with its U-boats defeated in the Atlantic the German Navy sought new areas in which to deploy – distant waters where defences might be weaker and successes easier to achieve. Australia was on such location. U-boat Far From Home reveals for the first time the full extent of the German plan for an underwater offensive against the southern continent. In an account that is both entertaining and enlightening, David Stevens describes the operation's strategic rationale, its practical implementation and how the Australians and other allies responded. Of all the U-boats allocated to the mission, U862 was the only one that survived.

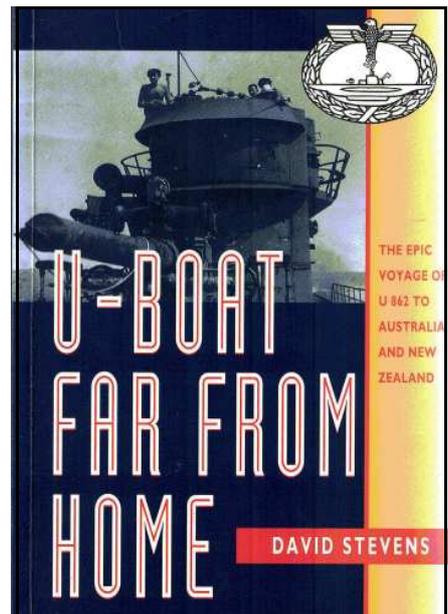
David Stevens is a former naval officer who served for twenty years in the Royal Australian Navy. On retiring from the RAN in 1994, he was appointed Director of Naval Historical Studies within the Department of Defence (Navy).

The following is an extract taken from the above book that relates directly the time the U-boat was in New Zealand waters.

“The boat is proceeding with difficulty in the rough sea. Lunch is a catastrophe; in the gallery the pots hop around and just at the moment the *Kommandant* wishes us a “Happy New Year” on the loudspeaker, the last pot of vanilla sauce overturns. Here’s to the New Year! We dive and have a small celebration in the forward compartment, where for the first time we formally light the Christmas tree.

For the next week *U862* struggled on through poor visibility and heavy seas. Finally the weather began to clear and on 6 January 1945 those on the bridge basked in

their first early morning sunlight for several weeks. They remained on the surface until thick cloud cover reappeared and the danger of surprise attack from the air drove them down again. On 7th January 1945 the U-boat rounded the tip of New Zealand’s North Island and headed southeast to follow the shipping route. *Reiffenstuhl* made sure that the torpedo mechanics checked the remaining torpedoes thoroughly, for ‘for it may be that we will need them in the next few



days’. For a change the sea was mirror-smooth and while the weather remained calm Timm patrolled some 40 miles from North Cape, using the lighthouse to fix their position. The crew listened intently for any sign of the expected traffic. Detecting nothing they moved closer to the coast and 10 January 1945 were presented with their next opportunity to strike.

We are close to the shore in the approaches to Auckland. At night the Cape Brett Light is a good and continuing navigational aid. Again a very dark night, wind from the east which becomes stronger at midnight. Nothing to hear, nothing to see. One hour later the hydrophones detect an engine noise. Surfaced and looked out - it is a medium size steamship which is running parallel to the coast. Heavy squalls, it is very hard to see it. We

have positioned ourselves out of sight of the steamship and then lost him again. Either we have either miscalculated, or the steamship is only part of the coastal traffic and has gone into a small harbour north of Cape Brett. Still, we dive ahead of the calculated interception point; however nothing found. There is a strong westerly and because of this we approach to within 8nm of the mainland.

Timm positioned the U-boat off Cape Brett Light again briefly waited for the next passing steamship. But still nothing came, so he moved further south. By the evening of 11 January 1945 they were travelling close to an unfamiliar coast dotted with several small islands. It was a perfectly dark night, and the sky remained overcast, preventing a fix of position. Heavy rain squalls made matters worse, at times reducing visibility to less than a metre. As dawn approached, *Reiffenstuhl* was horrified to see land directly ahead of the U-boat and only a mile away. It had been a close brush with disaster, and the continuing lack of targets only added to Timm's problems. Perhaps intending to play on words, *Reiffenstuhl* wrote that night in his journal that it was 'the morale of the crew that had sunk'.

Timm discussed the situation with his officers. They had two apparent options. The first would be to go back north, continue on past New Guinea, and attempt to intercept Allied traffic from Australia to the Philippines theatre before taking the U-boat on to Japan. The second option was to continue south, rounding New Zealand's South Island before making a further raid on the Sydney area and returning to Java. This last proposal was closer to the plans discussed before their departure and Timm decided to stick with it, since fuel and above all provisions were already short.

During the day *U862* skirted submerged along the edge of Great Barrier Island and crossed the Bay of Plenty that night. By the

early morning of 13 January the Germans had reached a position of East Cape. Here at last they found another target. It was a medium-sized vessel heading southeast along the coast and Timm tried hard to manoeuvre into an attack position before dawn. He failed. His orders prohibited him from making an attack close to an enemy coast if there was any risk of being seen from land.

After nine weeks at sea excessive caution had allowed yet another steamship to escape. Soon, however, Timm would demonstrate a more reckless side to his character. On 15 January 1945, with no sighting of defensive patrols and with New Zealand merchant traffic seemingly unwilling to come from the coast, he decided to take his U-boat as close as he could to the town of Gisborne. *Reiffenstuhl* recorded that their excursion was simply to see whether any ships were at anchor or alongside, but it is easy to believe that Timm also intended a display of bravado to impress his weary crew. Gisborne's port is shallow, and larger ships must be unloaded with tenders in the bay outside. Whether Timm had visited the harbour during his time in the merchant navy is unknown, but a submerged approach in daylight would still require careful manoeuvring:

The navigation is indeed a matter of groping about, since we only have a little water under the keel. During the day you can see, through the periscope, people walking down the street. A man makes a fire on the beach. At dusk we are outside the harbour entrance, nothing is to be seen, the night is again very dark. Surfaced and charged the batteries outside the harbour. Went into the harbour. The docks were brightly illuminated, behind them a large factory.

You can see the cars with their headlights driving along the streets. The street lighting itself is also very bright, we are blinded by them. The houses are all brightly illuminated, it looks to us like

Christmas. Our hopes however are not fulfilled, there are no worthwhile steamships at anchor or in the dock, for us to sink. Yes, the people here are all so unsuspecting. Reversed course; carefully we creep out of the harbour and unseen we are swallowed up by the open sea again.

The value of Timm's excursion was questionable to say the least, and with only a few metres of water to spare *U862* could not have escaped easily if discovered. They had seen only one ship underway, the *SS Pukeko* of 742 GRT, which had passed them at midday just outside the harbour entrance. Judging it not worth a torpedo, Timm had also decided against using his deck gun because, as in the attack on *Illissos*, this would only have given their position away. 'Let it run,' he decided. 'It is like the others in there, not a thousand tons.'

Despite the disappointment, Timm decided to repeat the exercise the following day. After rounding Portland Island he ordered the U-boat to run in to Hawke Bay to examine a coaling pier. A heavy sea was running, and with the water less than 30m deep they found submerged steering difficult. Discovering no ship coaling, Timm that night moved on to the town of Napier on the southwest shore of the bay. He kept the U-boat on the surface as they approached, there is no darkening

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

'Now is the Time for all Good Gunners to come to the Party'.

Yes your 75th Anniversary reunion is shaping up to be outstanding - but only if *you* turn out for it.

It's easy to register. Return the form on page 1 or go online to *Muzzle Flashes - today.*

10. BAND OF THE ROYAL REGIMENT OF NEW ZEALAND ARTILLERY

The Band would very much appreciate any support that Gunner readers may like to give by way of membership to the Band Association Committee, which meets monthly and acts as an interface between members and the Band itself.

Although the Band is a Territorial Force unit and both the local Infantry unit and our Regiment provide as much support as possible, it gets little support from the system for anything other



than territorial force pay, uniforms, and some transport assistance to official functions. This means that instruments and music, which are worth hundreds of thousands of dollars, have to be paid for by the Band. This is done through a combination of income from play outs and money from various charities and individuals. In addition, the Band owns its own freehold premises.

These activities take a reasonable amount of administration, and this is really the focus of the committee that we are seeking support for. If you're interested contact Barry Dreyer on b.dreyer@clear.net.nz

Now for a summary on the Band in the last year. They have had a good year. Last year they travelled to Queensland representing New Zealand at the Australian Defence Force Reserve Army celebrations. Preparing for this and undertaking the trip provided a musical and unit

focus for a number of months and in the last financial year the Band has been reaping the benefits of this. Numbers are good, and the musical output, particularly ensemble music, is growing monthly.

A lot of you will have heard the Band at its various engagements this year around the Auckland region and further South. They have been involved in public concerts, specialist days, military parades, dining nights and general public appearances. They are a very good representative face of both the Royal Regiment and the Army. In our terms Army gets a really good bang for their buck.

The Band is about to go through another instrument replacement phase with a grant from their major sponsor the Mount Wellington Trust. Recent recruitment advertising has bought in four new competent players to the Corps.

The Band welcomes any Gunner support. Come along and have a look at the Band Room, listen to the Band play and do a bit of socialising.

**Article supplied by
Barry Dreyer, President
RNZA Band Association**

11. PENSION AND WELFARE NEWS

On 1 July 2008 Veterans' Affairs New Zealand (VANZ) became a fully operational unit of the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF). This change saw the integration into VANZ of War Pension Services from the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). VANZ has its own Minister, the Minister of Veterans' Affairs, Hon Judith Collins. The Chief of Defence Force (CDF) Lt General Jerry Mataparae is VANZ's employer. Brigadier Rick Ottaway (Rtd) was appointed as General Manager of VANZ and Secretary for War Pensions. Since then Mr Greg Crott has been appointed as Deputy Secretary for War Pensions.

VANZ's client group includes Veterans of a recognised war or emergency; partners, dependant children and orphans; children of Vietnam and Operation Grapple Veterans; civilians in the pay of NZ Government who have their service recognised as being part of a recognised war or emergency.

War Disablement Pensions are compensatory, a tax free lifetime entitlement, paid in addition to other entitlements or income – including ACC. They are for any current disabilities related to Service; claims are individually determined and awarded in percentages for specific disabilities.

Veterans' Pensions, in lieu of NZ Superannuation, are managed by MSD. A Veteran qualifies for a Veterans' Pension if they are in receipt of a War Disablement Pension of 70% or more, or if the Veteran is under 65 years and unable to work due to accepted disabilities.

One should note here that if a Veteran who is under 65 years of age receives a Veterans' Pension, and has any earnings, the Veterans' Pension is abated to offset the earnings.

If a Veteran opts to receive a Veterans' Pension then his wife may also transfer from NZ Super to a Veterans' Pension.

If you are on a Veterans' Pension then anything to do with Work & Income payments e.g. Disability Allowance, Accommodation Allowance, Living Alone Payment

1. If you do not already qualify for a Community Services Card (Gold Card) then this is automatically granted to you and your spouse.
2. If you should be hospitalised in a public hospital for more than 13 weeks then your Veterans' Pension will continue
3. Upon the death of the Veteran, the spouse will receive a lump

sum payment of about \$4,000.00. If the spouse predeceases her husband then he will receive about \$2,000.00. This payment is over and above any other payments that may be due.

VANZ now has ten Case Managers in Wellington and ten Case Managers in Hamilton. Every Veteran can have a Case Manager, whose job is to focus on coordinating the delivery of services to the Veteran and their family, provide access to entitlements, provide some discretionary funding and provide one point of contact for ongoing support.

The War Pensions Act 1954 is currently under review by the Law Commission. Hon Sir Geoffrey Palmer heads this project. Until a new Act is in place then the old Act remains for all intents and purposes.

**Article supplied by
Margaret Burke
Pensions Advocate Auckland
RSA.**

STOP PRESS - Pension and Welfare Late News:

1. Rick Ottoway, GM of VANZ, advised RNZRSA on 9 September that VANZ is up to date with refunds of most claims, especially travel. He has overturned the payments process system inherited from MSD and now expects claims to be processed for payment on the same day they are received.
2. The new Act may be some time off, as the Law Commission is waiting on Treasury costings of possible schemes. In the meantime, the Commission has researched Canadian and Australian law and practice. The Australians have a set of principles that may be useful to NZ vets, while the Canadian holistic approach to rehabilitation would also be beneficial.

12. A VIETNAM WAR STORY, with a Kiwi flavour. Literally!

The Long Hai hills in the corner of Vietnam's Phuoc Tuy Province could be the Waitakeres in miniature, the difference being they were smaller, steeper, spectacularly rugged, but rocky and without so much lush greenery. They ran north from the South China Sea about 9km and were in turn 11 km south of the sprawling ANZAC Base at Nui Dat.

I was one of a Kiwi Forward Observation Team attached to Charlie Company 8th Battalion of the Australian Infantry. On 10th Feb 1970, as part of Operation Hammersley, we deployed to a place we called Isa. There was a quarry there and our objective was to secure and develop it in the interests of pacification and helping the Vietnamese.

A successful ambush by one of our platoons on the night of 15/16 meant a sudden change of priority and emphasis for the whole Operation.

In the spirit of ANZAC cooperation we Kiwis were there to provide NZ artillery support if called on, although in this event none was within range. There were 4 of us. Lieutenant Angus Rivers (Gus) was our leader, Sel MacDonald from Auckland

the Wellington area and myself, a naïve country lad from Whangarei, whose job was the radio.

The night of the 17/18 was spent in the open and in the dawn commotion to leave, Gus, to my surprise, said 'You come with me today Bro', and so it was that I ended up in one Armoured Personnel Carrier and MacDonald and Arnold in another, a fortuitous twist of fate as events were to prove.

With APC's and Centurion tanks we were a formidable force moving down the eastern side of the range, steep rocky outcrops to our right and flat wasteland to the left. Inside the APC I was oblivious to much going on outside but after 20 minutes and a sudden burst of gunfire we captured a young enemy soldier who ended up sitting next to me as we proceeded. Still only 20, and still quite stupid, I had recently bought a large flashy watch and decided to try my luck. I held my wrist in front of his face, "You buy" I said. He gave me the blank look treatment and because he smelt like he hadn't washed for a month, I was glad when we stopped briefly and he was taken up in a helicopter by the Vietnamese speaking Battalion Commander where he very agreeably pointed out his comrades bunker positions.

We soon turned west in to a valley and straight into intense



Left to right: Foreground, Wayne Radavanovich, Michael Brunton, Rod Simpson and Lt. Angus Rivers with NZ produced Condensed Milk

(whose previous attempts to get to Vietnam had been thwarted by illness or injury), Neil Arnold from

small arms and RPG fire from enemy in well entrenched bunkers.

(I learned in 1988 this was the training camp for the enemy's D445 Battalion) A book called 'Combat Battalion' published in 2000 covers the next sequence of events in the eyes of an Australian infantryman who like me was down inside an APC.

"There was so much going on it was incredibleYou just couldn't keep control of what was going on..... You were yelling at guys who could see and they were too taken up with their jobs..... You try to shoot - you know you've got to shoot - but you're so wound up its incredible"

I saw things a bit differently, but the noise was deafening, and after a loud explosion close by I learned that the APC with MacDonald and Arnold had been hit by a RPG, killing two and wounding all the others, so I focussed on my attempts to contact our fellow Kiwis in 161 Battery (deployed to the north) to advise of our team's casualties.

By now we had helicopter gunships circling overhead, tanks using their main armament at point blank range and the situation was becoming a bit surreal. I recall looking up to see Gus, a radio handset in each hand directing American artillery and Naval gunfire simultaneously (from an Australian Warship off shore). All the time he seemed to be smiling.

The battle ebbed and flowed for much of the day and the enemy, although outgunned gave as good as they got. In the event we broke contact, but other Infantry Companies deployed as blocking forces ran into all sorts of problems, and with the enemy taking the initiative, probably took more casualties than we did. One of them was a young Australian I had got to know well. He was killed that day by a booby trap. You would not have met a nicer young man.

During a lull MacDonald and Arnold were helicoptered from the area, eventually recuperated in

hospital in Malaysia and finally returned to NZ. I have never seen them again. Sel MacDonald, deemed unfit for the Army joined St. John Ambulance and days after I returned home 8 months later was knocked off his motor scooter and killed.

We returned to Nui Dat and that night and B52's plastered the Long Hais. When we returned the next day the valley was like a moonscape, devoid of vegetation. Weapons caches and food stocks were found and destroyed. Amongst the food was a supply of condensed milk. We now had 2 Kiwi replacements to our team and we sat down for a well needed cuppa. I studied the milk can. Most of the writing was Chinese or Vietnamese but clearly visible on the bottom was, "Canned in Singapore. Made from finest New Zealand Dairy Products" News got to the Australian CO who ribbed Gus about it. We were accused in good humour of 'aiding the enemy'. It made excellent coffee, but today I'm a tea drinker, and am right off condensed milk.

**Article supplied by Rod Simpson
Dvr Op, 161 Bty, SVN, 1969**



1936 3 Bty NZFA @ Rotorua

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Did You Pass the Test??

During a visit to a mental asylum, the Director was asked by a journalist "how do you determine whether or not a patient should be institutionalized."

"Well", the Director, "we fill up a bathtub, then offer a teaspoon, a teacup and a bucket to the patient and ask him or her to empty the bathtub."

"Oh, I understand", said the journalist. "A normal person would use the bucket because it's bigger than the spoon or the teacup".

"No," said the Director, "a normal person would pull the plug. Do you want a bed near the window."

Pays to listen carefully and not make any assumptions before making a decision.

GOOD EDUCATION

Q: Name the four **seasons**?

A: Salt, pepper, mustard and vinegar

Q: How is **dew** formed?

A: The sun shines down on the leaves and makes them perspire.

Q: What happens to your **body** as you age?

A: When you get old, so do your bowls and you get intercontinental.

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Behind the Lines: The Editor's Page

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Subscriptions: *Accounting policy* - The 2008 AGM endorsed the Committee's policy of accepting only 'full year' payment of subscriptions, that is, \$20 or multiples thereof. This action is necessary because the accounting process does not cater for fractional years. Odd sums will be credited to the Welfare Fund in the donor's name.

Donations: All charitable and welfare donations over \$5 are now tax deductible as the Association is a Registered Charity.

Receipts: Receipts are issued for all incoming monies and sent out quarterly with the next issue of *The New Zealand Gunner*.

Email Addresses: Are you on the Internet? The Secretary may not be aware of your address. If you are not getting messages from the RNZA Association and wish to do so, let him have your address. Have you changed ISPs? Have you updated your Internet address? Some mail is being returned.

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

New Members: New members are most welcome. ALL Gunners with a minimum of 3 years service *or* an Operational Tour are eligible for Full Membership. Associate Membership is available to anyone who has been attached to an RNZA Unit or has had a close affiliation therewith, and to close family of RNZA Gunners. Membership application forms are on-line at www.riv.co.nz/rnza/folk/join.htm, or *Muzzle Flashes* (kiwigunners.blogspot.com).

Death of a Member: If you know of the passing of someone who was a Gunner or a member please tell the Secretary. Where possible a representative of the Association will attend the funeral.