



The New Zealand Gunner

Official Journal of

The Royal New Zealand Artillery Association (Inc)

Founded 1934

Issue #

2009

*Christmas Message from the Patron, Col
Commandant, Secretary and Committee Members
of the RNZA Assn;*

REPORT FROM OUTGOING COL COMDT AND APPOINTMENT OF NEW COL COMDT:

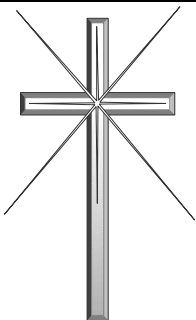
I stood down as Colonel Commandant on St Barbara's Day this year, having completed six and a half years. It has been a wonderful privilege to have held this appointment, and a great way to end fifty years as a gunner since I joined the RNZA on graduation from Duntroon in December 1960.

I must report that the Regiment is in good heart. 16 Fd Regt is at its strongest manpower wise since the end of the Korean War. The three gun Batteries are well manned, equipment is first class, and morale is high. The recent introduction into service of the unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) has given the gunners a new capability that will greatly enhance our overall effectiveness. The new computer equipment will bring us very close to achieving the long term gunner aim of first round target round. 11/4 Battery, although short in numbers, continues to fly the flag in Auckland, and our Band is the public face of the Army in our new 'super' city. As a Regiment we will need to remain vigilant to ensure the ongoing life of these two TF units within the gunner fold.

I thank you all for the support you have given me during my term as Colonel Commandant, and wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and successful 2011.

It is my very great pleasure to advise you that the Chief of Army, Maj Gen Rhys Jones, has appointed Colonel Barry Dreyer as our next Colonel Commandant. Barry is well known to most of you, and served the guns on the gun position in Vietnam, was an IG at the School of Artillery, and commanded both 161 Bty and 16 Fd Regt. I wish Barry all the best for his term of office.

Graham Birch



LAST POST

*The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not ant;
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green; he leadeth me
The quiet waters by.
My soul He doth restore again,
And me to walk doth make.
Within the paths of righteousness,
E'en for his own name's sake.
Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me
And in God's house for evermore
My dwelling place shall be.*

34690 WO1 (Rtd) **FORRESTER** GC (Darkie). At Christchurch on 3 December 2010 aged 88 years. Darkie served in the RNVR 1938-1946 and the RNZA 1950-1972.

301483 Sgt **HOTERE**, Matiu Waipouri (Matt) at Whangarei on 29 October 2010. Matt served with the guns for many years including in SVN in 1966 as the Gun Sgt on No1 gun. He also served with 1 NZ Regt in Malaya 1957-1959.

J484503 **MOORE**, Kevin William. At Palmerston North on 13 November 2010, aged 61 years. Kevin served the guns in SVN in 1970 as the BC's Batman (yes, John's Batman)

SHIRLEY, T.P. (Pat) on 29 August 2010 on the North Shore.

212099 **SKEDGWELL**, T.W.T (Bill) RNZIR. Bill served the guns as a Dvr Op in SVN during 1966.

971598 Lt Col (Rtd) **MASTERS**, John Milbanke, ONZM, MC, JP, RNZA. John lost his final battle on 28 October at Christchurch, having fought cancer for a number of years. He was the last Battery Commander appointed during the time 161 Bty served in SVN.

John served in the NZ Army for twenty-seven years, holding many key gunner appointments including being a Forward Observer and Battery Commander on active service, and as Chief Instructor of the School of Artillery and Director RNZA. It was as a FO that John earned his immediate MC, when in Borneo in 1965 he carried a wounded Ghurkha CSM, Hariprasad Gurung, for a day and a half under extremely difficult conditions through the jungle away from the site of a fire fight, thus saving the CSM's life. The Ghurkhas recognised John as a hero, awarding him life membership of a very select Ghurkha organisation. John's second term of active service was as the last BC of 161 Bty in Vietnam. Prior to that John had been the CI at the School in Waiouru, training many of the gunners who were later to join him in Vietnam.

John's final gunner appointment was as DRNZA and Director Army Air Corps, from 1975 to 1978. John was one of the last NZ Army officers to earn Air OP

wings.

More recognition was to come post John's retirement from the Army. He was instrumental in spearheading a campaign to raise \$1 million for the Rannerdale Veterans Home and Hospital in Christchurch, for which he was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit. It was his role in the Government's acknowledgement of Vietnam veterans' exposure to Agent Orange, however, that most veterans will remember him. His testimony to the Health Select Committee was crucial to breaking open the facts of NZ serving soldiers being exposed to dangerous chemicals during the Vietnam War.

Then came his crowning glory, his naming as the inaugural ANZAC of the Year in 2010.

John was farewelled with full military honours at his funeral in Christchurch on 2 November. Mourners included the Minister for Defence, the Honourable Wayne Mapp, with eulogies from the CDF, Lt Gen Mateparae, and the President of the RSA, Lt Gen McIver. Lt Col Mike Harvey spoke of John's long and loyal service with the RNZA. Appropriately 16 Fd Regt carried out the military ceremonial duties.



As the first very cold snows of winter descend onto London it is quite hard to believe that we have been in the UK for 12 months. As I look out of my office window at 1600 hrs it is dark outside and there is snow on the ground across Trafalgar Square. It is a sight straight from a post card and reminds me to remain grateful for the privilege to represent the NZ Army in such a wonderful location. The role continues to be varied and busy. From an RNZA perspective we are currently contributing towards enhancing our training, equipment and doctrine for our growing Close Air Support capability. I recently attended a conference in London that provided some good insight into operational lessons in Afghanistan. Even with the huge advances in technology many of the old adages of previous conflicts still apply when trying to utilise air support for precision fires. We are also working with the Offensive Support Cell of the NZDF Capability Branch on the Light Gun enhancement programme and the procurement of a new met system.

I had the honour to represent the NZ Army at the Armistice Day commemorations in Ypres, Flanders on 11 November. The service at the Menin Gate was held in freezing driving rain which seemed fitting for the occasion. On Remembrance Sunday I was invited to attend the Royal Artillery commemoration at Hyde Park Corner. Many gunners from the UK and the Commonwealth were present including the Master Gunner of St James's Park, Gen Sir Timothy Granville-Chapman GBE KCB ADC Gen. I was able to lay a wreath on behalf of all New Zealand Gunners both past and present. The most moving aspect of the parade was the presentation of Elizabeth Crosses to the families of three RA soldiers killed in Afghanistan during 2010.

May I pass on my good wishes to Brig (rtd) Graham Birch, MBE as he steps down on St Barbara's Day as Colonel Commandant of the Royal Regiment of New Zealand Artillery. One of Brig Birch's final duties has been to forward to me a Christmas card to her Majesty The Queen, Our Captain General. It states 'with loyal greetings and best wishes for a merry Christmas and happy 2011 from the Colonel Commandant and All Ranks of the Royal Regiment of New Zealand Artillery'. I shall ensure that it passed to the Private Secretary to her Majesty in good time for Christmas. I was privileged to be the CO during Brig Birch's tenure and I shall be always grateful for his words of encouragement and advice. I wish the best to Lt Col (rtd) Barry Dreyer as he takes up the role of Colonel Commandant.

May I finally offer my personal condolences at the passing of Lt Col (rtd) John Masters ONZM MC JP. There is no better accolade or cenotaph than to be named as New Zealand's ANZAC of the year.

Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year to you all.

Lt Col Nick Gillard MNZM (London)

HISTORICAL ITEM—Operation of 2 NZ Dic. 9-16 Apr 1945, including crossing the of the SENIO (Part Two)

N.Z.ARTILLERY

(a) General

(i) The weight of artillery employed in the bombardment prior to the crossing of the SENIO is shown in Part 1 and the accuracy, perfect timings and devastating effect reflect the greatest credit on those responsible for the planning and execution of the bombardment, and the subsequent barrage which carried the infantry up to the LGO canal. The fact that the RA operation order contained over 30 Appendices goes to emphasise the triumph of co-ordination which enabled this great programme to be fired without a mistake and completely as planned.

(ii) During the subsequent advance, 6 N.Z. Field Regiment was in support of 6 N.Z. Infantry Brigade, and took part in the 4 barrages which carried the Brigade to its positions West of the SILLARO. Some of these were fired at very short notice. For example, the barrage which carried both Brigades from the SANTERNO MORTE to the line of MASSA LOMBARDA was originally planned for 5 Brigade alone. It was not until after midday that orders were received that the barrage was to be extended to include 6 Brigade on the left by the addition of one field regiment and one 105 Field Regiment S.P. This was laid on in something under two hours and the barrage was fired at 1500 hours.

(b) Attack – Planning and Preparation

The underlying principle of a divisional attack by 2 N.Z. Div was that it should be carried through to sufficient depth to displace the enemy supporting weapons up to and including his field artillery. This normally required an attack of some 4000 yards in depth under a barrage with pre-arranged defensive fire tasks on call when the infantry had reached their final objective. The Div almost invariably attacked on a two Brigade front, each Battalion having a frontage of 800 yards. It can be seen therefore that, in an attack of this sort, not only must the artillery plan and programme be laid on with the greatest accuracy but that the infantry plan is governed by the artillery plan and is subject to any limitations imposed by time or space upon the capabilities of the artillery available. In planning a divisional attack, therefore a divisional conference was called and decisions as regards time and space were based on the artillery task. The frontage over which the attack was to take place was governed by the amount of artillery available to produce the necessary barrage and superimposed concentrations; the time necessary to lay on the artillery programme dictated the earliest moment at which H hour could be fixed. In the barrage it was always assured that there should be one gun per 25 yards of attacking

front, although 20 yards was considered more desirable. When these points had been fixed, the remaining details were decided to enable the CRA to complete his programme and produce the barrage trace. These included start line, finishing line, pause lines, length of time on pauses and firing line, rate of advance, and H hour.

When these points were decided, the CRA was free to start work on the artillery programme subject to the firm understanding that there would be no alteration to the detail already agreed upon. This is most important as the battle, once engaged, is controlled by the artillery who must be afforded the maximum time possible for the issue of detailed orders, and production of gun programmes to produce the accuracy essential to their task.

Barrage Trace

The barrage trace was issued down to and including Infantry Company Commanders. It was completed sufficiently early to enable Brigade Commanders to issue copies in conjunction with their orders for the attack and was sufficiently comprehensive to require nothing more than short supporting verbal orders to tell the recipients all they required to know. A DF trace was also issued for protection of the final objective after the attack.

Preparation

When possible, a natural feature such as a lateral road was chosen as an infantry start line.

When an arbitrary line had to be chosen, the artillery was made responsible for surveying in the start line and for marking it on the ground. Results showed that the infantry advance right up to the barrage with confidence bred of the unfailing accuracy of the gunnery.

Control of the Attack.

Bofors guns, surveyed in on the ground for position and bearing, and firing straight down the boundaries of the attack, were used for two purposes :-

1. Fired in bursts of 3 every two minutes to mark the line of advance, and inter unit bds.
2. Fired in bursts of 10 to signify the start and finish of pauses and the stander on the artillery final line.

This was a set plan, with deception taking the form of additional lanes worked out on the flanks.

Superimposed Concentrations.

A barrage was always supported by concentrations on selected targets within the barrage area.

Stress was laid on the importance of keeping a full and accurate RA Intelligence map on which known and likely enemy positions and strong points were marked and continuously bought up to date. All

available intelligence sources were tapped for this purpose, and constant liaison with MATU (WEST) was found to pay a good dividend. Prior to an attack, Infantry Brigade Commanders were consulted as to their requirements for flank protection and concentrations were laid on accordingly.

TIME.

12 hours was considered a suitable time to allow the artillery after receipt of the Divisional Commanders orders for the preparation of a barrage with supplementary concentrations in support of a divisional attack under normal conditions.

Calibration.

A successful attack under a barrage is governed by the accuracy of the shelling.

The following methods were recommended in checking and maintaining the accuracy of guns during operations :-

1. Comparative calibration carried out whenever possible by OP Officers.
2. Use of the Air OP who can be particularly useful in spotting a "rogue" gun.

The 2 N.Z. Division has always specialized in the quick barrage and the degree of accuracy maintained by the artillery is such that the troops advance very close to the barrage with perfect confidence.

During this offensive there was not a single report of a short round, in spite of the weight of shell fired.

It was considered that this speed and accuracy was governed by the speed with which the Regiments got forward, and that, to ensure this, the following points required special consideration.

- (i) Early reconnaissance of the next forward positions, based on accurate appreciation of the rate of advance of the infantry.

(ii) Expert gun drill and handling of equipment. In this connection, a high state of physical fitness is required of the men and it was emphasized that physical training is as important to gunners as it is to the infantry.

(iii) Early work on routes and close liaison with provost.

(iv) Priorities for movement laid down by Division in light of future commitments.

Administration

- (i) Prior to the crossing of the SANTERNO, ammunition points were established on the FAENZA – RUSSI road behind the R. SENIO. On 13 April, when the advance continued from SANTERNO,

ammunition points were moved forward to the vicinity of LUGO and later, on 16 April to MASSA LOMBARDA thus ensuring that only one major obstacle lay between them and the forward units.

- (ii) The following gives in detail the dumping and carrying of ammunition undertaken during the period prior to D day up to 16 April.

2 Apr 45 Ammunition points were established vicinity MAIN 2 NZDIV on FAENZA – RUSSI road.

Dumping programme of 25 pr and 105mm carried out. All ammunition being uplifted from 501 AAD CESANA and delivered direct to gun positions.

25 pr	800 rpg	76800 rds
105 mm	600 rpg	14400 rds

Total of over **1500 tons**; 300 NZASC vehicles employed over 3 nights.

12 Apr 45 Following was uplifted from AAD and delivered to Ammunition Points.

25 pr	61100)	
105 mm	25240)	
3.7	2800)	1412 tons
5.5 HE	4400)	
4.5 HE	3200)	
75 mm	11000)	

36000 rds of 25 pr were issued from Ammunition Point on 12 April

13 Apr 45 Ammunition Points established vicinity LUGO (MR 3636) and all ammunition was transferred from previous dump to new location – **3018 tons**.

Following was uplifted from AAD and delivered to APs and gun positions 13 – 15 April 45.

25 pr	124700)	
105 mm	10000)	2790 tons.
5.5 HE	10980)	
4.5 HE	4000)	

Dumping programme of 500 rpg 25 pr, 400 rpg 105 mm, 200 rpg 5.5 HE and 200 rpg 4.5 HE was carried out over two nights

(13 – 14 Apr 45) – **1500 tons**

Issues for the same period.

25 pr	32000 rds
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**To be continued in the next issue of
The NZ Gunner**

76th ANNUAL REUNION and AGM, held at Taupo 12-14 November 2010.

The usual meet and greet at the Taupo RSA started the reunion off and it was encouraging to see a number of new members plus a small group from across the ditch representing the RAA Assn. Yes Kim and friends were back again and again were intent on having an enjoyable weekend. A number had dinner at the RSA where the stories got told and the laughter confirmed that it was indeed a good story.

The NZ Officer Cadet School from Waiouru were in town to honour the Charter Parade that had previously been granted to the Regular Force Cadets but had since been taken up by NZ Officer Cadet School. This year's parade coincided with our RNZA Association Annual Reunion so that members of the Assn could slip into town to watch the proceedings. as many of our members are ex RF Cadets a special interest was taken in the parade the time of AGM was brought provide an hour and amazing there were no hold ups to avert it from starting on time.

RNZA Association Inc - Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the Spa Hotel, Taupo, on Saturday 13 November 2010 at 0930hrs.

Welcome; Lt Col (rtd) Frank Hopkinson welcomed members to the meeting.

List of attendees (36); Frank Hopkinson, Don Kenning, Ray Andrews, Tony McLeod, Kerry Lee, Graham Black, Bill Giles, Brian Jerry Meyer, John Botica, Peter Botica, Roly Flutey, Woody Barrett, Mike Dakin, Laurie Coxhead, Bevin Culhane, Spike Jones, Barry Cook, Marie Roberts, Gordon Revell, Jeff Waters, Bill Cooper, Barry Dreyer, Bryce Harrison, Mike Maunsell, Alan Taylor, Graeme Wilson, Bill Stewart, (plus six). Non Members (3); Robert Down, Clive Miln, Patti Miln.

List of apologies (17); Lyall McGregor, Neil Rhynd, Max Newman, Les Pye, Mayne Manson, Brian Frances, Pat Duggan, Paddy Ryan, Lindsay Skinner, Tom Roche, Don Potter, Ted Lyall, Colin Jansen, Russ Martin, Peter Hanson, Margaret Burke, John Stewart,

Last Post; Helen Agar, Greg Allan, Ross Andrews, Des Barkle, Charles Batchelor, Fred Biggwither, Alan Boyd, Chris Brown, Ricjie Gerrard, Ken Hair, Jim McCaig, George Miln, Ted Peck, Thelma Salt, Morrie Stanley, John Valentine, Allan Wilson, John Masters, David Flux, Bill Skedgewell,

Previous Minutes; The minutes of the 2009 AGM held on 1 November 2009 at Browns Bay, having been circulated, were accepted as a true record; Moved; Roly Flutey, Seconded Mike Dakin. Carried

Matters Arising; Discussed under Notices of Motion and general business

Presidents Report



Frank reading, Tony listening

Good morning everyone.

Firstly, may I welcome everyone here today, and especially those of you who have crossed from other land masses to be with us here at Taupo.

It again gives me much pleasure to report to you on your Associations affairs over the last year.

Your committee reps have continued to be attentive to your interests, by their attendance at meetings and correspondence, with organisations such as the Royal New Zealand Returned Services Association, Veterans Affairs etc. Through our affiliation to RNZRSA, we have attended the annual Affiliates' Forum and National Executive Council. Reports which are appropriate, are published for your information on **Muzzle Flashes**. (which I just know you read on a regular basis and continue to provide snippets for!) On that subject, I again urge you to use **Muzzle Flashes** actively to improve comms on the gunner net - contribute whatever and whenever you can.

In the coming year, attention will focus on new legislation for war pensions. We are up to speed with developments there and await an announcement on the Government's intention. As you may know, the Law Commission has made recommendations for sweeping changes that will benefit war pensioners now, and in the future. Again, as we get more information about this, we will pass it on to you via **Muzzle Flashes** and the quarterly issues of **The New Zealand Gunner**.

We encourage members to seek support from their own RSA for general welfare and pension matters, but, in the past year, we have assisted five members in progressing their claims with Veterans' Affairs.

If you do handle your own claims, make sure you get it right first time. Most rejections, requests for review and appeals, arise from incomplete preparation and presentation. Ask for advice before you

send it off! We have expressed our concern at the slowness of processing the claims at Veterans Affairs The Auckland Coastal Defences Historical Trust (on which we have two reps) has to date still not signed a Concession Document with DOC for conducting guided parties covering Fort Takapuna and

North Head, despite negotiations having been on-

going since April 2009. I remain hopeful it will be done before the AGM.

The cup which was presented by Colin Jansen at last years AGM, has been selected for the Association Trophy (as reported last year) and is in process of being refurbished. Again, I hope it will be on display this weekend. It is hoped to get the nomination process underway as soon as possible.

Last year, the AGM resolved that this years reunion would be at Taupo, and I suggest that the meeting today considers having next years in the South Island, after which, if it proves successful, the venues could alternate between the islands.

Membership grows but very slowly (13 in, 11 out), and the main concern, as reported last year, is that the new members are still mostly "old and bold", and not "young and frisky"! It is in an endeavour to help overcome this problem that a motion to amend our rules is being presented to you today. Whilst on this subject, I again ask you to consider standing for one of the positions being filled later in the meeting so we may get new ideas on how to advance the Association's aims and membership.

The Committee have continued to meet regularly, and I express my sincere thanks to them all for their support, especially **Secretary/Treasurer** Tony McLeod, **The New Zealand Gunner** editor Marie Roberts, **Muzzle Flashes** moderators Mike Dakin and later Kerry Lee, and to Angus and Catherine Rivers go our thanks for their continuing work with the web site.

I move that my report to this meeting be accepted.

Frank Hopkinson

Moved, Presidents report be accepted Frank Hopkinson, Seconded Barry Dreyer Carried

Financial Position; Treasurers Report, Statement of Position attached.

Income. We received a total income of \$12,822.70. This came from; Subscriptions \$4,860 Q store \$319 (\$234 profit) Donations \$570.45 (\$360.00 from VANZ, \$210.45 from members) Subs accepted on behalf of 173 AB and deposited in their account \$140 Bank Interest \$709.25 Reunion 2009 \$6196 Income , with an expenditure of \$4634 which meant we made a profit of \$1562 on the 75th reunion at Browns Bay. Well done to the organising C'ttee.

Expenditure; We had expenses of \$8419.71. This was made up from; Newsletter printing and postage \$2900.87 Q store purchases \$85 (for purchase of monograms and a jersey which were on-sold) Bank Fees \$52.10 General Expenses \$607.74 Comprised of;\$101.49 Reimburse Stationery Expenses,\$400.00 Donation to ACDHT; \$50.00 Charities Commission Fee \$56.25 RNZRSA Affiliation Fees

We are now \$4,402.99 better off than we were at this time last year, and our Total funds of \$22,283.22 are held as follows \$10,530.66 Term Deposits (06 and 07) \$11,150.96 Interest Bearing On-line accounts (01 and 05) \$601.60 Current Account

Our Accounts were examined and approved as an accurate record by Wayne Anker and Greg Thwaite on 19 October 2010

Moved; Accounts as attached be accepted. Mike Dakin, Seconded Barry Dreyer Carried

Election of Officers; Patron, Don Kenning (Chair); President, (Not filled); Secretary ,Tony McLeod; Treasurer,Tony McLeod; Committee, Mike Dakin, Bob Kerslake, Jeff Waters, Barry Dreyer, Bill Stewart, John Botica, Joe Panoho, Colin Jansen. The committee will ensure that any duties associated with the Presidents position will be carried out in a dutiful manner. The Colonel Commandant is an ex-officio member of the committee.



Members paying attention to what was being discussed at the AGM

Subscriptions; Proposed that annual subscriptions remain at \$20. Moved Mike Dakin, Seconded Barry Dreyer, Carried

Honorarium; Proposed Secretary honorarium remain at \$500. Moved Mike Dakin, Seconded Roly Flutey, Carried

General Business;
Notices of Motion;

1. Regimental Membership; At the last AGM it was decided to open a new membership category for serving personnel to try to get more serving personnel involved in the Association. To achieve this, after the Executive Committee recommend the following:

Motion;-That a new Rule 10 be added to the membership rules as follows:

1. The committee may from time to time appoint as Regimental Members of the Association serving RNZA Officers and Warrant Officers who hold key Regimental appointments.
2. The purpose of the Regimental Membership is to foster liaison and closer ties between the Association and serving gunners of all ranks.
3. Regimental Members shall pay no subscription.
4. Regimental Members may choose to continue as full members when they vacate their posting.

Moved Barry Dreyer, Seconded Bevin Culhane. Carried

2.Length of service for membership; Background;

The current membership wording requires a gunner to have had three years service (or an overseas deployment) before they can have `Full` membership status. Present rules do allow gunners with less than 3 years service to become associate members. The Executive Committee considers that the length of service for `Full` membership should be reduced to 3 months, so that younger serving gunners can become full members. The principles of; ``welcome to the `family` of the gunners`` and; ``once a gunner always a gunner``, are the primary motives behind this change , as well of course of encouraging an early decision to join the Assn.

Motion; Amend wording of Rule 9 by replacing words ``3 years service`` in line two with ``3 months service``. After discussion, the wording of the motion was amended to ``**3 months gunner service**``
Moved Roly Flutey, Seconded Mike Dakin, Carried

Other Business

1.RNZA Assn Trophy; In Oct 09 a subcommittee of senior RNZA personnel met to consider the establishment of an RNZA Assn Trophy, ``to be awarded annually to that badged member of the RNZA whose actions in the year (June-May), whatever they were, best epitomised and enhanced the traditions and reputation of the Royal Regiment of New Zealand Artillery. An Awards Committee will propose selected nominations (if any) to the Associations Committee which will make the final choice. The Awards Committee consisting of the Col Comdt (chair), Col in Chief RNZA, the senior RNZA WO1, and Secretary of the RNZA Assn, will meet at a mutually acceptable time and place so a presentation can be made at the Assn`s AGM``. The inaugural year for presentation of the Trophy will be 2011 (if a suitable recipient is identified). (Action, Committee)

2.Regional Reps. The need to resurrect this structure so that the Association does not become just an Auckland organisation was discussed. Use of Muzzle Flashes is to be encouraged as a means of getting messages out within regions. This will remain an ongoing effort (Action ,members, Committee).

3.Pension Claims. Woody Barrett, (Pres EVSA), explained the delays which may occur if multiple claims are submitted at one time, especially where one is a presumptive claim. He recommended to members to submit individual claims. (Action, members as required)

4.An artwork being displayed in Auckland, which shows the `Dog tags` of personnel who served in Viet Nam, was discussed. It contains some errors in Regimental numbers. (NFA, interest only).

5.Return to Vietnam. Mike Dakin advised that the trip had now been costed, and the itinerary was being finalised. (Action, trip participants, Mike Dakin).

6.Gunners Port is available from Jeff Waters at \$25 and \$35. (Action, interested members)

7.Skype. Alan Taylor provided an update on the



Gnr Howarth told me that this is a L119 Light Howitzer gun, introduced into the NZ Army in the early 1990`s, it is a British design.

useability of Skype for conferencing. (Action. Info only, potential for future committee meetings)

8.Auckland Coastal Defence Historical Trust. Barry Dreyer briefed the meeting on progress towards achieving a concession to provide guided tours through the gun emplacements at North Head. Plans are also being made for the utilisation of the old Officers Mess, and creating a National Memorial Walkway. (Action, any member interested may contact the ACDHT through Barry Dreyer).

Next Meeting. The President proposed that the South Island Gunners be invited to host the next AGM be held in Christchurch. Carried. (Action, Committee/South Island organising committee). Normally our Reunion/AGM is held the weekend closest to Armitise Day but next year it will fall during Canterbury`s show week so don`t mark your calendar just yet.

The meeting closed at 10.25am.

In the afternoon today`s gunners from 16Fd Regt put on a static display on the lawn at the Spa Hotel.

The Editor visited the display and was admirably updated by these fine young gunners.



Gnr Pratt told me that this a Collimator used for re-siting the original position of the gun.



Is a compass not used to determine where we are? Oh no we use a hand held GPS unit L/Bdr Pederson tells me



Margaret Mansell, Adell Wilson and Lyn Culhane were at the display but I suspect they were not talking about military things!



L/Bdr Taka told me that this a Gun Display Unit and is used to send data between the Command Post and the guns, (I hope he is right??)



Col (Rtd) Don Kenning probably saying to Graeme Black something like; "they don't know how lucky they are to have all these modern things".

After a few had a nanny nap it was time for the Assn's formal dinner which was held that the Lake Yacht Club on the Lake front.

As the "Big Band" played in the background the gunners communicated as they do when they can't hear, and the catering staff circulated with plates of canapes (devils on horseback, smoked salmon fillos parcels, crostini with a selection of toppings and spring rolls and vegetable samosas).

Mr Vice (Tony McLeod) first advised the Dining President (Frank Hopkinson) that his guests were seated then gave the Grace (Not the Gunners one). The main meal consisted to: Aromatic Lamb and pumpkin Tagine, Honey glazed warm ham form the bone, Pistachio and cranberry chicken roasted roulades, accompanied by roasted potatoes and kumara, cucumber, green been, feta and live, grilled mediterranean vegetable salad with basil and walnut pesto, Rocket, parmesan, red onion salad and bread rolls.

Dessert was Crème brulee, mini meringues, chocolate brownie followed by tea and coffee.

The formal part of the evening began with the Loyal Toast given by our Patron Col (Rtd) Don Kenning. The toast to The Royal Regiment was given by Stewart McLeod, RNZN (no relation to Tony), President Taupo RSA. The reply to this toast was given by Capt John Gordon, RNZA who is currently IG at the School Artillery.

Brian (Jerry Meyer over from Aussie gave the toast to Absent Friends, he was followed by Peter (Nig) Botica who toasted the Wives and Partners.



Capt John Gordon making his toast (Reply to The Royal regiment

Kim McGrath JP, President RAA Assn proposed the toast to the International Community of Gunners. After the toasts Kim present to the Assn a banner to commemorate the relationship the two Assns have with each.



Brig (Rtd) Graham Birch making his farewell speech

As the saying goes, the band played on and was great to see those dancing the night away.

Sunday morning saw a reasonable turnout of gunners join Padre Derm Buchann at the church service held in the meeting house at the Spa Hotel. The service began with the singing of the National Anthem, followed by a number of prayers, a reading, singing of a hymn and an address from Derm.



After the usual farewells and “see you next year, God willing”, everyone went on their merry way in all compass directions.

The Editor again went off to another golf tournament (after having played the previous week at Te Puke) and along the way encountered three associated with the Gunners.

At Waihi I played against an ex RF Cadet who joined the RNZE and served with 161 Bty in 1966 in SVN as part of the Engineers Detachment. I have to say he and his partner gave me and my partner a thrashing, playing off a 22 handicap he shot 81 off the stick. His name was **Eddie Bruce**.

At Tairua while in the club house I was introduced to another RNZE who served with the Bty in 1966 in SVN. His first words to me was I knew David, His name was **Mike Newport**.

At the Pauanui Club I was sitting with a group of two other women when this gentleman spoke to us asking if we were the ones travelling in the motor homes (we were of course). He said he was over from Melbourne visiting a relation who was having a birthday (90). He was having a look around the club as he last visited the place in 1972/73, I casually mentioned that at that time I was in a place called Waiouru.

He looked at me and said so was I.

Of course I asked what Corp were you in.

He replied, Infantry first then RNZA.

I naturally said well what is your name.

He replied **Rob Barker**.

I replied, guess what, I am the Editor of The NZ Gunner, (I knew I sent him a copy of it)

He replied, that is amazing, I knew David.

My two friends sat there in stunned silence.

I guess the message in this is that you never know where you will come across a member of the **GUNNER** family.

HOW THE LAST POST STARTED

During the night, Captain Ellicombe heard the moans of a soldier who lay severely wounded on the field. Not knowing if it was a Union or Confederate soldier, the Captain decided to risk his life and bring the stricken man back for medical attention. Crawling on his stomach through the gunfire, the Captain reached the stricken soldier and began pulling him toward his encampment.

When the Captain finally reached his own lines, he discovered it was actually a Confederate soldier, but the soldier was dead.

The Captain lit a lantern and suddenly caught his breath and went numb with shock. In the dim light, he saw the face of the soldier. It was his own son. The boy had been studying music in the South when the war broke out. Without telling his father, the boy enlisted in the Confederate Army.

The following morning, heartbroken, the father asked permission of his superiors to give his son a full military burial, despite his enemy status. His request was only partially granted.

The Captain had asked if he could have a group of Army band members play a funeral dirge for his son at the funeral.

The request was turned down since the soldier was a Confederate.

But, out of respect for the father, they did say they could give him only one musician.

The Captain chose a bugler. He asked the bugler to play a series of musical notes he had found on a piece of paper in the pocket of the dead youth's uniform.

This wish was granted.

The haunting melody, we now know as 'The Last Post' used at military funerals was born.

The words are:

Day is done.

Gone the sun.

From the lakes

From the hills.

From the sky.

All is well.

Safely rest.

God is nigh.

Fading light.

Dims the sight.

And a star.

Gems the sky.

Gleaming bright.

From afar.

*Drawing nigh.
Falls the night.*

*Thanks and praise.
For our days.
Neath the sun
Neath the stars.
Neath the sky
As we go.
This we know.
God is nigh*

I too have felt the chills while listening to 'The Last Post' but I have never seen all the words to the song until now. I didn't even know there was more than one verse. I also never knew the story behind the song and I didn't know if you had either so I thought I'd pass it along.

I now have an even deeper respect for the song than I did before.

Remember Those Lost and Harmed While Serving Their Country.

Also Remember Those Who Have Served And Returned; and for those presently serving in the Armed Forces.

As sent to the Editor

KIWI GUNNERS NEED THREE THINGS TO EASE RUGGED LIFE

By Richard Long, NZPA Special Correspondent in Vietnam.

Baria (Phouc Tuy Province July 1966)

Kiwi soldiers serving in the sweaty, humid heat of the Vietnam war long for three things—the end of their term, mail from home and R and R (rest and recuperation) leave.

The gunners become eligible for leave every three months and they go as vacancies become available. They are flown out for 4-5 days in “glorious civilization,” breaking the tense edginess of their war zone life and its sparse comforts.

Now single men may soon get a grant from the Army, after a year's service, to spend on the R. and R. leave. The men were told this recently by the Army Adjutant General, Brigadier A. H. Andrews, when he visited the camp.

United States Air Force planes fly the men to Hong Kong and Bangkok for the leave. Singapore has been added to the list as an alternative and has proved a popular choice. Many of the Kiwis have served in this theatre also and are taking the opportunity to look up old friends.

The 150 men battery receives about a dozen

vacancies a month for the leave and men go on a priority of service. Single men, in the theatre for 15-18 months, sometimes get three leaves, married men serve for nine months, have one of two leaves. Because of the small number of vacancies the leave is usually well overdue.

Lieutenant John Henderson (Auckland) has just returned from leave in Hong Kong, the first break he has had after six months service.

“It's just marvellous to turn on lights when you want to, and to turn on taps to get water and beer,” he said. (In camp no lights are allowed as the perimeter marks no-man's land. Water is scarce, although now the men have the luxury of a small shower a day. One can of beer a day is provided).

“In camp there is a little time off and then there's nothing to do. And of course Charlie is just out there and everybody is pretty tense,” Lieutenant Henderson said



The Shower blocks at Bien Hoa and at Baria

From the Editors Collection

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 and to Gunners of any nation around the world. Membership application forms are on-line at www.riv.co.nz/rnza/folk/join.htm, or MuzzleFlashes.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.

Muzzle Flashes items to Kerry at: MuzzleFlashes.blogspot.com

Secretarial/Treasurer Matters to Tony at: RNZA.Association@gmail.com

Items for The NZ Gunner to Marie at: dgroberts@xtra.co.nz