

# GUNNER NEWS



Royal New Zealand Artillery Association Newsletter

Issue # 170

June 2016

## Kia Ora & Welcome

It has been extremely busy since our last issue and, as a result, there is heaps of interesting stuff in this newsletter, ranging from a wee essay I wrote for ANZAC Day to the memories of Gunners who served in Kapyong and Long Tan. There is also a revised history of the 1st Battle of Coral, written from the GPO's perspective, that differs from the 'official' history. And then there are bits of poetry and other stuff that I thought you might find interesting. I have even recorded the confession of a one time policeman who later served the guns, plus a well known Gunner from my generation features.

I was hoping to bring a report of 161 Bty's trip to Korea in this issue, however they must be a bit busy, but, I have been invited to join 163 Bty as they undertake live firing in Waiouru with the Hawaiian based Marines in July. Glad I won't be the only one freezing my butt off, provided the BC doesn't forget that he has invited me. You are on track aren't you Brent Morris ?

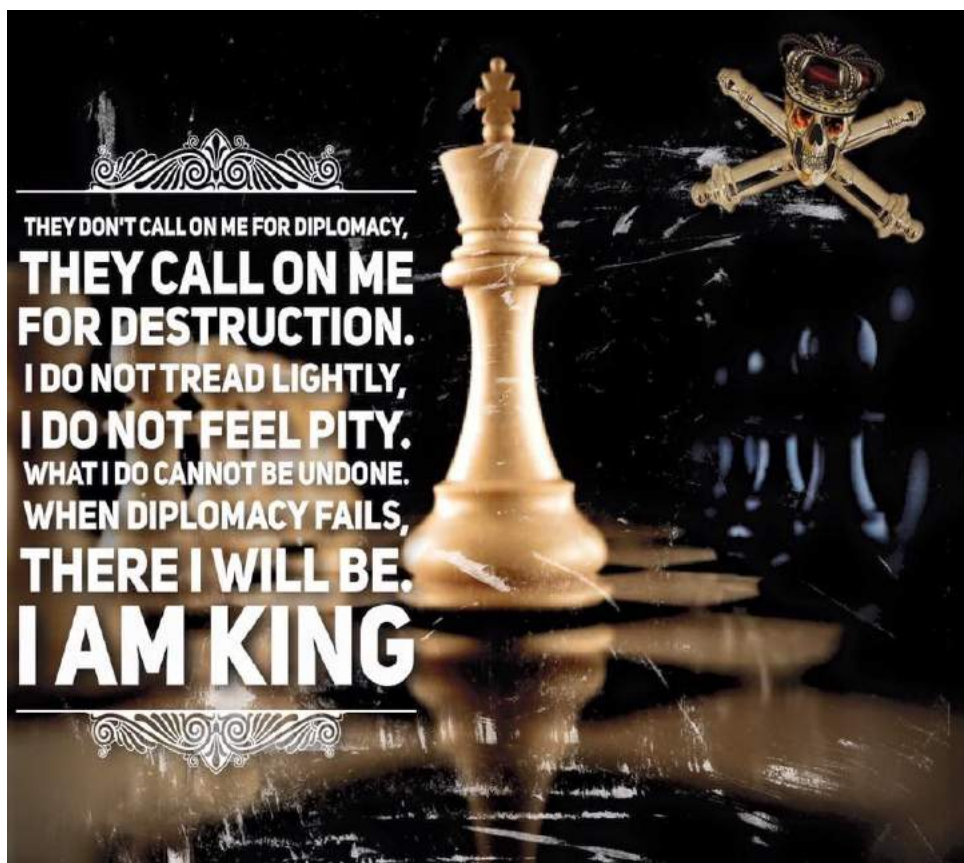
Ubique

David Bähler

Glad I won't be the only one freezing my butt off, provided the BC doesn't forget that he has invited me.

## In This Issue

- Dog tags, p2.
- Eight things a civvy should know before dating, p 3
- RNZAA Presidents & Colonel Commandant's reports, p 4
- Memories of Kapyong, p 8
- 1st Battle of Carol, p 9
- Letter to the Editor, p 11
- Let me die a young man's death, p 12
- ANZAC Day & Gunners Day, p's 17-19
- A confession, p 21
- The Battle of Long Tan—a Gunners Perspective, p 24
- Q Store, p 28
- Behind the Lines, p 29
- And heaps more between each of the above



I was taken out of a box and stamped with a name and a regimental number. They also added a blood group and a religion. I have a twin, who is identical. We were both threaded through a metal chain and given to a man who is fit, young and very competent at his job. He is a soldier. We become one although I rarely see daylight as I am kept out of sight under his shirt. He never, ever takes me off.

I am his dog tags, my job is to identify him.

Because I am hidden I can't see and cannot really tell what he is doing. Sometimes he gets me very wet and soapy. Other times he seems to be running and I am bouncing against his chest. Then he is walking slowly and whispering to his mates.

Once I nearly drowned as he kept me underwater in a dirty smelly creek for what seemed like a very long time.

A couple of weeks ago I had the sensation of flying on a very noisy bird that I later learnt was a helicopter. Then there was a sudden jolt as my man jumped off the chopper. He is running. He is looking for cover. He drops to the ground. I am ground into the dust. He seems to be trying to squirm underground. He is keeping very low.

There are loud bangs and cracks. I can hear explosions. Someone is shooting at us. I hear the ricochets. There is a lot of noise and confusion and anger. I can feel the air move with bullets very close by. There is a lot of dust from the helicopter. It is hard to see. Everything is happening very fast.

Suddenly I am flung into the air. I can feel myself almost flying and then I thump down on to ground. I am on my face but this time it feels like my man's body is incomplete, something is missing. He is not breathing.

I can hear someone yelling at my man. He is asking if he is OK. He turns us over and swears. The air turns blue. He rips open the shirt and I see daylight. I am shoved to one side and the other bloke begins to push down on my man's chest. Up and down he goes, trying to get air into my man. Someone else has tied a very tight bandage around what remains of a leg. My man is screaming. He is in pain now. Someone gives him an injection, the pain wanes, all becomes a bit dreamy.

I think he will survive.

I am his dog tags. My job is to identify him if he doesn't.

DB April 2016

## Last Post

Tawara, Brigham (Alfie), 17 Mar 2016. 161 Bty RNZA SVN

Peter, Alan. Date TBA. RNZ Sig att to 161 Bty RNZA SVN

Henry, Wally. 14 Mar 2016. Gnr. 161 Bty RNZA SVN

Frederickson, Arthur George, 18 Mar 2016. SSgt RNZAC, LBdr (Dvr Op) 161 Bty SVN

Culhane, Bevan. 1 April 2016. WO1, 16 Fd Regt RNZA. 161 Bty RNZA SVN.

Mitchell, Keith. 3 Apr 2016. Gnr 2<sup>nd</sup> NZEF, WW2.

Jarvie, Roy. 4 Apr 2016. 32 (E) Bty, 3 Fd Regt, RNZA

O'Connor, Desmond. 7 Apr 2016. WO1, RNZA, NZ Regt, RNZIR, WW2 vet.

Wasson, John, 17 Apr 2016. Lt Col. 161 Bty RNZA SVN, INZATTV.

Mackley, Ian Chappell, 24 Apr 2016. Sgt 162 Bty, 16 Fd Regt RNZA Korea

*They shall grow not old as we  
that are left grow old  
Age shall not weary them  
nor the years condemn  
At the going down of the sun  
and in the morning*

*We will remember them  
We will remember them*



## Eight things civilians should know before dating someone in the military

Dating a service member is different than dating a civilian. — but just how much different is it? Here are eight things to consider before jumping into a relationship with someone in uniform.

1. Service members are independent and you should be too. Troops have to deploy, which means not having him or her around for important events like anniversaries, birthdays, and weddings. If you're a person that constantly needs their physical presence, dating a service member is probably the wrong choice.

2. Don't be jealous. Most of the NZ military is integrated. They deploy to remote locations and work long hours with members of the opposite sex. You'll have a hard time trusting your significant other if you're naturally jealous.

3. Don't overly display supportive military gear like you're rooting for your favourite sports team. It's okay to be proud of your boyfriend or girlfriend serving in the military, but you can take it a bit too far. Gear includes t-shirts, bumper stickers, jewellery and more. You may think it's cute and supportive, but you've just painted a target on the back of your significant other as the butt of many jokes. You're also on your way to being labelled a "dependa" without actually being one.

4. It's not being mean, it's tough love. Service members are used to direct communication, so avoid that passive aggressive, vague, manipulative language that you practice on your friends and co-workers. Direct communication is instilled from day one in the military. I can still remember (46 years later) my drill instructor yelling, "say what you mean, and mean what you say!"

5. There will be secrets. Depending on their specialty, service members are trained to be more guarded than others. This is especially true with members that require secret clearance to do their job. You can poke and prod all you want, but it's not going to happen. You'll have to be okay with not knowing that part of their life.

6. You have to be willing to move. If you're looking for a life partner in the military, you've got to be willing to give up ties to a specific location. This could mean giving up your career and being away from family. Some service members move every three years. Are you willing to live like a nomad?



*The above lapel pins are available from  
[www.poppypins.co.uk](http://www.poppypins.co.uk)*

7. You have to be flexible. Plans might change or be cancelled at the last minute. One moment they're free to go on a date night, the next day they're pulling an all-nighter. Same goes for weekends. Just because they spend one weekend with you doesn't mean that next weekend will be the same.

8. Learn to tolerate his buddies. The military is a brotherhood. Their lives depend on this special bond, so don't think that they can just go out and get new friends. Learn to get along with friends, even the annoying immature one.

### Quote of the Day

"At the same time, we should also remember that the military has long prided itself on being a meritocracy, where those who serve are judged NOT based on who they are or where they come from, but rather what they have to offer to help defend this country."

*The United States Secretary of Defense Ash Carter*

## RNZAA Presidents Report

It is fantastic to see the amount of 'gunner associating' which has taken place over the past three months, so a big well done and thank to all those who have organised and attended Gunners Day functions and other related activities. There is a really positive vibe around the gunner community at the moment and this atmosphere of active comradeship is what will allow us to extend our welfare and support to our fellows in need.

I must make special mention of the great relationship developing between past and present gunners, facilitated and encouraged by the CO (Lt Col Ben Bagley) and the RSM (WO1 Richard Theodore). A sincere thank you to these gentlemen and all the serving soldiers at 16 Field Regt..

I personally have been 'light on the ground' as I have been on holiday in the UK, but I can report that the Memorial Service at Salisbury Cathedral on 19 May, and the Review of the Royal Regiment by HM the Queen, our Captain General at Larkhill on 26 May were both utterly memorable events.

I met with the Master Gunner St James Park, Gen Sir Timothy Granville-Chapman at the Service, and was seated immediately behind the Queen at the Review.

The sight of all six guns of the Kings Troop RHA, each towed by 4 horses, charging past the saluting dais at full gallop is an image which will remain a long time. Unfortunately I was not able to formally present the Statue, the official gift from the RNZA to the RA, but I have left it in the good hands of Lt Col Tom Ellen until the official presentation can be made on El Alamein Day in October. Tom is recuperating well from his quadruple by-pass, and was a fantastic host to Mary and me during our time in the Salisbury area. Thanks Tom.

Our travels now continue in rural Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland, where WiFi is a pretty rare commodity. So the problems of every day life seem very distant at the moment and we are able to reflect on the lives of our immigrant forefathers.

Lets make the AGM/Reunion in Auckland a cracker this Labour Weekend, so that it reflects just how well we are progressing as an Association.

My very best wishes to all Gunners.

Ubique

Tony McLeod  
President, RNZA Assn

### A Toast to the Guns

By them we live,  
For them we would die.  
Whatever the Mission,  
We'll give it a try.

We'll serve them with Honour  
For they are the ones;  
That make us Artillerymen,  
So here's to the Guns:  
**TO THE GUNS!!**  
- Unknown

## The Colonel Commandant reports:

As usual it has been a busy few months for the family of Gunners in New Zealand. It started with a gun battery deployed in Korea for the first time since the Regiment returned from active service after the Korean War, and finished with a very successful Gunners Day and commemoration of the 300th Anniversary of the Royal Regiment of Artillery. And, there was plenty in between.

I was lucky enough to join the CO and RSM for a short part of their visit to 161 Battery who were deployed in Korea for about a month over February and March. They were working with ROK Marines and a United States Marine Corps air and naval gunfire liaison unit preparing for and participating in the major Allied exercise in South Korea. The Battery trained and live fired before joining their supported ROK Marine Battalion at sea in an assault carrier and completing a beach assault as part of the exercise. I was quite pleased that my trip did not include the four days at sea crammed into an assault ship; I suspect the CO and RSM felt the same.

In the time off, the Battery was able to visit the war cemetery at Busan and pay their respects to those of the Regiment who were killed in action or died on active service during the Korean War. They also visited Kap'yeong, the DMZ, and had a short break in Seoul. It was a very successful exercise.

In late March there was a parade and ceremony in Linton to welcome the latest batch of RNZA Corps trainees into the Regiment. By now they would have felt the full brunt of winter live firing exercises in Waiouru. It was a reasonably large intake, with a good mix of skills and trade, and a welcome addition to the Regiment.

During April we lost two long serving members of the Regiment, both with active service with the guns in Vietnam. John Wasson was 2IC and Bevan Culhane an RSM. Regiment provided the necessary military ceremonials at both funerals. Both were proud, long and loyal servants of the guns.

*Continued P 5.....*

.... From P 4

For ANZAC Day, the Regiment participated around the North Island, with 11/4 Battery providing minute guns at two sites in Auckland and one in Hamilton, and a significant Regimental presence at Raglan, Hunterville and Paraparaumu.

In the middle of May I spent a few days in Waiouru (mostly above 3000 feet) on Exercise Brimstone, which is the final testing exercise for the JFTs course – in our language, Forward Observers. The first week was spent on mortars and the second week on guns, with a six gun battery. There was a variety of fire missions and fire plans, and all students qualified. See the picture below.

Heading into the field for live firing is always a great thrill. I would recommend to anyone interested that they plan on attending Exercise Ben Cat in August, when one can be a guest of the Regiment during a live firing exercise in Waiouru.

The most recent activity was of course Gunners Day, and very successful it was too. Dawn guns in eight important gunner locations started the day and the publicity. The main body of the Regiment had a range of activities in Palmerston North and Linton including an historic weapons display and inter Battery gun run in the city Square, and the gunfire breakfast and barbecue in Linton.

The day culminated in very well attended and successful Gunners Day dinners throughout the country, where more than 600 Gunners and their partners enjoyed the company of other Gunners.

In the United Kingdom, we were represented at the Captain General's Royal Review of the Royal Artillery at Larkhill. Our representation was led by Brig Evan Williams the Defence Attaché in London, Tony McLeod our Association President representing past Gunners, and SSgt Jason Wells representing serving Gunners. All three joined the Captain General's party for the Review.

Our Band remains very busy. They had half a dozen or so engagements around Anzac Day. In the forthcoming months they have at least one public engagement each month as well as mess functions at Papakura, and in November they have been invited to play at the Armistice Day commemorations at The Shrine in Melbourne.

The RNZA Heritage Trust continues its work. An author has been selected for the Miles biography and the Trust is about to enter a fundraising phase to ensure there is sufficient cash to write and publish the book over the next couple of years.

...Continued P 6



The picture is of the left section in high angle from a gun position alongside Westlawn Hut.

...from P 5

Some important Gunner medal collections have been donated to the Regiment, including a Military Medal set from a gun number one at Passchendaele, and another Military Medal set from a 162 Battery Signals Sergeant from the Korean War. The Trust is now investigating secure display facilities for these two sets and other medals for the Regimental Museum at RHQ in Linton.

In closing, remember to frequently look at the Muzzle Flashes page of the RNZA Association website, where you will find day to day announcements of Gunner activities throughout New Zealand and where appropriate, Australia. The major participation activity coming up will be Exercise Ben Cat in August in Waiouru, where Association members will be hosted by the Regiment during a live firing exercise. Also in August, for Vietnam veterans, there will be major commemorations in Wellington, Canberra and Brisbane, marking the 50 year commemorations of the Vietnam War.

In the meantime, keep your powder dry and keep well. I look forward to catching up at the AGM in Auckland on Labour weekend in October.

Ubique

Barry Dreyer

Colonel Commandant Royal Regiment of New Zealand Artillery

## Plan G - Nursing Home Plan for old Gunners

Say you are an older senior citizen and can no longer take care of yourself and the government says there is no Nursing Home care available for you. So, what do you do? You opt for "Medicare Plan G".

The plan gives anyone 75 or older a gun (Plan G) and one bullet. You are allowed to shoot one worthless politician. This means you will be sent to prison for the rest of your life where you will receive three meals a day, a roof over your head, central heating and air conditioning, cable TV, a library, and all the Health Care you need. Need new teeth? No problem. Need glasses? That's great. Need a hearing aid, new hip, knees, kidney, lungs, sex change, or heart? They are all covered!

As an added bonus, your kids can come and visit you at least as often as they do

now! And, who will be paying for all of this? The same government that just told you they can't afford for you to go into a nursing home. And you will get rid of a useless politician while you are at it. And now, because you are a prisoner, you don't have to pay any more income taxes!

**Is this a great country or what?** Now that I've solved your senior financial plan, enjoy the rest of your week!



11/4 Bty, 16 Fd Regt RNZA on parade late last year

## FROM 6RAR

The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary OF THE Battle of Long Tan will be held at the Brisbane Convention centre on the evening of the 19<sup>th</sup> August 2016. The organising committee would like to invite members of 161 Battery who may be interested and were on the ground on the 18th August 1966 to attend this event with your partners.

Final details such as timings have not been decided upon yet but all details will be printed on tickets which will be forwarded after payment is processed. With DVA assistance we have been able to keep the costs down to \$60 pr. head. This will apply to all in attendance including the D Company Vets. The price will include pre dinner snacks, a two course meal, a four hour drinks package and entertainment. Tea and coffee will also be included.

Although it is still over two months away, time goes quickly for old blokes and the committee would like to start getting numbers together. Money and details can be sent to: John Heslewood, 2/15 Bass Court, Bribie Island Qld 4507. Please include Christian and Surnames so name tags can be printed up and sent back with tickets. If there are any questions give John a ring on +61 (0)7 34107734.

Ubique  
Barry Dreyer

## Infantry Entrance Exam

### Instructions

Using the crayon provided, join the two dots below.  
You have until the big hand reaches the 6 to complete this task.  
Please do not eat the crayon.



## Expression of Interest

### 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Vietnam War - 2016

Commemorations of the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War will be held in Wellington and Canberra, Australia on 18 August 2016.

Thirty-five New Zealand Vietnam veterans selected in a ballot will travel to Canberra, to participate in commemorations at the Vietnam Forces National Memorial, Anzac Parade on 18 August. Veterans selected to participate will travel to and from Canberra with support from the New Zealand Defence Force.

Thirty veterans will be selected from a general veterans category and five veterans who served with 161 Battery in Vietnam will be selected from a separate category in the ballot.

To be eligible to travel to Canberra for the commemorations, veterans must have served in Vietnam between 1962 and 1975 (in either the civilian medical team or the New Zealand Armed Forces), have qualified for the relevant Vietnam medallic recognition, and be cleared by their GP for overseas travel.

To be eligible for the 161 Battery category, veterans must also have been posted or attached to 161 Battery on 18 August 1966 and have served at the gun line during the Battle of Long Tan.

To register your interest, please email [commemorations@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:commemorations@nzdf.mil.nz) to request a registration form.

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.

## Memories of Kapyong

Maurice Gasson took long term leave from his teaching position at the Te Kuiti District High School in 1950, to join the newly formed 16th Field Regiment. He sailed with the main body on the S.S. Ormonde in December of that year, for Korea, where he served with 161 Bty until his return to New Zealand near the end of 1952.

Upon discharge Maurice returned to his teaching position, and remained teaching, through a number of North Island schools. He served his last 10 years of teaching as Principal of the Clevedon School, and retired in 1985. He now lives with his wife on a small holding, raising beef animals, travelling, and writing both poetry and prose. With seven children and sixteen grandchildren, (and currently 14 heifers) he is kept quite busy.

I am standing in my garden, in the early morning haze,  
 Looking up towards the hillside where the quiet cattle graze,  
 And the fog which night has gathered on the swamp which lies between,  
 Forms a blanket which enhances this, my early morning scene.  
 But now further up the valley, from the quarry neath the hills,  
 Comes the sound of early blasting which my peaceful scene dispels  
 For the sound I hear recalls to me the echo of a gun,  
 In a valley in Korea in the spring of fiftyone.  
 And the fog which shrouds the swamp land, now assumes a deeper hue  
 Like the gunsmoke on the paddi, in that valley that I knew,  
 I smell the cordite once again, and as the daylight comes,  
 I see spread across the valley floor, that regiment of guns.  
 The Middlesex ahead of us, Australians to the right,  
 And to the left Canadians have held on through the night.  
 With target after target from our O.P. on the crest,  
 The gunners feed the guns, their bodies crying out for rest.  
 For the guns, now like an orchestra, the targets they engage,  
 With a symphony of anger, a cacophony of rage.  
 And from the hill above me, just beyond the nearest crest,  
 Comes the stutter of the bren guns from the infantry hard pressed  
 From the road which lies behind us come the Army Service Corps,  
 Dump their load of ammunition and then speed back off for more.  
 I see walking wounded moving through our lines, while overhead,  
 Fly the choppers which are lifting out the dying and the dead.  
 And now at last, the foe repelled, the storm and fury done,  
 Each weary gunner lays him down and sleeps beside his gun.  
 Now I hear a pheasant calling, and a stirring in the trees,  
 And I feel the cool caresses of an early morning breeze  
 I feel a hand upon my arm, a voice beside me say,  
 "What are you thinking of my love? You seem so far away"  
 My aging eyes refocus on the farmlet that we share,  
 The orchard with the apple trees, the peach, the plum, the pear,  
 The sun is up, the mist is gone, the cattle on the hill,  
 Are back to grazing peacefully, and all is calm and still.  
 You sometimes smile and tell me of the things that I forget,  
 People's names and missed appointments, little things like that, and yet  
 Despite the years that lie between, my mind can still recall,  
 How we held the line that April, on the road that led to Seoul.

M. E Gasson, May 2003

Source: : <http://riv.co.nz/rnza/songs/gasson.htm>

## First Battle of Coral - 12th - 13th May 1968 - The Real Story

by Colonel I.F. Ahearn (Rtd), Gun Position Officer, 102nd Field Battery, FSPB Coral 1968

*(The following story is a GPO's perspective of the Battle and differs somewhat from the 'official' version.)*

The initial deployment did not go smoothly. It set the scene for a day where there was considerable confusion, with important decisions being made on the spot as events unfolded.

The first disruption reported in the deployment, according to the Official History, was made by Lt Col Shelton CO 3 RAR when he discovered that the US Army was in contact with the enemy in the vicinity of Coral. According to the History, Shelton, after radio discussions with the Commander 1 ATF, began to make rapid changes to the plan. The History does not say what those rapid changes were and, at the time, no information was passed to the Gunner elements of the deploying force about any changes, rapid or otherwise.

According to the Official History, an 'American air commander' prevented B Coy of 3 RAR from landing at K Pad at Coral. Yet, the reconnaissance parties of 12 Fd Regt and 1 RAR which were scheduled to land at K Pad (Map Reference XT9252840) just five minutes later did so without any problems. On arrival the reconnaissance parties (of which the author was a member) were met by US troops, not members of B Coy 3 RAR. Contrary to this reality the Official History states that B Coy 3 RAR on landing at an LZ some 1,000 metres to the South West 'hurried' to the original landing zone which could only have been K Pad. If so they were not sighted by the reconnaissance parties or 161 Bty.

All was confusion on the LZ. The helicopters containing the Gunner and 1 RAR reconnaissance parties landed at 0720 hours into an area secured by a company from the US Army 1st Division (the Big Red 1) with airstrikes being conducted to the West. The 102

Bty GPO, Lt Ian Ahearn (the author), together with a Gun Section Commander, 2Lt Bob Lowry and a Gunner Surveyor Gnr Geoff Dwyer, had travelled with the 161 Bty party. Adding to the growing confusion, the Regimental Reconnaissance Party, which included the 2IC of 12 Fd Regt, on landing, disappeared from the LZ and, at first, could not be contacted by radio. The only clue to the whereabouts of the party was provided by an American infantryman when he advised that '... some guys had left the perimeter' and headed out into 'Indian country'.

The Gunners in the reconnaissance parties expected that the procedures for a Regimental deployment would be followed. That is the 2IC of the Regiment, Maj Brian Murtagh, would indicate areas for each of the three gun batteries (including the US Bty that was to deploy the next day). Normally, the total area would be approximately 400 metres square. Each of the GPOs would then lay out their gun positions in their assigned areas. But the disappearance from the LZ of the Regimental Reconnaissance Party and the inability to establish radio communications prevented an orderly deployment of the artillery from the very outset.

Growing confusion was suddenly compounded by the unexpected arrival of the 161 Bty guns. The sky above the LZ quickly filled with Chinook helicopters carrying the guns of 161 Bty, but with the absence of the 2IC there was no designated area in which to land the guns. There were also no gun tractors on the ground, so once the guns were landed, an action that the helicopters wanted to complete immediately, the only way to move the guns was by manpower. Apart from the intense problem that now existed on the ground, the arrival of these guns was the first sign that there was disruption to the planned air insertion. According to the plan, 161 Bty guns were not due until 1000 hours. The New Zealanders had no choice but to accept their guns and Lt Rod Baldwin, 161 Bty GPO, sprinted away to lay out the gun markers.

Despite repeated efforts by both 161 Bty and 102 Bty,

*... continued P 10*

the 2IC could not be contacted by radio until the time when the helicopters began to land the 161 Bty guns. With communications being finally established, the 2IC acknowledged the pressing situation and ordered that the 102 GPO Party move to his location ‘... just up the track’. Such an obscure order was not at all helpful. The 2IC, whose actual location was still unknown, provided no map reference. The area had formerly been a rubber plantation and, naturally, it was littered with tracks. It was impossible to know what track the 2IC was referring to. The author therefore requested the 2IC to throw a smoke grenade to provide a visual indication of his location. The author then took a compass bearing on the smoke and he and his two companions marched out of the LZ now in a state of frantic activity with the deployment of the New Zealand guns.

In his book, *The Battle of Coral*, Lex McAulay described the actions of Murtagh’s party once they had arrived at K Pad:

‘The recce party checked the location and found that they were 1000 m away from the desired location, so they set off in that direction.’

This comment seems to explain why Murtagh’s party had disappeared from the LZ and moved off into surrounding country. It is not clear which member of the ‘... recce party checked the location’ but whoever it was could not map read. Apart from the confusion caused by the absence of the 2IC from the LZ at a critical time, this error in basic navigation was to have an impact on the subsequent operations around Coral.

The Official History failed to understand what transpired during the initial landing at the prescribed LZ when it declared that ‘... the guns (161 Bty) were landed in an improvised landing zone, a clearing some 1,000 metres to the southwest of FSB Coral.’ That statement is wrong; as explained above, 161 Bty guns were landed at the only map location given in the orders. The location was subsequently verified by a report at 1045 hours that 161 Bty, despite the frantic confusion, had expeditiously established the battery on the ground and was ready for

action at map grid reference 927284. This grid reference specified a position just 200 metres from the LZ designated in the orders. On this basis alone, it is indisputable that 161 Bty was delivered to the right location and the Regimental Gun Position should have been grouped around that location.

Things did not turn out so well for the Australian battery. Murtagh selected a site for 102 Bty that was simply too far from the initial LZ. The only explanation for Murtagh’s decision to site 102 Bty so far from the initial LZ was poor map reading and a mistaken appreciation of how much real estate was needed to accommodate the future tenants of Coral. When the author’s party eventually found Murtagh, he was some 1500 metres from the LZ area. Deeply concerned, the author pointed out the enormous gap between the battery locations but Murtagh was unmoved and replied that as the Task Force was deploying, the space would be needed.

To determine an accurate location of the area, Ahearn, Lowry and the Battery Surveyor moved off into the rubber to a set of ruins that appeared on the map; this meant that the ruins could be given a grid reference. Using a theodolite, the three moved back to the position, which Murtagh had indicated, to provide an accurate map location for the guns. As they moved through the rubber, they came upon an area with a hundred freshly dug circular weapons pits and picked up an AK-47 round and a lolly with a Ho Chi Min wrapping. These were obvious signs that an enemy force had rested in the area within the last day or so. This vital and disturbing information was reported to Murtagh, but it appears that he told no one.

At this stage of the initial deployment it was now apparent that 1 RAR was not to land as planned since the supporting US helicopters had been temporally withdrawn resulting in a delayed fly-in. The withdrawal of helicopter support did affect the orderly arrival of 102 Bty guns which began to be flown in at 1230 hours before 1 RAR. Some of the battery sorties were delayed until later in the day. D Coy 3 RAR, the

## Letters to the Editor

Hello David,

I know you are a in a bit of a pickle at the moment and I do hope the matter resolves itself with you shortly, there is a situation with VANZ that perhaps you need to put in your next missive.

On their website is an April 16 Newsletter, the newsletter gets posted to all in NZ but we in Orztrallya do not get the same service, no doubt saving on postage. Us "Foreigners" are on record as having been told by the Minister in a letter that we are on our own once we leave NZ.

The Newsletter details new rates of Pensions etc. as of April but also tells you that in future you will get any medical reimbursements fortnightly instead of monthly but no longer will you get a letter telling you what is going into your bank account, you must look at your bank statement to find this out. With the letter came a blank form for your next reimbursements but no longer do you get this either, you need to download it from the Internet if you are lucky enough to have Computer/Printer.

I took this up with my Case Manager only to be told the system has changed and this is the way it is now.

Pity the poor bloke who has no computer and has no idea what goes on in Veterans affairs.

We used to moan about Jesse Gunn but she was a Saint compared with the treatment we get today from Jacqui Couchman, mind you her Bio when she took the job told us she was well versed in "Change Management" and "Saving Money"

I don't want to add to your dilemma but I think the Chaps need to know.

Best regards

Ed

The young woman who submitted the tech support message below (about her relationship to her husband) presumably did it as a joke. Then she got a reply that was way too good to keep to herself. The tech support people's love advice was hilarious and genius!

The query:

Dear Tech Support,

Last year I upgraded from Boyfriend 5.0 to Husband 1.0 and noticed a distinct slowdown in overall system performance, particularly in the flower and jewellery applications, which operated flawlessly under Boyfriend 5.0.

In addition, Husband 1.0 uninstalled many other valuable programs, such as Romance 9.5 and Personal Attention 6.5, and then installed undesirable programs such as: NBA 5.0, NFL 3.0 and Golf Clubs 4.1. Conversation 8.0 no longer runs, and House cleaning 2.6 simply crashes the system. Please note that I have tried running Nagging 5.3 to fix these problems, but to no avail.

What can I do?

Signed, Desperate

=====

The response (that came weeks later out of the blue):

Dear Desperate,

First keep in mind, Boyfriend 5.0 is an Entertainment Package, while Husband 1.0 is an operating system. Please enter command: I thought you loved me.html and try to download Tears 6.2.

Do not forget to install the Guilt 3.0 update.

If that application works as designed, Husband 1.0 should then automatically run the applications Jewellery 2.0 and Flowers 3.5.

However, remember, overuse of the above application can cause Husband 1.0 to default to Grumpy Silence 2.5, Happy Hour 7.0, or Beer 6.1. Please note that Beer 6.1 is a very bad program that will download the Farting and Snoring Loudly Beta version.

Whatever you do, DO NOT, under any circumstances, install Mother-In-Law 1.0 as it runs a virus in the background that will eventually seize control of all your system resources.

In addition, please do not attempt to re-install the Boyfriend 5.0 program. These are unsupported applications and will crash Husband 1.0.

In summary, Husband 1.0 is a great program, but it does have limited memory and cannot learn new applications quickly. You might consider buying additional software to improve memory and performance.

We recommend Cooking 3.0.

Good Luck!

## Powder Monkeys



The "powder monkey" on the USS New Hampshire in 1864. The powder monkey ran gunpowder from the powder room to the ships cannons and were usually boys aged 12-14, selected for their height as they could easily duck for cover.

## Did you know the origins of the rank of Bombardier?

The rank of Bombardier is derived from the Bombard, which was used at the Battle of Crecy in 1346 (the first battle in which the British employed artillery); the rank was the junior-most NCO and it was his duty to ignite the cannon's charge. Originally the titles of the Artillery's junior NCOs were bombardier and corporal; however, in 1920s, these ranks were replaced with lance bombardier and bombardier.

## True or False?

One of our FO's in SVN got to play with the battleship USS New Jersey. It was parked off the coast and a helo was sent to our Nui Dat position to collect the FO – one Lt (who shall remain nameless– mainly because I can't confirm this)

The target area was in around the Warburtons to the north of Vung Tau which was rumoured to be the base and hidey hole for one of the NVA Regts in the province. The FO was rumoured (Bdr's don't get told much, non RNZA Cpls get told even less!) to have directed the fall of shot for most of the time from the helo but felt a more personal approach was required and landed somewhere close to the target.

Apparently he misunderstood the reach of the 16 inch shells blast wave, shock and other hurting stuff and subsequently decided that directing shot from the helo was close enough. He may be the only NZ soldier to have ever controlled the fall of shot from a battle ship.

## LET ME DIE A YOUNGMAN'S DEATH

Let me die a young man's death  
not a clean & in between  
the sheets holy water death  
not a famous-last-words  
peaceful out of breath death

When I'm 73  
& in constant good tumour  
may I be mown down at dawn  
by a bright red sports car  
on my way home  
from an all-night party

Or when I'm 81  
with silver hair  
& sitting in a barber's chair  
may rival gangsters  
with ham fisted tommy guns burst in  
& give me a short back & insides

Or when I'm 94  
& banned from the Tavern  
may my mistress  
catching me in bed with her daughter  
& fearing for her son  
cut me up into little pieces  
& throw away every piece but one

Let me die a young man's death  
not a free from sin tiptoe in  
candle wax & waning death  
not a curtains drawn by angels borne  
'what a nice way to go' death

Let me die a young man's death  
*Roger McGough*

**SOME OF THE MOST SICK  
& TWISTED PEOPLE I KNOW**



*from P 10...*

company designated to defend the FSPB, indicated that it arrived at Coral (although timings are confused). According to Lex McAulay, the Officer Commanding discussed the situation with Murtagh ‘... came to some arrangement’. The OC of D Coy explained that: ‘There was a gap between the rubber trees; we’d move our company up and sit there where we could get good views over the open ground on either side of the rubber. Now whether that was where we were intended to go or not, I’m not sure, but that was agreed with Brian Murtagh on the ground and we duly went off and dug in there.’

The precise location of D Coy 3 RAR was never advised to 102 Bty or the 1 RAR Mortar Pl when the latter finally arrived at Coral. D Coy 3 RAR was to take no further part in the activities of the first night at Coral. The vagueness of the ‘arrangements’ arrived at by Murtagh and the OC indicated the beginnings of the muddled planning and preparation for the defence of Coral. The alarming feature of what was unfolding was that Murtagh had been told about the close proximity of freshly dug enemy weapon pits, had seen the nervous Americans at the landing zone and had seen the airstrikes to the west. Such information should have had a significant impact on the officer who had been charged with the responsibility of local defence commander of the FSPB.

The Official History obliquely comments on the poor planning for the defence of Coral: ‘Major Brian Murtagh, second-in-command of 12 Fd Regt and commanding the artillery tactical headquarters, was the designated commander of the fire support base; he was faced with the difficult and complicated problem of coordinating the defence of FSB Coral with his two batteries of guns some 1500 metres apart instead of being located at Coral and two battalions in his general area’.

This comment needs to be considered in detail. Murtagh was not ‘commanding the artillery tactical headquarters’ he was commanding 12 Fd Regt Regimental Headquarters. The appointment of a FSPB defence commander was common standard practice and had been followed in all deployments previous to Coral. The procedures and practices of coordinating FSPB defence were therefore well known by infantry company commanders and gun batteries. Up to this

point in time, Murtagh had no real experience of being an FSPB defence commander. In addition to his lack of experience – and probably because of it – Murtagh had complicated the FSPB defence problem by his own poor decision to site the two batteries 1,500 metres apart. While the Official History portrays Murtagh as being ‘faced with the difficult and complicated problem of coordinating the defence of FSB Coral’, the history fails to say that it was Murtagh’s own decisions that created the major problem of the dispersal of the two batteries. Furthermore, the presence of the two infantry battalions ‘in his general area’ was not a problem as the Official History suggests. The presence of two battalions was a temporary and common practice and each only transited through ‘his general area’ into their own operational areas. Indeed, the two infantry battalions were irrelevant to Murtagh’s role as defence commander of the FSPB because those units were not integral elements of the FSPB itself. The battalions would have no affect on his duties as the defence commander.

The infantry company allocated to FSPB defence, D Coy 3 RAR, was not given clear orders by Murtagh nor, subsequently, were the other tenants of Coral under his command. It would seem that Murtagh himself contributed a great deal to the ‘difficult and complicated problem of coordinating the defence’. Bob Lowry accurately described the end result of the deployment with a concise comment on the defence problem:

‘The fire support base was under command of Murtagh for local defence, but was actually two separate bases, one clustered around 102 Battery and the other around 161 Battery, with the reconnaissance party of Headquarters 1 ATF and its Defence and Employment Platoon stranded between them. To compound matters, except for 10 Platoon located with 161 Battery, the remainder of D Company, 3 RAR, was too far away to assist in the local defence of either base.’

From the tactical perspective, the layout of the

*... continued P 14*

military force was quite unsound. In view of indications of the presence of a disciplined military force the poor tactical stance was inviting trouble. With the return of the US helicopters at the end of their temporary withdrawal, the disjointed fly-in recommenced and the infantry companies of 1 RAR began to flow through the 102 Bty area. It was obvious that they were confused and disoriented; most sent their affiliated artillery FO's to 102 Bty to check on the map location before moving out to their night ambush positions. 2Lt Gordon Alexander was sent on such a task by his OC, Maj Tony Hammett:

‘At the gun position, Alexander spoke to Ian Ahearn, the Gun Position Officer (GPO), and one of the Section Commanders, Bob Lowry. They told him of the newly dug positions in the rubber trees just north of the guns, and that they thought there was ‘something funny going on’.

The gunners of 102 Bty were unable to carry out the normal defensive tasks such as the erection of barbed wire and the bunding of guns since the neither the defence stores nor the battery bulldozer had arrived. They were set to work digging their personal weapon pits to Stage 1 (four feet deep), a task that none enjoyed but an effort that saved lives later on. The Official History states that: ‘Most 102 Battery soldiers had no time to dig their individual “shell scrapes” deeper than fifteen centimetres before they had to stand to.’

The statement gives a false impression and appears to be based on the recollections of LBdr Forsdike who was a member of HQ Bty 12 Fd Regt, not 102 Bty. As indicated above most of 102 Bty had dug to Stage 1 (1.5 metres deep) although some individuals may have only constructed shell scrapes. Unfortunately for the CP staff they also had to dig and then set up the CP since the bulldozer had arrived. A trench about two meters deep was dug then ‘shelves’ levelled out on each side to provide space for the CP staff (duty officer, two operator command post field and a signaller). Sandbags were placed around the edges, wooden beams laid over them for protective cover and the peak of an 11x11 CP tent placed on top of the beams. Radios, connected to an R 292 mast aerial were set up outside the CP against the sandbags and the handsets passed through into the CP.

As the fly-in was coming to an end, a detachment of 131st Div Loc Bty comprising two listing posts (LP) and a mortar locating radar was airlifted in among the last sorties. LP 31C was deployed near the machine gun in front of Number 4 gun and the radar was positioned between 102 and the Regimental CP on the western side of the gun position. LP 31E moved on foot over the 1500 metres to the 161 Bty position.

The 102 Bty helicopter sorties to Coral were complete by 1720 hours and they included additional ammunition, part of the battery defence stores and an O-Sized bulldozer. The latter was quickly put to work piling up protective earth bunds around individual guns. The 1 RAR Mortar Pl was among the last to arrive on the ground with last light fast approaching. The Mortar Pl was located at the left (northern) flank of the gun line some 50 metres from the nearest guns and like the guns it had a centre of arc of 1600 mils (due east).

The Mortar Pl was not isolated on the perimeter as claimed in different accounts of Coral; in a further display of the poor defensive layout the Mortar Pl, 12 Fd Regt HQ and 102 Bty actually formed the perimeter! Misleadingly, the Official History incorrectly presents a picture of a totally isolated mortar platoon when in fact the mortars formed what could be regarded as a seventh gun platform in 102 Bty located on the left–northern-flank of the gun position (when viewing the gun position in relation to the easterly centre of arc).

It was at this stage that CO 1 RAR decided that his HQ would not move out to join one of his companies as planned but would remain in Coral protected by his battalion's Assault Pioneer and Anti-Tank Pl's. The battalion headquarters and the two platoons were the closest infantry to the mortars and 102 Bty, being some 400 metres south-east of the former and about 300 metres from the latter.

The poor defensive layout was only one aspect of the defence problem. As Lt Tony Jensen, the Mortar Line Officer at Coral observed: ‘1 RAR mortars did not arrive on the position until approximately 1700 hours and there was no FSPB defence coordinating conference.’

Remarkably, there were no orders issued to any elements

on the ground for the defence of Coral on that first night, including 161 Bty isolated some 1500 metres to the south-west. The New Zealanders were left out on their own, a situation that was also noted in the Official History.

As local defence commander, Murtagh was also responsible for coordinating 161 Bty defence and tying it in to the overall defence plan; the problem was that no plan existed and that the positioning of the two batteries had made the defensive task impossible. The defence principle of mutual support had been ignored.

At the 102 Bty position Jensen and Ahearn sited and coordinated the arcs of the two Battery machine guns placed in front of Number 4 Gun and Number 6 Gun with the Mortar Pl machine gun. In addition, Jensen tied in the arc of the Regimental CP machine gun with the latter. No coordination was carried out with any of the HQ elements of 1 RAR nor was any orders group held by the FSPB Local Defence Commander.

The Official History recorded that the 1 RAR Anti-Tank Pl's two 90 mm Recoilless Rifles (RCL) were sited to fire across the front of Jensen's mortars. This comment reinforces the impression that the mortars were in a totally isolated position. This was not the case, the Mortar Line was shielded from the RCLs by the Guns of 102 Bty. The RCLs could only fire across the right flank of the 102 Bty gun position. In any case, no one informed Ahearn or Jensen that such a significant action had been taken. A telephone line was run between the Mortar CP, 102 CP and the Regimental CP. The line was not extended to HQ 1 RAR. No defensive wire barriers were constructed since the wire had finally arrived on the position late in the day and erection of barriers could not be completed by last light. Furthermore, no claymore mines were deployed since the location of D Coy 3 RAR was not known as darkness fell. The claymore mine was a powerful local defence weapon that, something like a large shotgun, simultaneously fired thousands of steel balls parallel to the ground. A command detonated weapon, the mine could have a devastating effect on enemy forces attacking a position. On a more positive note, the O-Size bulldozer completed the protective earth bunds around Number 4, 5 and 6 Guns before last light.

With the dark came 'stand to', the practice whereby work ceased and all were required to 'watch their front' and maintain quiet in anticipation of an enemy assault. 'Stand to' was also implemented each morning at first light. It was essentially an infantry practice that was, at times, inappropriate in a gun position. The first night at Coral was one of those times as, what would normally be a period of attentive quiet, the last light 'stand to' was shattered by 105 mm Howitzers adjusting Defensive Fire tasks for the companies from the two infantry battalions which were still deploying. Indeed, the need to stop defensive work for a full stand-to under these circumstances was highly questionable and resulted in only the northern guns (number 4, 5 and 6) being bunded before the bull dozer was obliged to stop. The bunding around the Number 4, 5 and 6 Guns was to prove another stroke of luck.

*This story will continue in the next issue with the enemies response*

*Source: Eyes & Ears Official newsletter of the 131 Locators Association Inc.*

### **The Top Ten Song from the SVN era:**

10. The Green, Green Grass of Home—Porter Wagoner
9. Chain of Fools—Aretha Franklin
8. The Letter Box—The Box Tops
7. Sittin' on the Dock of the Bay—Otis Redding
6. Fortunate Son—Creedance Clearwater Revival
5. Purple Haze—Jimi Hendrix
4. Detroit City—Bobby Bare
3. Leaving on a Jet Plane—Peter, Paul and Mary
2. I feel Like I'm Fixing to Die Rag—Country Joe and the Fish
1. We Gotta Get Out of the Place—The Animals

Do you agree? Let me know

## Come commemorate and celebrate the forming of the RSA in Wellington 100 years ago.

The RNZRSA 100th National Council will be held at the Michael Fowler Centre on the 10 and 11 of October 2016.

Before this, on Sunday 9th October 2016 at 2pm, we will be holding a National ceremony at Pukeahu, the National War Memorial. Please put this in your diaries and newsletters!

There will be a parade of veterans and current serving personnel, followed by a wreath laying ceremony. We are hoping that the Chief of the Defence Force will be our Guest of Honour.

We encourage all veterans to participate in this parade to commemorate the forming of our organisation.

If you would like to march in the parade you just need to be at Pukeahu ready to form up in Tasman Street, by 1.30pm on the 9th October.

We will send out more details as the event comes closer.

For further information contact Bukit Hill at [Bukithill@xtra.co.nz](mailto:Bukithill@xtra.co.nz) or phone 027 659 0679.

## We Are Gunners

We may not rule the night  
We do not own the day  
But whatever time we are needed  
We're never far away

We can light your way through darkness  
We can split the ground in front of you  
And we will shake the world around your foes

When you need us, we stand side by side  
If you don't we are always watching over  
One thing we will not do, is we will never hide

Who are we?  
What are we?  
We are the Gunners  
Serving God's call  
To add dignity to what would otherwise be an ugly brawl

Whether its 105mm or MLRS  
Starstreak or Rapier AS90 or Stormer  
Commando, Para or Sphinx  
We will support you, when you call it in  
Through all your times of need  
To bring the will of God, to those who have committed that most mortal sin

Although some of us never come home  
They will never be forgotten  
As every Gunner knows, we do not die  
We simply fade away  
For God has reserved a place in heaven, that every Gunner stays.

We run, we crawl, we fly, we soar  
We stay until evil is no more  
We are Gunners, we are fair  
We are always Everywhere

So Take the time to think of all us Gunners  
and know we always tried  
Where the danger roams and trouble hides  
Mothers have cried for the sons that died

We are there on the divide  
Serving our country with Pride.  
UBIQUE





Billy Gunn-James & Jim Taare—  
Rarotonga



Ron Turner with friends



Danny & Bernie McCort—  
Rotorua



Three generations  
of Clayton John's  
family



Gunners in Sydney



Pukeatua—NWM



Katikati RSA



Self propelled L5 found in Te Anau



Capt Catherine Dymock and a  
couple of Alexandra reprobates



S Sgt Jason Welles at Westminster Abbey  
ANZAC Day service



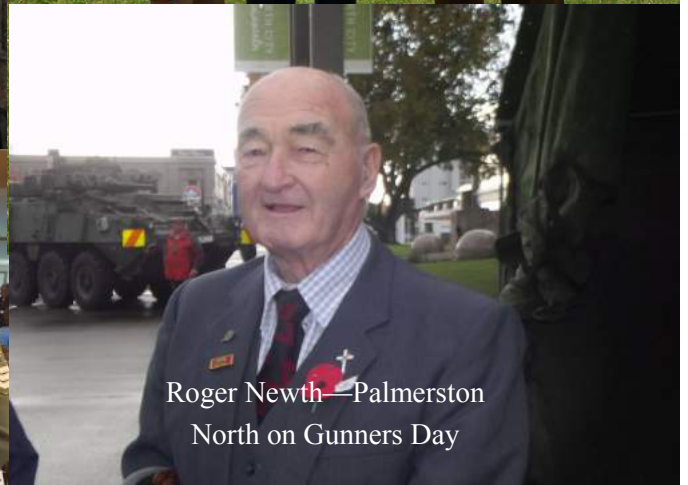
Prince Harry at ANZAC Day service at  
Westminster Abbey with NZ High Commissioner



S Sgt Dean Cootes with ex SVN Gunners at  
Paraparamu RSA



Mary and Tony McLeod, with Lt Col Tom  
Ellen, at the 300th Anniversary celebrations  
at Larkhill



Roger Newth—Palmerston  
North on Gunners Day



Skin Francis & Pat Duggan at Canterbury University



Ahhh, that whiff of cordite on Gunners Day

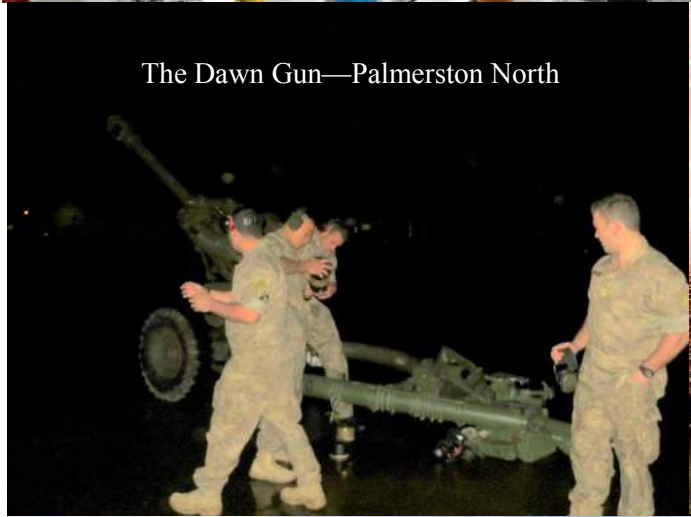
19  
Gunners Day 2016



Gunner Mafia at Devonport



22 (D) Bty Gunners— Wayne Burns, Chris Morriss, Colin Jansen & Howard Page



The Dawn Gun—Palmerston North



Dawn Gun—North Head



Dawn Gun—Dunedin



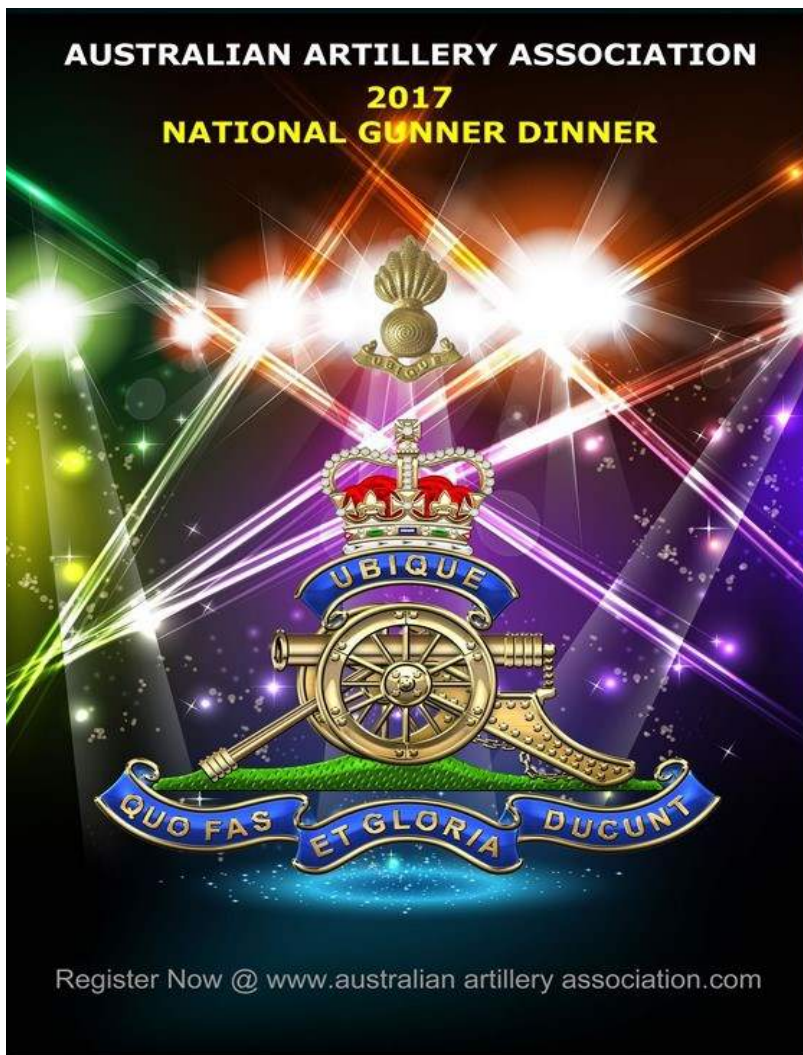
BC & members of 11/4 Bty at Devonport



Dunedin Gunners waving the flag



Sgt David Dench & crew, 163 Bty Takatu  
—winners of the inter Bty gun race



My goal for 2016 is to lose just 10 kilos ... only 15 to go!

Ate salad for dinner... mostly croutons & tomatoes ... really just one big, round crouton covered with tomato sauce ... and cheese ... FINE, it was a pizza ... I ate a pizza!

I just did a week's worth of cardio after walking into a spider web ...

I don't mean to brag but... I finished my 14-day diet food in 3

hours and 20 minutes ...

A recent study has found women who carry a little extra weight live longer than men who mention it ...

Senility has been a smooth transition for me

Remember back when we were kids and every time it was below zero outside they closed school? Me neither.

I may not be that funny or athletic or good looking or smart or talented... I forgot where I was going with this ...

I love being over 60... I learn something new every day... and forget 5 others ...

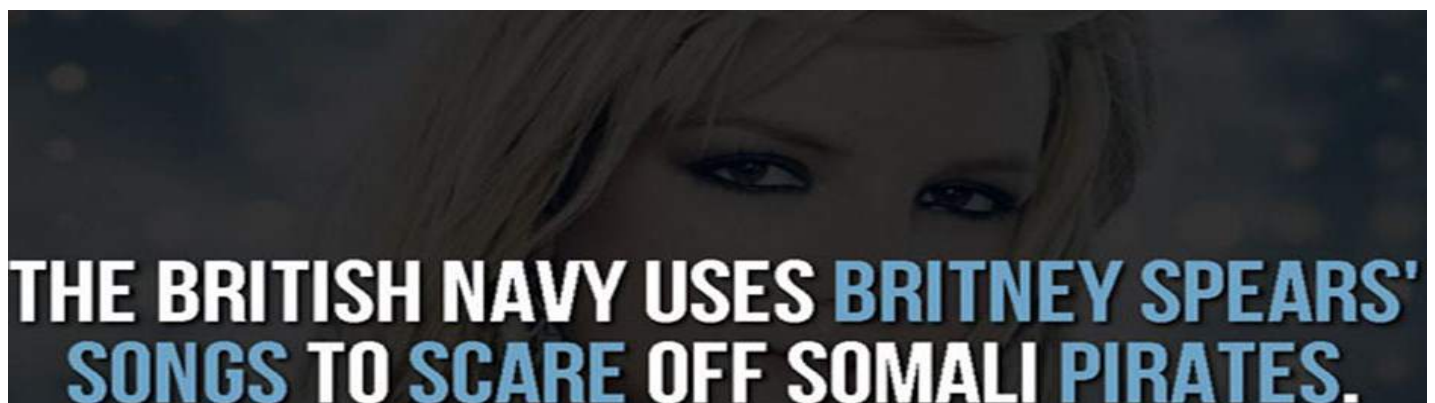
A thief broke into my house last night... He started searching for money ... so I woke up and searched with him ...

I think I'll just put an "Out of Order" sticker on my forehead and call it a day ...

Don't forget to set your bathroom scale back 3 Kilos ... it is Daylight Savings Time.

*We gave our youth, for others to have  
theirs....*

*Against all odds we worked, to help clear  
the path through the darkness,  
for the youth of tomorrow  
to live, in the light they deserved*



## I felt the need to confess

*Many of us, after serving the Guns, went on to enlist in that other honourable profession of the Police. Some of us older ex cops have been reminiscing and the following is one of those stories., but in this case this story comes from a bloke who served as a cop before he went to SVN as a Gunner. No names, no pack drill eh mate?*

I felt the need to “confess my sins” over life in The Wellington Central Barracks, after my hurried departure from Lower Hutt no thanks to a certain Sgt Newman who was filling in for the Snr Sgt.

As you know from your time in Wellington the Barracks as they were, took the top floor of the Cell Block, and ran parallel to the back of the then Midland Hotel. As a matter of fact our “Recreation Room” was the Back Bar of the Midland.

And I was only 20 at the time, nobody seemed to give a toss, Sgts and Snr Sgts all drank there so it was a happy little place.

Now the Barracks, with the basement half below ground held the stores etc. and the ground floor was the normal cells, the second floor was the Women's wing presided over by a resident Matron and us on the top floor. Our ‘room’ was a converted cell, with only enough space for a bed, washbasin and a small table but it was “home”.

My room faced out over the Midland and would you believe it faced the Staff quarters of that very hotel and those were the days when the Tourist Hotel Corp brought young Aussie Girls over on a 12 month contract to work in NZ, the last 4 months of their contract were spent anywhere they wanted to work hence there being a mob in the Midland, talk about “Hormones on Legs”, what a randy bunch they were.

Outside my room ran a Fire Escape the length of the building and likewise there was a similar Fire Escape over on the Midland. The distance between us would have been only about 6 feet and laying along the fire escape were various

planks of wood which could be used to bridge the gap if one was inclined.

Opposite me was one nubile young Wench who was prone to put on a Strip Show if she noted I was at “home” of course that was an invitation to fly across the gap and be educated into the ways of the World that you can only imagine. Mind you I was not the only one getting an education, several of my fellow Wallopers who lived in, their names I will conveniently forget, used to do the across the plank routine quite often.

It all came undone one night when the Civvy Telephone Operator in her little booth in the Watch house looked up out a small window that she had and saw a body going across the Gap. Of course she just had to tell the Duty Snr Sgt, it was Charlie Bowley from memory, and he soon invaded the female Staff Quarters of the Midland with a Posse he had gathered, however, trying to hide under the bed did not work for me and next morning about 4 of us were “Tap Dancing” in front of The Area Commander, old Bob Moore I think it was.

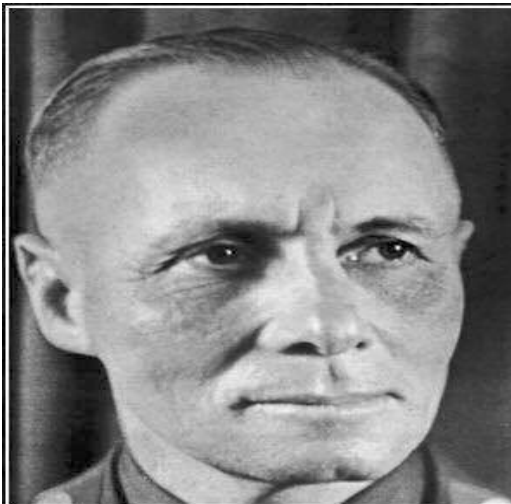
Well, to our dismay we all copped a fine of 15 Quid each, quite a bit in those days. Being on Licensed Premises out of hours I think they called it.

The Barracks closed in about 62 with the opening of the new Barracks in Buckle Street, but I had other ideas and went to live out.

It is all only a pleasant memory today. Ahhhhhhh

*(I didn't identify you did I Ed?)*

*I do need to mention that in my early days as a cop, I remember those two buildings and always wondered why there were planks of wood connecting the two.*



If I had to take hell, I would use the  
Australians to take it and the New  
Zealanders to hold it.

— Erwin Rommel —



To purchase contact :  
[rnza.association@gmail.com](mailto:rnza.association@gmail.com)

## THE BRONZE GUNNER

### COLONEL COMMANDANT'S MESSAGE

Greetings, fellow Gunners and families.

We have been working with the RNZA Heritage Trust and the NZ Defence Official Artist, Captain Matt Gauldie RNZA, to develop a distinctly Kiwi Gunner trophy of some impact and value. The result is this wonderful bronze of a gunner in action on his gun.

This is being produced by Captain Gauldie in a limited edition of fifty, each individually finished, signed and numbered.

As well as being a superb trophy, the statue represents generations of New Zealand Gunners, fighting their guns with skill, courage and determination.

Available with or without a brass cartridge case mount, I would encourage you to consider purchasing the trophy.

Matt Gauldie is recognised as one of the country's leading artists and has many of his works in galleries and private collections. More recently he has been commissioned in both Australia and New Zealand to complete monumental bronzes for public place display.

This bronze combines his love of both guns and bronze sculpture into a superb collectors' piece.

Ubique

Barry Dreyer

Colonel Commandant Royal Regiment of New Zealand Artillery

### Quoting Napoleon Bonaparte

"The first shot is for the Devil, the second for God, and only the third for the King."

"Nothing is more destructive than the charge of artillery on a crowd."

"The best generals are those who have served in the artillery."

"God fights on the side with the best artillery."

"With Artillery, War is made."

"Leave the Artillerymen alone, they are an obstinate lot. . ."

**"It's through mistakes that you actually can grow. You have to get bad in order to get good. "**

**– Paula Scher**



## A POEM TO WHICH I CAN RELATE

I remember the corned beef of my Childhood,  
And the bread that we cut with a knife,  
When the Children helped with the housework,  
And the men went to work not the wife.  
The cheese never needed a fridge,  
And the bread was so crusty and hot,  
The Children were seldom unhappy,  
And the Wife was content with her lot.

I remember the milk from the bottle,  
With the yummy cream on the top,  
Our dinner came hot from the oven,  
And not from a freezer; or shop.  
The kids were a lot more contented,  
They didn't need money for kicks,  
Just a game with their friends in the road,  
And sometimes the Saturday flicks.

I remember the shop on the corner,  
Where biscuits for pennies were sold  
Do you think I'm a bit too nostalgic?  
Or is it....I'm just getting Old?  
Bathing was done in a wash tub,  
With plenty of rich foamy suds  
But the ironing seemed never ending  
As Mum pressed everyone's 'duds'.

I remember the slap on my backside,  
And the taste of soap if I swore  
Anorexia and diets weren't heard of  
And we hadn't much choice what we wore.  
Do you think that bruised our ego?  
Or our initiative was destroyed?  
We ate what was put on the table  
And I think life was better enjoyed.

Author, Unknown...

If you can remember those days...

Continue to enjoy your Retirement & GOD BLESS YOU.

*Courtesy of a onetime scribe, aka a layabout, pint puller, 3\* Gunner and general drifter from the north of the West Country*

Most Syrians struggle to even read Arabic, much less have a clue about English.

So, how do a group of Syrian protest leaders create the most impact with their signs by having the standard "Death To The British"(etc) slogans printed in English?



Answer:

They simply hire an English-speaking civilian to translate and write their statements into English.

Unfortunately, in this case, they were unaware that the English "civilian" Insurance Company Employee hired for the job was actually an ex 2nd Para Sergeant!

Obviously, these pictures of this protest rally never made their way to Arab TV networks, but the results were PRICELESS!

*This photo has not been doctored*



## The Battle of Long Tan—A Gunners Perspective

In August 1966, Rotorua's Danny McCort was part of a New Zealand artillery battery when Australian infantry came under attack by an almost overwhelming force. What happened next is now the stuff of Anzac legend - the battle of Long Tan. Matthew Martin shares his story today, on Anzac Day.

Around 4pm on August 18, 1966, Rotorua's Danny McCort and his gun crew received orders to fire on an advancing enemy patrol. Little did he know they had just joined the now legendary Battle of Long Tan.

Danny picks up the tale.

"We thought it was just a normal fire mission, the target description was a VC (Viet Cong) patrol, but then they changed it to VC platoon, then to VC company, then they screamed 'fire mission regiment', all 18 guns.

"Most of the guys were down at Luscombe Field, an airstrip, and an Australian artist, Little Pattie, was playing a concert down there so the guns were only half manned."

He soon learned that the men from D Company 6 Battalion Royal Australian Regiment (6RAR) were caught up in a serious fire-fight with North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong troops, some 2500 strong.

As the battle raged on the situation was getting more and more dire for the men of D Company who were almost surrounded and running out of ammo.

"To my knowledge it was the last defining and major battle ANZAC's had been involved in together."

Alongside the Australian troops caught in the rubber plantation of Long Tan were two Kiwi forward observers attached to 161 Battery Royal New Zealand Artillery, of which Danny was a bombardier and in command of a six-man team. They were Captain Morrie Stanley and Bombardier Willie Walker. Their job was to call in artillery support for their ANZAC mates.

Danny estimated his gun crew fired more than 600 rounds that day and overnight.

"We kept firing until we were told to stop. It was pissing down with rain, a real monsoon storm. At one stage a lightning bolt hit the comms post, so we just kept firing until we almost ran out of ammo. Man, we fired some rounds that night."

Australian troops caught up in the battle were unanimous about one thing. If it were not for the skill of the Kiwi gunners, none of them would have made it out alive.

"Only the quick response of a New Zealand artillery battery to desperate calls for support saved D Company from annihilation," states the Australian government's official history of the battle.

Cutting a long story short, D Company were resupplied by Australian air force helicopters and continued fighting, repelling wave after wave of enemy troops until 3 Troop 1 Armoured Personal Carrier Squadron drove off the attacking forces about 7pm that night.

"But it was Morrie who really saved them, calling down all that fire."

Danny and the men of 161 Battery continued firing on the area for another 12 hours. After the battle Danny spoke to some of the men from D Company, who had lost 17 men with another 20 or so wounded.

"They were bloody rapt, and they say if it wasn't for us they wouldn't have been there. We were dropping right close to them, 50m, almost right on top of them, those rounds have a killing range of 150m."

He said the day after, everything was a mess. "The place almost got flooded out during the battle as well. Everything was covered in mud and crap. But that's war, you have to do what you gotta do.

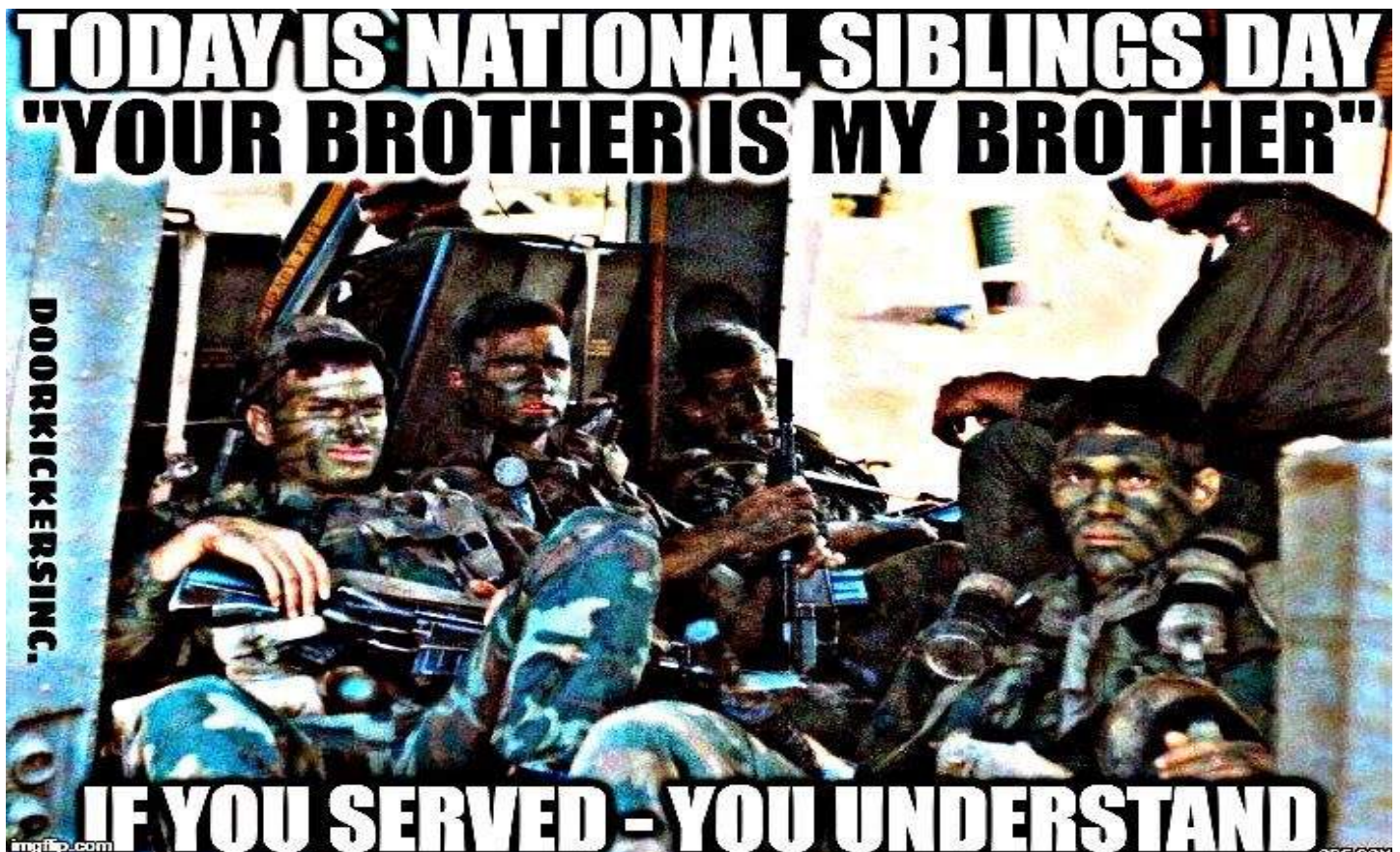


*Danny McCort holds his much deserved medals. Photo / Stephen Parker*

"Where we were on the guns, we weren't getting shot at, it was those poor bastards up the front that copped it. But it does become a defining part of your life though. I remember it right from the first minute."

So on Anzac Day today, Danny will remember those who fell at Long Tan and other battles over time - Chunuk Bair, the Somme, El Alamein - to name a few. "I'll remember those guys who didn't come home, my mates. But I don't think anyone can imagine what it feels like for a family who had a son killed. Just waiting for that knock on the door, how the hell did they handle it?"

*With thanks to Marie Roberts and Rotorua's daily newspaper*



## The Battle of Long Tan Timeline

\* August 18, 1966

\* East of Nui Dat Task Force Base, Long Tan, Phuoc Tuy Province, South Vietnam

\* Patrolling the area were D Company, 6 Royal Australian Regiment

\* Artillery support provided by 161 Battery, Royal New Zealand Artillery, plus Australian and US heavy guns

\* Attacking were North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong forces of up to 2500

### Timeline:

**3.40pm:** D Company 6RAR make first contact with Vietnamese forces

**3.45pm:** Heavy monsoon rain begins

**4.10pm:** Battle of Long Tan fully involved

**4.15pm:** Artillery called in

**4.45pm:** Battle escalates

**6.05pm:** 9 Squadron RAAF resupplies D Company

**7.05pm:** 3 Troop 1APC Squadron drives off attacking forces

**7.15pm:** Enemy in retreat

**Until morning:** 161 Battery, RNZA continue barrage

## Roly Flutey

In each generation of Gunners there is one or two that standout in our memories. I am a 70s Gunner and my generation was heavily influenced by those who served in Vietnam and there were many notable characters amongst that group of Gunners. One who will be in the memory of many in my cohort was Roly Flutey.

Roly was a scruffy Gunner, who appeared to take pleasure in providing the BSM with a great deal of angst. His barracks room was always a mess and he led a few of us younger fellas astray on one or two occasions. But there can be no doubt that he knew his gun drills backwards and was always quick to help out the new guys.

Roly joined the Army aged 19 in 1967 and did a winter Basic in Waikouaiti. In July 67 he was posted to Depot Bty in Papakura and over the next year completed three gunnery courses and was posted to 161 Bty RNZA SVN in July 68, arriving just after the Tet Offensive.

His first impression of Vietnam was of the heat and the disorganisation. He and his mates had to wait 6 hours at Ton San Nut for onward transport to Nui Dat, however he found that unlike NZ, where the drinking age was 21, he could freely enter the bars at the airport and thereby found a very reasonable way to pass the time.

On arrival in Nui Dat, it was hot, wet and the guns were out on a Fire Support Base, so his first jobs on active duty were to mow the lawns and do picket duty. He was issued with his rifle, webbing and a tent, the only one that had a light in it as apparently the previous occupant, a medic, had insisted on being able to see.

Roly was initially attached to No 1 gun, under Jim Breen and later transferred to No 2 under Jock Fallon. Each gun crew, whilst at Nui Dat, consisted of a Sgt, a Bdr and eight ORs. Five members of each crew had to be available for action so they worked on a 48 hour rotating roster that allowed those off duty to have a drink or two, whilst those on duty were expected to remain on the dry. When out on a FSB, the crew consisted of a Sgt plus 7 and they were on duty 24/7.



The BC on arrival was Maj Hitchings, followed later by Maj Horsford. His Section Commander was John Tulloch and the BSM was Jack Keinzley.

Fire Missions were often in support of the NZ infantry Companies, and they would regularly have to change barrel direction when firing in support of the Kiwi grunts as they would chase the VC, whereas the Aussies, when making contact, tended to stay in the same spot.

Roly's R & R was in Bangkok and the Gunners had the opportunity for in country rest at Vung Tau.

On return to NZ in June 1969, Roly was posted to NZDef Publications Branch. He returned to SVN in early 1970 and was on Dave Morgan's gun with Maj Andrews as the BC.



In July of that year, whilst at FSB Leloi, a petrol can exploded and Roly's leg was severely burnt. He was evacuated to Nui Dat and subsequently sent to Singapore and then returned to NZ. He was given six weeks sick leave with the expectation that he would receive skin grafts but through some cock up, that never happened, which was to have repercussions later in life.

On return to Depot Bty, he was assigned to the April 71 flight for his 3<sup>rd</sup> tour to SVN, but that flight was cancelled as the Bty came home in May 71.

Roly eventually made the rank of Bdr and was discharged in October 1975.

His first jobs outside the Army were as an Insurance salesman and a frozen goods delivery driver. He then got a job with Air New Zealand as an aircraft loader and held that job for 18.5 years, before working as a taxi driver and shuttle bus and tour operator in partnership with his wife Gail.

Roly now works for Zirka Circus, with Gail, as an advance booking agent and he gets to travel around the country in his mobile home and has the opportunity to meet many of his mates whilst travelling. He has turned up on my doorstep a couple of times now and emptied my whisky bottles.

*Ed's note: any errors or omissions are entirely mine—there is nothing wrong with Roly's memory.*



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**Secretary** Bernie McCort, 07 345 3643, 18 Walford Drive, ROTORUA 3010. **Email:**  
**rnza.association@gmail.com**

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**Subscriptions:** For those members wishing to receive a printed copy of the Newsletter a \$20 fee is payable. Please forward by cheque to The Secretary 18 Walford Drive, Rotorua 3010. Subscription **Associate Members:** \$20 per annum. Please send cheque to above address.

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

**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, please forward your address. Have you changed ISPs? Have you updated your Internet address? Some mail is being returned.

**Input into Gunner News:** Short stories, especially with accompanying photographs, are always welcome for inclusion. The Editor's email address is: **davidwbahler@gmail.com** Please send as an attachment in MS Word format.

**Member Registration:** New members are most welcome. **ALL** Gunners are eligible for Full Membership, it is **FREE**, and automatic once a gunner has served in the Regiment for more than 3 months. 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 the new website: [rnzaa.org.nz](http://rnzaa.org.nz).

**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 Skin at:** **muzzleflashesnz@gmail.com**

**Secretarial/Treasurer matters to:** **rnza.association@gmail.com**

**Items for Gunner News to David at:** **davidwbahler@gmail.com**

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