



NZ GUNNER

Royal New Zealand Artillery Association Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

BY SHAY BASSETT

Seasons' Greetings Fellow Gunners,

As you will likely be aware, some weeks ago we held our RNZA Association Annual General Meeting (AGM) under quite unusual circumstances. Normally, of course, it is included as part of the annual reunion. Unfortunately, this was simply not possible due to lock downs, and our planned weekend in Trentham had to be cancelled. Thanks to modern technology though, we were still able to at least complete the AGM.

As a result myself and a number of new Committee members took over the reins from Tony and his outstanding team. I do not use this term of phrase lightly. The achievements of the Committee, under Tony's outstanding leadership over the last decade, have simply been astounding. Thankfully, a number of absolutely key members agreed to serve on, and it is this that helps ease my fear that we have such a 'hard act to follow'!

I know that I am not alone when I say that one of the worst impacts of having to cancel this year's reunion was that we could not all be there together to really show Tony our appreciation, however, plans are already in place to remedy this situation on Gunners Day 2022!

For those that weren't able to 'tune in' for the AGM, I on assuming the chair I took the liberty of briefly outlining what I see as the main, but interwoven and related, streams of effort for our new Committee as we go forward. These were:

- Comradery – In 1936 when our organisation was first established the term 'comrade' was included in the title. I believe the reason for this still holds true today.
- It is at the heart of what binds us together, and is so aptly captured in that great old saying "Once a Gunner always a Gunner"!
- Almonry – On the day I used the term 'welfare', but as our Vice President, Greg Thwaite, has subsequently and quite rightly pointed out, the connotations of this word these days are not good. On the other hand 'almonry' has a more genuine and caring quality to it, and touches on the aspect of comradery.
- Linkage between serving and ex-serving Gunners – While older Gunners tend to desire and see the strength of this, it has always been a 'tough nut to crack' getting younger serving Gunners to see the merit in this, but we will continue working on improving this and thankfully have the support of the Regiment in doing so.

In November I had the opportunity of visiting Linton and meeting with CO 16th Field Regiment (16 Fd Regt), Lt Col Dean Gerling, to discuss the above points along with a number of other matters.

I'm very pleased to report that the CO was extremely positive and could not have been more supportive. The following is a brief synopsis of the key aspects of our, quite long, meeting:

- The new RSM, WO1 Aaron Taylor, will continue from where WO1 Heath Southcombe left off as the lead point of contact at the Regt for all RNZA Association business. By the time you read this I should also have had a chance to sit down with the RSM and go over some of the points below in more detail.
- The CO is more than happy, and planning, on an RNZA Association contingent attending a Live Shell Practice (LSP) again in 2022. At this stage it's likely to be a three day affair sometime in May – June (so pack your woollies!)

- The CO welcomed the offer of the RNZA Association being able to provide almonry support to serving personnel as well as ex-serving Gunners.
- The Regt offered up a big thanks for the 'RNZA Assn' face masks (well done Craig Hewett) provided to all of the soldiers currently conducting Covid Operation Protect (Covid 19 MIQ) duties around the country.
- Continuing on from the above point, support to Operation Protect continues to be the Regt's 'main effort' and at this stage this is unlikely to change for some time yet.
- The CO raised the subject of how the Association might assist with finding employment contacts for Gunners taking release from the Army.

Which brings me to more recent RNZA Association activities that have managed to go ahead. Most importantly Gunners around the world gathered on Saturday 4 December to suitably mark St Barbara's Day. For those of us in Wellington it was even more poignant than usual, as Col (rtd) Rob Hitchings had very thoughtfully asked those that had known his father, Brig (rtd) G.A. Hitchings, CBE, to join him for a drink in remembrance. There is more on this event below, but suffice to say it was great to see so many Gunners of all eras come together for this. Feedback from other gatherings around the country seem to also indicate events were well supported.

More recently our new Committee meet for the first time on Tuesday 5 December, once again by Zoom, and covered off many of the items above. Additionally, considerable discussion was also generated in relation to two other subjects.

The first was the definition of 'veteran'. As you probably know, Veterans Affairs New Zealand (VANZ), as a result of their founding legislation, currently interpret this term to mean NZDF personnel who have deployed on operational service.

This, however, is not the definition you will find for 'veteran' in most English dictionaries. The conscious of our Committee was that 'veteran' better describes those that have served their country in the armed forces, i.e. every Gunner is a veteran. The second topic was on the merits of seeking to include in the next census a question (or questions) pertaining to service in the NZDF. It may surprise many of you to know that although there are records, sometimes quite poor, on the number of NZDF personnel that have deployed on operations over the years, the same does not exist for those that have served. Any numbers you read or hear are based on estimates at best. There is still a lot of water to go under the bridge in terms of background work that needs to be done before we are in a position to pursue anything in relation to these two matters, and the Committee would certainly value any thoughts Members may have.

Until next year, I wish everyone a safe and happy break over the holidays.



AGM - 30 October 2021

The incoming committee members are:

President: Shay Basset

Secretary: John McNicol

Treasurer: Chris Pearce

Members: Greg Thwaite Chris Morriss, Craig Hewett, Bryan Moles, Pete Dawson, Paul Weldrand



COLONEL COMMANDANT'S CORNER

BRIGADIER (RTD) PAUL SOUTHWELL

As we emerge from the fog of Auckland lock down I am aware that in many areas we have probably not done justice to our patron saint, Saint Barbara's day 4 Dec. No doubt some of you were able to awaken neighbours with early gunfire and a tot of rum with your coffee. The Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery sent us St Barbara day greetings and best wishes to all gunners and their families.

Despite restrictions a few of us were able to attend the funeral of Brigadier Geoffrey Hitchings on 9 November

DRob Hitchings, his son, gave a fine tribute via video. Rob had commanded 16 Fd Regt when his father was Colonel Commandant RNZA.

The retirement of Tony McLeod as president of the association was marked by an online Annual General Meeting. Tony and wife, Mary have dedicated many years to the Association, years which have seen the Association redirect itself, grow and become one of the foremost advocates for veteran issues.

Congratulations to Major Shay Bassett who has taken the reins as president and we look forward to working with Shay and the new committee members. The festive season will soon be upon us and I want to wish you all a joyous occasion with family and friends and let's spare a thought to those servicemen and women who are deployed overseas and on Operation Protect.



Passchendaele Continued: New Zealand Artillery in the battle of 12th October 1917.

The NZ Division's attack on 4 Oct, despite difficult conditions had gone relatively well. The barrages were successful and the NZ Div secured both objective lines taking over 1000 prisoners and gaining valuable ground in preparation for the next phase of the battle.

The German's still held much of the Passchendaele ridge which dominated the Ypres salient. Our infantry were withdrawn on the evening of 5 Oct with the guns remaining to support the 49th Division in the next phase of the battle. The CRA NZ Division, Brigadier Johnston remained in command of the eight brigades of artillery to support the divisional attack. Batteries needed to move forward but conditions had so worsened with unrelenting rain that roads were impassable.

Men and pack animals moved forward to prepare positions and dump ammunition. By the night of 6th Oct attempts to move guns forward had blocked the roads and guns were hauled off the road and brought into action where they stood or in some cases completely bogged and useless.

Dead men and horses lay scattered aside the roads and enemy long range guns searched for Battery positions.

Despite heavy rains on 7 and 8 of Oct the attack on 9 Oct went ahead with limited success. The infantry advance was unable to match the pace of the creeping barrage, which was brought back as a standing barrage at the first objective.

The strategic situation was not looking good for General Haig. Ten weeks of fighting had not achieved what Haig had calculated would take 2 days. Winter was approaching and the Germans were receiving reinforcement from the Russian front. Despite this Haig continued the offensive on the basis that German forces would be held up in Flanders while the French and Italians conducted major attacks.

A few days after the unsuccessful 49 Division attack the NZ Division was again brought to the front, and an attempt was made to bring guns forward. But conditions were so bad that only 8 x18 pounders and 4 x 4.5in Howitzers were in forward positions and they lacked platforms to keep them from sinking in the mud.



The CRA Brigadier Johnston reported to the Div Comd, General Russell and the Corps Comd that they could not depend on the artillery to support the attack planned for 12 Oct. Heavy guns were called to break up pill boxes and wire but to little effect and as a consequence the infantry attack was halted by wire and machinegun fire with tragic losses before reaching the first objective.

The guns provided a protective barrage (protecting against counter attack) while infantry were told to prepare for a fresh attack at 3pm. Fortunately infantry commanders insisted on the futility of a second offensive given the high number of casualties and the fact that many soldiers were trapped close to the wire and could not reorganize during daylight. Over the night the artillery responded to a number of SOS calls.

The casualty figure for the morning's attack was 2730 killed and wounded. Over the night 12/13 Oct men from the reserve brigade, every man that could be spared off the guns, and Service Corps, and a battalion from a neighbouring Division, were employed getting the wounded to dressing stations.

The cause of the failed attack was put down to a lack of preparation, although under such conditions it is questionable that any amount of preparation would achieve success. From a tactical view point there is the classical friction between maintaining momentum of an offensive and the need for preparation time.

No doubt Haig and Gough considered the NZ Div could repeat the success of the 4 Oct attack. In the circumstances it was an unrealistic expectation, and some historians suggest that General Russell was unwell at the time and this attack was most uncharacteristic for a man who had a reputation for detailed planning and preparation.

The NZ infantry were relieved by Canadians on 20 Oct and command of the guns passed to the Canadian CRA in preparation for a series of attacks by the Canadians that eventually took Passchendaele Town on 6 Nov.

- Col Cmdt



ARMISTICE DAY ROUNDUP

Auckland

"Owing to the Alert Level, the official Armistice Day event at the Auckland War Memorial Museum was cancelled yesterday, 11 November.

However, about a dozen people paraded at 11 am, for a defiant celebration hosted by the President of the RSA. It was a truncated ceremony, but still with the RSM of the Battalion, a bugler, the Ode, and the laying of a wreath.



I had the privilege of parading, and laying a poppy. It is the only parade I've attended where the Official Party and The Public were there in equal numbers."

-- Greg Thwaite

Christchurch

"The Christchurch City Council and the Police were concerned that a formal Armistice Day Parade may exceed 100 people and consequently advised that they could not support a formal parade under Covid L2 restrictions. The Chch Memorial RSA decided to go ahead with a "Claytons" parade, that is, a parade that you have when you're not having a parade."



The Armistice Day parade you have when you're not having a parade, parade. Note Skin Frances shouting at everyone. -Anon



"Around 10:40 on 11/11/2021 people started to wander about the area of the Bridge of Remembrance, many wearing medals and berets and some carrying wreaths. The Mayor of Chch also just happened to stroll by with a wreath as well. At about 10:50 some soldiers of various ranks in SDs wandered up, three of whom had weapons and took station at the Bridge. SSgt David David Fiu of the NZ Army Band also just happened to wander past with his cornet.

Also at about 10:50 one Skin Frances (RNZA) wearing one of his UN Observer berets and his medals, started shouting at everyone in military type language and I suddenly found myself "on parade" as right marker with like dressed ex military people falling in in three ranks on my left, suitably socially distanced.

At 11:00 two minutes silence was observed, words were spoken by the President of Chch Memorial RSA, wreaths were placed, then the Last Post was sounded, the Ode was recited, Reveille was sounded, then Skin Frances shouted at us again to "right turn and bugger off!" - Peter Dawson



Bay of Plenty

Glorious Day. Good turn out. Bofors gun Mitchell Park, Whakatane next to the RSA. Lovely remembrance garden, with a main cenotaph for WW1 & 2 then remembrance stones for the remaining conflicts/missions up to Afghan. About 10 people turned up. Then into the RSA for light refreshments.
- Craig Hewett

MEMBERSHIP

Welcome to the association to our new members

Full membership:

- Chris Dyhrberg
- Grant Day
- Chase Good
- Peter Walsh

Associate Membership

- Kara Hardley-Rout
- John Van Heerden

John McNicol remembers John Rout Father of Kara

In 1967, John Rout was an instructor at the School of Artillery on the National Service 17th Intake Driver Operators' Course. The course was run by people just back from their first tour in Vietnam, headed by Staff Sergeant Dave Roberts. Among the instructors were such luminaries as Bombardiers: Pat Duggan, Paul O'Connor, Dennis Dwayne and John Rout.

Such an impression these men made on me that I can still recall them vividly 54 years later. - John McNicol

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TREASURER'S REPORT:

BY CHRIS PEARCE

The cancellation of the 2021 AGM and reunion weekend planned for Trentham was a big disappointment for all. It also had a huge impact on our annual revenue drive. The reunion weekend provides the best opportunity each year for the Association to generate revenue via the event itself, Q Store sales to members, and donations. With no annual membership fees, the Committee relies on events, Q Store sales and donations to secure revenue to support its initiatives.

2021 has relied very heavily on Q Store initiatives driven by Craig Hewitt to provide virtually all income for the Association. This has been a fantastic achievement, but we have missed event income and donations. There is little we can do about events until 2022, but I do make a plea for donation support.

Our accounts are healthy, but we need to maintain a focus on the future, and to this end we will need donation support. So, this is a Treasurer's request as 2021 draws to a close.



Donations

Should you feel inclined, please consider a donation to the Association in 2021 to help towards our continued support of gunners, past and present.

Donations can be made to our account as follows:

Account name: RNZAA

Account number: 38-9007-0694501-00

Reference: Donation

You can claim tax credits for donations of \$5 or more when the donation is made to an approved charity. The RNZAA meets the charity criteria. Receipts for donations are available."

ARTILLERY PORT

FOR THOSE THAT NEED IT

Artillery Port is now available from the vineyard

Price \$30/bottle.

Delivery cost/freight charge \$12 anywhere in NZ.

Best shipped in 6 or 12 bottles - Smaller quantities are difficult to ship safely

Kym Rayner, Torlesse Winery.
PO Box 25, Waipara
ph 03 3146929

Email: winery@torlesse.co.nz.

Loffhagen Drive Waipara, New Zealand 7483



A GUNNER ON DEPLOYMENT IN KOREA IN 2021.

BY JOHN GARTON

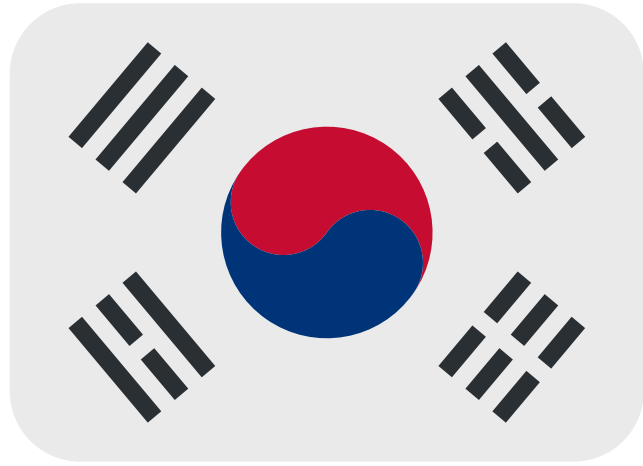
At started with a 11 hour flight from an empty Auckland International terminal direct to Incheon International Airport. Arrival procedures included producing proof of a negative COVID test, followed by loading one of the two Korean government COVID apps onto your cellphone. Then producing proof of A2 visa and being military.

On exiting into the terminal, more confusion with our US counterparts ending with a bus ride to Camp Humphreys 60km south of Seoul. Another COVID test then two hour wait for transport to our accommodation for the next two weeks. On completion of two weeks hardship living in an apartment outside camp we started conducting our handover from the departing team.

This included a visit to the famous blue buildings where the Korean Armistice Agreement was signed in the Joint Security Area (Panmunjom). This was also timed to allow us to observe the monthly 'right to flight' helicopter flight as allowed in the armistice.

Prior to departing NZ, I was contacted by Maj Mike Lawry RNZE for information on Kapyong and 16th Field Regiments part in it. During our isolation Mike and I carried on discussing from each other's balcony's parts of the battle and some of the finer points of gunnery to allow him to understand how and why some things happened. Mike had already completed about four weekend recces of the positions occupied by 3 RAR, PPCLI, 1 Middlesex Bn, the two US Heavy Chemical mortar batteries, 213 Mobile Artillery Bn and of course our own 16 Fd Regt. He also conducted a lot of research with the United Nations Command historian, putting everything in chronological order from the unit diaries and other books. The result is the document uploaded on the RNZA facebook page.

It should be noted that United Nations Command (UNC) is not controlled by the UN. On the outbreak of war the UN sanctioned the US to lead the response and through some miscommunication approved the name United Nations Command and use of the UN emblem.



People posted to UNC do not wear the UN blue beret but their own countries headwear.

United Nations Military Armistice Commission – Secretariat is a subunit but also policeman of UNC and Republic of Korea (ROK) forces for activities within the De-Militarized Zone (DMZ). On the signing of the armistice both sides were to set up a secretariat to work together to check activities on their respective sides of the Military Demarcation Line (MDL). The secretariats answered to the Military Armistice Commission (MAC) made up of pers from both sides.

The UN side still maintains the secretariat and the spirit of the armistice, but the North Koreans don't and renamed it to something else. No meetings have taken place between both sides as part of the Armistice Commission for a number of years. My handover included traveling to the east side of the country to Sokcho City to conduct an inspection on a Brigade guarding the DMZ.



The 01/21 rotation at the famed Blue buildings. Concrete pad behind us is the Military Demarcation Line.



Maj Joe Phippen, USMC and I during a HRE interdiction rehearsal drill onboard a ROK Marine RHIB

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As part of the handover we were included in the ceremonies for the Battle of Kapyong and ANZAC Day (something I may have had a little influence on with dates from my previous job at Joint Force HQ). 70th Kapyong commemorations on the 23rd Apr saw us attend the Commonwealth ceremony at the Commonwealth Memorial in the center of Gapyeong (modern spelling of Kapyong) then moving to the ANZAC Memorial to the north beneath the 3 RAR battle positions. Both ceremonies were live streamed by the US Armed Forces Network and the Ministry of Patriots and Veterans respectively.

The ANZAC ceremony live stream was timed to include the ceremony at the Australian War Memorial with addresses from both locations streamed to the other location. It was at the ANZAC ceremony that I read the 16 Fd Regt poem, which was well receive

At the conclusion of the ceremony Maj Lawry guided a group of interested distinguished guests around the 3 RAR positions with the highlight being, ringing an Aussie Kapyong veteran from the top of Hill 504 and him describing to the Australian Ambassador where his fighting pit was at the top. He also described what he saw and did during the battle. Maj Lawry also conducted an abridged tour the next day for others, there was something about standing by the pits that were repelling an attack 70 years previously to the minute.



Maj Shaun Kelley US Artillery and I at Heartbreak Ridge on Gunners day 2021

It should be noted that if you presented the layout 3RAR occupied as a solution at Tactical School as a solution you would get a fail. With no depth support, and a Coy separated by the engagement area this would not pass the testing criteria. Neither would the complete Bde position with 2PPCLI separated by distance and altitude unable to provide fire support. This goes to show that practicality and fighting spirit can be better than blindly following theory. 3 RAR and 2PPCLI both conducted heroic feats in repelling the attacks, however only PPCLI called 16 Fd Regt to fire directly on their own positions. It should be noted that 213 Mobile Artillery Bn's history who fired in spt of 16 Fd Regt is hard to pin down. They were a Mormon Church based unit that at various times in Korea had 105mm SP guns, 155 MDM guns and 155 SP Guns.

There are various conflicting accounts of what they were equipped with during the Battle. One version of their history also claims they were solely responsible for defeating the enemy at Kapyong with direct fire, although this would likely have been at another battle to the northeast of Kapyong after the battle.

On completion of the abridged tour, we moved to Seoul to prep for ANZAC day the next morning. The ANZAC service was conducted in the War Memorial Museum in Seoul, located next to the downsized US Base at Yongsan. Post the ceremony a BBQ was held at the AS DA's residence followed by the 1.5 hr drive back south to Camp Humphreys. The War Memorial Museum is a must see if visiting Seoul. After this we said goodbye to the old team and settled into our day-to-day roles.



Looking East from the modern-day location of the 3 RAR engagement area up to their positions on the skyline. It is about here that the US tanks engaged the enemy advancing from the north (to the left of the pic), 3 RAR B Coy posn is directly behind the photograph. The road was a dirt track during the battle as further up the valley there was no road over the mountains.



The NZ end of the ANZAC Memorial

My role as the De Militarised Zone Operations Officer (DMZOPSO) involves, plotting inspections for the front line Brigades across the DMZ and the islands to the west of the Han River Estuary (HRE), conducting training for incoming Operations Officers and NCO's, conducting inspections of Brigades. This all needs to be coordinated with the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC) and the Republic Of Korea Advisory Group (ROKAG).

We are also responsible for overseeing boarding or eviction of the Chinese fishing fleet from the HRE, involves a chopper flight and boarding a RHIB to travel out into the HRE to interdict the fleet. This involves ROK Marines, Coastguard, ROK Seals and UNCMAC as observers. The role is a good mix of in and out of office time.

Inspections involve departing camp early on tues mornings and driving to the AO on the DMZ. After marrying up with the unit escort officer we start checking Southern Boundary Line (SBL) markers on all roads or tracks entering the DMZ. We also conduct inspections of Guard Posts in and overlooking the DMZ. This involves checking they only have approved weapons in location, copies of the latest regulations and interviewing soldiers for their understanding of the Armistice Rules Of Engagement (AROE).

Night-time sees us staying in a hotel in the area and eating in the town's restaurants. Hotels are plentiful in Korea due to their culture. Young people live with their parents until married, there is no bringing the girl/boyfriend home. If they choose to conduct 'activities' with each other they go to a "love hotel" with day rates and overnight rates. The ones we stay in are normally of a good standard, although there are some curious vending machines in a couple. Food is cheap and there is a lot of choices, most popular is chicken and BBQ (beef or pork). It is traditional for food to be followed with Soju (a rice spirit) and beer. My Facebook friends can attest to the food and beer as they follow the updates on Johnny's Beer and Food tour of Korea

It is now four months in to a 12-month deployment I have a routine at work Monday to Friday, with the ability to visit parts of Korea in the weekends. So far, I have seen The Punchbowl, Heartbreak Ridge, battle positions of the Kapyong battle, Seoul, and Sokcho. In the future Jeju Island, Busan (including the UN War Cemetery) and other points on 16 Fd Regt road move north in 1951 are on the list. Of course, I am continuing to enhance the Worldwide Gunner Brotherhood, making myself known to other gunners I meet. On Gunners Day I was on Heartbreak Ridge overlooking The Punchbowl with Maj Shaun Kelley US Artillery.

The Swedish delegation at NNSC has MajGen Swedish Artillery (that I have yet to meet) and LtCol Nicklaus Edelsvard lately CO Swedish School of Artillery. Maj Luke Seymour RAA has just arrived in Jul to oversee demining efforts at Whitehorse Hill on the UNC's behalf. Luke and I are working on getting ourselves invited to the US Fires Bde, St Barbara's Day celebrations at Camp Casey.



Korean made K6. The RAA is receiving these in the future.



Lt Col Nick Edelsvard, late CO Swedish School of Artillery and I before heading out for an inspection



FROM THE Q STORE

CONTACT: RNZAAQSTORE@GMAIL.COM

Facemasks

The Association have designer facemasks for members to purchase and wear with distinction. These designed to our specifications and are washable cotton with an inner for those who may wish to insert a filter. They have adjustable ear tabs and are moulded the contours of your face thereby giving full nose and mouth protection.

We gifted 250 masks to Regt. so our men and women on MIQ duty have a distinctive mask to wear when going to and from their duties and around camp (they do not meet the N95 mask requirements needed for MIQ).

The price available to members are \$15 each + postage. Buy more than 1 and then the remaining at \$10.00 each up to all up total of 5.

RNZA Flags

A RNZA Flag (5ft x 3ft) for those of you that have a flag pole at home or now wish to get one, have arrived into store. These are in 2D and available in: Double sided. \$40.00
Single sided \$25.00



Blazer Pocket badges.

These are made with 'woven bullion wire' and are to a very high standard.



For other Q items click on the Q Store link:

<http://rnzaa.org.nz/the-rnza-association/the-rnza-association/q-store>

THE RNZAA HISTORIC TRUST

BY BARRY DREYER

The RNZA Historic Trust was formed nearly 10 years ago to identify, codify, and record RNZA trophy and memorabilia which at that stage was being spread somewhat around the countryside.

The trust also has aims that include the recording of our history, the acquisition of RNZA items that are important to the Regiment, and the furthering of the knowledge of the public of the contributions our Corps has made to our country.

The Trust was initially formed as a Registered Charitable Trust Board but is now a fully registered Charity.

Examples of activities the trust has undertaken include:

- renovation of a WW2 RNZA Memorial in the Solomon Islands
- purchase of medal groups that are important to the Regiment, including framing and presentation
- the commissioning of the bronze gunner
- financial assistance to Operation Ubique
- the funding of the RNZA 18 pounder gun detachment for the Commonwealth salute in France commemorating one hundred years since the Battle of Passchendaele

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More recently, the focus has been on the biography of Brigadier Reg Miles, CBE, DSO and bar, MC. Brigadier Miles is arguably our most famous gunner. He had a distinguished record in Gallipoli and the Somme, was a key gunner and staff officer between the wars and was CRA of 2 NZ Division until his capture in the Western Desert in late 1941.

He was imprisoned, escaped from the General's POW camp in Italy to Switzerland, and then spirited out of Switzerland by MI9 through occupied France to northern Spain with an aim of returning him to the New Zealand Division to replace Freyberg as Divisional Commander.

He died mysteriously in northern Spain in 1943. Spanish historians are certain he was murdered by the Gestapo or Franco's Secret Service. The official account indicates a suicide.

The RNZA were gifted a large collection of his letters from 1911 onwards until the night of his death, by his family.

The biography of Miles has been on the go since 2016. The author is Sarah Gaitanos, a multi-award-winning New Zealand biographer. Sarah is helped by the Miles family, current members of the RNZA, and our gunner diaspora around the world. We now have a significant collection of important original historical documents from family, Spain, Switzerland, Italy, the UK, Australia, and of course New Zealand, collected by the Trust and Sarah.

Commissioning a biography is not a cheap activity. The focus of the trust in the last five years has been on raising funds to allow Sarah to do her work, and on providing guidance to Sarah on matters military.

We have expended tens of thousands of dollars so far with a lot more to come. We have been grateful for the support of all gunners in the RNZA who have provided cash or assistance in kind. The family has also been generous.

The Trust has frequently applied for grants from government and philanthropic organisations. Government provided a travel grant to allow Sarah to visit Gallipoli, Greece, Switzerland, and Spain as part of her early research. The National Army Museum paid a significant early grant to support our work. The Trust has recently obtained a significant grant from the Stout Trust, and Sarah is awaiting news of another grant from the Turnbull Library community. Sarah describes the biography as her most significant work to date. We hope it will be a major piece of New Zealand literature and history.

Sarah is presently writing at first draft stage in mid-1940 when Miles was commanding 2NZEF (UK) on the Kent coast during the Battle of Britain. There is about one year of further first draft work, before Sarah gets into the arduous second and third drafts in preparation for publication. These latter tasks will take about a year.

The Trust is grateful for all your support. There is much more to be done.

We are aiming for an outstanding book of national importance to recognise the life and contribution of this gallant and little-known gunner.

Ubique and Christmas Greetings to all from the RNZA Historic Trust. - Barry Dreyer

Eligibility for the New Zealand Operational Service Medal (NZOSM) has been extended to include a larger proportion of members of the New Zealand Armed Forces who served in Malaysia and Singapore - From the Army News Issue 528

The award of this medal recognises the valuable contribution to the defence of South East Asia by veterans who served in Malaysia and Singapore, but were previously excluded as they were not required to deploy into combat areas, such as Borneo or Vietnam,” Defence Minister Peeni Henare said.

“I’m proud that around 4,500 veterans who served in South East Asia from February 1959 to January 1974 are now rightly able to be awarded a medal for their valiant service. I hope veterans and their whānau take this opportunity to have their service recognised in this way.”

The review commissioned by the government and carried out by the New Zealand Defence Force, showed there was a need for a wider approach to medallic recognition for South East Asia than had been the practice in the past.

The 2021 review looked at the period between 1955 and 1989 and assessed that service between 1 February 1959 and 31 January 1974 should be qualifying service for the award of the New Zealand Operational Service Medal.

It was a unique period in New Zealand’s military history including; forward deployment and deterrence; operational readiness as part of the South East Asia Treaty Organisation plans for responding to the threat of communist expansion into South East Asia; an ongoing communist terrorist insurgency in Malaysia; the Cold War; a fraught relationship with Indonesia which resulted in conflict; and war in Vietnam.

It concluded that together during that period that these events justified the award of medallic recognition but not a campaign medal. Campaign medals (and the New Zealand Operational Service Medal) have already been awarded for related operational service including the Malayan Emergency, Thai-Malay border, Confrontation with Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam.

“An eligible veteran must have been posted or attached for seven or more days with the Far East Strategic Reserve, the Australia New Zealand United Kingdom Force or associated units during these dates,” Mr Henare said. “I implore all those who meet the new criteria to apply for the formal recognition that they and their whānau rightly deserve. The dedication and commitment both individuals and whānau make in order to keep our country and region safe cannot be overstated, and I wish to thank every one of the Defence Force whānau for their service.”

Those eligible under the revised settings, veterans and next-of-kin of deceased veterans need to apply to receive the NZOSM. The application form is on the New Zealand Defence Force Personnel Archives and Medals website: www.nzdf.mil.nz/pam



I think the person at the top a young Sgt Minarapa who was the Platoon Sgt of the gunner platoon of TF intake 22. Does anyone else remember him? - Marty

The New Zealand Operational Service Medal (NZOSM) was instituted in 2002. It is awarded for operational service since the end of the Second World War, including for current missions. About 30,000 medals have already been issued to veterans of conflicts such as the Korean War, Vietnam War, TimorLeste and Afghanistan. Another 15,000 veterans are also eligible but have not yet applied for the medal.



ST BARBARA'S DAY ROUNDUP

SINAI

The three Gunners here on OP FARAD for St Barbara's day - Matt Marinovich

Saint Barbara is venerated by those who face the danger of sudden and violent death at work. She is invoked against thunder and lightning and all accidents arising from explosions of gunpowder.

She became the patron saint of artillerymen, armourers, military engineers, gunsmiths, and anyone else who worked with cannon and explosives.



Fun Fact - The name Barbiturate for a class of chemicals is believed to be derived from a suggestion from a group of Gunners celebrating St Barbara's Day.

Three gunners continue this tradition....
Marty Coomber, Leon Grandy, Bill Taylor

Bay of Plenty

We had a Bay of Plenty/Coromandel gunners' St Barbara's day lunch at the Waihi Beach RSA's "Gunner's View" restaurant on Sat 4th December. We had a good turnout of 22 attendees, and plenty of stories and memories were shared. Attendees were Woody and Lyn Barrett, Barry and Maureen Cook, Allan Cameron, Bryan Christy, Craig Hewett, Erik Kristensen, Martin and Dianne Layzell, Tim Moanaroa, Chris Morriss, Garry Rae, Boof Richardson, Doug "Buck" Rogers, Clyde Stewart, Kevin and Margaret Stone, Mike and Marilyn Subritzky, Matt and Ida Te Pou.

- Chris Morris



Erik Kristensen, Boof Richardson, Woody Barrett



Doug Rogers, Allan Cameron, Clyde Stewart



Mike Subritzky and Tim Moanaroa



Bryan Christy, Matt and Ida Te Pou



Craig Hewett, Martin and Dianne Layzell, Marilyn and Mike Subritzky, Tim Moanaroa, Bryan Christy, Matt and Ida Te Pou, Garry Rae

Auckland

3 December was the first day after the major change in the Covid confinement saga. So, no get-together had been organised.

By chance, the dinner to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Royal New Zealand Navy was held in the evening. As a private initiative, a RNZAA facemask was presented to Captain David Turner RNZN, the Dining President. He is due to take up the post of Defence Attaché in Seoul, South Korea, and command of the dozen or so NZDF members stationed there. He was delighted to receive it, as he is taking up command in the Theatre for which 16th Field Regiment was raised.

Hopefully he will wear it when he visits Kapyong, the scene of the epic engagement of the Regiment. Bill Giles, BSM of 11(A) Battery in 1973, was one of three Gunners who had fought there and at Long Tan in Vietnam.

The Navy has some unusual traditions, for a Gunner. First, the port for the Loyal Toast is slid along the table, not passed in the air. Secondly, the Loyal Toast is made when everybody is sitting down. Third, no outsider proposes a Toast to the Navy, but a Captain proposes a Toast that goes back to Lord Nelson in the Napoleonic Wars.

By chance, thirty years ago I attended the 50th anniversary celebration of the RNZN at the Embassy in Washington, USA. For the 100th anniversary, as a sprightly Old Gunner in his 80's, I'll be hoping that the Admiral puts me at the Top Table.

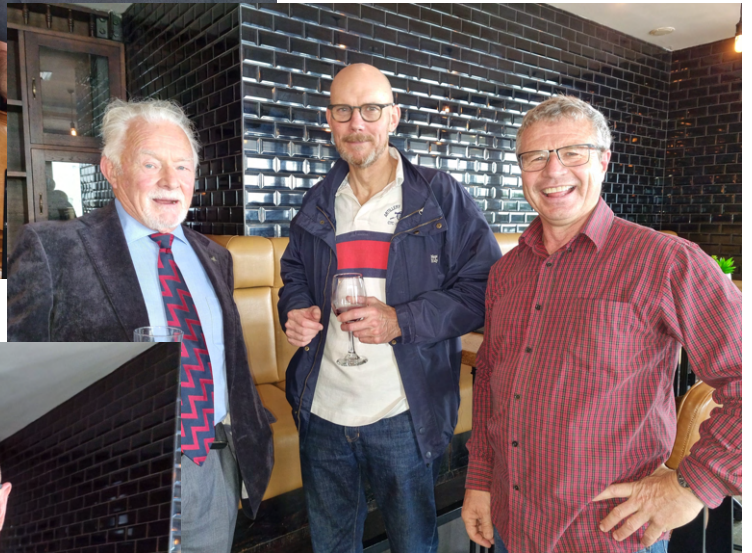
-Greg Thwaite

Christchurch

A good number of Sth Gunners attended St Barbara's Day in Christchurch with the day being split into 3 separate events: golf in the morning, 10 pin bowling in the afternoon and followed by a BBQ at Sonny Manuel's place. I didn't attend the golf as in the words of my early BSM Ken Turner, at 71 I'm too young to play golf! It was a beautiful day in sunny Christchurch and a great day was had by all who participated. Old friendships were reunited, memories refreshed, old bullshit stories retold and newer ones introduced. Ubique

Wellington

Twenty-five gunners from Wellington attended St Barbara's Day Celebration. It was also an opportunity to mark the passing Brigadier Geoffrey Hitchings. There was a good turnout of his former comrades



WAIKATO ARTILLERY MUSEUM

BY HUGH VERCOE

Earlier this year a small group of ex 4 Medium gunners embarked on a project to establish a small gunner museum at Tauhei, Morrinsville.

We originally constructed a new building to house our 5.5" gun and other personal display items. We were about to start setting out our display when Tauwhare Military Museum announced that they were closing down. This presented us with the opportunity to expand our vision of preserving the 4 Medium Battery history into a full Artillery Museum. We will not be a National New Zealand Museum, but rather a collection of all things gunner, brought together by a group of enthusiastic old gunners

Our builder, having finished the original structure had moved on to other contracts, but we have managed to get him back starting in February to do a pretty major extension.



Items already on site from the now closed Tauwhare Military Museum include one 25pdr gun, Limber, and tractor, one Scammel recovery vehicle, one IH original 5.5" gun tractor, one RL Bedford, and one giant 40 foot container absolutely full of things from Tauwhare.

I have been following Trademe and have purchased a rare book titled The History of The New Zealand Artillery 1914 – 1918. I have also bought a few interesting items including flags, badges etc. I have bought three new mannequins to display my old SD, Mess Kit and camo uniforms. Our good mate Boof Richardson phoned me with the sad news that the Tauranga Garrison Club was closing and I was able to negotiate with him and purchase some really neat glass display cabinets.

The project is coming together well but is taking more work than I originally estimated. I will provide regular updates on the RNZAA facebook site for anyone interested in our project. Any suggestions are always welcome.



BRIGADIER GEOFFREY HITCHINGS CBE, MBE

BY RNZAA

HITCHINGS, Geoffrey Andrew

Regt No: Q30420 Brigadier (Retired) CBE, former BC 161 Battery in SVN, Director RNZA, Colonel Commandant of the RNZA and Life Member of this Association

Died peacefully on 2 November at Remuera, aged 90 years.

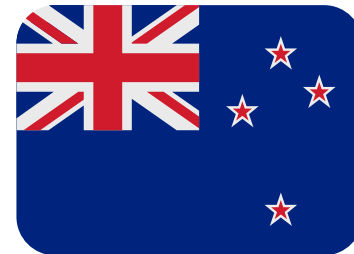


1931 Born in Christchurch
 1944-1948 Educated at Rongotai College, Wellington
 1952 Graduated from the Royal Military College Lt into RNZA
 1954 Marries Barbara Anne Wearne, Rose Bay, Sydney Australia
 1954-1955 Served with 16th Field Regiment in Republic of South Korea
 1962-1963 Attended the United States Command and General Staff College
 1968 - 1969 Battery Commander of 161 Battery, RRNZ, Nui Dat, Viet Nam
 1970 Attends the Australian 'Joint Services Staff College' Canberra, Australia
 1973 -1976 Washington, DC - Assistant Head of the NZ Defence Staff.
 1976-1978 Colonel and Commander of ATG
 1978-1979 Post to Royal College of Defence Studies, London, UK
 1981-1984 Commander of the NZ Land Forces
 1985-1987 Commander of NZ Forces South East Asia in Singapore.
 1987 Retired from military and moved to the orchard near Matakana.
 September 1969 Awarded MBE for services in Viet Nam
 December 1987 Awarded CBE for his Defence Force service

Much loved husband of Barbara for 67 years. Loving father and father-in-law of Richard and Heather and Rob and Tess. Proud grandfather (Gaffer) of Sarah, Kathryn and Matthew. Loved brother of Terry and Beryl Campey (Deceased). Much respected by all his family, friends and colleagues.



LAST POST



- BURKE, Murray William. 41260, L/Bdr, 161 Bty, Vietnam. Passed away on 21st November 2021 at home in Waihi aged 79 years.
- WINIATA, Whiwhi Nepia, RNZA. Passed away suddenly at home in Levin on 21st November 2021. Member of Horowhenua Artillery Ass'n.
- JESSEN, Robert Gordon. 42443, Gnr, 161 Bty, Vietnam. Passed away on 6th November 2021 at Greymouth Hospital after a short illness.
- BRANSBY, Guy Henry. 30936, Capt, 161 Bty RNZA and 2NZATTV, Vietnam. Passed away on 5th November 2021.
- HITCHINGS, Geoffrey Andrew CBE. 30420, Brigadier (Rtd), BC 161 Bty Vietnam. Director of Artillery. Colonel Commandant, RNZA. Life Member, RNZA association. Passed away peacefully on November 2, 2021 at Remuera, aged 90.
- HEMI, John. Sgt (Rtd), RNZA/RNZMP. Passed away in Wellington on 28th October 2021.
- LAPSLIE, Peter John. V823189, WO1 (Rtd), 163 Bty, RNZA/RNZAOC. Passed away on October 22nd 2021 in Ashburton aged 85 years
- GOODALL, Frederick Robert (Fred) ONZM, ED. 803559, Lt Col (Rtd), CO 3 Fd Regt, RNZA. Life Member, RNZA association. Passed away aged 83 in Wellington on October 18th 2021.
- CRANCH, Raymond James, MNZM. 458916, Sgt, NZ Arty, WW2. Passed away on October 13, 2021, aged 98 years in Auckland.
- FENTON, Daniel Robert, (Doc). 387125, Gnr, 161 Bty, Vietnam. Passed away suddenly on 12th October 2021 at home in Whangamata.
- KINNAIRD, David. Sgt, RNZAMC, 161 Bty, Vietnam. Passed away 10th September 2021.
- KNAPP, Henry Lionel. 466902, Gnr, 4 Mdm Bty, RNZA. Pvt, 1 RNZIR, Malaya. Passed away on 17th August 2021, peacefully at Waikato Hospital aged 82 Years.
- MACKAY, James. 38191, Cpl, RNZSIGS, 161 Bty, Vietnam. Passed away 25th July 2021.
- BREWERTON, Barry John. 39468, Cfn, RNZEME, 161 Bty (Att), Vietnam. Passed away 29th June 2021.
- TURINUI, Thomas Rouroha. 483067, Gnr, 161 Bty, Vietnam. Passed away on 11th October 2020 (not previously listed by RNZA ass'n).
- PEDERSEN, Reidar Amund. RNZA. Passed away on July 23rd 2015 peacefully at Papakura aged 83 years. (not previously listed by RNZAA ass'n).

Thank you to Brian Meyer for providing association with so many of these entries. Your ongoing efforts on this are very much appreciated.