



NZ GUNNER

Royal New Zealand Artillery Association Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

BY SHAY BASSETT

While this year has undoubtedly been memorable for the RNZA generally, and our Association in particular, it has not been without its ups and downs. After a rough start due to the impact of Covid, which saw us having to cancel last year's annual Reunion and hold our AGM virtually, the country thankfully moved on to a 'New normal'. It was during the transitory phase to get there that one of our most notable RNZA Association social events for many years was held.

This, of course, was the delayed Gunners Day dinner hosted by our new Patron, the Governor General Dame Cindy Kiro, at Government House Auckland; where we were finally able to farewell our past President Tony McLeod in a fashion befitting the enormous contribution he has made to our Association over the years.

The night was truly a pleasurable one, and went like clockwork thanks to the countless hours put in by our Vice President, Gregory Thwaite, in working with the Government House staff to ensure every single detail and aspect was as perfect as it possibly could be. I would like to take the opportunity, one last time, of publicly thanking Greg for delivering such an amazing occasion.

During her dinner speech the Governor General spoke about recently attending Queen Elizabeth the Second's platinum jubilee celebrations in the UK. Sadly, just a few short months later, we lost our Captain General when she passed away. The funeral was attended by the RNZA Colonel Commandant, Brig Paul Southwell, and four members of 16th Field Regiment.

Many of you probably heard or saw interviews with the CO, and by all accounts they represented the RNZA in the finest of traditions.

Many of you probably heard or saw interviews with the CO, and by all accounts they represented the RNZA in the finest of traditions.

Unfortunately, the Queen was not the only loss to our Regiment this year, and those others will also be remembered at both the dinner and through shared stories over the weekend I'm sure. At this point I would like to highlight that the renewed comradery occurring over these few days is only possible as a result of the outstanding efforts of our 'Southern Gunners'.

At the risk of missing someone, or making them a target - pun intended, I would like to particularly thank Skin Frances and Pete Dawson for their superb foresight and planning which resulted in the original suggestion, of holding this year's Reunion and AGM in the South Island, becoming a reality.

I would also like to give credit to a number of Committee members who have worked in 'general support reinforcing' roles - yes another gunner pun, not just for the Reunion and AGM, but throughout the year. In particular, John McNicol who most members receive our Association correspondence from and who is instrumental in sustaining 'good comms'.

Additionally, John has maintained momentum in the enormous task of trying to locate the RNZA's decommissioned guns. This project is far from over, and as a history buff I share John's belief that this is important work. So I would commend members to share any information and images they may have on old guns so we can continue to build the database on former RNZA pieces.

In many ways our Secretary's successes are made possible by the efforts of Chris Morris. Chris is the consummate 'silent achiever'. He quietly and professionally handles the roles of managing; our massive membership list – which currently runs to over 800 people, and the Association website. Additionally, Chris is the driving force behind local Gunner get-togethers in his region.

During the year Chris has put in countless hours adding new members and updating details, while at the same time satisfying requests from an overly demanding President for updates to the website. His efforts have produced great results, as evidenced by the recent edition of Steve Newman's book 'Vietnam Gunners' to our website. Steve, a TF and RF gunner of many years standing, was kind enough to agree to this arrangement and I wish to publicly thank him for his generosity.

Of course, unless they are virtual, no organisation can really function these days without money. Thankfully we have two sources of funding that permit us to continue belonging to an Association that continues to be fees free – something that I believe is unique among similar NZ military organisations. The first of our revenue streams is donations. These have come in at a steady rate throughout the year in various ways, not always in cash, and really do make a difference. I will resist the urge to name any major contributors, but please accept my gratitude on behalf of us all.

The second area to have a significant impact on our bottom line is the Q Store, which is incredibly well run by Craig Hewett. If you want a business done right, pick a high achieving entrepreneur to run it. I suspect BQMS was one of the few appointments Craig didn't fill back in the day, but he is certainly making up for it now.

Craig is constantly coming up with new products and taking every opportunity to market them. His sales speak for themselves. Thank you Craig for your tireless efforts. As we know though, generating money is all very good, but it still has to be managed.

The Committee is lucky enough to have the safe hands of Chris Pearce as our Treasurer. Chris does a wonderful job of protecting us all from having to worry about financial issues, as you will see from the published accounts. His exceptional combination of efficiency and practicality is invaluable, and I thank you Chris for your ongoing commitment.

An aspect that has perhaps not received as much attention as it could have over the decades, but has certainly started to in more recent years, is ensuring historical aspects of the RNZA are not forgotten. On your Committee we have two men who are part of the Operation UBIQUE team.

Together with other Association members, Paul Weldrand and Bryan Moles are making a tangible impact on keeping our history alive and providing an advertising 'flag ship' for the Association. Thank you guys, and long may Op UBIQUE continue. It is perhaps appropriate for me to also mention the work of the 'RNZA Historical Trust'. Although a stand-alone organisation, we clearly have close alignment.

Of late, Barry Dreyer has been leading the charge on a project of interest to many, whether Gunners or not. His work involves the writing, and eventually publishing, of a biography on Brig Reginald Miles, CBE, DSO (and Bar), and MC.

A Kiwi gunner of repute that lead an adventurous life and died in suspicious circumstances during WW2, it should make for a good read but does require more funding if it is to come to fruition. If you would like to contribute in some way to this project, I would ask that you please get in touch with Barry.

So far I have principally covered off the activities of your Committee members, but there are a couple of Association members who work very closely with the Committee to provide services and support to you that I definitely need to mention.

Firstly, Bernie McCort. Bernie continues to provide invaluable service as our go-between with Veterans Affairs and leading welfare support matters on behalf of our Association.

Secondly, Marty Coomber. As Editor and Chief of our newsletter, this year Marty has been producing an incredibly professional publication for us all to enjoy. I would like to thank Bernie and Marty for their ongoing dedication, and indirectly 'dob them in' respectively as points of contact if you have any welfare matters or items of interest for future publications.

Looking forward to 2023, let us hope the 'New normal' continues. Once the location of the next Reunion and AGM is confirmed, your Committee will commence preparations for what will hopefully be another successful event.

Until then, I would encourage all members to take the opportunities presented for getting together for more localised activities, such as Gunners Day and St Barbara's Day; and if nothing has been organised in your area, perhaps kick something off, even if it is just meeting up with the Gunners for a drink and bite to eat.

I thank you all for the chance to report back to you on what I consider to be a very successful year, and I look forward to the chance of continuing to serve with such a great Committee in the coming year.

Ubique,
Maj Shay Bassett
President, RNZA Association

Does your RNZA winter mess kit no longer fit?

BY MICKEY DOUGHTY

I am attempting to get every single officer in RNZA mess dress as opposed to the issued army reds. Sadly these will have to be gifted as the cost of formal issue is prohibitive. I am issuing an appeal for unwanted or "unaccountably shrunk over the last 10 years" mess dress. While a gift would be the most desired I am sure the officers would not be adverse to a small payment. Could you please reach out to me at

MICHAEL.DOUGHTY@nzdf.mil.nz

Q Store:

For a wide range of RNZA and gunnery items

www.rnzaa.org.nz/the-rnza-association/the-rnza-association/q-store

New Members

Please welcome our new members:

- Warren Whiting
- Brian Dilger
- Neill Price
- Jonesie Jones
- Richard Adams
- David Hercus
- Phil Fry

Contact Us:

RNZAA Website: www.rnzaa.org.nz

President: Shay Bassett: SHAY.BASSETT@nzdf.mil.nz

RNZAA Secretary: John McNicol: rnza.association@gmail.com

Newsletter: Marty Coomber: martin.coomber.nz@gmail.com

Q Store: Craig Hewett: rnzaaQstore@gmail.com

Donations

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.

COLONEL COMMANDANT'S CORNER

BRIGADIER (RTD) PAUL SOUTHWELL

Operation London Bridge

What a great honour it was to be one of those to represent the Royal Regiment of New Zealand Artillery at the Queen's funeral, a magnificent farewell to Her Majesty our Captain General.

The other gunners from 16Fd Regiment were: the CO, Lt Col Dean Gerling; the RSM, WO1 Aaron Taylor; Bdr John Casson (Joint Fires Team); and Gnr Regan Powell (a young soldier who had just completed his basic).

Three Kiwi Colonel Commandants joined me for the occasion: Col Ray Seymour (Infantry); Col Trevor McCommish (Armour); and Col Paul Curry (Engineers). Our conditioning and rehearsals for the procession was considerably less arduous than that of our Regular Force fellows of whom there were about 30, mainly army with a scattering of Navy and Airforce. The Colonel Commandants for the Commonwealth marched in a group behind the Attache Group about 200 meters ahead of the coffin.

For us older fellows maintaining dressing and keeping step in the rehearsal, which started about midnight, with an unfamiliar pace of 70 paces per minute was somewhat of a challenge. The Lt Col from the Guards (clad in red with a bearskin hat) in charge of our group summed our rehearsal effort up with the most encouraging comment. "bloody terrible, sirs, bloody terrible". Suffice to say the performance on the day was a remarkable improvement.

The four London based NZ Attaches were led by our Defence Attache Brigadier Jim Bliss. He and his team did a magnificent job hosting events leading up to the big day and ensuring all went smoothly from a Kiwi perspective. 🇳🇿

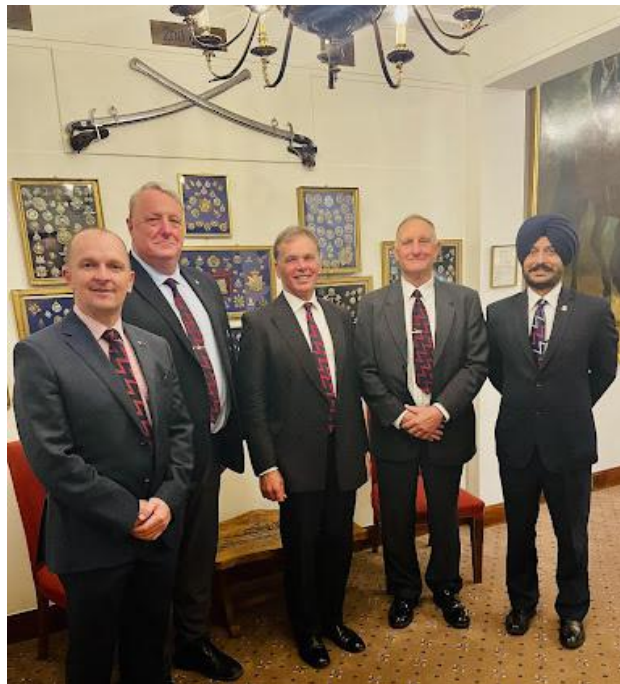


End of the procession at Wellington Arch prior to transfer of the coffin to a hearse. You can see the NZ monument top right. Black steel pillars

DINNER WITH THE MASTER GUNNER ST JAMES'S PARK.

One of the highlights of our time in London was dinner with The Master Gunner ST James's Park, Lieutenant General Sir Andrew Gregory KBE CB DL. Colonel Commandants and Commanding Officers from; Australia, New Zealand, Canada and India and accompanying COs enjoyed a very special evening while reflecting on the passing of our Captain General. 🇳🇿

Left: Brig Damian Hill (Aust); Brig (Rtd) David Patterson, MSM, CD (Canada); Lt Gen (Rtd) Sir Andrew Gregory KBE CB DL (master Gunner St James's Park); Brig (Rtd) Paul Southwell (NZ); and Brig Vikramjit Singh Gill (India)



TRAINING UKRAINIANS

As most of you would be aware we have a good number of Infantry and engineer instructors assisting the British with the training of Ukrainian soldiers. We were fortunate enough to visit this training. Our instructors are much appreciated by the British and Ukrainians and are themselves gaining a unique experience training mature well motivated soldiers using local interpreters to get their lessons across. 🇳🇿

16 FIELD REGIMENT

The Regiment has a new Commanding Officer, Lt Col Sandra Patterson. She is our first female Commanding Officer and we wish her all the very best in her new role. Lt Col Dean Gerling has retired to the Queenstown area where he has taken up a dream job managing a golf course. We pass our thanks to Dean for all his good work as CO and his support of the Association.

WO1H Heath Southcombe to take over from WO1 Evan Kareko as our new Regimental Warrant Officer. WO1 Kareko has completed over 6 years as our Regimental WO and I thank him on behalf of the Corps for his ongoing support post his time as RSM 🇳🇿

From Lieutenant General Sir Andrew Gregory KBE CB DL



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Master Gunner St James's Park

Brigadier P Southwell
Colonel Commandant
The Royal Regiment of New Zealand Artillery

4th October 2022

Dear Paul,

Now, as the dust settles on what has been a truly momentous event, I am writing not only in my official capacity as Master Gunner St James's Park, but personally as well, to congratulate your officers and soldiers on their outstanding, professional support during Her late Majesty our Captain General's funeral.

As you are all too aware, your Regiment, provided a marching contingent who journeyed across the time zones and oceans, to represent the Royal Regiment of New Zealand Artillery. As one who was also involved in the solemn parades on the day I can vouch that the overwhelming effects on those soldiers who took part was, and will remain, unforgettable and was something that the television recordings couldn't quite capture. Unperturbed with facing the largest audience in the world, with the additional and invisible pressure of countless media and personal cameras, all waiting to record the slightest of mishaps, your marching contingent (as reported to me) performed their duties faultlessly. I appreciate also that the constant preparation and drill practice necessary to produce such a high standard, demanded much from the small contingent, especially in the immediate days before the funeral. This personal effort from all individuals paid off. Recognition should also be given to those in your RHQ who worked behind the scenes monitoring the Op BRIDGE Instructions as they came in. Small cogs, but essential to the smooth delivery of the support.

In my position as Master Gunner St James's Park, I was able to bask in the praise and compliments that were showered on me for the performance of our Royal Regiments. Such praise rightly belongs to all members of our Regiments involved that day. All ranks can be justifiably proud of themselves and in the part they played, whether great or small, at the very centre of what was a world event. They have upheld the pride of their own Regiment and have, through their smartness on parade and their involvement, been instrumental in marking their Regiment's farewell to Her Majesty our Captain General.

Please ensure my congratulations and personal thanks are passed to all ranks of your marching contingent.

Yours ever,
Andrew

THE ROYAL REGIMENT OF AUSTRALIAN ARTILLERY PARADE AT VICTORIA BARRACKS SYDNEY

On Saturday 4 Nov the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery paraded to celebrated 150 yrs and the consecration and presentation of the new Banner of Queen Elizabeth the second. WO2 Patrick Brock (BSM 161 Bty) accompanied me representing Royal New Zealand Artillery at this very special and unique occasion. The old banner had been presented in 1971 and after 50 years of service was in need of replacement.

A Banner is a Colour historically carried into battle at the centre of a unit to identify that unit. It was protected at all costs, it carried the names of battles in which the unit had fought. It was and still is saluted by all ranks. Because we gunners have ours guns and mortars as our Colours it appears strange that the Australians should have a banner. Here in lies a story.

“The banner belonging to the Royal Australian Artillery is unique to Commonwealth artillery regiments. After the Second Boer War concluded in 1902, King Edward VII presented ‘Kings Banners’ to a number of colonial units who had participated in the war as tokens of his regard. Of those, one was awarded in 1904 to what is now known as A Battery, the oldest continuously serving permanent sub-unit in the Australian Army, originally raised as a colonial battery on 1st of August 1871. A Battery’s establishment is now regarded as the beginning of the Australian artillery – a ‘birthday’ if you will.”

The parade is in two parts. Firstly the old Banner is paraded for the last time (Trooping of the Colour) before being laid up permanently. The second is the religious consecration and presentation of the new Banner. The Banner was presented by the Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia; His Excellency General David Hurley AC DSM.



The new Banner is laid upon the drums before being presented by the Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia

Historically drums were considered a pagan instrument. To ensure they would not be played during the blessing of the Colours they were removed from the band and placed in a “pile” to be used as an alter upon which the Banner is placed.

A great day was had with the parade being attended by all senior Australian Gunners and the Chief of Army Lt Gen Simon Stuart. It was followed by; an afternoon tea, a visit to the museum at Victoria barracks, and an evening function. – Colonel Commandant

HEARING LOSS AND DEMENTIA

BY MARTY COOMBER

I am getting older – like most of us – and finding my ability to hear slipping away – I bet I'm not the only one turning down certain social situations because I know I will not hear. Here is an interview that may be of interest

Ayesha Rascoe speaks with Dr. Frank Lin of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health about the link between hearing loss and dementia, and how over-the-counter hearing aids may help.

LIN: About a decade ago, we began a series of research studies. And we increasingly found that hearing loss was strongly linked with your risk of dementia. And to this day now, based on all the studies over the last 10 years showing that hearing loss is arguably the single largest potentially treatable or potentially modifiable risk factor for dementia.

RASCOE: Do we have any sense of why that might be the case? Because some people may be listening and be like, well, what does hearing have to do with dementia?

LIN: (Laughter). You know, you're absolutely right. I mean, like, you know, hearing loss affects, like, the inner ear – your cochlea. And dementia is about your brain. How could they be related? But it comes down to probably arguably three major mechanisms. So the first mechanism is basically that hearing loss likely imposes a load on the brain. And what I mean by that is when you can't hear well, when you have had some aging of your inner ear, it basically means your brain's constantly getting a much more garbled sound from your ear. And in turn, what the brain has to do to consciously decode that sound is the brain has to sort of throw more brainpower at it. And when the brain has to do that, those brain resources may come at the expense of other systems, like our thinking and memory abilities.

The second idea is related but actually is very different. And it's the idea that hearing loss actually does directly affect the brain's structural integrity. Parts of the brain that are used to receiving sound begin to atrophy faster. And we actually see this now not only in animal studies but in human studies.

And finally, the third idea – and again, the thing I need to emphasize is these ideas aren't mutually exclusive – not that one's right; other ones are wrong. It's likely a combination of all three. The last ones the most intuitive. And it's the idea that, you know, for some people, if you can't hear very well, you might be more isolated and hence lonely. And in turn, for many, many years now, we've understood that social isolation and loneliness likely directly affects our risk of cognitive decline dementia, mainly through loss of cognitively stimulating activities but also just a loss of engagement with the world around us as we become sort of more pigeonholed at home sometimes.

RASCOE: Will the over-the-counter devices – will they be good enough to actually address Americans', like, hearing loss issues? Are there any concerns about buying hearing aids at the store the way someone might get some reading glasses? Is there any risk to this?

LIN: The only way an over-the-counter hearing aid is going to kill you is if you swallow it. And I think it's absolutely true. It's just a hearing aid. It's not going to kill you.

From a Gunner:

I was conscripted into the 17th Intake National Service in August 1967. All the way through basic, with a dirty great big SLR going off in my right ear, then it wasn't until the late-70s that Health and Safety caught up and the Gun Detachments were issued with ear muffs – nothing for the Driver Ops, who when they became Battery Guide had to act as section commanders on the gun line close to these things that went bang, loudly. This was well before ACC. I guess this is the time when I put my money where my mouth is, face up to the local RSA and ask what they can do for me.

And another Gunner:

Funny old thing, after 30+ years as a gunner and being really careful with looking after my hearing, the biggest damage I have suffered was from small arms fire on a close combat range in the Sinai when I got caught without hearing protection! That was over five years ago and the ringing has never stopped.



RECENT LSP

BY JEREMY MCLURE

The weather was perfect, it is strange to say but I enjoyed the experience of being in the rain and cold with the wind howling, I felt close to nature again, I think a perfect day would have spoiled it – the weather had just the right amount of mongrel, Rainbows and sun on one side of the valley, heavy rain on the other obscuring the view of the target area at times with us in the goldilocks zone.

The young guys on the guns all came and introduced themselves, showed us what was going on and explained the technology making us feel very welcome, they also worked with the adverse weather as though it was nothing while a number of us kept a Mog propped up sheltering from the wind.

The team were calibrating some new gear with charge 3 and possibly the odd charge 4, a few of the contingent got to fire a round and I pretty sure they will still be grinning !

For lunch we headed up the road to Westlawn Hut and shared a few rat packs – as the guns were firing slightly away from us but inline with where we were.

The fall of shot made a nice addition to the peaceful birdsong. Then we travelled back down the road stopping at an old ohp observation post and viewed the gun position in the distance seeing the guns firing and the fall of shot, the horses in the valley below where not concerned at all.



Grant Hays, curator for Artillery and Vehicles at the Museum atook us on a tour of some storage he has on base that has an incredible number of Guns all beautifully refurbished, along with some very entertaining stories, after looking at all the Artillery pieces, we visited the Spare vehicles that they do not have enough room to display in the Museum – there are a significant number more than I photographed. I was completely stunned to see all of this.

Please pass on my thanks also to all those involved in making this happen. Regards Jeremy



A view we have all shared - This shot really takes me back - Marty

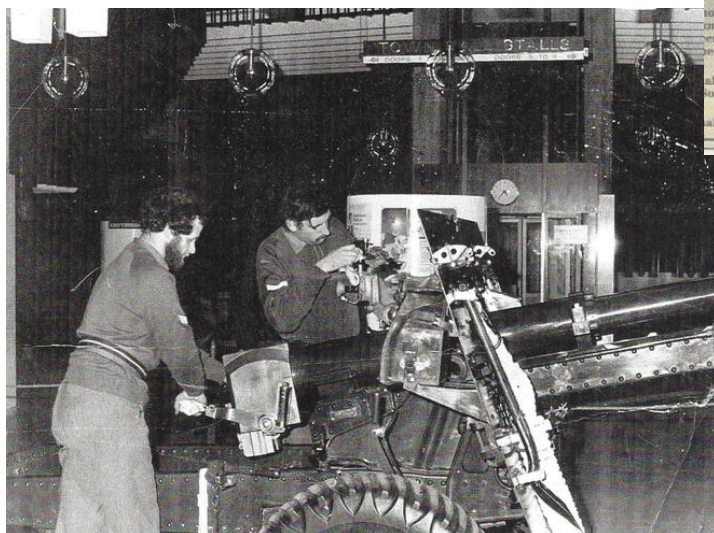


BLAST FROM THE PAST

BY PETE DAWSON

Pete has kindly provided our first Blast from the past column - Please send in your memories - Marty

The "Old Farts Detachment" who fired No 1 gun at the final Queen's Birthday 21 gun salute. Of the detachment there were 3 WO2s, a Captain and a Colonel. All had been SNCOs in 32(E) Bty at some stage of their careers. Of the detachment, only Col Craig Ruane and I are still alive. Craig is still serving.



A Hippy Army! Chch Gunners Assoc annual ball, Chch Town Hall 1974. My best mate Russ Barron and me preparing a 32(E) Bty ex 10th Commonwealth Games refurbished 25pdr in the Town Hall main foyer on the afternoon prior to the ball. We took a couple of doors off and drove our Series 1 swb Rover "Doris" right on in with the gun. When we lowered the platform and brought the gun into action we left a circular gouge mark in the white marble floor 1ft in diameter!



Ken Turner's rather unique hat badge



The attendees at the 3 Fd Regt RNZA Reunion at Addington Showgrounds 1990.

THE GREAT L5 HUNT

BY JOHN MCNICOL

As reported in the last Newsletter, there were several guns which were constructed from the spares sold by NZDF to a scrap merchant, who on-sold these parts to two entrepreneurial collectors. These guns include the Peter Miles gun, which is included as one of the official guns, even though it is a "bitzer" made up from a variety of sources.

Pete Dawson first drew my attention to it, and Terry Farrell certainly has a finger in the pie, but the gun that first surfaced at the October Horse Power Rally in Timaru, reappeared at the Christchurch Reunion and AGM.

The interesting thing about this gun is the breech ring, which is number 01301. In addition the Christchurch Gun has the MLA Number 57119, which fits the sequence of known legitimate MLas and which is right for this gun number. It appears to have the same number as a gun in the School of Artillery Gun Park, Linton although this gun does not have an Mla Number.

he Linton gun though does not have an Mla Number. I suspect that in the general mismatch of parts that occurred when the guns were decommissioned, this Christchurch gun acquired the authentic breech ring, while the Linton Gun which hitherto was accorded the official status, is becoming quite suspect.


According to Chris Morriss, all you need for the ownership of such guns is a class A gun license, being a single shot non-magazine weapon. And of course they are blank-firing capable, as is evidenced by Peter Miles gun.

The only question we have now, is why the Christchurch gun carries the Tac sign for Q Battery? In the original 16 Fd Reg orbat, 11(A) was P, the senior battery, 22(D) Battery was Q, while the Junior Battery, 161, carried the R Tac Sign. This gun then purports to be A gun of 22(D) Battery. I would be really glad to enter into correspondence about this. In the meantime there are reports of other sightings of "rogue" guns, which we would be very interested to record the numbers. And of course, there are the three missing "official" L5.



I was attending the Horsepower Rally at Levels Raceway outside of Timaru recently and came across this. There was a large military vehicle and equipment component to the rally. There were a total of 11 artillery pieces there including 4 x 25 pdrs (including one Brit with muzzle brake), 4 different anti tank guns, our M101A1 and the L5 already mentioned, plus a captured WW1 Krupp 77mm howitzer. The majority of the guns were firing blanks throughout the day - Pete Dawson

In the last newsletter I gave a list of people who the Gunner Community were beholden to. There were several other general references which I inadvertently omitted. These include:

- Grant Hays: "We stand on the shoulders of giants." Grant's list was the foundation of all we did. We are delighted that we were able to fill in some blanks, but there is no doubt we the immense debt of gratitude we owe to Grant who kicked it all off.
- Phil Cregeen: Guns on Public Display in New Zealand, On-Line Publication, No Date. - Featuring: Margaret and Ray Brown: Seatoun RSA, Margaret Brown: Titahi Bay RSA, John Osbourne: Kaikohe and District Memorial RSA Inc, 2010
- Newman, S D. (1988); .Vietnam Gunners - 161 Battery RNZA South Vietnam 1965 - 1971. Tauranga, Moana Press
- Google Earth: for some general location photos.
- Cooke, P.D , and Maxwell, I., (2013) Great Guns; the artillery heritage of New Zealand, Wellington, Defence of New Zealand Study Group. 

Thank you all once again. - John McNicol

Op Ubique Update

BY PAUL WELDRAND

The New Plymouth RSA L5 has now been uploaded and will land at the Steam & Sand Blasting (S&S) workshop The New Plymouth District Council have allocated a grant for this work, I'll be liaising with Chris, our Treasurer, with regards to any funds accepted etc. Fingers crossed we should have this gun returned to NP in the not too distant future!

The Napier L5 RSA. Plans have been made in order to get this gun also taken to S&S after the New Plymouth has been returned to New Plymouth .

New Lynn RSA: Whilst Molesy & I were in Auckland, we found an L5 outside this RSA, in not too bad a condition - however a good 'tickle up' would be beneficial. I am hoping we can get a weekend organised along with a team of merry men to administer the afore mentioned 'tickle up'. The indications are it will be left on site and we'll be planning that weekend in the Summer!

Papakura Cadet Unit: Yet again, a 5.5inch medium gun is located outside the Cadet unit, this is in a shocking state and will need a really good attempt to make it at least asthetically pleasing! Watch this space for further plans...

Palmerston North 105. My memory isn't as sharp as I'd like however, there is a privately owned gun that has been leased to the PNCC that yet again, needs a good tickle up! I'd like to arrange a weekend in Linton Military Camp so as to give the guns we've previously worked on, a good washing down before Summer, this would give us a good chance to attack this new gun, yet again, watch this space for further plans!anpower. I will be sending an all C/Ss email out in the next week so as to confirm exactly who we still have on board, I have recruited other members from different locations, some of which are Veterans, not particularly RNZA however will be good assets to have in the team!

The obvious winter period has been a bit of a bugger to us lately however, fingers crossed for a glorious Summer so we can start cutting about doing good stuff!

All in all, a good amount of work is in our midst, obviously I'll let you all know of our adventures!



Services to the Polish Community

BY GREG THWAITE

At a ceremony at Polish House in Auckland on 20 November 2022, Old Gunner Mike Subritzky was honoured for his services to the Polish community in New Zealand. The Ambassador of Poland, Mr Grzegorz Kowal, awarded him a Polish decoration.

In his speech afterwards, Mike disclosed that his ancestor who started the family tree in New Zealand had originally emigrated to avoid conscription into the Czarist Army.

Mike's own record is quite opposite. He served in the RNZA, the RNZN, and the RNZAF, with one deployment to Rhodesia and another to the Antarctic. Among Gunners, Mike has acquired renown for his published poetry about Army life.

He is photographed (right) at Polish House. Behind him is a bookshelf that contains books of his poetry. Beside him stands Vice President Greg Thwaite, sporting his own Bene Merito medal awarded by the Polish nation. 🇵🇱

Kiwi Peacekeepers by Mike Subritzky

There's death all around me, there's death in the air,
I can smell it and feel it - and I know now the fear.
The road could be mined, or an ambush await,
It may be the end - our appointment with fate.

The escorts have left us, we're now on our own,
I'm as frightened as hell - and we're all so alone.
Our armour is moving, we're leaving the town,
Rhodesians are waving, yelling - "Keep your heads down!"

I look at the Gunner, his face is all drawn,
His machine gun is loaded - and the safety catch on.
We drive through the war zone, on dirt roads blood red,
Past African kraals - with children unfed.

Expecting a tank mine, or bullet to tell,
Or a Russian made rocket - to take us to hell.
At Assembly Place "Lima", the site of an old kraal,
We finally halt - and put our backs to the wall.

Raise the stars of our nation, raise the Brit's Union Jack,
Put the dread right behind us - for there's no turning back.
Not there for the fighting, not there for the fall,
We are the friend of no one - and the enemy of all.

...We are the Peacekeepers.

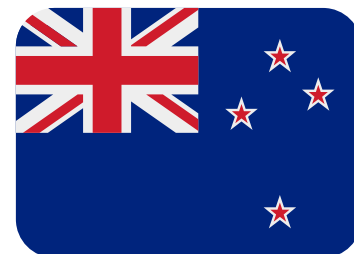
Mike Subritzky
NZATMC - AP Lima 1979



Greg Thwaite (L) and Mike Subritzky (R)

This poem was read aloud at the Gunners Day Dinner 2022 held at Government House, Auckland, in the presence of the Commander-in-Chief Dame Cindy Kiro, to loud applause afterwards as Mike stood to acknowledge the poem.

LAST POST



- Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Captain General, RNZA. Passed away on September 8 2022 at Balmoral Scotland aged 96.
- MACLEAN, Angus Neil. 3 Fd Regt RNZA, and former NZ Chief Coroner. Passed away on November 17 2022 in Hamilton.
- RURI, James (Junior, JR). V45076, RNZA, Passed away in November 2022 in Whakatane.
- COOPER, Richard Hugh (Dick). 675546, Gnr, 161 Bty RNZA, Korea. Passed away in Masterton on November 21 aged 91.
- HIGGINSON, Trevor James. 212351, Capt QM, 161 Bty RNZA, Vietnam. Passed away peacefully on November 14 2022.
- COWLEY, Edward (Eddie). E40507, 161 Battery RNZA, Vietnam. Passed away peacefully on 7 October 2022 in Adelaide.
- BLACKBOURN, Noel William. 536810, Sgt, 161 Bty RNZA, Vietnam. Passed away on 4 October 2022 in Albany.
- HAYMAN, Arnold Halliwell ED. 920003, Major (retd), 16 Fd Regt RNZA, Korea. Passed away at home on 1 October aged 90
- DAVIES, William Albert (Taffy). 23631480, CFN, REME, Paratrooper, British Army. 38178, Sapper, RNZE, 161 Battery RNZA, Vietnam (wounded in action, land mine, foot amputated, July 1967). Passed away at Thames Hospital, on 4th September, 2022, aged 85 years.
- WHEELER Peter John (Al). 40291, RNZASC, RNZCT, 161 Bty Vietnam. Passed away on 21 August 2022 in Whanganui.
- HENDERSON, Graeme Stephen. L814072, WO1, 161 Bty, RNZA, Vietnam. Passed away on 12 Aug 2022 aged 90.
- BROOKING, Graham Morehu. 39066, Sgt, 161 Bty, RNZA, Vietnam. Passed away peacefully on 11 August 2022 in Hastings.
- DOWNS, Peter (Doggo). T345247, WO2, RNZEME, 161 Bty Vietnam. Passed away on 9 August 2022 in Brisbane, aged 84.
- RANKIN, Stewart Frederick (Stioux). 161 Bty, RNZA, Vietnam. Passed away on August 9, 2022 in Christchurch.
- NORTHOVER, Robert Frederick (Bobby). 974164, Gnr, RNZA. Passed away on August 3, 2022, aged 84 years.
- COCHRANE, Colin Dennis. 37603, 161 Bty, RNZA, Vietnam. Passed away peacefully on August 2, 2022 in Australia, aged 82.
- STUART, Richard Patrick (Pat). 207886, Gnr, 16 Fd Regt, Korea. Passed away on July 30, 2022 in Greymouth, aged 94.
- ASHTON, Graeme. 207884, 163 Battery RNZA, Korea. Passed away on 18 July 2022 in Taupo, aged 93.
- SMITH Norman David (Norm). 212334, 161 Bty RNZA, Vietnam, and Malaya/Borneo. Passed away on July 6 2022 in Papamoa, Tauranga.



NZ GUNNER

Royal New Zealand Artillery Association Newsletter

AGM AND 22(D) REUNION SUPPLEMENT

AGM 10-13 NOV 2022

BY PETE DAWSON AND SKIN FRANCES

When planning the 2022 Royal New Zealand Artillery Association (RNZAA) Reunion and AGM, based from the Richmond Club in Christchurch, the key intent was to provide a slower paced event to allow more time to socialise with those who attended.

Thursday afternoon saw Pete Dawson and Skin Frances attending to the final setup, while Bernie and Danny McCort, under the close supervision of their 'minder' Andrew Donnellan, delivered name tags and other printed items, and Rowan and Craig Hewitt arrived with the Q Store. Soon after, about 20 others arrived for drinks and a catch up.



With Friday being Remembrance Day, a great gaggle of gunners made up the majority of those who paraded at the bridge of Remembrance. The NZ flag and the 3 Field Regiment Standard lead the parade, which was under the command of Skin Frances. The Artillery wreath was laid by our Colonel Commandant, Paul Southwell and Robert Smith, 'Smithy', who was over from Australia for the reunion

More Photos can be found on the RNZAA webpage:
[RNZA Association AGM 2022](#)

Election of Officers

Shay Bassett - reappointed as President.
 John McNicol - reappointed as Secretary.
 Chris Pearce - reappointed as Treasurer.

Committee: (6 members. - all reappointed)

Greg Thwaite - Welfare
 Chris Morris - Membership Secretary and Webmaster
 Craig Hewett - Quartermaster
 Bryan Moles - Operation Ubique and Engineer Extraordinaire
 Paul Weldrand - Convener Operation Ubique
 Pete Dawson - South Island and Operation Ubique

Outside the Committee

Bernadine McCort - Veterans Coordinator
 Marty Coomber - Editor of NZ Gunner

After gathering again at the Richmond Club, twenty plus people took the opportunity, organised by Pete Dawson, to visit Fort Jervois, aka Ripapa Island Historic Reserve in Lyttleton harbour.



The Saturday morning AGM was well attended, then at 1300 hours, 60 plus sat down for the Formal Luncheon, where the Association Vice President, Greg Thwaite, presided over the event. The Colonel Commandant, Paul Southwell, updated us on the state of the 16 Field regiment and his trip to the UK for the Queens funeral, then later the Gunner of the Year award was presented. Once the luncheon was over many remained to enjoy the evening socialising at the Club.



The Colonel Commandant, Brigadier (Ret) Paul Southwell presents the Gunner of the Year to Sergeant Thomas Walker



The Colonel Commandant presents a certificate of appreciation and a veteran's pin to Skin Francis. The certificate is signed by the Minister of Defence and the Prime minister and expresses the thanks of the New Zealand people and Government for the service given to the nation.

On Sunday, a brief Church Service was presided over by Association Vice President, Greg Thwaite, and again the ubiquitous Artillery wreath was gain laid.

The slower pace of activities for the Reunion/AGM weekend, a Formal Luncheon (rather than an evening Formal Dinner), and greater opportunity to socialise over the three-four days was appreciated by most. Many thanks to the RNZAA committee for their assistance in organising the event and all those who were able to attend. 🇳🇿



22(D) BTY REUNION

BY MARTY COOMBER

The 155th Reunion dinner held on 18 June 2022 marked 155 years since the formation of D Battery in Wellington.

Fifty-five former battery members and their partners attended a full weekend of activities based at the Porirua RSA. While most come from the lower North Island, we had members from Australia and the USA making a special effort to get together.

Social activities played a major part with Meet and Greet drinks on Friday night, a tour of the Wrights Hill Fortress on Saturday and a Service for the Fallen at the National Memorial on Sunday.

The highlight of the weekend was a buffet dinner on the Saturday night. John McNicol - he elder Statesman of the members - in his Toast to the Queen our Captain General, gave a moving speech highlighting the long history of the Battery, the professionalism of the unit, and the unique experience of serving with Gunners who came from all walks of life, and who gave up their weekends and annual holidays, year after year, to serve their country.

Nothing speaks of more of this unique bond that even 20 years after disbandment, so many Gunners came together to meet each other again.

The stories were wonderful - some how, each year the mud gets deeper, the rain wetter, the cold harsher, the runs longer, packs heavier and the rations worse.

But we all remember with pride the unique teamwork, training, skill and accuracy that that is needed to deliver rounds down range.

All of us give very sincere thanks to Graig Hewett for not only organising the event, but being the social glue that keeps the connections open, the address lists updated and sense of community going. Thank you Graig.

The toasts that concluded the evening were to The Regiment, Absent Friends and above all - "To the Battery"



Craig Hewett.



John McNicol







Our President - taken at the 125th anniversary 1992

