



NZ GUNNER

Royal New Zealand Artillery Association Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

BY SHAY BASSETT

Greetings fellow Gunners

Last month, after some delay, the RNZA Association was finally able to farewell our previous longstanding President Tony McLeod, and his wife Mary, in a manner befitting his extraordinary dedication and achievements. At a postponed Gunners Day event, around 70 members were wined and dined in style at Government House Auckland by our Patron, Her Excellency Dame Cindy Kiro.

Due to the magnificent efforts of our Vice President Greg Thwaite, working together with Government House staff, the evening was truly one to be remembered. I will resist dwelling any longer on this activity, as there is more to come later in the Newsletter, but before I move to other matters I feel obliged to say that before that night I had never seen Tony completely lost for words!

On the serving Gunner front, members will be aware that the New Zealand Government is providing ongoing support in numerous ways to Ukraine during fight against invasion by Russia, and that the NZDF has contributed to this in part by providing artillery training to Ukrainian gunners in the United Kingdom. The contingent of Kiwi Gunners doing this great work recently returned to New Zealand, and they are now all on some well-earned leave.

For your interest, below is an article that is essentially a reprint of one originally published in the Army News about the deployment. Looking to the future, in November we have another great opportunity for members to gather and share each other's company.

While the focus has been on the Gunners' Day dinner up north, some of our southern members have been grafting away organising the major fixture on our RNZA Association yearly calendar.

By this of course I mean the Annual Reunion and General Meeting. Once again, there is additional information below, however, I will point out that we have not had a get-together in 'The Mainland' for quite a while and, given the fickle times in which we now live, who knows when the chance will come up again. I would therefore encourage anyone undecided to grab the opportunity if you can and join us down south over the Remembrance Day weekend.

Ubique,
Maj Shay Bassett
President, RNZA Association

AGM Warning Order

The Royal NZ Artillery Association Inc 88th Annual Gathering & AGM

10th November - 13th November 2022

**To be held at the Richmond Club
75 London Street, Richmond
Christchurch**

Thursday 10 Nov 2022 From 1600hrs – Registration open, mix and mingle at Richmond Club

Friday 11 Nov 2022 1050hrs – Armistice Day Service at Bridge of Remembrance
1200-1700hrs – Own arrangements, or
1300-1700hrs – Ripapa Island/Fort Jervois Visit – Liaise directly with Pete Dawson (petedawson1950lytt@gmail.com) for details and bookings
From 1800hrs – Registration open, mix and mingle at Richmond Club

Saturday 12 Nov 2022 0830-1000hrs – Breakfast available at The Richmond Club
1000hrs – Registration open at Richmond Club
1030 - 1200hrs – Association AGM at The Richmond Club
1300 - 1600hrs – Reunion Formal Luncheon at the Richmond Club
From 1600hrs – Richmond Club facilities available to attendees to mix and mingle

Sunday 13 Nov 2022 0830-1000hrs – Breakfast available at The Richmond Club 75 London Street, Richmond, Christchurch 8013.
1030hrs – A brief Church Service

Accommodation – Own arrangements, but the Christchurch Committee have included a list of suggested accommodation. A list of Accommodation in the Christchurch area is at this [link](#)

Vaccinations – Required.

Dress for formal luncheon– Gents – Tie, jacket with medals /miniatures. Ladies, semi-formal.

Register Now

Please click the link below to Register. You can either register online, or download and print the paper version and send that. If possible, could you please use the on-line version. Click or Right Click to register: [Link](#)

Richmond Club

Address: 75 London Street, Richmond, Christchurch 8013

Phone: 03 389 5778

Map: [Here](#). Website: [Here](#) (Click or Right Click the links)

NZDF Artillery team trains Ukrainians alongside UK

From the Army News

A New Zealand Defence Force Artillery team trained Ukrainian soldiers in using L119 105mm light field guns and dial sights for the weapons system earlier this year.

The 30-personnel strong training team deployed for two months, and instructed members of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the United Kingdom. NZDF personnel did not enter Ukraine.

The NZDF also provided approximately 40 gun sights to Ukraine, along with 360 rounds of ammunition for training purposes. 16th Field Regiment Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Dean Gerling said the training team spent the days before deploying the equipment as well as the delivery of the instruction to people.

"The delivery of this instruction was complicated by having to use translators and interpreters to ensure the technical side of artillery and gunnery can be portrayed in a manner the Ukrainian forces can understand."

He said the ability for 16th Field Regiment and the wider Royal New Zealand Artillery team to deploy demonstrated the importance of their continued training over Operation Protect, but also since then.



"The School of Artillery has continued to conduct individual coursing in gunnery during Op Protect so that we have been able to maintain an individual based level of capability throughout the period of Covid-19."

"In addition, 16th Field Regiment has continued to conduct unit based training in those windows when people haven't been on Op Protect to maintain a basic level of capability."

The NZDF training team would be part of a wider UK team instructing in use of the light gun, and was primarily focused on training orientation of the light guns and use of dial sites.



"All artillery equipment needs to be pointing in the right direction, and that orientation can ensure all of those light guns are pointing in parallel to each other, so we know the rounds are going to land on target," he said.

"The dial site is a piece of equipment that is used to ensure the light gun is pointing individually in the right direction to achieve the desired effect at the target end," he said.

The Artillery Training Team joins more than 60 other NZDF personnel deployed to the UK and Europe where they are working with international partners in support of Ukraine's self-defence.



For a very informative review of artillery in Ukraine: Click or Right Click here: [Perun](#)

ANZAC Day Photos

John McNicol (Association Secretary) and Paul Weldrand (Convener Operation Ubique) Wellington Cenotaph laying the wreath for Anzac Day.



ANZAC Day 2022 at Bupa 'Hugh Green' Lifestyle Village and Residential Care, Rosedale, Auckland
Graham Bennet (Vietnam) David Bell (Vietnam) Marjorie Shaw (WW2, 107 yrs) Mike Dakin (Vietnam)

As well as the vets shown there were several others present, including some from South Africa. Many people in the gathering had relatives who had not returned. – Best regards to all – Mike Dakin

ANZAC Day at Whakatane

BY CRAIG HEWETT

The Dawn Service is held at the Wairaka Marae down on the Whakatane river. After the service we go into the Marae's dining room for a full sit down served breakfast, it's semi-formal with a top table, the Mayor and other official guests.

As part of the breakfast ceremony is 'Roll Call' where a microphone is passed around the tables and those who have served or close family members acknowledge the memory of a past family and their own service.

There is a very close connection to the 28 Maori Btn with many having had fathers, grandfathers or uncles who had served. Lots of laughter but at the same time it's a very moving experience.

I acknowledged my father who served in Palestine, Middle East, North Africa and Italy with 14th LAA Regt. 4 yrs 203 days in the NZ Army of which 4yrs & 15 days 'Beyond New Zealand'.



Me (Left) with Billy Gun taken after the Civic service in Whakatane, he lives in Opotiki. SVN - 2 Tours with 161 Bty and 1 Tour with 4 Troop NZSAS.



Op Ubique Update

BY PAUL WELDRAND

Hello all, well another year has passed and what a year it has been! Myself, and members of the Op Ubique Group are praying for 'Green' so to speak so we can carry on with our mission - stand by for notification as soon as we get that Green light!

So what's been happening in the background? Lots! Myself & our wee bald Engineer aka Bryan Moles, had an unexpected invitation to attend the RNZAA Annual Gunners Day dinner at Government House in Auckland, Her Excellency The Governor General, Dame Cindy Kiro was in attendance along with some very passionate Veterans and Serving Military Members, this was an extremely proud moment for me to represent the fantastic members of the Op Ubique team.

I felt extremely humbled to be in attendance whilst you were all in my thoughts. A huge Thankyou to the RNZAA President and Committee for your invitation.

Being in the Auckland region also gave us an opportunity to visit some of the local RSA's etc and ascertain what Guns were where and what condition they were in, 2 of note that really need our attentions, were found - an L5 Situated at the New Lynn RSA and a 5.5 situated at the Papakura Cadet Unit, both of which are screaming out for us and I am currently wrapping a plan around us getting together towards the end of this year and when we can be sure the weather Gods will be on our side!

Keep an eye on the Facebook Page (Operation Ubique New Zealand wide) for more info in due course, it would be awesome to show the RSA members and Cadets exactly what our efforts can reap.

Click (or Right Click) here to listen to Paul's interview with Radio New Zealand about Op Ubique and this Gun: [Operation Ubique](#)

Even during the Covid pandemic, we have managed to complete several tasks, A very hearty slap on the back to the Southern based boys for their efforts with the 3 pieces located at Burnham Camp,

It had previously been a challenge to get through the camp gates however after some extremely good work by Peter Dawson, Skin Francis and others, that has now occurred and I believe great progress has been made - Well done to all concerned!



Greytown RSA: The Op Ubique name has spread! I was lucky enough to receive a phone call 'out of the blue' from a Mr Brent Mortensen whom alerted me to the fact that a World War 2, 1942 25pdr had been sat in a Greytown (Wairarapa) transport contractors yard for approx 16yrs.

You can see from the pics that the piece was in extremely bad condition. I promised Brent that we would do something about this - 48hrs later, the Gun was loaded onto the back of a truck and delivered to Steam & Sand Blasting, Porirua



3 Months later, and after extensive work by both Steam & Sand blasting, Bryan Moles and myself, the completely refurbished Gun was then wheeled back across to Greytown and is now awaiting its movement onto a concrete pad at the Cenotaph.

Huge thanks to the team at LT Transport, Porirua for their transportation assistance. I am proud to have been part of this event and look forward to posting pics when it is unveiled to the Greytown community and looking amazing!

Once again, a huge Thankyou to the Op Ubique team for being so loyal to the cause, and of course all those people mentioned above. I am certainly looking forward to pushing on with our mission and catching up with the team! Take care all, be safe and watch this space!

Thank You to

Steam & Sand owned by Matt Trail

www.steamsand.co.nz

Matt and his team have been very generous and this is the third gun that they have helped restore. it is wonderful that these pieces can look so great after the hard work your team put in. We really appreciate your support.



After the primer spray



Click here to listen to Paul's interview with Radio New Zealand about Op Ubique and this Gun: [Operation Ubique](#)



The grand unveiling



Special thanks to (L to R).

Byan Moles (Engineer Extraordinaire)
Paul Weldrand (Convener Op Ubique)
Matt Trail (Steam & Sand)

FROM VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The Veteran, Family and Whānau Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy Framework

Most of New Zealand's veterans will experience good mental health and make a successful and safe transition into civilian society. However, a small number will face mental health and addiction challenges and be at risk of a range of poor outcomes.

This framework draws on international evidence and local experience to explain the factors that may impact on the mental health and wellbeing of veterans and their families. It identifies the groups at higher risk of poor outcomes and suggests effective responses and priority areas for action.

The framework has been developed for the wide range of individuals and organisations that contribute to the mental health and wellbeing of veterans and their families. This includes civilian organisations such as government departments, health service funders, workforce and research bodies, and health provider groups such as doctors, nurses and allied professions. It will also be useful for the New Zealand Defence Force and service and veterans' organisations.

For more details click or Right Click [here](#)

Donations

Should you feel inclined, please consider a donation to the Association in 2022 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."

Q Store:

For a wide range of RNZA and gunnery items

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

Contact Us:

RNZAA Website: www.rnzaa.org.nz

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

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

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Q Store: Craig Hewett: rnzaaQstore@gmail.com

NATO AWARD FOR ARMY OFFICER'S AFGHANISTAN WORK

Tying up all the loose ends of New Zealand's Afghanistan commitment as Covid-19 raged in the country was just one of the challenges Colonel Ben Bagley faced on his most recent deployment.

His demonstration of exemplary leadership and devotion to duty during the deployment has earned him a prestigious NATO Meritorious Service Medal which was presented to him by Defence Minister Peeni Henare recently.

From the NZDF website

COL Bagley deployed to Afghanistan in mid-2020. His task was to close down the Op Rua II training mission in the midst of the close down and withdrawal of forces for NATO's Operation Resolute Support. By then New Zealand had reduced its presence in Afghanistan to only six personnel, relying heavily on the support provided by the Australian Defence Force.

Deployed as New Zealand's Senior National Officer and Director of Future Operations, he was given the task to officially hand back Kandahar Air Base to the Afghanistan authorities not long after arriving in theatre. "We couldn't meet Afghan officials in person, so the whole job was completed by VTC," he said.

As the Kandahar handover was being organised, concurrent planning for the handover of air bases at Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif and Bagram was also added to the task. As the mission drew down his duties also included reducing the troop force flow into theatre to prepare for withdrawal, whilst maintaining the viability and security of key bases.

As Director of Future Operations he led the Resolute Support Force Management Board and streamlined a complex process which enabled multi-nation capability to be maintained. His job involved keeping airfield operations going at a vital air node which enabled civil and military flights to continue to support the Afghanistan National Defence and Security Forces in Kandahar Province and southern Afghanistan.

He engaged with every branch of the Afghanistan National Defence and Security Forces, and lead a disparate group of stakeholders to develop solutions that enabled airfields to continue to function once handed over by the mission.



COL Bagley's citation said his efforts resulted in the continuation of airfield security and services, which preserved capability. "Through his distinguished work ethic COL Bagley has influenced, reassured and assisted members from all services of the Afghanistan National Defence and Security Forces," it said.

The spread of Covid-19 throughout Kabul meant all welfare facilities such as base gymnasiums and support facilities could not be used. "For PT it was just a matter of putting on thermals and dusting the snow off the equipment that had been moved outside to avoid the further spread of the virus." The Kiwi team based in Kabul did really well to overcome all of these seemingly insignificant challenges to ensure they maintained their cohesiveness and morale, he said.

Base dining facilities were also closed although takeaway food was available. When the chefs succumbed to Covid 19, ration packs were issued. COL Bagley said he felt humbled to receive the award and was proud of the work he and his team achieved in what was a challenging and fluid environment.

The Great L5 Roundup

BY JOHN MCNICOL

Thanks to your efforts, we have traced 21 of the 24 L5 guns known to have served with the RNZA, with one more to be verified. Three are missing without trace. Quite apart from the list below, we also have a database of photos of most of these guns.

We have also had a bit of success with detailing some of the gun's histories, including the guns that served in South Vietnam.

According to Steve Newman's book, Vietnam Gunners, a total of eight L5s were sent to South Vietnam. There were 5 in the first deployment, believed to be 01301 – 01305.

On 14 March 1966, approval was given to increase the Battery's establishment by one more to bring it up to a full six gun battery. On 1 July, two more arrived in country to replace two badly worn ones, sent back to New Zealand for base repairs.

In early 1967, the L5s, being unable to withstand the stress that the periods of sustained fire that the Battery's change of role required, were replaced with M2A2s, the US 105mm gun. The L5s were sent back to New Zealand for refurbishing, after which they were dispersed to sub-units around the North Island. We believe we can identify which of the guns are ex-Vietnam guns. This is reflected in the list below.

Due to the mix and match nature of the guns, which occurred when the Guns were decommissioned and made up for allocation to RSAs and memorials, we have determined that the number on the top of the breech ring, is the gun number and the M1a number on the rear of the breech ring is the Breech number. This may or not be reflected on the Data Plate.

A huge thank-you to all of you who located and photographed the following guns.

Colin Jansen: General Background and Peter Miles' Gun

Chris Morriss: Peter Miles' Gun

Denis Dwane: Attested to the Vietnam Service of the first six guns

Des Wallace: Vietnam Service, Taradale RSA, Napier RSA, Seatoun RSA

Shay Basset: Liaison with NZDF Disposals, Trentham Military Camp, School of Artillery, Gun Park, 161 Battery Lines, 16th Field Regiment HQ, Papakura Military Camp, Romney 2 and Building 370 Army Museum, Recovering Gun from Papakura RSA, Recovering Seatoun Gun from Wingnut Studios

Craig Ruane: Confirmed there were no L5 guns on the West coast of the South Island, Got a member of his chambers to check Clyde Memorial and Cenotaph

Richard Stanley: Swanson RSA, Auckland, New Lynn RSA

Paul Weldrand: New Lynn RSA, Operation Ubique

Gareth Prentice: Napier RSA

Dave McClellan RNZEME: Confirms Steve Newman that only five guns were sent to Vietnam in the initial batch.

Martin Coomber: Confirmed condition of the Clyde Memorial and Cenotaph Gun

Chris Pearce: New Plymouth Memorial, Te Aroha RSA

Rob Mcaulay: Kaikohe RSA

Karen and Larry Riwaka: Picton RSA

Bryan Moles (Molsey): Engineer Extraordinaire, Titahi Bay, Operation Ubique

Kerry Lee: Titahi Bay

John McNicol: Titahi Bay

Lyn Culhane: Te Aroha RSA





In service in Malaya - From the Army Museum



MLA 57155 - ex 22(D) Bty at the Army Museum

List of Identified ex-NZDF L5 105mm Howitzers at present in New Zealand:

Gun #	Breech #	Location	Notes
1301	No Mla Number	School of Artillery, Linton MC	SVN gun
1302	MLA 57120	Private hands, Peter Miles, Taupo	SVN gun
1303	MLA 57121	Swanson RSA, Auckland	SVN gun
1304	MLA 57122	Napier RSA	SVN Gun
1305	MLA 57123	Missing	SVN Gun No known Location
1306	MLA 57124	NZDF Disposals Trentham Camp	The ex-Papakura RSA Gun
1307	MLA 57125	Clyde Memorial and Cenotaph	
1308	MLA 571256	New Plymouth Memorial	
1309	MLA 57127	Taradale RSA	
1310	MLA 57149	Kaikohe RSA/Oponone RSA	Not Verified - Data Plate wrong
1311	MLA 57128	School of Artillery, Linton MC	
1312	MLA 57130	Papakura Military Camp	The Ex- Wainuiomata RSA Gun
1313	MLA 57147	Picton RSA	SVN gun
1314	MLA 57148	161 Bty, 16 Fd Regt, Linton MC	"C" gun 161 Bty - "E" gun 22(D) Bty
1315	MLA 57149	Titahi Bay RSA	SVN gun
1316	MLA 57150	Missing	No known location - "B" gun 161 Bty
1317	MLA 57151	RHQ, 16 Fd Regt, Linton MC	A truly composite gun
1318	MLA 57152	New Lynn RSA	Data plate wrong - "E" gun 161 Bty
1319	MLA 57153	Te Aroha RSA	
1320	MLA 57154	Twizel RSA	Verified Twizel RSA - "A" gun 161 Bty
1321	MLA 57155	National Army Museum, Romney 2	"F" gun 22(D) Bty
1322	MLA 57156	Missing	No known location
1323	MLA 57157	Seatoun RSA, NZDF Disposals Trentham Camp	SVN gun - E" Gun 22(D) Bty -1970
1324	MLA 57158	National Army Museum, Building 370	

There are three guns missing, with no known location. One of these is a gun that served in South Vietnam. (01305). While it is an outstanding achievement by a lot of people to locate the guns we have, it would be really great to find out where our missing guns are. So, a final plea. If anybody knows anything about the location of an L5 not accounted for, could you please let us know. We would prefer solid facts, but rumour, conjecture, legend or hearsay will be a start. It would be fantastic if we could know where all our guns are. Email to: rnza.association@gmail.com.

Remembering Korea

BY CHRIS MORISS

The photo was posted in the assn facebook group two years ago by Tom O'Reilly. It has been (re-coloured from think a black and white original)

It shows a gun crew from 162 Battery, 16th Field Regiment, Royal New Zealand Artillery, Korea, circa 30 April, 1953.

If anyone knows anything of the extended family of the crew, please get in touch

Korean War Armistice Signing on 27 July Wellington

When: 27 July 1600 – 1800 (or later)

Where: Duke of Wellington (until otherwise informed), on your way home to the train station.

Who: Fine upstanding Gunners

Why: 69 years Korean Armistice Signing Anniversary. Increasing comradeship with the spinning of tales that may have some basis of truth attached.



From left: Gunners P. Te Kani (Tauranga), W. Martin (Whakatane), J. J. Hudson (Whakatane), B. Manga (Gisbourne), and Lance Bombardier J. T. Popata (Kaitaia).
Taken by an official photographer (colourised by Jecinci).

Credit: National Library of New Zealand, ref. K-2007-F.

22(D) Battery Reunion

BY MARTY COOMBER

On the evening of 22 July 1867 a meeting was held in the Princess Hotel, Molesworth Street, Wellington. At this meeting an organisation known as the Wellington Artillery Volunteers was formed.

It is from the Volunteers that 22 (D) Bty, 16 Field Regiment, Royal Regiment of New Zealand Artillery can trace its history. Prior to the First World War the Battery was known as D Battery. To preserve the historical link the letter D was added to 22 Bty's title in January 1971.

The 155th Anniversary reunion of 22(D) Battery will be held at the Porirua RSA over the weekend 22-24 July 2022.



The Princess Hotel



D Battery at Miramar, Wellington 1898

Alexander Turnbull Library

Ref: No 20918 1/2

D Battery was equipped with a variety of guns over the years, for example: 24pdrs, one of which was hauled by the volunteers up Mt Victoria and still remains there; Armstrong 9 pdrs, which they held their first live shell practice at targets moored in the Wellington Harbour in January 1868; and the Nordenfolt guns and 15 pounders which the Battery took to Samoa in 1914, this being the only occasion when the Battery has served overseas as a unit.

In the early days of D Battery intending members had to be proposed, seconded and elected to membership by two thirds majority. If he was then allowed to join, the new member had to pay £3 (a lot of money in those days) to a unit fund to cover the cost of uniforms.



22(D) Battery 1976

Gunners Day Dinner

10 June 2022

BY GREG THWAITE

The highly successful RNZAA celebration of Gunners Day 2022 in Auckland gathered together three ideas. First, to forge closer links with the Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief Her Excellency Dame Cindy Kiro, as the Patron of the RNZAA. Second, after the cancellation of the 2021 Reunion to arrange a memorable Gunners Day event in Auckland (even if held late to accommodate our Patron's travel). Third, to have a proper venue for a presentation to the RNZAA's former President.

The Committee had been looking for a memorable venue. We invited Dame Cindy to host the event, pointing to (a) the long history between the Sovereign and the Artillery, (b) the constitutional nicety that soldiers swear the attestation oath to the Sovereign and not the Government of the day, and (c) the commitment and cheerfulness with which Gunners had done their Quarantine duty in hotels..



Her Excellency The Rt Hon Dame Cindy Kiro addresses the members of the Association. In the background CAPT Sarah Linehan (ADC).

To some surprise, an invite arrived from Dame Cindy to be her guests at Government House. This is a substantial old home with a large garden on a magnificent site in the opulent neighbourhood of Epsom.

We discovered matters of protocol in dealing with Government House. A person was assigned to work with us. A delightful lady, she enjoyed the quirks and customs of the RNZAA. We submitted for review any material we were to send out about the dinner. Care was paid to the prohibition of raffle tickets during the event.



The process began to bring in people from the various parts of the Artillery. The net was spread wide, to reach the full range of Gunners, throughout New Zealand. Enough people replied in the first couple of hours to fill about a third of the seats. The first Old Gunner to respond lives in Melbourne. Unfortunately, a change of plans intervened.

We reached out in particular to some of the artists: Mike Subritzky (poet), Matt Gauldie (sculptor), and John Knowles (musician). Now a separate, civilian group, the whole RNZA band was keen to participate. Numbers had to be restricted to the space available.



Retired Colonel Commandant Barry Dreyer lent for the evening a statuette of the Vietnam Gunner, sculpted by Matt Gauldie, for display in the foyer. The Regiment sent up two model guns from Palmerston North, while our President Major Shay Bassett lent a third. John Vague brought from his yacht the Gunner flag to decorate the flagpole, which was illuminated in the dark by a light brought along by Major Peter Mortimer RNZIR. Bernie McCort brought from Rotorua the present that she had arranged. Chris Pearce drove up from the Coromandel with a dozen bottles of Artillery Port.



As usual, some late replies arrived, which were filled in for some withdrawals. Gunner's Luck left us with 70 people, being the maximum number for seven tables in the Pavilion. Dame Cindy occupied the top official table, while her Official Secretary occupied the other. Other guests were Mrs Mary McLeod and Mrs Jacqueline Bassett, who accompanied their respective husbands; from the Infantry, Major Mortimer, our guest to propose the Toast, and our very own Paul Weldrand of Op Ubique, in origin a Yorkshire infantryman; plus a Life Member who was attached to the Guns in Vietnam.



The balance numbered 63 Gunners. Lack of space precluded an open invitation to spouses. The Gunners ranged from the Colonel Commandant Brig. Paul Southwell, across to short-term Gunners from the 1960s who had served in Vietnam. The average length of service was about 20 years, and the average age was about 68. Deployments ranged from Malaya to the Middle East, usually as soldiers in a composite unit than as members of a Battery.

Major Bassett as PMC welcomed guests alongside the Official Secretary in the patio. He sent them off to the first phase of the night. This was a reception in a large lounge, which is normally reserved for distinguished foreign dignitaries.

The surprise on arrival was the presence of 9 or so band members inside the lounge, playing *merrie tunes*. Soon the room was filled with happy conversation, as Old Gunners met up, serving Gunners met Old Gunners, and serving Gunners caught up with each other.

Apart from the general merriment, Dame Cindy held a small reception for the Official Party in a side room. This Party consisted of key people in the RNZA and the RNZAA: the Regimental Colonel, Col. Ben Bagley; our President Major Bassett; WO1 Evan Kareko as the Regimental Warrant Officer; WO2 Shane Lawrence; and Bernie McCort, the indefatigable doer of good deeds for veterans.

Announced by an ADC, Dame Cindy then joined the reception. She moved freely through the room, paying particular attention to the Vietnam veterans. She has an acute capacity to initiate a conversation with genuine interest and warmth.



Too soon the time came for dinner itself, on the other side of the house. The seven tables were all named. Dame Cindy was at *Headquarters*, along with dignitaries. The other official table with the CO Lt. Col. Dean Gerling was *Regiment*. A cluster of bemedalled Colonels and Majors going back to the Vietnam War occupied *Command Post*, while a mix of serving and veteran Warrant Officers assembled on *Gun Line*. The table set aside for a number of Vietnam veterans was called *161 Battery*. A mixture of Subalterns and Sergeants found themselves assigned to the *Remote OP* table. A group of Gun Number types assembled around the table *Tiffies*, along with Bernie McCort. The Government House staff had puzzled at the term, and were interested to hear about the indispensable role of RNZEME artificers on the gun line.

The formalities consisted of the entry of the Governor-General Dame Cindy, and her short, informative, and occasionally humorous address of welcome. She recalled that some of her ancestors fought at Ruapekaka Pa in 1846, against British cannon.

Brig. Southwell made a laudatory speech about the achievements of the former President, Lt. Col. (Rtd.) Tony McLeod, across 10 years in revivifying the Association. He then invited Dame Cindy to come forward to the dais, along with Tony McLeod and Mary McLeod. She presented to Tony McLeod the RNZAA's gift of a mere, made of greenstone/pounamu. It sits on a wooden base, which is inscribed "First in word and deed". The phrase comes from the praises by the Greek historian Thucydides in the fifth century BC, of the great General Pericles of Athens. She presented to Mary McLeod a bouquet of flowers – red and blue, the colours of the RNZA.

With Mary McLeod standing at his side, Tony gave a short account of his work. He started by acknowledging the two ADC's in the room, who are successors to his service as ADC to Sir Keith Holyoake when he was Governor-General. He recorded as the two great achievements the expansion of membership by the removal of any type of subscription, and the active involvement of the RNZAA as a veterans organisation advocating for veterans before Parliament on the Veterans Support Act.



The ADC then invited Vic Timu to say Grace. An Old Gunner from Vietnam who subsequently devoted his services elsewhere in the Army, he recited a karakia in Maori. Then the traditional Gunners Grace: "For what we are about to receive, thank God". Whereupon the first of the three courses for dinner arrived.

After the meal, the port decanters passed in the air above the tables from glass to glass. Major. Bassett as PMC called for the Toasts.

Dame Cindy proposed the Loyal Toast.



Major Mortimer toasted the Regiment with wit and learning, to the receptive ears of the Gunners. Col. Bagley replied to the Toast, drawing on his family's experience. He cited to the example of Gunner White MM in North Africa. He earned his medal for keeping his gun firing as the rest of the gun crew were wounded and removed from the gun pit. The lesson is that the Guns will keep firing, as long as one Gunner is able to load, lay and fire..

Bernie McCort proposed the Toast to Spouses, which was heard in awed silence and brought tears to some in the room. Having seen generations of Gunners enter, serve, and depart, WO1 Kareko was the best person to propose the Toast to Absent Friends.



To finish off, the short poem Kiwi Peacekeepers by Mike Subritzky was recited. It reflects his experiences in Rhodesia at the time of the transition to Majority Rule. At the end Mike stood to acknowledge the room's applause. And then the time had come for tea and coffee, and departure.



All good things must come to an end. Still, jovial little groups of Colonels and Warrant Officers lingered to talk on the patio, long after the cleaners had arrived for the room.

By the end, John Vague had retrieved his flag from the flagpole and Major Mortimer disconnected and carried away his light to the Battalion Q store, and a spectacular Gunners Day Dinner was complete.

One senior officer of high standards reported no adverse comment about the planning and conduct of the Dinner. One WO1 veteran from Vietnam said he had never dreamed of being invited to Government House for dinner, while another WO1 veteran from Vietnam proclaimed it one of the highlights of his life.

As a small appreciation to the official at Government House, an RNZAA baseball hat has been despatched to her. Now, she can regard herself as part of our quirks and customs.



Presentation to Tony and Mary McLeod

Your Excellency, distinguished Guests, and fellow gunners. Tonight we are very honoured and privileged to be guests of your Excellency as we celebrate our Gunners day. It is a most fitting occasion for us to recognize and thank our retiring President, Lt Col Tony McLeod and his wife Mary for the their many years of service to the association.

Tony is a very modest fellow and will be the first to say that it is a team effort and give credit to all, but himself. However it is through his vision and inspiration that this body of gunners has grown in membership and scope.

Tony had a distinguished artillery career serving as Chief Instructor of the school and Director of Artillery. His pride in the Corps and strong sense of comradeship continued beyond his retirement first as a committee member of the association and in 2010 when he became the association president.

In Tony's 10 years of leading the association significant advances were made: Membership was expanded encouraging all who served the guns including serving soldiers to join and rekindle their comradeship; A website and Facebook pages were established alongside a regular Gunners newsletter: Connection with the Regiment was enhanced through visits to exercises, an officer mentoring program, and establishment of a trophy for Gunner of the year.

Tony encouraged activities that brought comrades together emphasising regional and national reunions and seeing that Gunners day and St Barbara day were commemorated.



The Colonel Commandant RNZA, Brigadier Paul Southwell reads the address

Veteran's welfare was close to Tony's heart. The association made significant submissions to reviews of the Veteran Support Act becoming a leading advocate for veteran welfare.

Another aspect of Tony's leadership was the encouragement he gave to gunner history and traditions. The association become actively involved in restoring and preserving artillery pieces through OP Ubique. Tony also had a hand in working with our past Col Commandant Barry Dryer in establishing the RNZA Historical Trust to ensure the preservation of artillery items of historical value.

Barry could not be here tonight but asked me to pass on to Tony and Mary his grateful thanks. Let me quote Barry's words:

"I was very ably supported on Corps and other matters by Tony. His dedication, efforts and knowledge helped transform the Royal Regiment from a gathering of individuals to a large and influential group of Gunners working for the betterment of the Regiment, its history, and its people. He has had a significant influence on us all, and on behalf of my generation, I wish him well in his retirement, with a big thank you for his service"



The Governor General presents the award

As soldiers we know that these achievements are about inspirational leadership and teamwork. Tony was supported by many of you here tonight but chief among his supporters must be Mary who as well as operating a significant business always found time to assist and encourage Tony in his role as president.

Tony and Mary on behalf of the association and NZ gunners, thank you both for your exceptional service and we look forward to your continued comradeship for many years to come.

Your Excellency, could I ask you to come forward and present the association gifts to Tony and Mary.



Tony McLeod and Mary McLeod

Tony was born on 8 June 1951 at Devonport, Auckland. He attended Westlake Boys High School 1964-68.

He joined the NZ Army in Jan 1969 and attended the Royal Military College of Australia, Duntroon (1969-1972). He graduated in Dec 1972 with a BA (Military Studies) as a Lieutenant into the Royal New Zealand Artillery. After serving as a platoon commander with the first two Territorial Force Intakes, he was posted to 4(G) Medium Battery as the cadre officer ('73-'74) and then 161 Battery as the GPO ('75).

He was then posted to the School of Artillery as an IG ('76-'77), followed by 15 months as ADC to the Governor General, Sir Keith Holyoake. In 1979 he spent a year as an UNMO in UNTSO (Sinai, Golan Heights) before heading on a 6 months OE in Europe.

On return to NZ he spent 9 months as FOO 161 Battery, and then 12 months attending the Long Gunnery Course (8101) in Gagetown, Canada, after which he was posted back to Waikouru as Chief Instructor School of Artillery for 3 1/2 years ('82-'85). He then attended the Australian Army Command and Staff College ('86), and spent 6 months as SO2 Ops at 3 Task Force (ChCh) before being promoted to Lt Colonel and posted to Director of Artillery, AGS, Wellington (Jun '87-Dec '88).

He retired from the NZ Army on completion of 20 years service in Jan 1989



Toast to the Spouses

BY BERNIE MCCORT

This is the toast I gave to the spouses at the Dinner

"When God created the Military Spouse He ran into His sixth day of overtime.

An Angel appeared and said, "you're having trouble with this one. Whats wrong with the standard model.

The Lord replied. " have you seen the specs on this order?

It must be completely independent.

It must be able to handle emergencies without an instruction manual,

It must be able to cope with family sicknesses

It must be able to move all around the country and perhaps the world at short notice.

Have a kiss that cures anything from a child's bruised knee to a partner's weary days.

Have the patience of a saint when waiting for its mate to come home and

Have six pairs of hands.

The Angel shook her head slowly and sid "six pairs of hands? NO WAY"

The Lord answered " Don't worry, we will make other military spouses to help, besides its not the hands that are causing the problem - its the heart:

It must swell with pride,

It must sustain the ache of numerous separations while remaining tru,

It must beat soundly even when it feels too tired to do so,

It must be large enough to say " I understand" when it doesn't

And to say "I love you" regardless.

"Lord", said the Angel, gently touching his sleeve. " Go to bed. You can finish it tomorrow"

"I cant" said the Lord. " I'm so close to creating something quite unique.

Already it can heal itself when sick,

On a moment's notice it will willingly feed and embrace strangers who are in a similar situation

And it can wave goodbye to its spouse when they have to leave for duty.

The Angel circled the model of the Military spouse very slowly. "Its too soft" she sighed.

"But tough" the Lord said excitedly. " You cannot imagine what this being can do or endure"

"Can it think?" asked the Angel.

"CAN it think?! - it can convert 1400 to 2pm" replied the Lord.

Finally the Angel bent over and ran her finger across the cheek. " There is a leak," she said.

"I told you that you were trying to put too much into this model"

"Its not a leak", said the Lord. "Its a tear"

"Whats it for" asked the Angel.

"Its for Joy, for sadness, for pain for loneliness and for pride"

"You're a genius" said the Angel.

Looking at her somberly, the Lord replies " I didn't put it there"

LAST POST



- SADLER, Arthur Brian. 39379, 161 Bty RNZA, Vietnam. Passed away on 19 Jan 2022 in New Plymouth aged 80.
- HAITANA, Harold Te Tawhero, "Harry". 626042, LCpl, 161 Bty RNZA, Vietnam, RNZASC. Passed away on 8 March 2022.
- LYTTLE, David Alexander. 546265, 161 Bty RNZA, Vietnam. Passed away on 8 April 2022
- SELLAR, Robin John. 40079 161 Bty RNZA, Vietnam, RNZEME. Passed away on 27 April 2022
- FALWASSER, Jared. Gnr, RNZA. Passed away in April 2022.
- REED, Murray. 329493, 12th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, RNZA. Passed away on 5 May 2022 peacefully in Auckland.
- POWER, John Reginald. 208754, 16th Field Regt RNZA, Korea. Passed away on 6 May 2022 in Rangiora, aged 91 years.
- LE CREN, Anthony St John (Tony). 208504, 16th Fd Regt, RNZA, K Force. Passed away on 20 May 2022 in Christchurch.
- MAKOARE, Michael. 41246 161 Bty RNZA, Vietnam (2 tours). Passed away on 22 June 2022 aged 77.
- BOYLE, Kevin Daniel, "Charlie". 934834, Gnr, 161 Bty RNZA, Vietnam. Passed away on 24 June 2022 at Clyde.
- COULAM, Leslie Neil. 342919, Gnr, RNZA. Passed away on 25 June 2022 in Auckland.
- GOVER, Reverend Adrian Donald. 463037, Gnr, RNZA. Passed away on 3 July 2022, aged 86 years
- MANNERING, David Alister. 205432, Major, RNZA, K Force, 16th Fd Regt/4th Mdm Regt. Passed away on 3 July 2022, aged 93 years.
- TAKARUA, Ypres Hori, "Jack". 556510, Gnr, 161 Bty RNZA, Vietnam 1969/70. Passed away on 8 July 2022 aged 74.
- BYERS, Richard, "Richie". 16th Fd Regt, RNZA. Passed away in July 2022.