



NZ GUNNER

Royal New Zealand Artillery Association Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

BY SHAY BASSETT

As I write, the King's Coronation has just concluded and unfortunately the weather in the United Kingdom seems to have been about the same as we had here in New Zealand. Regardless of peoples' feelings on the monarchy, Saturday was a spectacular display of military pageantry that I don't believe any other country in the World could have come even close to matching.

The New Zealand Defence Force sent a contingent of 20 personnel to participate in the, simply huge, procession from Westminster Abbey to Buckingham Palace. The more sharp eyed of you may have spotted two Kiwis in the foot escort to the King and Queen's carriage. What you may have missed was that one of them was a subaltern from 16th Field Regiment. So a New Zealand gunner was one of the closest to the very centre of the action! I'm sure it was an experience she will never forget, and is certainly one to be proud of. It's not often that the RNZA gets the chance to be actively involved in a ceremonial event with our Captain General, so a hearty congratulations to Lt Jessica Hansen.

Last month I had the pleasure of joining our Secretary, John McNicol, in laying a wreath (beautifully made by his daughter) on behalf of the RNZA Association at the ANZAC Day Wellington service held at the famous war memorial near parliament. In contrast with the coronation, it was both dry and 'Goldie Locks' weather – not too hot and not too cold. Proceedings were well organised and went like clockwork under the longstanding traditional guidance of the Wellington Returned and Services Association, ably lead by one of our own, Col (Rtd) Theo Kuper.

Once again I had the chance to parade with my sword, which was fresh back from nearly a year of

refurbishment by one of the last qualified military swordsmiths in New Zealand. Although these days it is not the norm to wear a sword on ANZAC Day, I do so in memory of its first owner. Captain Douglas MacPherson Cuthbertson, New Zealand Field Artillery, volunteered for overseas service at the outbreak of World War One and landed at Gallipoli with 4th (Howitzer) Battery, the very first ANZAC fire unit ashore.

Douglas went on to be Mentioned in Despatches, but was tragically killed in action on the Western Front just a few short months before the end of the war. Interestingly, Douglas was also a second generation Kiwi gunner, his father having commanded the Invercargill Garrison Artillery in 1879. After clearly being neglected for some time, I like to think Douglas would approve of his sword getting a new lease of life, and a small piece of RNZA history being saved.

Looking to the future, we have Gunners Day later this month, and our annual RNZA Association Reunion at Trentham Camp in October. I know from Chris Morriss that preparations are well underway for Gunners Day in his neck of the woods, and I'm sure others will be doing the same. I certainly look forward to seeing what Johnny Garton has organised for those of us in Wellington!

In regard to the Reunion, things are also coming together nicely. Rather than 'reinvent the wheel' myself and the aforementioned good Major Garton have essentially followed the successful template of 2019, i.e. meet and greet in the WOs & Sgts Mess on Friday night, activities on Saturday followed by dinner in the Offrs Mess, and a memorial service on Sunday morning. More detail will be forthcoming, but at this point I can confirm we have some barrack rooms and approval to use the main mess in Trentham for other meals. In closing, I wish you all the very best for Gunners Day and look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the Reunion in October.

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

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

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.

OP UBIQUE UPDATE

FROM THE NEW PLYMOUTH & DISTRICTS' RETURNED AND SERVICES' ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER

The Gun sited across the road from the New Plymouth Cenotaph had signs of corrosion, so it was recommended that the gun be stripped, cleaned, sandblasted and recoated with coatings appropriate for the salt air environment. Due to the costs involved for the gun to be restored to its original condition, it was more practicable to restore it to its best possible condition.

Due to the original restoration quotes increasing from \$25,000 to \$40,000 the NPDC declined to assist with the restoration costs. Through contacts we found the Op Ubique team of Gunners associated with the NZ Artillery Association who provide voluntary labour with only consumable costs to pay.

In September the gun was uplifted and taken to Porirua. The NPDC Parks Board, being the custodian of the gun, paid for the transportation costs to and from Wellington. It was estimated the costs for consumables would be under \$5000 and in fact the completed job cost \$2500.00.

The NPRSA would like to acknowledge the work The Royal NZ Artillery Association and its sub group, Op Ubique (a RNZAA welfare initiative for ex- service personnel, some ex Vietnam vets that served on these guns), for the refurbishment of the L5 Howitzer on the NP foreshore.



COLONEL COMMANDANT'S CORNER

BY BRIGADIER (RTD) PAUL SOUTHWELL

So far it has been a rather quiet time from an artillery perspective this year, especially after the rush of activity late last year. As yet we have no word about His Majesty's intention to take on the role of Captain General of the Artillery. Perhaps it is something he will attend to after his coronation. The RSM tells me we have one young Gunner officer (Lt Hanson) attending the coronation, and 163 bty will fire a 21 gun salute in Wellington.

The Regiment and school are about to head off on exercise Hellfire, an introductory shoot for new gunners and in June Exercise Brimstone will be conducted for the senior courses.

Members of the Regiment spent about one month assisting in the emergency phase of cyclone Gabrielle with one week in Auckland and three on the East Coast. By all accounts they found the work gratifying and enjoyed much praise from those they assisted.

For those who like to know what the Regiment is doing the RSM posts an update on 16 Fd Regt facebook.

I hope none of you suffered damage from the cyclone.

It was a great pleasure to join Bernie and her team at the Veteran Affairs Forum in Auckland on 28 March. If you have the opportunity to attend one of these events I strongly recommend that you do so. There is much of assistance to veterans, including; health advice, employment, archives and medals research, plus meeting with comrades and enjoying some fine catering and barista coffee. Did you know barista is Italian for barman, not that any alcohol was served.

Norman Cyril Jackson VC

... He gripped the air intake on the leading edge of the wing with one hand, and fought the fire with the other. The flames seared his hands, face, and clothes. The fighter returned and hit the bomber with a burst of gunfire that sent two bullets into his legs. The burst also swept him off the wing.

He fell 20,000 feet (6,100 m), but his smouldering and holed parachute worked well enough to save his life. He suffered further injuries upon landing, including a broken ankle, but managed to crawl to a nearby German village the next morning, where he was paraded through the street.

He made two escape attempts, the second of which was successful as he made contact with a unit of the US Third Army.

No doubt most of you enjoyed an ANZAC day gathering. This year I promised myself a more relaxing ceremony preferring to listen to speeches rather than making them. I chose a monument close to home at Buckland, just south of Pukekohe. It was surprisingly well attended with well over 300 people. The guest speaker spoke of a NZ airman VC winner, who when the engine of his bomber caught fire and the captain ordered them to parachute out over occupied France, he suggested a better solution. He crawled out on the wing armed with a canvas and fire extinguisher and some rope to lash himself to the wing, lost the extinguisher, but managed to put the fire out with the canvas. The plane arrived safely back to England. I imagine he didn't have to buy any drinks that night. The local minister invited people to the quaint pre 1900 church to place candles in memory of those who perished in service. There were a handful of people standing around a small box of sand with five lit candles when a young girl decided to blow the candles out on the birthday cake, a charmingly innocent act that would draw a smile on the face of every soldier.

Trust you are all well prepared for winter and I look forward to seeing some of you on gunner's day. 🇳🇿



THE GREAT M101A1 HUNT

BY JOHN MCNICOL

Fellow Gunners,
I hope you are finding this as fascinating as I do.

Just when you think you have the whole thing wrapped up, something comes out of left field and you are blindsided. I thought we had the L5s taped, but thanks to Terry Farrel, another piece of the jigsaw is revealed. The gun we listed at Twizel as Gun Number 01320, Mla 57154, now thanks to Terry and his Photos, is revealed to be Gun Number 01316, Mla 57150. This was listed as one of our missing guns. It begs the question though, where is gun 01320? If anybody has a handle on that, please let us know.

Now onto the M101A1s. Surprisingly, there is less known about the M101A1s than the L5s in NZDF service.

This American gun was adopted by NZ in 1967 in Vietnam. Designed before WWII, 10,200 had been made by 1953. According to whatever source you believe, six Canadian models were hired from the Australians for NZ use in Vietnam, after the L5s broke down under the sustained firing conditions. Four more were purchased for training in NZ from 1968 (for \$US13,862 each). One arrived in April 1968 and went to 161 Depot Battery, from where it first fired at Waiouru on 1 August. The next three, however, were damaged by a major fire on the African Star when she collided on 16 March 1968 with barges under tow on the lower Mississippi River (21 people died on board, the fire taking three days to extinguish).

After repair in America, the guns came to NZ but a change of role accompanied the return of 161 Bty from Vietnam in 1971. It reequipped with the L5 (the Territorial Force 11(A) and 22(D) Batteries retained their L5s all along) and the M101A1 was chosen to replace the 25-pounder in the South Island Batteries. 16 more were required. The US Arsenal supplied 16 reconditioned models, which arrived in 1977 and entered service in April 1978 (and periodically rebuilt them in the 1980s).

References

Peter Dawson – List of M101A1s as of June 2022

Grant Hays – List of M101A1s as of June 2022

Newman, S D. (1988); .Vietnam Gunners – 161 Battery RNZA South Vietnam 1965 – 1971. Tauranga, Moana Press

Cooke, P.D , and Maxwell, I., (2013) Great Guns; the artillery heritage of New Zealand, Wellington, Defence of New Zealand Study Group.

Henderson, A., Green, P., and Cooke,P, (2008) The Gunners, A History of New Zealand Artillery, Auckland, Penguin Group.



Crew of No. 6 gun, 161 Battery preparing to fire a M101A1 Howitzer at Nui Dat, circa 1966-1967. The person standing facing the camera is Gnr R.G. Jessen.

The M101A1 was introduced to re-equip 3 Fd Regt RNZA at the RNZA Waiouru Corps Camp in January 1978 when both 31(B) and 32(E) Btys fired their "new" guns live at Waiouru.

It was withdrawn from service in the late 1990s, the M101A1 fired its last salute in Christchurch (by 32 Bty RNZA, in June 1999).

Often misidentified as the 'M2A2', the Complete Equipment Schedule (CES) shows it to be a Howitzer, Light, Towed, 105mm M101A1 which consisted of a 'Cannon 105mm Howitzer M2A2' on 'Carriage 105mm Howitzer M2A2'. And if there was any doubt, legendary gunner John Masters said 'M101A1 it is'.

So, where are they now? We know that there were 20 purchased (discounting the 6 Vietnam Guns which were returned to the Australians when 161 Battery left Vietnam.) They did not suffer the ignominy of being mixed and matched like the L5s, and most apparently are intact. Below is a list from Pete Dawson, corroborated by one from Grant Hays, the Artefacts Curator at the National Army Museum, which identifies the carriage numbers of 15 guns. We know that there are two more, at the locations given, but we do not know where the other three have got to.

Once again, a huge plea. You responded magnificently to the L5 hunt, and it would be great to find out where the other M101A1s are. So if you are passing your local RSA or Memorial, if there is an M101A1 there, take a note of the numbers – a photo would be great. Send any information to John at rnza.association@gmail.com.

Also an indication of condition would be of great help to Operation Ubique. Any indication of service would be helpful too.

Ubique,
John
Maj (Rtd) John McNicol ED.
Secretary RNZA Association

LIST OF M101A1S IN NEW ZEALAND MEMORIALS

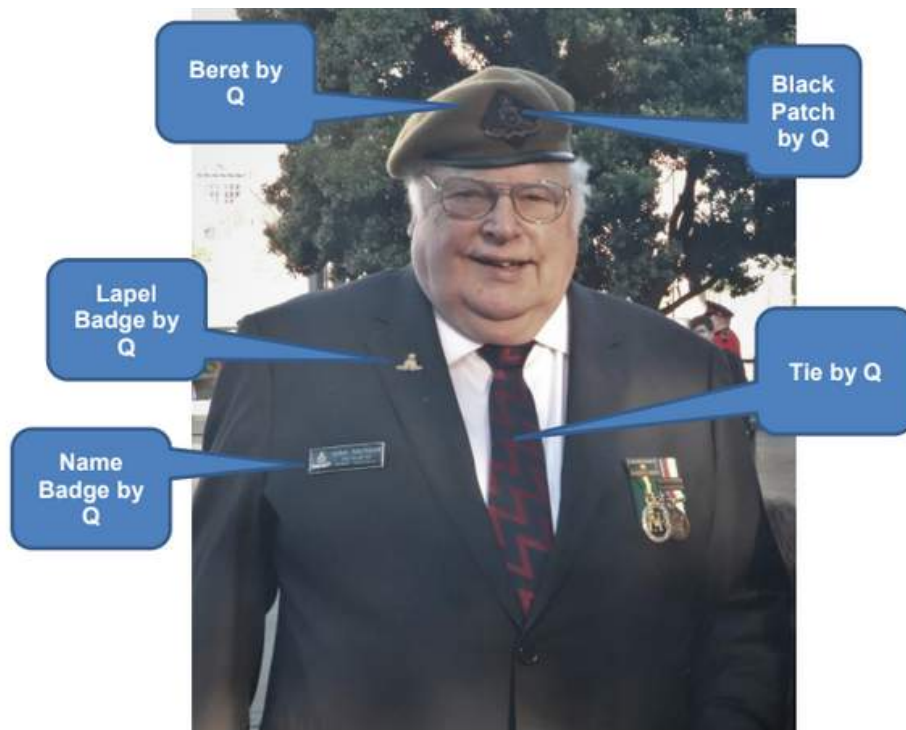
Item	Carriage Number	Location
1	1095	Papanui RSA, Christchurch
2	1096	Manurewa RSA, Auckland
3	1102	Hokitika RSA, West Coast
4	2788	National Army Museum, Waikouru
5	4964	National Army Museum, Waikouru (Green Pod 4)
6	5244	Stokes Valley RSA, Wellington (apparently returned to disposals)
7	6447	16 Field Regt RNZA, Linton Camp, Palmerston North
8	8937	Southern Gunners, Christchurch (ex 3 Field Regt RNZA Assoc)
9	9212	Burnham Military Camp, Christchurch
10	10147	Tokoroa RSA
11	10161	Paeroa RSA, Coromandel
12	10508	Christchurch Memorial RSA
13	11315	Gore RSA, Southland
14	11438	Cust/West Eyreton, Canterbury
15	22720	National Army Museum (Green - building 370)
16	???	The Square, Palmerston North (ex Palmerston North RSA)
17	???	Morrinsville RSA
18	???	Te Kaha RSA

Thanks to Peter Dawson for compiling this list and to Grant Hays for reviewing it.

FROM THE Q STORE

CONTACT: RNZAAQSTORE@GMAIL.COM

I owe it all to Q



So what else can the Q do for you?

Check out our product range at
<http://rnzaa.org.nz/the-rnza-association/the-rnza-association/q-store>

and watch out for new product coming to the Q Store soon.



BRIG REG MILES CBE, DSO & BAR, MC

BY BARRY DREYER

Most of you will be aware of the Reg Miles story. Briefly, he was the top graduate of the original graduating class from RMC Duntroon in 1914, with Graduation Certificate No 1. He took the first NZ guns ashore at Gallipoli, was recommended for a VC in France (he got the DSO) and won an MC. He was wounded twice and ended the War as the Brigade Major of the NZ Div artillery, responsible for the fire plans at Messines and Le Quesnay.

In WW2 he was the CRA, commanding all 2 NZ Div's artillery. He was captured in a slit trench, wounded, and engaging the enemy with a rifle, behind 6 Fd Regt when it was overrun by German Panzers and infantry, at Bel Hamad in Dec 1940.

Imprisoned in the Generals' camp outside Florence, six senior officers escaped after digging a tunnel under the chapel in the castle walls. The four British escapees were quickly captured; the two NZers got to Switzerland and were interned.

With NZ wanting Miles back in 2 NZ Div, the British secret escape organization got him out of Switzerland, across occupied France and into neutral Spain, where he was to be taken out by submarine from Gibraltar. For his Desert service he was awarded the CBE by NZ, and for his daring escape a second DSO by the British. He was the most senior successful Commonwealth escapee in the war.

Unfortunately, he died in mysterious circumstances in Figueras in Northern Spain in Oct 1943, where he was buried with full military honours by the Spanish, and where he remains.

Memorial Donation

The RNZA Historic Trust is seeking donations to place a plaque for Brig Miles at the house (now Museum) where he died.



Brig Miles wore this jacket made from a blanket in his escape by tunnel from an Italian prisoner-of-war camp.

DSO Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He fought his battery until the enemy were within 500 yards, and his ammunition exhausted, at the same time rallying infantry stragglers and manning a fire trench, then made a reconnaissance into a wood sending back valuable information. He was finally wounded by rifle fire at close range. — The London Gazette, No. 30813, 23 July 1918



"Reggie Miles was an all-round gunner, interested and accomplished in every sphere of gunnery. At all levels and in all units he was admired and respected and when he disappeared it was as if the Divisional Artillery had lost its father". W E Murphy

The room in which he died is now part of a museum. A group of Spanish locals, with the agreement of the Museum, are planning to develop a permanent memorial for Miles in the room, on the 80th anniversary of his death, in late October this year.

We feel that New Zealand needs to also memorialise Miles in the Museum room, and we are calling for donations to raise enough for a suitable bronze plaque to be commissioned and placed with the Spanish memorial, from New Zealand. The alternative is an oil painting of Miles. A bronze is about \$6,000, an oil about \$4,000.

We have a donor who will match the first \$750 raised, dollar for dollar.

Please forward your donation to the RNZA Historic Trust with Miles in the reference field, at BNZ Hutt Central 02-0528-0274552-000.

The trust is a Registered Charity, so donations are deductible for tax purposes. If you require a receipt for tax purposes, please email Barry Dreyer at barryddreyer@gmail.com Ubique. Barry Dreyer

161 BTY REUNION

BY CLAYTON JOHN

Dates and location:

Friday 20th to Sunday 22nd October 2023, inclusive.

Location:

Campbelltown RSL, 1 Carberry Ln, Campbelltown
NSW 2560

Events

Friday 20 Oct: Arrive, meet in the RSL for sundowner and catchup.

Saturday 21 Oct: Events TBA, a buffet dinner in a private room with bar service. Including short commentary and feedback.

Sunday 22 Oct: Farewell breakfast and depart.

Accommodation and Travel:

The accommodation and travel are for everyone to organise themselves.

Unfortunately discounts for group bookings were not worthwhile. Here is a list of hotels in the vicinity of the RSL:

- IBIS
- Ridges (most expensive)
- Quest
- Maclin
- Hermitage

Most are around 1 Km away, except the Maclin which is around 300 meters or so

There is a train that leaves the Sydney airport and stops at Campbelltown.

Reunion Registration:

Registration is important for various reasons. Please send me an email with following;

Name, email address, phone number and city of residence.

Communications:

Please send any comms to me, by email or Messenger.

Please do not use Facebook, as I do not monitor it.

My email is: clayton.john56@gmail.com

Mobile: 0429 528 378 (Australia)



Reunion Cost and Payment:

We have booked a private room with a bar and buffet dinner for the Saturday night.

The cost is AUD\$100 per person. This is based on a minimum of 40 people. The AUD\$100 does not include drinks.

Two important issues here.

1. We need to pay this up front. So, in the next say 2 months we need full payment from everyone. Banking details for payment below.
2. If we don't get a minimum of 40 people, then the price will increase.

With the level and interest and excitement the idea of this reunion has produced, I believe with partners will well exceed 40.

Banking Details:

Chook (Ron Fowell), has set up a bank account, I have cut and passed the details below.

VERY IMPORTANT: - your proper name (not army nickname, or no name at all) must be put in the banking details so we can account for who has paid and who has not.

Bank: St George Bank
10 Oxford Rd Ingleburn
NSW 2565
BSB: 112-879
A/C: 498 156 271
Swift Code: SGBLAU2S
Account Name: Ronald G Fowell

The Swift Code numbers are for those that are sending funds from overseas transactions
All participants must have my contact details:

Clayton John
21 Dunkeld Place
St Andrews
NSW 2566
Phone 0425 326 838

ANZAC DAY PHOTOS

Wreath Laying ceremony at Wellington Cenotaph Anzac Day 2023



Seen at the Ceremony:, A group of
22(D) Battery Stalwarts:
Blair Dickie
Michael Brown
Maj. Shay Bassett (Assn President),
PO James Dunlop-Storey
Ian Dickie
Marty Coomber (Newsletter Ed)
John McNicol (Assn Secretary.)



Two styles of wreath
RNZAA - Made with care by John's daughter in-law
22(D) Bty - New permanent wreath that can be
rested annually - and for the next reunion



ANZAC Day at Cooper Crest, Tauranga.
Colonel Roger Pearce, 93yrs



Waihi mid-morning service on Anzac day. TL to R, George Love,
Chris Morriss, Alan Cameron.

Veteran's Stories for ANZAC Day

D-Day "Landings"

My Dad was a skipper of a Landing Craft at D Day. He didn't get a DSC but did get a direct hit from the German coastal artillery and was blown overboard unconscious only to wake up in a St John Ambulance hospital near London. He got the France-Germany clasp on his Atlantic Star.

He was in the NZ Merchant Navy seconded to the RN for minesweepers first and then LCs. He was repatriated to NZ having to work his way back on Light Duties on a troop ship only to be seconded to the NZ Navy, again LCs, resupplying the Coast Watchers around the Pacific. Prior to his secondment to the RN he crewed troop ships from NZ and AUS, did Atlantic convoys to and from the USA and then the Arctic convoys to Murmansk and Archangelsk.

He never forgave the Soviets for not letting him ashore in Murmansk or Arkhangelsk after having fought U Boats, Stukas, surface fleets and the ice in order to resupply them and help them. Ship's crew were met at the foot of the gangways by machine guns forcing them back on the ships.

He said that when his LC was hit he learnt that Kiwis could fly. He fought hard with the War Office to receive the France Germany Star but was turned down because he did not set foot on France. Right up to his death he claimed that his feet hit the bottom when he flew overboard and as far as he was concerned, he had landed in France! -

Pete Dawson



USSR Arctic Convoys Hero medal presented to him at Chch RSA by the USSR Ambassador following resumption of Diplomatic Relations between USSR and NZ following the Dr Sutch affair.

Operation Pedestal - Malta Convoy

There was a scheme by which young New Zealanders with ability were drafted into the Navy as seamen, with the prospect of being commissioned in the Royal Navy Reserve. I met as an older man Howard Anderson, who was such a man.

Howard was on the famous Pedestal convoy to Malta, which was the last attempt to resupply the island with gasoline, for the Spitfires. Max Hastings has written a magnificent book about Operation Pedestal. I was on the edge of my seat in his holiday home as Howard recounted a Homeric epic of avoiding German submarines, Italian aircraft, and German warships -

Greg Thwaite

VIETNAM VET LAID TO REST

BY STORY FROM STUFF - PHOTOS JOHN MCNICOL

A Vietnam gunner killed in action 58 years ago has finally been laid to rest in New Zealand.

New Zealand Army Sergeant Alastair Don's long journey home began in September 1965 after his Land Rover was blown up by a Viet Cong landmine, killing him and Bombardier Jock White. The pair were the first of 37 New Zealand soldiers to lose their lives over the seven years of the Vietnam War.

Sgt. Don was 27 when he died and was buried at Terendak military base in Malaysia for 53 years, and then repatriated to New Zealand in 2018.

Don was 27 when he died and was buried at Terendak military base in Malaysia for 53 years, and then repatriated to New Zealand in 2018.

His ashes were finally interred at Paraparaumu's Ara Tapu Cemetery on Saturday in a graveside ceremony organised by his family and supported by the local RSA with several Vietnam veterans present.

Also at the ceremony was Chris Turver, New Zealand's first war correspondent of the Vietnam War, who was also in the Land Rover when the bomb exploded. Turver and Lance Bombardier Roy Edwards survived the blast that killed the other two men.

John Deazley reciting the Ode

Turver believed Don's interment on Saturday was the last of the 37 soldiers killed in Vietnam and last of 'the 1965 originals'.

Sergeant Don's final journey came after his ashes were taken to 161 Battery at Linton Camp on Thursday last week, where he was welcomed back on base with a rousing haka by the soldiers. His ashes were then taken to Ara Tapu to be laid to rest next to his wife Isabel.

Corporal Trevor Don was one of Alastair's three sons at the ceremony – brothers Mike and Alastair were also there – and said it was a proud moment for everybody involved.

Turver remembered accompanying the two dead soldiers in the helicopter back to field hospital, and he was honoured to give the eulogy at Don's graveside on Saturday where he recalled how the events of that day were as raw as they were then. He described a "moment of humanity" when the New Zealand and American artillery were commanded to halt the barrage during Operation Ben Cat for the chaplain to say a prayer for the two fallen men, before being flown out of the combat zone.

"We who remain stand on the shoulders of men like Al who represented the best of New Zealand armed forces in a difficult war 9000 kilometres from home. After 58 years he has more than earned the right to finally rest in peace."



Al and Isabel Don on their wedding day.



Reunited after 58 years. Wedding photo courtesy of the family

NEW VIETNAM BOOK

BY DAVE SABBen

I was in D/6RAR in VN (and at Long Tan) with Morrie Stanley of 161 Bty.

This is an early warning that I am about to publish a new book. It is titled "Mentions In Despatches" and is essentially a day-by-day account of an infantry platoon in the first year of 1ATF at Nui Dat.

It will be A4 sized, 400+ pages, hardcover and on good quality art paper as it has 500+ images, many from AWM and similar quality sources – a 'coffee-table' quality book. I don't have a publish date yet but I'm told to expect it sometime in March

I have put together a website to tell the essentials of the new book that includes 24 sample pages and to include such text as the Contents, Intro, and Preface, (with Foreword and Index to come.)

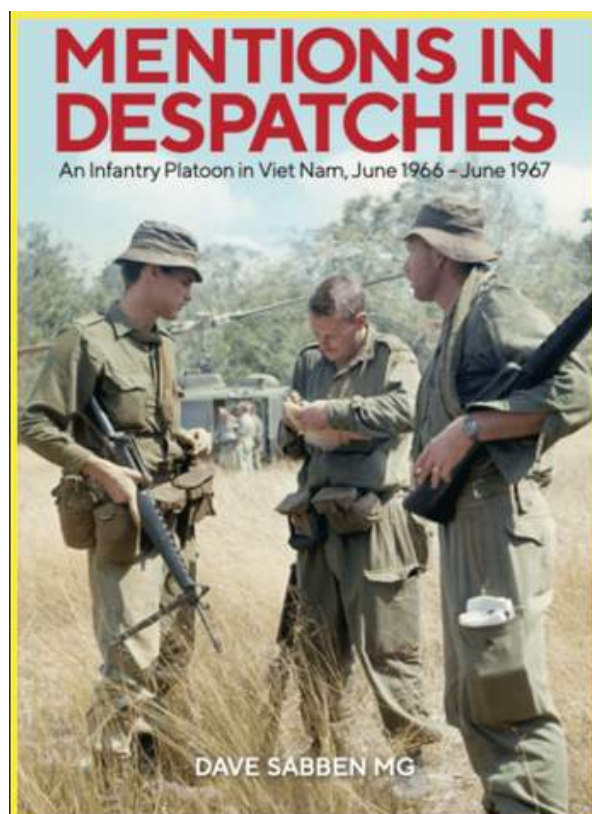
Please do a recce patrol to
<https://sabbenmidbook.com/>

The "BUY NOW" page is not yet commissioned but please be aware that the cost per book will be AUD\$80 plus postage

The book is to be ordered via the website only and will not through bookstores in Oz or NZ). - Dave Sabben



Second Lieutenant David Sabben with his damaged Armalite rifle after the battle of Long Tan



Major Harry Smith, far left, holds a briefing in the field shortly before his company return to the Long Tan battlefield. Second Lieutenant Dave Sabben is next to him.



Second Lieutenant Dave Sabben advances cautiously through the rubber plantation the day after the battle.

MET RADAR RESTORATION

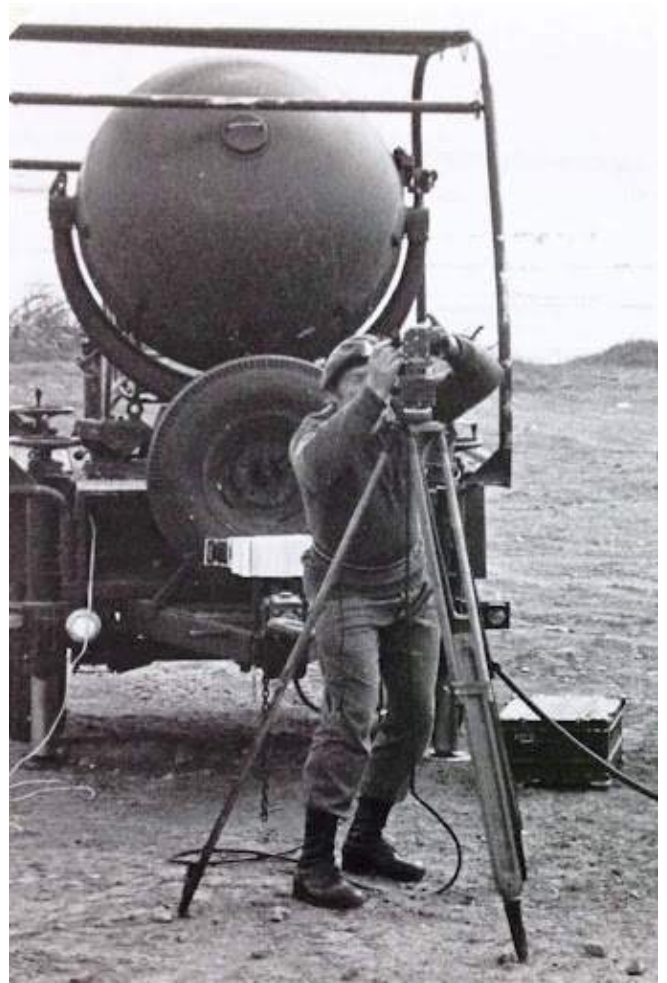
BY GRANT HAYS

WF3M Meteorological Radar is a weather finding radar made by Plessey in England that has been military 'ruggedised' (that's the M on the end) – officially known as a FA No19 Mk1.

The automatic tracking minimised operator training, and it had a solid state construction for high reliability and easy maintenance. It was fully mobile on its own trailer and provided a complete upper air system with automatic data processing.

The AA No3 Mk7 was originally used by the Royal Artillery after WW2 for data collection. In 1958 the ICAO Standard Atmosphere was formally adopted.

The WF3M was purchased for use by the NZ Artillery in the early 1970s including the AMETS computer, and remained in service for some 15-20 years. When used in conjunction with a German made Grausonde M60 it provided the Artillery with wind speed, wind direction, barometric pressure, air temperature and humidity in layers up to a height of 18,000 metres



Adam Gibson on the director



Length 3.9m
Width 1.8m
Height 2.7m

WF3M radar deployed in Waiouru



Sgt Hitchener (front) and Sgt Gibson (the two 1 Locating Troop Met Sergeants) with a sonde and reflector.

Taken at a recruiting display in Cuba Street, Wellington

The Plessey WF3 windfinding radar consisted of two main assemblies; the aerial assembly which included the transmitter/receiver and the control rack which contained the operator controls and displays.

Optional remote control unit or visual alignment unit allowed an operator to direct the radar onto the balloon-bore target immediately after release.

It brought the first Plessey Cassegrain Aerial, the first solid state modulator, was the first equipment to use integrated circuits and could be plugged in at the wall with a power consumption of only 750W.



Gnr Sharon Jackson holding the ballon ready for flight

After it was decommissioned in the early 1990s, it seemed to have been lost but in September 2021 a woman in Te Atatu North, Auckland got in touch with Defence HQ in Wellington, and then the museum, to say she had a “missile detector” in her back yard and did the museum want it. When she sent a photo it was the WF3M! Because Auckland was locked down in Covid-19 protocols it wasn't until March 2022 before it was able to be checked out.



It was retrieved from the backyard by Reg Gibson and his hoist, and then delivered to members of 10 Transport Company, 2 CSS Bn who loaded it onto their truck for the delivery to Waiouru where it was then offloaded by LMGI.



The trailer is known as a FV2411 Sankey Trailer, Cargo Missile Supply 1 ton, 2-wheeled that was originally intended as a resupply trailer for the Rapier missile system.

It is now awaiting the restoration team. A lot of the light panel work has disintegrated to rust due to being parked outside in the elements for 22 years. The person who purchased the radar at auction in South Auckland in 1999 was going to use the base as a boat trailer, but thankfully got side-tracked from that project!!



PRESENTATION OF E.D. TO THE DAUGHTER OF MAJOR A. MARBECK MID

BY GREG THWAITE

In a rare ceremony, Major Marbeck MID was commemorated at the Northern Club in Auckland on 26 September 2022. He was an Old Gunner from the long-ago North African Campaign.

The Final Phase of the North Africa Campaign: March/April 1943

The first action in battle of the Divisional Artillery during World War II in North Africa can be dated to 12 December 1940. On that date a Gunner column of 55 vehicles from Egypt headed westwards from the eastern side of North Africa into the Sahara Desert. It supported the Western Desert Force after the attack at Sidi Barrani.

Following the excursion to Greece and Crete in 1941, the Campaign resumed in North Africa. It seesawed back and forward, as the *Africa Korps* of German troops and its allies surged forward or scrambled back. Adopting a term from horseracing, the Gunners called the Campaign the *Benghazi Stakes*.

Still, by March 1943, the end of the Campaign was in sight. The Divisional Artillery had reached Tunisia, on the western side of North Africa.

The last several weeks saw intense fighting as the *Africa Korps* was pressed back to the Mediterranean in the north for its inevitable fate. The path of advance in Tunisia ran through a flat landscape. The few hills acquired great strategic advantage, particularly as sites for Artillery OP's.

Second Lieutenant Ngarimu of the 28 (Maori) Battalion was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross for his zeal at the Tebaga Gap on 26 March 1943. There he commanded his platoon in a successful attack upon the vital hill feature, Point 209. He organised the defence against counterattack until his death.

Next month, on 19-20 April, further north a small group of infantrymen under Lance Sergeant Manahi (also of 28 (Maori) Battalion) captured the strategic 300-meter high hill of Takrouna. Famously, he was recommended for a Victoria Cross, but eventually was awarded a DCM. Captain Stan Catchpole, an OP who participated in the attack, was awarded a MC.



Enfidaville War Cemetery

In this final phase, 48 Battery was commanded by Major Marbeck MID. He was a veteran of the Greek Campaign. On 24 April he was located in an OP in the 26 Battalion area. There he was killed in action.

The war diary record of the time described that loss as "a blow to the Regt.". According to the Official History, it was also a loss to the 7th Anti-Tank Regiment, whose Gunners warmly remembered him.

The Campaign in North Africa ended 19 days later. On 13 May 1943, Gun A1 of Fourth Field Regiment fired the last six or seven rounds at 0930h. Thereafter the Gunners watched the 90th Light Division of the *Africa Korps* march past the guns into captivity. Which they did, "...bearing themselves well and earning admiration", as the Official History punctiliously records.

PRESENTATION OF E.D. TO THE DAUGHTER OF MAJOR A. MARBECK MID - CONTINUED

The Marbeck Family

Major Marbeck left behind a wife. They had married when they were both aged 17. He was then already in the Territorial Force.

They had a little girl. Jennifer was barely a year old in 1943. Her mother thereafter received a modest Army pension. Peace came in 1945, and a new normality started.

Major (Rtd.) Taylor's Inquiries

In about 2005, Major (Rtd.) Noel Taylor RNZIR took an interest in Major Marbeck's medallic entitlement. He calculated that Major Marbeck was entitled to the Efficiency Decoration, for 12 years' service in the Territorial Force prior to the War. Major Taylor himself has been awarded the E.D. with two Bars.

In the 1930's a small number of men had soldiered on in the thin ranks of the peace-time Territorial Force. The most eminent was Lt. Colonel (later, Major-General) Kippenberger. Four Colonels in the Territorial Force were posted to the Reserve following their public denunciation of the Defence policy of the Government of the day.

Major Taylor commenced a one-man effort to obtain the appropriate medal for the Marbeck family. He had identified Jennifer as still alive, and settled in Auckland. The effort involved detailed research, and much correspondence with the NZDF.

Eventually, after 15 years, the claim was accepted. The file reached the desk of the Chief of Army, Major-General John Boswell. A technical question had arisen whether the rank on the medal should be shown as "Captain" or "Major". Owing to a lack of key records no clear decision was possible. On the information available the General ruled that he would be classified as a Major.

The actual medal posed its own problem. The current E.D. medal is lighter than the E.D. medal issued in the 1940's with the correct GRI Cipher. The General directed that an E.D. medal of the era be acquired. Negotiations were undertaken with a willing vendor in England, and a medal was purchased. In the custom of the era, the details of Major Marbeck are inscribed on the rear, using the correct period naming font.

The Presentation

The Officers Club in Auckland hosted an event to deliver the E.D. medal to Miss Jennifer Marbeck as next-of-kin. Wing Commander (Rtd.) Keith Graham, the President, was abroad, but had designated his Vice President to preside. This event had been arranged by Ken Young, the indefatigable Chair of the Social Committee in the Club. Unhappily, on the day he could not attend for personal reasons. General Boswell had hoped to attend, but a commitment elsewhere detained him. He delegated the RNZA Regimental Colonel, Colonel Ben Bagley, to present the medal. Now Commander, 1st (New Zealand) Brigade, Colonel Bagley was accompanied by his Command Sergeant-Major, WO1 Lyall Mooney, of the Corps of Royal New Zealand Engineers.

Miss Marbeck is an elegant lady, lively in mind and movement. She was accompanied by her cousin, Jill Deere.

The event started with the Loyal Toast from a bottle of prosecco. Colonel Bagley proposed the Toast to King Charles III. It was thought that the appointment as Captain-General had not been finalised, so the Gunner's addition to the Toast was not sounded.

Major Taylor said a few words about his inquiries. His interest in proper medallic recognition dates back to the RSA activities of his late father. His father was a retired Infantry Major, with the E.M. and E.D. & Bar. His practice was to ask a veteran whether he had received all his medals. A number had "never got around to it", so he started the process for them.

Then the time arrived for Colonel Bagley to speak. He spoke of Major Marbeck's service, and expressed his delight at honouring one of the veterans of a previous generation. He presented the medal in its box to Miss Marbeck. The box was opened and the medal was admired.

Miss Marbeck was advised that she was entitled to wear the medal on the right side of her blouse. Lt. Colonel Barry Dreyer, the retired RNZA Colonel Commandant, stepped forward, and deftly pinned on the medal.

PRESENTATION OF E.D. TO THE DAUGHTER OF MAJOR A. MARBECK MID - CONTINUED

Not unexpectedly, the event involved Miss Marbeck in many memories. Still, she gave a short and poignant speech, expressing her appreciation for the belated recognition of her late father's service.

Also in attendance were two former Presidents of the Officers Club, Captain (Rtd.) Lindy Esslemont and Lt. (Rtd.) John Abbott. Mr Phil Fry, who had served with an RA Battery in Hong Kong, added his own stylish Gunner presence.

Miss Marbeck mentioned her devotion to recording her family history. The record includes three years of correspondence home from her late father in the War. This correspondence has attracted the interest of Lt. Col. Dreyer. He continues to collect information in his work on the upcoming RNZA Historical Trust biography of the CRA, Brigadier Reg Miles. 🇳🇿

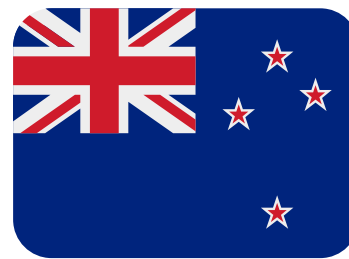


Left to right: WO1 Lyall Mooney RNZE; Lt Col. (Rtd.) Barry Dreyer; Captain (Rtd.) Lindy Esslemont; Lt. (Rtd.) John Abbott; Col. Ben Bagley; Miss Jennifer Marbeck; Ms Jill Deere; Lt (Rtd.) Gregory J Thwaite; Major (Rtd.) Noel Taylor; Mr Phil Fry

Conclusion

All who were present treasured the event. As Colonel Bagley had said in his speech, *We stand on the shoulders of those men.*

LAST POST



- COLLINGS, Ivan Robert. 443923, Gunner, 4th Field Artillery Regt, 2 NZEF WW2. Passed away peacefully on April 15 2023 in Papakura, aged 100.
- BROADHURST, Peter James. Gunner, 16 Fd Regt and 3 Fd Regt RNZA. Passed away on April 17 2023.
- SUBRITZKY-KUSZA, Jozef Patrick. A483345, Sergeant, 16 Fd Regt RNZA. Passed away on March 20 2023 after a short illness, in Auckland.
- HEDGES, Graham (Jock). 62376, Sgt Chef, RNZASC, 161 Bty RNZA Vietnam. Passed away in Woodville on March 13 2023, aged 87.
- BRISTOW, Alfred George Huru. 34684, SSGT, 161 Bty RNZA, Vietnam. Passed away on March 11 2023 aged 92 in Perth WA.
- DICKSON, Frank MBE. Major, 3 Fd Regt RNZA. Passed away peacefully in Christchurch on March 2, 2023, aged 91 years.
- TROTT, Iain Campbell. K604633, SSGT, 161 BTY RNZA, Vietnam. General Service Hand RNZAF. Passed away on February 9 2023.
- STEUART-MUIRHEAD, Richard Francis (Dick). 711539, 16 Fd Regt RNZA, Korea. Passed away peacefully on January 25 2023, after a short illness, aged 92 years.
- LAWLESS, Gary Denis. Capt, 61 Bty, 16 Light AA Regt. Passed away at Whangamata on December 31 2022, in his 92nd year.
- COCHRANE, Hugh. Q936390, Sgt, 31(B) Bty, 3 Fd Regt RNZA. Passed away peacefully on December 10 2022.
- CARSWELL, David (Curly). 39293, LCpl, RNZAC, 161 Bty RNZA, Vietnam. Passed away on April 11 2021. (Death not previously known about or listed by the association).
- DEACON, Ken. L760183, Sgt RNZEME, 22(D) Bty and 16 Fd Regt. Passed away at home in Tangimoana on May 14 2023.
- SIMPSON, Rodney Hugh Gillow (Rod). 43873, Gnr, 161 Bty RNZA Vietnam. Passed away on May 19 in Tauranga aged 73.
- SIMEON, Arthur Stanley. M34143, WO2, 9 Coast Regt, 161 Bty Vietnam, and 11(A) Bty RNZA. Passed away on May 15 in Kaitiaia aged 91.
- COE, Harry James Jack (Jack). 543601, 28 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regt, 3rd NZ Div, WW2. Passed away peacefully on May 14 2023 in Taupo aged 107 years and 3 days. Jack was thought to be NZ's oldest living man at the time of his death.