



NZ GUNNER

Royal New Zealand Artillery Association Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

BY TONY MCLEOD

Reunion/AGM. Congratulations to the organising committee, Chris Pearce, Martin Coomber, and Brian Moles for a fantastic reunion weekend in November. Thank you to the members and wives who attended the activities over the weekend. The dinner was quite special with very entertaining anecdotes about service life from the 12 new life members, who have all continued to contribute to the RNZA and/or the association since their service in Vietnam – my congratulations. I would urge everyone to read the minutes of the meeting (attached in the email or enclosed) so you can see the direction the association is heading. I would like to highlight two points;

Committee. We are in the process of moving the committee from Auckland to Wellington. This is seen as an interim move until we have a sufficient base of retired members in the Palmerston North area (maybe five years). The main concentration of active members at present is in Wellington, harking from the fact the association was based in Wellington from 1939 until about 1959. Maj Shay Bassett has agreed to come onto the committee this year to help affect this transition.

Veteran Support. Our submissions to the select committee on the VSA14 amendment Bill #2 pulled together a lot of very valuable ideas as to how the lot of the veteran may be improved. With the new government now in place, we should look at how we may get these ideas implemented.

In the absence of leadership from the RNZRSA, I have been under some pressure to form a group of veteran organisations to consolidate the priorities for those groups and form a plan to pursue them. However, I do not intend to use the RNZAA as a vehicle to lead this group as I do not feel I am up to it. What I do support is our participation in any such group that may be formed, and in the meantime we do what we can at a practical level, i.e. we make sure we are capturing the personal information of gunners upon release from the army and we are active in our offers of support to them through the first five years – the years which I believe are the most difficult in transitioning to the 'real world'. There are several organisations in place to help with this transition, particularly Willie Apiata's 'transition'. This is not to ignore or downplay ongoing veteran support in the mental health and physical well-being areas – we must continue to play our part in these areas by maintaining our networks and our 'social' activities. On behalf of all members, I would like to thank the outgoing CO of 16th Field Regt Lt Col Kristian Dunne for all his support over the past two and a half years and congratulate Lt Col Dean Gerling on his assumption of command. We wish him well in his tenure as Commanding Officer. WO1 Heath Southcombe will be continuing as RSM for the next 12 months and look forward to his continued invaluable support.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

Ubique

Tony McLeod
President

COLONEL COMMANDANT'S CORNER

BRIGADIER (RTD) PAUL SOUTHWELL

Christmas and New Years greetings

To all members of the association, their families, and our serving members of the Regiment, I extend the best wishes for a joyful Christmas and happy New Year. As we tuck into that Christmas lunch surrounded by friends and family, let's spare a thought for not only all those gunners who may still be serving overseas but the many more who will be standing security at various Covid-19 isolation hotels. We wish you all well and thank you for doing such a fantastic job.

Day Out with 11/4Bty

On Saturday 3 October, RSM Heath Southcombe arrived at the farm to pick me up for a day out on the Kaipara range with 11/4 Bty. A short detour to pick up the CO Lt Col Kristian Dunne and a pleasant drive saw us RV with Sgt Nini the cadre NCO, then a short sandy drive arriving just in time to share a few BBQ'd sausages and some tall stories of what it was like in the old days as a cadre officer of 11(A) Bty. Tony McLeod was cadre officer of 4 (G) Mdm at the time. It was a great pleasure to talk with the TF soldiers and discover the various jobs they had, and education they were undertaking when not in uniform. I was reminded of the very real skills, enthusiasm, and intellectual horsepower that the TF had contributed to New Zealand Artillery over our history. Historically the overwhelming majority of our gunners were TF. It was only in 1958 when (having been disbanded after the Korean war), 16 Fd was reactivated as our first RF RNZA unit. I recall how proud the TF btys would be on the occasions when they beat 161 Bty to the ready on regimental missions. It is only in recent years that the RF of the Regiment outnumbered the TF. I have long held the view that, of all corps, RF gunners were the most closely integrated with their TF comrades, and in a very short time we could have put together a very capable Fd Regiment and locating troop.



No1, Bdr Bhandari supervises his gun coming out of action on the dunes of Kaipara.

11/4 Bty traces its history back to batteries of the New Zealand Artillery Volunteers formed in 1864 when 15 batteries were raised as garrison artillery lettered A to O. These batteries formed the basis of the first brigade of New Zealand Artillery in WW1. "A" was the Auckland battery and "G" was the Hamilton battery. After WW1 batteries were designated by numbers and the letters disappeared, until sometime about 1972 when lettering returned to reflect the original NZ Artillery Volunteers.

Morning melodies with the RNZA Band

The light gun from 11/4 Bty stands proudly over the artillery band after an outstanding performance to a full audience of 650 at the Bruce Mason centre on Auckland's North Shore. The band was formed in 1864 and can lay claim to being New Zealand's oldest brass band with an unbroken playing history. Up until 2014 the band members were serving territorial soldiers and still today they enjoy playing in the place of regular service bands at the occasional ceremony and military funeral. The band is well recognised nationally and internationally. It includes in its ranks some outstandingly talented musicians, among them: WO1 Steven Booth, the band's Director of Music is regarded as one of the world's leading exponents of the baritone; Sgt Bill Rimmer is the current holder of the Terry Moloney Memorial Bugle Award, which is awarded to the New Zealand Band member who has made the greatest contribution to military music.



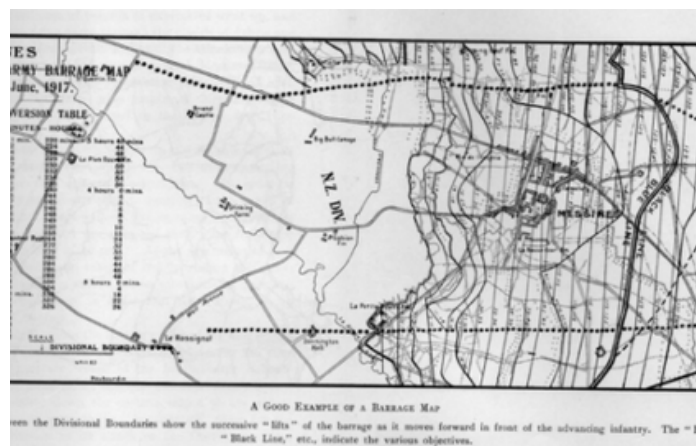
The tall fellow in black to the right of the photo is Mr Bob Davis, the band's secretary, event manager, and compere, who is also the World President of the International Military Music Society. During the performance, two long-serving members were presented artillery 20 years of service certificates by patrons of the band; Rt Hon Sir Don McKinnon and Brigadier (Rtd) Paul Southwell. Sgt Vic Holmes a euphonium player, a long-serving member of the band received his certificate, and Jessica Bloemendal – wife of SSgt Alan Bloemendal – a cornet player (unfortunately passed away a few years ago) received Alan's certificate. RSM 16 Field Regiment, WO1

Heath Southcombe (to the left of the photo) maintains the connection between the Regiment and its band and looks forward to the day when the gunners can once again march to the tunes of the Band of the Royal Regiment of New Zealand Artillery.

Our history: WW1 Battle of Messines June 1917

The Messines (Mesen) Wytschaete Ridge had been held by the Germans since 1914 and they had strongly fortified the area. The ridge was of strategic importance as it dominated the Ypres and Lys valley. Its capture was essential before any advance could be made on Passchendaele. The battle is renowned for its meticulous planning and preparation and the 19 mines that were detonated under the German front line at zero hr. After the battle of the Somme Sep/Oct 16 the NZ divisional artillery moved to the Armentieres front where they supported holding operations around the Fleurbaix area. This meant firing in support of raids and countering German efforts with harassing and counter battery fire, and responding to SOS calls (FPF in modern terms). German aircraft and balloons were always on the lookout for the guns and with snowfall it became more difficult to hide them as the gunners' tracks would converge on each gun platform and white sheets had to be placed in front of the guns to disguise the fan-shaped marks made by the gun-blast. Preparations for the attack on Messines were well underway as early as mid-1916 and NZ Div Artillery occupied their positions for the attack mid-March 1917. After registering their zones the guns were used primarily in defensive missions driving off German raids, while massive preparations for the main offensive were underway. Light railways were built by the pioneers to build up ammunition dumps and defence stores, and infantry work parties of Bn size assisted the gunners in establishing numerous gun positions for the masses of artillery yet to take up position. These were referred to as "magnum opus" positions. The Latin term means the greatest work of an artist or musician. General Sir Herbert Plumer commanding the second Army was the architect of this methodical and patient preparation, which was to ensure the success of the battle. All works had to be carefully camouflaged and Artillery was withdrawn from the front for periods of rest and training, as were the infantry. On 2 June 17 a practice barrage was fired using 75 per cent of the guns. This was repeated on the following days and a daily routine of firing was used to deceive the Germans as to the actual day and time of the attack. This prolonged preparatory fire had meant that the Germans had received no relief or food for a week. Zero hr was 0310 on 7 June and was marked by the explosion of the nineteen mines under the German front. The creeping barrage in front of the NZ Division was less than two thousand yards in depth and 1500 yards of frontage with 20 lifts.

A standing barrage of heavy guns and some 18-prs was in-depth to defeat reinforcements and subdue enemy MG and rifle fire. As well as the heavy guns and howitzers the fire plan supporting the NZ attack included: 114 x18-prs, 36 x 4.5in Howitzers and 56 machine guns (Machines guns were a separate corps at this stage of the war, sometimes attached to the infantry but not integrated into the sections). It should be noted that the NZ Division was one of nine divisions in the assault, the total frontage covering 16kms. The attack achieved all objectives. The barrage map supporting the NZ Division attack on Messines.



The town of Messines, or as the Flemish would say, Mesen, has a number of memorials to New Zealand soldiers and a small museum. The museum at Zonnebeke is one of the best in the area if you ever get a chance to visit.



LAST POST

BY RNZAA

- REDWOOD, Madge (nee Watkins). 813240, Bdr, WAAC, 9th Coastal Artillery Regt, WW2. Passed away peacefully on 14 December 2020 at North Shore Hospital.
- COTTER, Thomas Worthington (Tom). JP Rtd. 462954, Sgt 6th Light AA Regt, RNZA. Formerly of Putaruru. Passed away peacefully on Monday, 7 December 2020 in Auckland.
- FOULDS, George Robert. 63676, Gnr, 2NZEF, WW2. Passed away peacefully on 27 November 2020 at Waiapu House, Havelock North aged 101.
- COPE, Leslie James (Les). 206461, 16th Fd Regt, RNZA, Korea. Passed away peacefully on 18 October 2020 in Lower Hutt.
- SINTON, John Gifford MBE. WO209550, Capt, RNZA. Peacefully on 22 November 2020 at his home in Kerikeri, aged 77 years.
- HORN, James Patrick BEM. P972039, WO2, RNZA. Peacefully on 16 November 2020, in the care of Ascot Care Home Invercargill, aged 85 years.
- JONES, Richard Kelvin. 39427, 161 Bty, RNZA, Vietnam. Passed away at home on 24 October 2020 in Auckland, aged 77.
- TOD, Graeme Lincoln, JP. J745553, Major, RNZA and RNZCT. Passed away on 2nd October 2020 unexpectedly in the Wairarapa, aged 65 years.
- GREEN, Peter. 206417, L/Bdr, 16th Fd Regt, RNZA, Korea. Passed away peacefully at Wanganui Hospital on 21 September 2020, aged 93 years.

2020 AGM AND ANNUAL REUNION OF RNZAA

To see the full AGM minutes, please see the link in the email, or see enclosed if this newsletter was received in the mail.

Over 80 Gunners past and present and their spouses/partners gathered at Trentham Military Camp to attend the 85th Annual General Meeting and Reunion of the Royal NZ Artillery Association. The weekend commenced with a social gathering at the WO's and Sgts Mess on the Friday evening where gunners past and present gathered to renew friendships and reconnect. It was gratifying to see ex Gunners from now-disbanded Territorial units and the number of ex Vietnam 161 Bty members in attendance. On Friday evening, the NZ Veterans Pin and Certificate of Appreciation were presented to 102-year-old Capt. Ken Longmore by NZ Veteran Affairs. Ken served as a Subaltern pre-WW2 with 15 Heavy Coastal Bty at Fort Dorset and then was called on the day war was declared. He served with the 7th Anti-Tank Regt in Greece and then 6 Field Regt in North Africa but was taken prisoner at Ruweisat Ridge / El Mreir Waadi. He was in the same POW Camp as Charlie Upham and witnessed one of his escape attempts. On Saturday morning the AGM was held and Lt Col Tony McLeod (retired) was re-elected unopposed. In the afternoon, several activities were arranged for those interested. A pistol shoot at the Wellington pistol club and a tour of the Trentham ordinance museum. That evening, a semi-formal dinner was held in the Officers Mess and the guest speaker was Bernadine MacKenzie the CEO of Veteran Affairs. The Regiments recently appointed Colonel Commandant, Brigadier Paul Southwell was

introduced to the members along with the Regimental Colonel, Colonel Andrew Shaw. A number of life memberships were awarded to long-serving members as well as the Gunner of the Year awards to members of 161 and 163 Bty, 16 Field Regt: Bdr Solomon Falemai (2019) and Bdr Ryan Buchanan (2020). The evening finished with the traditional toast to our Captain-General Her Majesty the Queen. The next morning at 10am, a church service was held at the Trentham Camp Chapel officiated by the Associations Vice President Greg Thwaite. Because of the pandemic numbers were expected to be low however the Assn was thrilled at the turnout considering the circumstances. An excellent weekend was had and the 2021 AGM/Reunion is being planned for a similar date again at Trentham Military Camp and we look forward to even more members attending. The Association wish to thank the Camp Commandant, the PMC of the Officers Mess and the WO and Sgts Mess for their hospitality. For those Gunners who read this article and are not members of the Association, go to our website www.rnzaa.org.nz to join and learn more about who we are.

"An excellent weekend was had and the 2021 AGM/Reunion is being planned for a similar date again at Trentham Military Camp."

PHOTOS FROM THE AGM AND ANNUAL REUNION



BIO: KEN LONGMORE

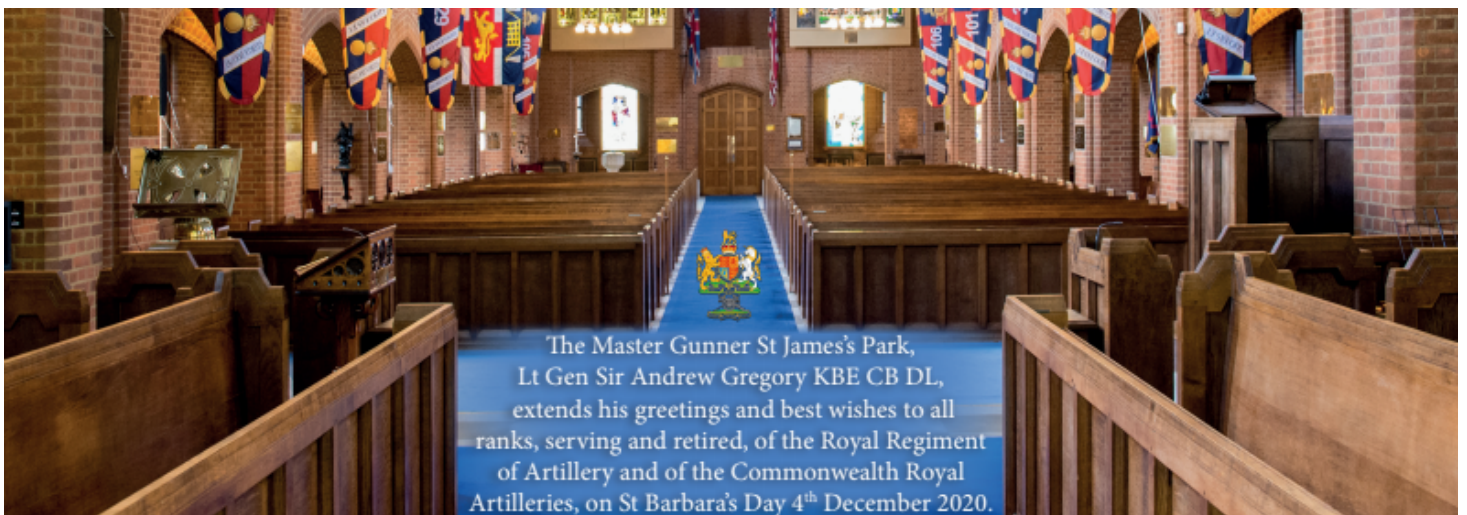


Pictured: Ken Longmore with Col Comdt RNZA Brig. Paul Southwell, RNZAA President Tony McLeod, RNZA Regimental Colonel Andrew Shaw and Chris Morriss (Ken's great nephew)

Captain (Ret'd) Ken Longmore, now aged 102, was a pre-war territorial subaltern with 15th Heavy Coast Bty at Fort Dorset in Wellington in 1938/39, and consequently was called up full-time the day war was declared. He went away to WW2 with the New Zealand third echelon as a troop commander with 33 Bty, 7th Anti-Tank Regt. He served with them, equipped with two-pounder AT guns, against Hitler's Panzers in the Greece campaign in 1941. After leading a party including Australians over the mountains to a southern beach during the retreat in Greece, Ken was among a group that found and "borrowed" a small boat to get away. They were later picked up by a British warship off the coast of Greece and taken to Crete, then on to Egypt. Ken was transferred from 7th Anti-Tank Regt to 6th Field Regt where he served in a 25-pounder Bty and fought with them at the fierce Minqar Qaim breakout in Egypt in June 1942 after the

New Zealanders were encircled by 21st Pz Div. He was later taken prisoner by a German tank crew on 23 July 1942 in the desert south of Alamein, after his vehicle was blown up by a landmine. The German tank crew found Ken in the desert trying to assist a mortally wounded fellow kiwi soldier, and the tank crew and other German troops who arrived went to great efforts to help Ken try to save the wounded man, before eventually politely telling Ken he was their prisoner. Ken was in POW camps in Italy at first, then later in Poland and Germany. For some time he was in the same camps as Charles Upham, and observed one brazen unsuccessful escape attempt of Upham's, made in daylight in full view of astonished armed camp guards and I think equally astonished other POW officers. It was an honour to have Ken join us for the RNZAA AGM/Reunion.

ST BARBARA'S DAY AT WAIHI BEACH



FIRING AT GODLEY HEAD

Firing at Godley Head on Saturday 5 December with Southern Gunners assisting the Godley Head Trust to fire nine rounds. Rounds fired from the Southern Gunners M101A1, a six pdr AT gun, and a Krupp 77mm field gun. Gun Det was ex 32 Pty pers. They managed to enjoy an Artillery Port afterwards.

(L to R) Neil Stewart,
Dave Westgrath, Mark
Hargraves



(L to R) Dave Westgrath,
Skin Frances, Mark
Hargraves and Neil
Stewart. An Artillery port
to celebrate. Also present,
but no pictures: Pete
Dawson, Ted Shears, and
David Bolam-Smith.



16TH FIELD REGIMENT

Gunner of the Year

The Royal NZ Artillery Association (RNZAA) recently held their Annual General Meeting (AGM) and dinner at Trentham Military Camp attended by the RNZA Colonel Commandant (Col Comdt), RNZA Regimental Colonel (Regt Col), RNZA Regt WO, RSM 16 Fd Regt and other members of the wider RNZA community.

The annual dinner is the RNZAA's chance to formally present the Gunner of the Year (GOTY) award to worthy recipients. The GOTY is an initiative designed and sponsored by the RNZAA to formally recognise Gunner performance within the RNZA Corps and encourage interaction between the RNZAA and serving Gunners.

With numerous commitments throughout 2019, the GOTY recipient (for that year) was unable to attend his dinner and receive the GOTY award. This year's RNZAA dinner provided the opportunity to award the GOTY to the 2019 and 2020 recipients.

Congratulations to the 2019 GOTY recipient: Bombardier (Bdr) now Sergeant Falemai.
Congratulations to the 2020 GOTY recipient: Bdr Buchanan who was accompanied by his parents.



The 2019 and 2020 GOTY recipients with the GOTY Trophy and their RNZAA certificates



Sgt Falemai with the RNZA Col Comdt, Brig (Rtd) Southwell (L) and the President of the RNZAA, LtCol (Rtd) McLeod, receiving the GOTY Trophy for 2019



The RNZA Regt WO, WO1 Kareko, GOTY recipients for 2019 and 2020 (Sgt Falemai and Bdr Buchanan) and the RNZA Regt Col, Col Shaw



Bdr Buchanan with RNZA Col Comdt, Brig (Rtd) Southwell (L), President of the RNZAA, LtCol (Rtd) McLeod, and his parents

11/4 Battery (Bty) Training Weekend — Kaipara

Personnel from 11/4 Bty recently deployed to the Kaipara Bombing Range for Light Gun deployment training. The training focused on into and out of action drills and Emergency Fire Missions (EFM), especially for the new attendees with little experience, assisted by Sgt Nanai. The CO, RSM, and Colonel Commandant (Col Comd) took this opportunity to see our Reserve Force personnel in action.



Q STORE

BY RNZAA

Craig Hewett is the Association's new Quartermaster and the Q Store will be available for purchases again in the New Year. Look out for the updated Q Store page on the website soon. We would like to thank Andrew Donnellan and Colin Jansen for their work in maintaining the Q Store over the past years.

LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

BY RNZAA

Congratulations to the following members who were awarded life membership of the RNZA Assn at the AGM:

- Mr Woody Barrett
- Mr John Deazley
- Mr Terry Farrell
- Lt Col(rtd) Con Flinkenberg
- Lt Col (rtd) Fred Goodall
- Maj(rtd) Kerry Lee
- Mr Danny McCort
- Lt Col(rtd) Rob Munro
- Maj(rtd) Roger Newth
- Col(rtd) Roger Pearce
- Brig(rtd) Paul Southwell
- Col(rtd) Nic Thornton
- Lt Col(rtd) Ron Turner
- Lt Col(rtd) Rick Williams.