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**RNZE Charitable Trust (RNZE CT or “Trust”) “Annual Report” for 2012**

This is the first full year of operation of the “Trust”, having been formed in May 2011, registered in July 2011 and having its inaugural Trust Board meeting on 4 August 2011. The Trust has had a very positive year, making significant progress on many projects and tasks, as reported on below. Although we are not obliged to make an annual report, other than lodging our financial report with the Charities Section, I thought it might be of interest to Sappers Association members.

Trust Board members (Trustees) comprise George Butcher (Patron, Sappers Association), Anthony Wilson (Col Comdt, RNZE), Don Jones (Outgoing CO/Regt Col, RNZE), Ben Pitt (Incoming CO/Regt Col, RNZE), Mike Owen (Chair, Sappers Association Council), Darrin Waitere (RSM, 2nd Engr Regt), Clas Chamberlain (Corps Historian, Hon Curator and Deputy Chair) and myself (IPP, Sappers Association, Patron of the RNZE Reunion and Trust Board Chair). I want to acknowledge two original Trustees in Mike Pettersen and Brent Wilson, who resigned during the year for work-related reasons and thank both Darrin Waitere and Mike Owen for joining us as replacement Trustees. All of our original Trustees worked very hard to get the Trust up and running in a relatively short timeframe and we are indebted to them for their contribution and support. Brent Wilson was our inaugural Secty/Treas, now replaced by non-Trustee appointments of WO2 Wayne Bramley as Secty and WO2 John Flintoft as Treasurer. The Trust Board met on 23 February, 24 May, 9 August, 10 October and 13 December 2012, discharging its responsibilities in accordance with the Trust Deed and requirements of the Charities Section of the Department of Internal Affairs.

Although still working on completing the financial reports, the Trust had a modest surplus of some $4,200, after expenditure of over $8,000, which was spent on a range of ECMC rebuild and other project tasks. As at the end of 2012, we had $30,500 on investment. Currently, there are 15 fortnightly and one monthly contributors to the Trust fund, realising a total monthly income of some $173 or just over $2,000 per annum. Our funds are slowly building up, but we could do with more regular contributors and donors, to increase our revenue. These funds are used to support the operational undertakings of the objects of the Trust, particularly the rebuild of the ECMC library and museum, and the displays therein.

We were delighted to receive just under $7,000 from Pub Charity, to cover the cost of replacing two older computers, a printer, external backup and support equipment in the ECMC Office. This project will also involve the installation of wireless Broadband into the ECMC, which we hope will be completed in early 2013. The latter will enable the establishment of internet connections and a further stage of the “ICR&T” project to be undertaken in 2013. This will further expand the number of computers, printers, etc, in the ECMC to support digitising and scanning activities, research and other related tasks. Other charitable trust applications have been made to the Lion Trust (unsuccessful), Endeavour Community (unsuccessful), ECCT (Corps History project – awaiting result in Apr 13), Perlorus Trust (publicity/promotional materials and consumables), NZCT (security equipment/safes and insurance premium) and JBS Dudding Trust (mannequins and cabinet lighting). There are 5-6 other trust applications lined up for 2013 to cover further stages of the Corps History project, exterior and internal signage, additional ICR&T stages and so on. The main focus is to seek external funding assistance for the main projects being undertaken by the RNZE CT.

We have tried to ensure that the ECMC is open every Thursday, to ensure that work continues on the library and museum, as well as encouraging visitors to have a look around the displays. The feedback from the latter has been very positive indeed. The rebuild and refurbishment of the ECMC library and museum is around 70% complete, with some 25 of the 32 display cabinet areas completed. This is being undertaken by Clas and myself, with the odd visit from other supporters, including George Butcher and Bev Heffernan from Masterton, Bruce McDonald and some of the Sappers Association members from Palmerston North. We can certainly do with much more assistance and support in this area, so that we can keep the momentum up and ensure that the displays will be completed within the next couple of years. There is probably 3-4 more years worth of work, covering the scanning and digitising of materials, photos, slides, etc, along with cataloguing and inventory work, display and equipment refurbishment, to name but a few of the major works in progress.

For the Corps History project, we now have Stage 1A completed, with over 15 spot interviews (audio visual recordings and abstracts) on file and wish to advance to Stage 1B (another 24 spot interviews) and Stage 2 (5-6 detailed extended interviews) before the end of 2013. Ministry of Culture and Heritage have been retained as our project managers for this task and as soon as we get approval for external funding applications already submitted, this work will resume in earnest. We are also on the lookout for a suitable author for the written history, plus we want to interview serving Sappers on a range of overseas deployments undertaken over the past 10 years, from those who are still serving in the Corps/Army. That should provide us with sufficient material from which to get the actual history writing underway.

I am pleased to report that with generous assistance from the SME and 2nd Engr Regt, the garage established between the ECMC building and the Chapel has been fully fitted out with one half being devoted to storage of RNZE heritage items and the other as a workshop and materials store. This now means that a lot of the display rebuild, item refurbishment, signage and ticketing and model making is undertaken in an appropriate environment, returning the ECMC office to its original purpose. The “RNZE Collection”, which includes all the items contained within the ECMC, Chapel and garage/stores as assets of the Trust, now total over 3,100 separate items, with a collective value of over $270,000. Clas continues to update the on-line inventory of all items that we have either on display, file or in storage within the ECMC, which is a huge task on its own. We have increased our comprehensive specialist insurance policy coverage to $250,000, reviewable annually.

I also need to mention the RNZE history lecture series being coordinated by Clas. These have been very successful during the year, but not always well attended. They are held normally in the ECMC lecture room, on the second Thursday in each month at midday and normally last for an hour or so. They cover a wide range of topics, including those with a RNZE flavour and not, NZ history and overseas, delivered by a wide range of very professional speakers and historians. A lecture programme is in place for 2013 and we encourage attendance of interested folk from within Linton Camp and Palmerston North, as an excellent service provided by the Trust and as an adjunct to the ECMC.

As our Trust Deed enables us to work as a flexible and exemplary organisation and we seem to be the envy of other Corps in this regard, we have provided advice and assistance to RNZA, RNZAC and RNZ Sig for the establishment of their own charitable trusts, with the ability to collect, store, display their own heritage items. This is not to compete with or replace the National Army Museum in Waiouru or the ECMC, but to enable the major units within Linton Camp to do what the RNZE has, as an adjunct to the 2nd Engr Regt and SME. We have also had numerous visits from military and non-military individuals and groups, including RNZE, Members of Parliament, foreign military delegations, clubs, genealogy and historical interests and so on, throughout the year. This has helped to give the Trust and ECMC more public profile outside of Linton Camp. It is fair to say that all of these visitors have been very impressed with the level of displays and activities within the ECMC, along with making the odd donation as well.

In closing, I want to sincerely thank our close supporters (2nd Engr Regt and the SME), along with our current sponsors, including Pub Charity, Advantage Computers Limited of Palmerston North and Inspire Net of Palmerston North, the latter two organisations who have provided much of the equipment and services to the Trust (and ECMC) at significantly discounted rates, as well as technical advice and support at no cost. Without these organisations, we would not have been able to make as much progress as we did during the course of 2012. On behalf of the members of the RNZE CT Trust Board, may I extend to you all our sincere thanks and appreciation.

Joe Hollander

Trustee/ Chair

RNZE Charitable Trust

Palmerston North

31 December 2012