**RNZE Charitable Trust (RNZE CT or “Trust”) Annual Report for 2014**

This is our third annual report, which is provided to recognise our sponsors and supporters and also to inform our parent bodies (namely the **RNZE Corps Committee** and **Sappers Association (NZ) Inc**) and wider Corps membership of the activities of the Trust during the calendar year 2014. Once again, we have had a busy but very successful year, now that we are well established since formation in mid-2011. We have also adopted the “strap/tagline” of “**Preserving RNZE Heritage**”, to more accurately describe the principle role of the Trust. This is now shown on our website and on all of our correspondence and promotional/publicity material.

The **RNZE Corps History project** progressed well throughout the year, as we have **completed some** **50 oral history interviews** (OHIs) of selected retired and serving members of the Corps. A further 6-7 OHIs will be completed in early 2015 and this will conclude the oral history phase of the project. Funds raised (just over $65,000) from various sources, has enabled us to complete this important work and to enable our OHI contractor, David Young of Wellington, to add a further number of OHIs to those previously completed by Claire Hall in 2012-13. Just before the end of 2014, the **Lottery Grants Board made a very significant contribution** towards the research and writing phase of the project, to take place over the period 2015-16. This has enabled us to select and appoint our historian author, Peter Cooke of Wellington, to undertake this work. Peter has been associated with us for many years and is very familiar with the Corps, ECMC and our heritage aspirations and has already started to complete the final OHIs and commence his research and commission with us. Hopefully, he will **complete his manuscript by early 2017** and assist us to engage a suitable publisher, so that we can release and **launch the publication in late 2017/early** **2018.**

Work on **rebuilding the museum** **displays** has also progressed, as 31 of our 35 display cabinets (including Cambodia/Laos, Pakistan, the new “Earle collection” and a start to the Afghanistan, Iraq and Timor L’este displays) have been worked on/almost completed. Displays still to be completed include Angola, Mozambique, Namibia and the remainder of Afghanistan, Iraq and Timor L’este. Several of these are still awaiting further artefacts, memorabilia and photos to fill up the displays. We would also like to build a new display showing RNZE involvement in the Middle East, in particular MFO Sinai. Up to 15 existing display cabinets now require refurbishment and refreshing, which will be undertaken over the next year or so. We would like to establish a WW1 trench emplacement in the grounds adjacent to the main building. We are also looking at placing older RNZE equipment on the concrete plinths at the entrance to the ECMC, plus more Bailey panels at the entrance pathway periphery. The LED lighting trial was a great success and we hope to convert all display cabinets to LED strip lighting during 2015.

We have had **over 1,400 visitors through the ECMC** since commencing records in mid-2013, 900 in 2014. These have included the CDF, DSM and entourage in early 2014, Prof Hew Strachan (world renowned military historian and author), Dr Andrew Cleland (ex-CEO, IPENZ and now CEO, RSNZ), Prof Glyn Harper, along with groups, individuals, ex-RNZE personnel, PNCC History Week tours, Basic Combat Engineer course participants and from other courses run by the SME, overseas (RE and USACE and Marine) engineers and general public visitors and so on. The ECMC is becoming better known amongst the Manawatu and wider community and that in turn enables us to publicise the Corps and meet the object of our new “strap/tagline” of “Preserving RNZE Heritage”.

Our **information, communications, research and technology (ICR&T) development** in Stages 1 and 2 have proven successful, involving bringing Broadband, the internet and a wireless environment into the ECMC, along with electronic display and multi-function printers with digitising and scanning capability equipment and a secure back-up system. We hope to embark upon ICR&T Stage 3 in early 2015, as we expand the electronic display equipment range within the ECMC museum area, introduce bar coding to support our inventory and library cataloguing processes, plus portable multi-media presentation equipment for the military history lecture presentations and other Corps, RNZE CT and ECMC presentations external to the ECMC and for the community at large.

We are continuing with the laborious task of **cataloguing all of our “assets of the Trust”**, with some 5,800 items (3,200 screens) inventoried (out of an estimated 60,000 items, including some 6-7,000 photos, negatives, slides, plates, etc), with an estimated recorded value of $305,000. Out comprehensive insurance cover will be increased to $300,000, when policy renewal is due in April 2015.

Our **financial situation** is in a reasonably healthy state, as most major projects and procurements in 2014 were covered by external funding sponsors. We sincerely acknowledge and appreciate the support from our sponsors and regular contributors, as well as other donors and individuals. Our regular contributors reduced from 27 to 21 over the year (we used to have over 130 regular contributors a decade or so ago), although the total raised for the year was in the order of $6,000. Our six-monthly GST rebates also assisted in keeping the funds for operational purposes in balance. Some 16 applications were submitted for funding supplementation to a total value of $235,335 (excl GST) and we received a total of $136,088 (excl GST) from grants as a result of approved and successful applications. Our generous sponsors and supporters for 2014 included Pub Charity, Infinity Foundation, Eastern and Central Community Trust, Mainland Foundation, Ideal Electrical (PN), Eyerite Signs (Levin), Ecostock (Akl), Advantage Computers Ltd (PN), Inspire Net (PN), Joel Moocarme (Graphic Designer, PN), Trophy Specialists (PN) and the Lottery Grants Board, some of whom provided multiple and significant contributions. All of the latter will be shown listed in our audited annual financial report and statements of accounts for 2014.

The **monthly military history presentation series** organised by Clas Chamberlain, was provided from February to November and included a wide range of excellent and informative presentations delivered by current and past RNZE unit commanders and personnel, as well as Professor Glyn Harper, Comd 1 (NZ) Bde (Col Nick Gillard), the RSM 2ER, to name a few. Topics included RNZE and other deployments to Iraq, Namibia, Sudan, as well as engineer amphibious operations in the Philippines, WW1 actions in the Somme and Ypres, a significant weapons collection and others. Another excellent series is prepared for 2015, including more on WW1, RNZE in the Middle East and Antarctica, 100 years of Army Nursing and so on. These presentations are held at the ECMC for only an hour during the midday period each month and serve as a useful means of keeping these important topics alive and at the forefront of our attention. Attendees come from all around, including the PNCC Library history team, Manawatu History Teachers Network, Manawatu Officers Club, plus serving military and civilian staff from Linton Camp and other NZDF elements in Palmerston North. It would be good to see more uniform personnel attend these presentations to broaden their military history knowledge and awareness.

The **Trust Board** continued to meet on a quarterly basis throughout the year, performing all of the requirements of our objects in accordance with the Trust Deed. As a number of trustees will be leaving us at the beginning of 2015, including Tony Wilson, Ben Pitt and Darrin Waitere, I want to take this opportunity on behalf of the Trust in particularly thanking them for their contribution and support throughout the year. Replacement trustees will be appointed at the first Trust Board meeting in 2015. My sincere thanks also to our ongoing trustees including George Butcher, Clas Chamberlain, Don Jones and Mike Owen, your assistance has been much appreciated. We have had a number of changes of Secretary and Treasurer throughout the year and our grateful thanks go to Lt Ingrid Gillingham, Lt Andy Blackburn, Lt Cam Allan and Lt James Brosnan for their contributions in these positions. Also to our new Secretary Lt Mike Lawry and Treasurer 2Lt Leroy Judge, we hope this will be an interesting experience for you, but do appreciate your support.

Over 50 personnel from RNZE units have provided valuable **assistance to the ECMC** for a few hours each Thursday, as part of the RNZE monthly duty unit assistance system. This was instituted by the RSM 2ER in mid-2014 and managed by the SSMs of each of the units of 2nd Engr Regt according to a monthly schedule and task list. This enabled a wide range of tasks to be undertaken to assist us in the ongoing maintenance of the ECMC and other RNZE CT administrative requirements. Volunteers including George Butcher and Graham Sims from Masterton, have come across every few months to lend a hand.

A number of **minor projects were carried out by the SME**, to improve the shelving in the uniform store, ancillaries in the adjacent garage workshop, additional electrical outlets, map cataloguing and storage, LED lighting trial and so on. This assistance is vital for the ongoing operation of the ECMC and we are very grateful to the CI, SSM and STI SME for their excellent support in 2014. Likewise, we have had excellent **support and assistance from the 2ER**, in particular from the CO, XO, Adjt and RSM, as well as Administrator Tania Jones and a number of other RHQ staff. Thank you all for this much needed and appreciated contribution and support. We have also appreciated support from OC LRSC (Maj Mike Pettersen) and DSS Property Group (WO2 Tom Donald) in the operation and maintenance of the ECMC. Given that there is only the two of us trying to keep the ECMC running on a weekly basis, as well as managing the RNZE CT and various key projects, we do need assistance from all of you and wish that more retired members of the Corps in the Manawatu would take a more active interest in the ECMC.

Finally and to foreshadow our planned activities, objectives and focal points for 2015, these include :

1. Continue to progress the RNZE Corps History project;
2. Keep the ECMC open every Thursday and operating satisfactorily;
3. Continue the rebuild, refurbishment and refreshment of ECMC museum displays;
4. Explore other means and modes to display RNZE activities and functions about the ECMC;
5. Convert all display cabinets to LED strip lighting;
6. Procure appropriate multi-media presentation equipment;
7. Introduce a bar coding system to support inventory and library collection work;
8. Expand electronic displays and equipment in the ECMC museum area;
9. Continue developing the website and relevant sub-pages on [www.sappers.org.nz](http://www.sappers.org.nz).; and
10. Manage the RNZE CT in accordance with the Trust Deed and to meet all related compliance requirements.

Joe Hollander

Trustee/Trust Board Chair

RNZE Charitable Trust

Palmerston North
31 December 2014