**RNZE Charitable Trust (RNZE CT or “Trust”) Annual Report for 2015**

It is indeed a pleasure that I submit this, our fourth annual report, which is provided to recognise our sponsors and supporters. It also informs 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 2015 calendar year. Once again, we have had a busy, productive and successful year, now that we are well established since our formation in mid-2011. The recently adopted “strap/tagline” of “**Preserving RNZE Heritage**”, more accurately describes the principle role of the Trust.

The **RNZE Corps History project** has progressed well throughout the year, with the completion of 53 oral history interviews (OHIs) of selected retired and serving members of the Corps. A further seven OHIs of retired members are available from other sources, which means that we have some 60 OHIs to utilise for the project. All OHI recordings have now been formally lodged with the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington as a condition of our DIA/LGB grant. Both hard and electronic copies, including associated bios, photos, consent forms, etc, are secured at the ECMC. Our project author and historian, Peter Cooke, completed the final OHIs and also his initial research phase, involving visits to the ECMC, Engineer Reunion and Auckland. He has submitted regular quarterly project reports and also the first draft chapter of the book. This is currently being reviewed by the Corps History Project Advisory Group and we look forward to further chapters being released for review on a 4-6 weekly basis throughout 2016-17. Peter will also make a trip to the UK in April – May 2016 to visit a number of Royal Engineer and archival establishments to further close the gap on some early NZE and RNZE history. We plan that his manuscript will be completed by mid-2017, as he assists us to find and engage a suitable publisher, so that we can release and launch the publication in late 2017/early 2018. So far, we have expended $107,467 of the $168,617 funds raised for this project, including the $98,914 (all amounts excluding GST) LGB contribution. Unfortunately, NZDF/Army is unable to provide any further funding support for this project.

Work on **rebuilding the museum** **displays** has also progressed, as most of our 35 display cabinets have been worked on, or are almost completed. Displays still to be completed include the remainder of Afghanistan, Iraq and Timor L’este, where these are still awaiting further artefacts, memorabilia and photos to fill up the cabinets. 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 still 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 around the entrance pathway periphery. The LED strip lighting conversion project to all display cabinets has now been completed and has made a huge improvement to all displays.

We have had **over 2,475 visitors through the ECMC** since commencing records in mid-2013, 968 in 2015 (915 in 2014). These have included a wide range of local and international, serving and retired members of the NZDF and RNZE, general public, schools and clubs, etc. The local IPENZ chapter made several visits during the year and also donations to the Trust, which all have been greatly appreciated. Basic Combat Engineer course participants and personnel from other courses run by the SME have also made visits to the ECMC complex. We remain members of Museums Aotearoa and are shown in their annual directory and website, as a museum worthy of a visit. The ECMC is becoming better known within the Manawatu and wider community and that in turn enables us to publicise the Corps and meet our object of “Preserving RNZE Heritage”.

Our **information, communications, research and technology (ICR&T) development** is now in Stage 3 and has proven successful, involving bringing more electronic displays (now WW1, WW2 and two displays of contemporary RNZE activity/roles) into the museum area. We now have a full and portable multi-media presentation package to support the military history and other presentations within the ECMC and elsewhere. Funds have also been provided for the further development and upgrade of the “Sappers” website, which serves the Sappers Association, ECMC, RNZE Trust, 2nd Engineer Regiment, SME and Corps as a whole. This is linked to other social media sites, as well as being enabled for all related organisations to communicate with serving and retired members of the Corps, through this medium. All of this activity has been funded from external sources and is much appreciated by the Trust (our sponsors are recognised below, for their generous and valuable contributions).

We continue with the challenging task of **cataloguing all of our “assets of the Trust”**, now with some 8,245 items of the ECMC/RNZE CT “collection” (4,379 screens) inventoried (out of an estimated 60,000 items, including some 2,066 photos, negatives, slides, plates, etc) and with an estimated recorded value of $321,500. Our comprehensive insurance cover is reviewed annually and was increased in value to $305,000 (plus Trust liability insurance), when the policy was renewed in April last year. We have had to relocate our stored items into an external expandable (old medical operating theatre) container adjacent to the main building and garage. This has enabled us to review items of equipment, clothing and photographic and document records, to inventory, sort and store them again in more suitable facilities.

Our **financial situation** remains in a reasonably healthy state, as most of the major projects and procurements in 2015 were covered by external funding sponsors. We sincerely acknowledge and appreciate the support from our sponsors and regular contributors, as well as other donors. Our **regular contributors** have further reduced from 21 to 15 over the year or approx $213 per month (we used to have over 130 regular contributors a couple of decades ago), although the donations total contributed for the year was in the order of $9,200. The latter also includes other contributions from the Auckland Sapper Officers’ Mess, IPENZ (Manawatu) Branch, the ECMC donations (visitors and history presentations) box and other miscellaneous donors. Our six-monthly GST rebates also assisted in keeping the funds for ECMC operational purposes in balance. Only six applications were submitted this year for **funding supplementation** to a total value of $65,089 (excl GST). We received a total of $13,549 (excl GST) from grants as a result of approved and successful applications. Our **generous sponsors and supporters** for 2015 included Eastern and Central Community Trust (ECCT), Mainland Foundation, Pub Charity, Ideal Electrical (PN), Eyerite Signs (Levin), Ecostock (Akl), Advantage Computers Ltd (PN), Inspire Net (PN) and Joel Moocarme (Graphic Designer, PN), some of whom provided multiple contributions during the year. All of the latter will be shown listed in our audited annual financial report and statements of accounts for 2015.

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 Clas himself, along with Professor Glyn Harper (Massey University), Comd 1 (NZ) Bde (Col Nick Gillard), PNCC City Library Archive and Research team, Dr Chris Pugsley, RAdm (Rtd) David Ledson, Sheryl McNabb, Sqn Ldr (Rtd) Paul Harrison, Lt Col (Rtd) Terry Kinloch, to name a few. Topics included “Johnny ENZED”, “NZ Div on the Western Front”, “A Soldiers Life in the Archives”, “Small Ships – Big Fish”, “3 Sqn RNZAF History”, “100 years of Military Nursing”, “NZ Mounted Rifle Brigade in WW1”, “Aspects of the Campaign in Gallipoli” and “The National War Memorial”. As the ECMC lecture room now houses the HQ for QAMR, these presentations are now held in the Linton Camp (LRSC) Conference Room, only for 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, PNRSA, Manawatu History Teachers Network, Manawatu Officers Club, plus serving military and civilian staff from Linton Camp and other NZDF elements in Palmerston North.

The **Trust Board** held its meetings every three months throughout the year, performing all of the requirements of our objects in accordance with the Trust Deed. All relevant reports have been prepared, approved and submitted to Charities Services and are shown on their website. Hon Col George Butcher and Mike Owen have now stepped down as trustees and I want to take this opportunity on behalf of the Trust in particularly thanking them for their contribution and support throughout the year. George was a foundation trustee and has been with us and as a strong supporter of and contributor to the ECMC for many years. He has now relocated from Masterton to Opotiki and we wish him all the best for the future in his new home location. Replacement trustees Cliff Parker (a Vice-Patron of the Sappers Association) and Greg Findon (as our new Treasurer and as a past Treasurer for the Sappers Association) were appointed in late 2015. My sincere thanks also to our ongoing trustees including Clas Chamberlain and Don Jones, along with CO 2ER and Regt Col RNZE, Lt Col Paul Hayward and RSM 2ER, WO1 Lyall Mooney, your assistance has been much appreciated.

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 scheme. This was instituted by the RSM 2ER in mid-2014 and managed by the SSMs of each of the units of 2nd Engr Regt and the SME 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, as well as Mike Earley of PN who has been a regular assist throughout 2015.

A number of **minor projects were carried out by the SME**, including some fixtures in the adjacent garage store and workshop, electrical and lighting tasks within the museum area, plus the LED strip lighting conversion to all 35 display cabinets. 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 support in 2015. Likewise, we have had excellent **support and assistance from the 2ER**, in particular from the CO, XO, Adjt and RSM, as well as unit commanders and 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 a few 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. We wish that more retired members of the Corps in the Manawatu would take on a more active interest in the ECMC.

Finally and to foreshadow our planned activities, objectives and focal points for 2016, these include:

1. Continue to progress the RNZE Corps History project through to completion;
2. Keep the ECMC open every Thursday and operating satisfactorily;
3. Continue to rebuild, refurbish and refresh the ECMC museum display cabinets;
4. Explore other means and modes to display RNZE activities and functions about the ECMC;
5. Introduce a bar coding system to support inventory and library collection work;
6. Explore and introduce interactive electronic displays within the ECMC museum area;
7. Continue developing the website and relevant sub-pages on [www.sappers.org.nz](http://www.sappers.org.nz).; and
8. Manage the RNZE CT in accordance with the Trust Deed and to meet all related compliance requirements.

Joe Hollander

Trustee/Trust Board Chair Palmerston North

RNZE Charitable Trust 31 December 2015