**RNZE Charitable Trust (RNZE CT or “Trust”) Annual Report for 2017**

This is our sixth annual report, which is provided to recognise our sponsors and supporters as well as an awareness of the activities of the Trust. Whilst it is not a compliance or statutory requirement, it helps to inform our parent bodies (namely the **RNZE Corps Committee** and **Sappers Association (NZ) Inc**) and wider Corps membership of the progress the Trust has made on key projects during the 2017 calendar year. Once again, we have had a busy and positive year, building on the progress made in previous years and since our formation in mid-2011. The adopted “strap/tagline” of “**Preserving RNZE Heritage**”, clearly reflects the principle objects of the Trust and what is has achieved since its original establishment.

Our top priority project has been the **RNZE Corps History project,** which has progressed well throughout the year with the completion of the research and writing phase and preparation of a final manuscript. This has been reviewed by members of the Corps History Project Advisory Group, along with Prof Glyn Harper and Dr Ian McGibbon, and feedback passed directly to the author Our project author and historian, Peter Cooke, has made further research visits to the ECMC, RNZE units and Exercise “UBIQUE” during the year. He has submitted regular quarterly project reports, which have been circulated widely. Following a RFP process, we have appointed Exisle Publishing (Dunedin) as our preferred contractor and an agreement has been signed. This will see the publishing of the book during 2018, with the end-product being available for a launch and release in early 2019. So far, we have expended $182,106 of the $184,117 funds raised for this project, including a significant Lottery Grants Board contribution back in late 2014. As NZDF/Army was unable to provide funding support for this project, further Trust contributions and fund raising will be necessary to cover the shortfall through to completion and book release.

Progress on **rebuilding and refurbishing the museum** **displays** continues at a slower pace, as we have had to focus on other tasks, without much additional staffing. We have really appreciated the voluntary contributions made by Mike Early and Noel Woodley, who have joined Curator Clas and the writer for our regular Thursday public openings. Progress has been made in the **scanning, digitising and post-processing** of our **photographic collection**, where over 4,500 of our collection of 20,000+ photos, slides, negatives, plates, etc have been scanned and stored digitally. We commenced Stage 1 of a project to **scan and digitise** some of our older (late 1800’s/early 1900’s) **heritage material and books**, using an external contractor and funded by ECCT. This initial stage was intended as an experimental exercise and now that we have established project performance metrics and process, we hope to embark on Stage 2 during 2018. We also want to raise another project sorting, cataloguing and refurbishing the collection of **model Bailey** **bridging holdings**, which have now been passed to the ECMC as heritage equipment items. It is still our intention to locate and place older RNZE equipment on the concrete plinths at the entrance to the ECMC, plus more Bailey panels around the entrance pathway and periphery, subject to availability of SME staff and students. We have experienced several electrical and security system faults in the building, which have all been rectified by SME, Spotless and contracting staff, however, they reflect the age and condition of much of the building and its infrastructure and systems. This will need to be addressed in the future, in terms of security and ongoing sustainability of the facility.

We have had over **4,700** **visitors through the ECMC** since commencing record taking in late-2013, with 1,178 in 2017 (1,008 in 2016, 968 in 2015 and 915 in 2014). These have included a wide range of local and international, serving and retired members of the NZDF and RNZE, community organisations, members of the public and so on. All Basic Combat Engineer course participants and personnel from other courses run by the SME have also made visits to the ECMC complex as part of their programmes and Corps heritage familiarisation. 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** ceased during the year, whilst waiting for the Sappers Association Executive to make a decision on the refurbishment or replacement of the current outdated “Sappers” website. If necessary, the Trust will have to decide on an alternative approach, so that important information belonging to the ECMC and Trust is made available to serving and retired members of the Corps, as well as for the wider community. We want to introduce more interactive and electronic displays into the museum and await advice from our technical advisers at Advantage Computers on both hardware and software requirements and availability. We still need an updated electronic library system, so that we can keep track of the extensive collection of reference material housed in both the library and “technical information section” for RNZE activities and deployments.

We continue with the challenging task of **cataloguing all the “assets of the Trust”**, now with some 12,084 items of the ECMC/RNZE CT “collection” (6,374 screens) inventoried (out of an estimated 60,000 items, including some 4,500 photographic items and with an estimated recorded value of $363,000. Our **comprehensive insurance cover** is reviewed annually and was increased in value to $310,000 (plus Trustee liability indemnity insurance), back in 2015. We continue to hold much of our stored items in an external expandable (old field medical operating theatre) container (with heat pump controlled environment) adjacent to the main building and garage. This has enabled us to further review items of equipment, clothing, photographic and document records, to inventory, sort and store them again in more suitable facilities.

Our **financial situation** remains in a stable position, as most of the major projects and procurements in 2017 were covered by external funding sponsors. We sincerely acknowledge and appreciate the support from our sponsors and regular contributors, as well as our other donors. Our **regular contributors** have increased back up to 23 over the year or approx $311 per month (we used to have over 130 regular contributors a couple of decades ago), the donations total contributed for the year was in the order of $3,705, plus a further $2,103 from “casual and miscellaneous” sources. The latter included contributions from the Auckland Sapper Officers’ Mess, ECMC donations (visitors and history presentations) box and other miscellaneous donors. Our six-monthly GST rebates also assist in keeping the funds for ECMC operational purposes in balance. Three grants were received this year for **external funding supplementation** to a total value of $17,894 (excl GST). One was for our insurance premium renewal ($3,894) from the Mainland Foundation, another ($4,000) from ECCT for Stage 1 of the scanning, digitising and post-processing of heritage material and $10,000 from the National Army Museum Trust Literary Fund to support the RNZE Corps History project (publication seeding fund). Other **generous sponsors and supporters** in kind for 2017 included Advantage Computers Ltd (PN), Inspire Net (PN) and Trophy Specialists (PN) and we sincerely thank them all, as well as our other regular donors to the Trust.

We continue to co-host the successful **monthly midday military history presentation series** with the Palmerston North City Library and now running these in the Palmerston North CBD from February to November each year. Venues include the City Library and Te Manawa and sessions are always well attended, with between 20 and 70 participants each month, depending upon the topic and weather on the day. Presentation topics included a wide range of excellent and informative presentations delivered by: Maj Tim Woodman (HQ 1 Bde – “HMS Veronica and Napier 1931 Earthquake”), Selwyn Ponga-Davis (LRSC – “Searching for Family at Gallipoli”), Col (Rtd) Bryan Wells (“The Waikato Land Wars – Battles at Orakau and Rangiriri”), Sqn Ldr (Rtd) Paul Harrison (“80 years of the RNZAF”), Wg Cdr (Rtd) Peter Hurly (“Medical Support in the Battle of the Somme”), RADM (Rtd) David Ledson (“HMS New Zealand, etc”), Dr (Lt Col Rtd) Mesut Uyar (ADFA/Turkish Mil Academy – “Myths and Realities of the ANZAC Landings at Gallipoli on 25 Apr 1915”), Leanne Hickman (Historian, Massey University – “Chronology of PN Military History 1860-1975”), Capt John Aitken, RNZE (25ESS – “Operation Winston – HADR in Fiji”), and Prof Glyn Harper (“Battle of El Alamein – 75th Anniversary”). A similar programme of many different speakers and topics has been arranged for 2018.

The **Trust Board** held quarterly meetings throughout the year, performing the requirements of our objects in accordance with the Trust Deed. All relevant compliance has been met and reports have been prepared, approved and submitted to Charities Services and are available on their website. We have appreciated the excellent service provided by Treasurer and trustee, Greg Findon, as well as the Secretary, Lt Sean Kinsella, latterly of the SME. An inaugural trustee and strong supporter of the Trust, **Lt Col Don Jones**, stood down in August and was replaced by **Lt Col Todd Hart** later in the year. We are sincerely grateful for the strong support and input provided by Don during the initial establishment and over his six plus years on the Trust Board. Incoming CO 2ER, Lt Col Terry McDonald and RSM, WO1 Greg Hinch also joined the Trust Board in 2017. Outgoing trustee, Lt Col Paul Hayward, remains a trustee, albeit connecting from his current post in Australia. Outgoing RSM 2ER, WO1 Lyall Mooney retired from the Trust. My sincere thanks go to all our trustees including Clas Chamberlain, Greg Findon, Cliff Parker, along with Paul Hayward, CO 2ER, Lt Col Terry McDonald and RSM 2ER, WO1 Greg Hinch, for their assistance and support throughout the year. As the Trust has now been operating for more than six years, it is time to **review our role, goals and purpose**, particularly looking at the sustainability and operation of the ECMC, as well as succession planning. Trustees will be asked to undertake some strategic planning this year to determine our future direction and survivability.

Over 60 personnel from all RNZE units in Linton Camp 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, based on a monthly roster and task list. This has enabled a wide range of tasks to be undertaken to assist us in the ongoing maintenance of the ECMC library, museum and Chapel, plus other RNZE CT administrative requirements. It also keeps these young sappers connected with their heritage and spiritual home, in the hope that they will take an interest in its preservation in the future and as their careers progress within the Corps and the Army as a whole.

Once again, several **minor projects were carried out by the SME**, including electrical tasks, hinging and securing display cabinet doors, preparing to repaint display cases and so on. This assistance is vital for the ongoing operation of the ECMC and we are very grateful to the CI, SSM and WO TTW, SME for their support in 2017. Likewise, we have had excellent **support and assistance from** 2ER, in particular from the CO, XO, Adjt, RSM and Wks WO, as well as unit commanders and a number of other RHQ staff. Our sincere thanks go to you all for this much needed and appreciated contribution and support. We have also appreciated support from OC LRSC (Maj Mike Pettersen) and his staff, DSS Property (now Defence Estates and Infrastructure) Group (WO2 Tom Donald and Shannon Quirke) and Spotless in the operation and maintenance of the ECMC building. Given that there is only a few of us trying to keep the ECMC open and running on a weekly basis, as well as managing the RNZE CT and various other key projects, we do need ongoing assistance from you all. Our wish is that retired members of the Corps currently living in the Manawatu, take more of an active interest in the ECMC and join our ranks as volunteers.

Finally and to foreshadow our planned activities, objectives and focal points for 2018, here are our aspirations for the coming year, in no particular order, including:

1. Continue to progress the RNZE Corps History project through to its completion and release and launch of the history book in early 2019;
2. Keep the ECMC open to the public every Thursday and operating satisfactorily;
3. Continue to rebuild, refurbish and refresh the ECMC museum displays;
4. Explore other means and modes to display RNZE activities, functions and heritage about the ECMC;
5. Introduce an electronic system to support inventory and library collection work;
6. Continue to scan, digitise, post-process and store heritage material for future access and safekeeping;
7. Explore and introduce interactive electronic displays within the ECMC museum area;
8. Continue to seek external funding supplementation as required; and
9. 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 2017