

# RNZE SAPPERS NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 200 July 2018





## President NZ Sappers Association.

There might be some good news as explained further down. But first a bit of background. My President's report to the March AGM outlined the problems we were having trying to find a website and membership database solution. In it there was a reference to needing perhaps \$11,000 for a setup that appears to tick most of the requirement boxes. That option was negated when the members voted \$10,000 for the Corps History Book. The finances were tight before but became impossible afterwards. I then went out looking for design from scratch proposal and about a month after the AGM received a quote of \$38,000. I didn't bother running it past the Executive Council.



Gummy Phillips put the President's report in the April Newsletter. And it turned out somebody did indeed read it, the Treasurer of the Victoria RAE Association in Australia. He picked up on our tale of woe, contacted me and pointed out that they were in a similar pickle a few years ago. They had duplicate databases etc, similar to our mess. A couple of years back he came across a program run by [www.tidyhq.com](http://www.tidyhq.com) and their Association has been using it successfully ever since. I set up a 30-day trial account back in April and Gummy and I have had a play around with it. Gummy in the same month had managed to crack the Ken Avenell membership database copy held by Mike Owen. So, he loaded 700 plus members into TidyHQ. In the meantime, the trial period ended without much more fact finding about the program. To save any fuss, I paid for one year's worth of the TidyHQ basic option AU\$468 [to be treated as a donation]. I intend to use the next few months to shake this program down. In the least, I want to use it to rebuild our membership database to the extent of being able to convert to Excel and print off a hard copy for the March 2019 AGM. After that, the Executive Council can decide on whether to pull the pin on TidyHQ or take over yearly payments to keep it going.

In early July I met Jamie Howard in Wellington who confirmed he is keen to help get the RNZE Reunion going as the local 'go getter' [not as Chair]. With that in mind, I think I can Chair a Wellington reunion via skype, email etc from Tauranga. We still need a Reunion Secretary now that Jim Smoothy is the Hon Secretary [and doing a good job too] and can't do his old reunion secretary job as well. An important function of the Reunion Secretary is to maintain a contact details roll of sappers not in the Association. Any cloud backed up members database the Association eventually adopts and pays for will be for those who paid for it, the life members, only. The Reunion Secretary would need to maintain the non-members database on excel, outlook etc on his/her home computer. The Reunion Secretary can be from anywhere in New Zealand, communicating via email and skype, providing he/she attends the reunion to fix up last minute hitches.

## What's on and Where

### Decade 1975-84

Picton or Wellington 2019

### National RNZE Reunion

Petone Wellington has been  
**POSTPONED to 2019**



**Almighty God,  
we pray Thee to bless  
the Royal new Zealand  
Engineers.**

**May our bridges always  
stand,  
and our charges never fail.**

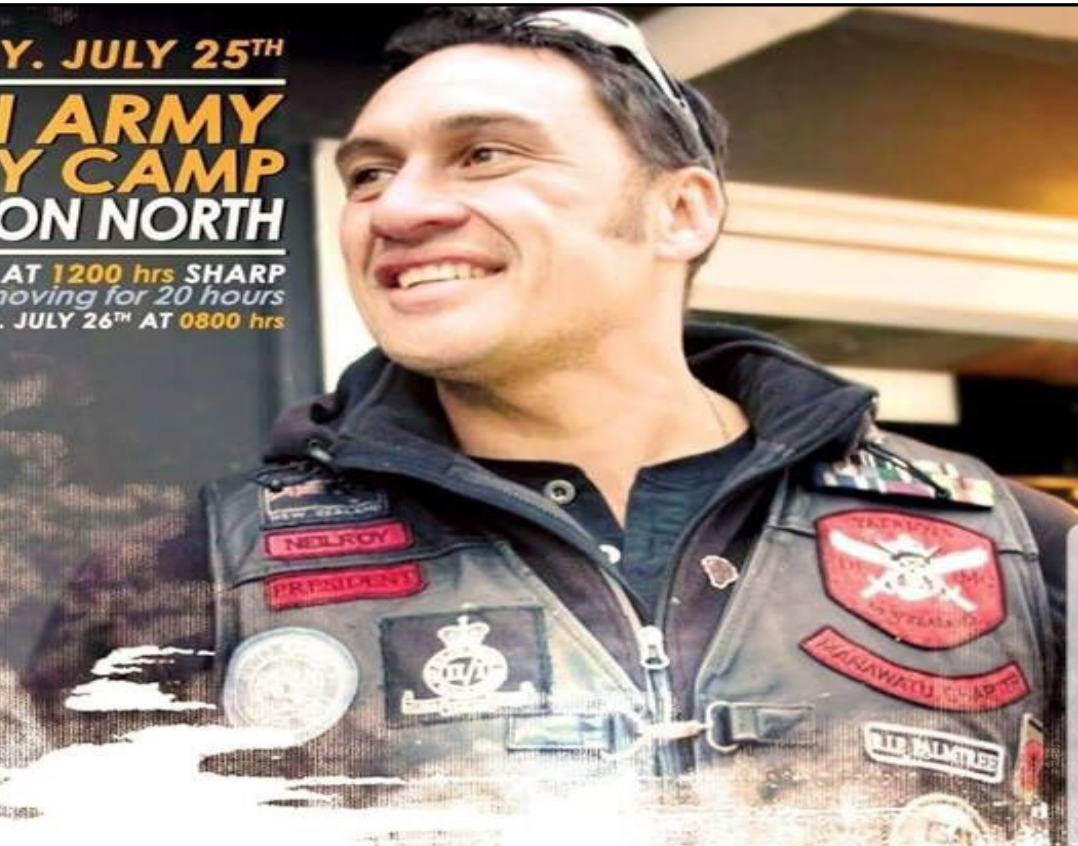
**Our members be ever loyal,  
and our officers worthy of  
their loyalty.**

**May we work diligently in all  
our purposes,  
and be skilled in our trades,  
steadfast for Queen  
and country everywhere.**

**Amen.**

I have been thinking for several years that spouses and partners should have some form of membership in the Sappers Association. The military observation 'wives also march to the beat of the drum' to my mind is true. With the passing recently of Janice Rose, who organised Sapper ladies' luncheons in Christchurch for years, I think now is timely to start the discussion. Perhaps many years ago when the RNZE Reunion was advertised in the woman's magazines, resulting in some wives dragging their husband to the reunion by their ears, was an indicator of how much they are part of things. I believe that spouses and partners should have some form of membership in their own right which stays current even after separation or divorce. The friendships made with other ladies in younger years need to be maintained later at Decade Do's etc regardless of how family life turned out.

Vail 'Hub' Hubner



**WEDNESDAY. JULY 25<sup>TH</sup>**  
**LINTON ARMY**  
**MILITARY CAMP**  
**PALMERSTON NORTH**

RELAY WILL START AT 1200 hrs SHARP  
*Keep the baton moving for 20 hours*  
 FINISHING THURSDAY. JULY 26<sup>TH</sup> AT 0800 hrs


**MCGREGOR**  
**20 HOUR**  
**RELAY**


**FUNDRAISER**

*fundraising event for one of our soldiers*

**REGISTRATION IS \$240 A TEAM**  
**TEAMS CAN BE ANY SIZE**  
 TEAMS CAN CRAWL / RUN / WALK...ITS THAT EASY

TO SUPPORT NEILROY, KATE AND WHANAU.  
 ALSO TO FUNDRAISE FOR THE SUPPORT  
 OF HIS RECOVERY AND FURTHER TREATMENT  
**\*REGISTRATIONS DUE BY JULY. 23<sup>RD</sup>**

**Contact: SGT D. MARTIN**  **daniel.martin@nzdf.mil.nz**







**Glen Cockburn - Owen Phillips - John Sparks - Kevin Boniface - Stan Hansen**

Members of Burnham Camp 1980 UFBA Competition Team meet up again after 38yrs at Ross Hargreaves Memorial Service Papanui RSA .

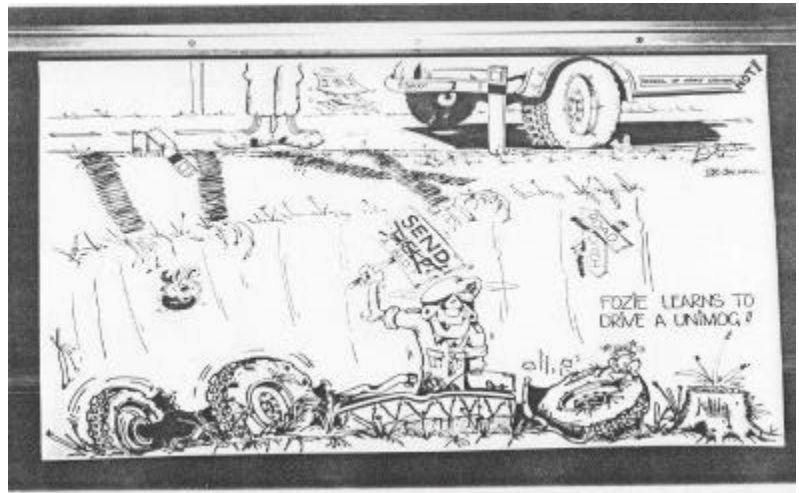
Ross was Fire master Burnham & SO Fire Defence in the late 70s –80s







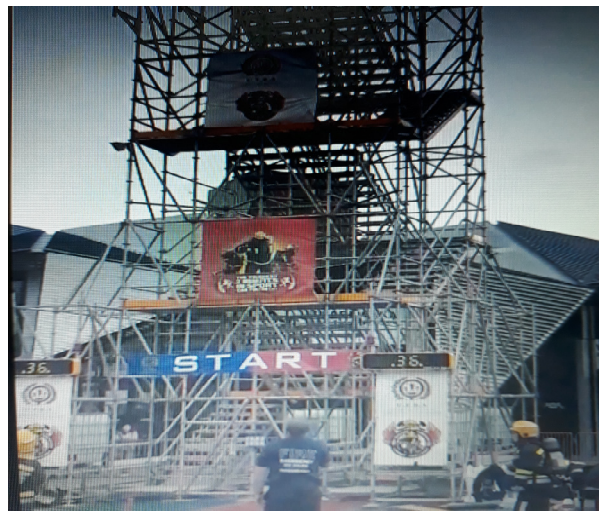
## Some of the old ERS Sketches from time passed



The New Zealand Fire Combat Challenge is now complete in Wellington with great results from the team in the carnival atmosphere. The results are preliminary, however it was a great competition with our teams representing the Corps and Army extremely well.

A snapshot of just some of the highlights (there are lots), a lot of personal bests beaten, such as SPR Dye-Hutchinson initially achieved New Zealand's second fastest female time and in a testament to the quality competition she finished as the 4th ranked female in the country; also the Co-ed team of SPR Dye-Hutchinson and CPL Grant achieved 2nd place overall. A number of our team are likely to have qualified to represent New Zealand at the World Championships.

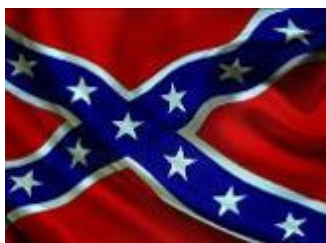
Well done to everyone who participated and particularly to SGT Klaassen for being the team manager



Burnham Fire Station competing UFBA competitions Dunedin 1979  
Glen Cockburn -  
Gummy Phillips  
Kevin Boniface  
Stan Hansen  
Dave Ackroyd







The 3<sup>rd</sup> RNZE BRANCH  
SAPPERS ASSOCIATION (Inc.) NZ

**OFFICE HOLDERS ARE:**

**Chairman** Bernie Rose 03 3131569

**Vice-chairman:** Eric Elley 03 3107385

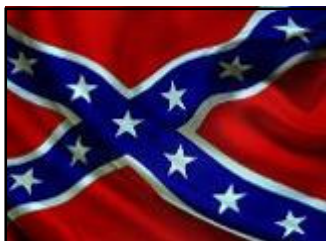
**Secretary:** Colin Walsh 03 3423272

**Committee Members:** BJ Clark 03 3594522 John Fischer 03 3130305 George Jason Smith 03 3124844  
Brian McTurk 03 9818291 Owen Phillips 022 1949900 Norm Smith 03 3481562 Jack Blyth 03 3543199



ENGINEERS OF THE NEW ZEALAND ARMY AT RIVER-CROSSING EXERCISES IN THE SOUTH ISLAND





### 3 Branch Get togethers

These are informal gatherings which are being well supported; we hope to see new faces turning up each time. These are held at the South Island Sappers HQs, the Papanui RSA. Any time after 1700hrs, on the second Friday of the even months of the year, See the dates below, Food is available, as are Drinks. Come along and see who turns up.

On the following months

08 August	Friday Night	Get together
15 October	Sunday Sappers Day, Raising of the Flag & Buffet. Papanui RSA	
08 December	Friday Night	Get together
09 February 18	Friday Night	Get together
13 April	Friday Night	Get together
08 June	Friday Night	Get together
10 August	Friday Night	Get together

**Mark these dates on your Calendars as a reminder.**

#### **Sappers Wives / Partners Luncheon**

It's hard to believe it is over two years ago we started our 2 monthly luncheons. It has been a great success with mainly small numbers of us meeting for a drink, chat and lunch. We welcome anyone who would like to join in. Come along to our next luncheon on Tuesday 04 July at the Papanui RSA at 1200hrs. If you have any enquires please ring me, Joyce Walsh Phone 3423272

Then on the following months

10 July 2018  
11 September 2018  
13 November 2018  
12 March 2019

**SEE YOU THERE**

On 21 May 1945

26 sappers were killed in an inexplicable explosion during an exercise at the Royal Australian Engineers' training base at Kapooka, a suburb of Wagga Wagga, New South Wales.

*(At approximately 1445 (2.45 p.m.) on Monday the 21st of May 1945, an explosion occurred in a dugout in the Demolition Area at the Kapooka Camp. As a result of this explosion twenty-four soldiers were killed outright and four were seriously injured, two of whom died within two hours of admission to hospital. )*



## Kiwi in spirit and Kiwi in scale, Burnham Military Camp sits largely unremarked on the outskirts of Christchurch find out what goes on behind the wire.

How many have wondered what really goes on inside Burnham Military Camp (BMC) as they whiz past it on State Highway 1, just south of Rolleston Or with Burnham being so nearly invisible, how many even notice the base is there.

First impressions are that the security at the gate is surprisingly low key. A flimsy pole across the road. A grey-haired old guy in a booth checking passes. All fairly sleepy looking. But then, this is an army base. Anyone actually crashing the barriers is going to be encountering some well-trained, well-equipped, opposition pretty fast. Driving into Burnham, you can immediately see where New Zealand's taxpayer dollars are not being spent.

Built in the 1940s for World War 2, BMC is an ugly clutter of small low buildings, mostly breeze block and un-landscaped, set in a confused grid of roads. Nothing impressive or sweeping about its vistas. Arriving at the headquarters of the 2/1st ("second/first") Infantry Battalion, its commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Mike van Welie, laughs as he leads the way through the somewhat eccentric design built by army engineers in the 1980s.

The HQ is shaped in an octagonal ring for some reason. Possibly some ergonomic theory that was in vogue at the time. Anyway, says van Welie, Linton – Burnham's fellow army base in the North Island just outside Palmerston North – has an exact replica.

Scratching his head for some recent lavish improvements he can mention, van Welie replies brightly: "We do have a new toilet block." The dim narrow corridors are hung with trophies, plaques and memorabilia, mixed in with a few health and safety notices – size guides and maintenance advice for the new EP7 issue ear plugs. It is all very Kiwi make-do.

And quickly, chatting with van Welie, you realise why Burnham is so unobtrusive a presence – not a source of rowdy drunken squaddies hitting town on a Friday, or road convoys of more than the occasional three or four khaki trucks. Because, in truth, the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) is tiny. Pip-squeak. So as an army base, Burnham is smaller in numbers than some Christchurch high schools. Van Welie gives the overview. In terms of regular infantry, the New Zealand Army has a single brigade with a single regiment. And that is it.

The regiment is split into the 1st Battalion at Linton and the 2/1st at Burnham. Van Welie has 430 under his command. So front line, the sharp end? You are talking about barely 1000.

Well, at least we know our international reputation. The NZDF is a dinky but highly professional force. The world's greatest peace-keepers. A token presence that pops everywhere from Afghanistan, Iraq, Sinai, Korea, Sudan, to the Arab Emirates – any place we need to do our bit to bolster the legitimacy of actions initiated by our allies. We have got good at treading that fine political line using our minimal resources. But while we might be bloody good in a scrap on all accounts, you wonder what the story would be if such a small force were actually ever called upon to defend our own shores.



Our military is meant to be setting an international example in gender-neutral thinking. The last health minister gave it the goal of becoming the world's first smoke-free defence force by 2020. It is having to deal with millennial recruits with a different mindset. So heading out to have a more general nose around the camp, my interest is in how Burnham is being affected by these latest changes.

A first seemingly obvious question is could Burnham even eventually face the axe? Christchurch lost Wigram airbase as its pilot training centre in 1995. And long term, can New Zealand afford to divide its single army regiment into these two still smaller North and South Island contingents. The answer from Van Welie, and also camp commandant, Captain Grant Payton, is any such radical consolidation is unlikely for both operational and social reasons. Payton says NZDF has to be a good employer. While the nature of soldiering means six or nine month postings overseas, personnel also need a stable home life. Most of those serving at Burnham are also well-entrenched in the local community. Medic alert: Tri-service medic training at BMC. Dealing with simulated trauma at a car crash is today's module.

In 2012, one of NZDF's economising moves was to start charging market rates for its on-base accommodation. Burnham has its living barracks and also a large chunk of state housing for families. "But about 60 per cent would live off-base now," says Payton. It is another reason why BMC's existence is low key. Most of its people are also rush hour commuters travelling in from Hornby, Oxford or even as far off as Ashburton. Payton says Rolleston – just minutes away – is the obvious place that personnel would converge. But its new post-quake housing is pricey – expensive on a corporal's \$50,000 pay. However, you will see plenty of uniforms down at Rolleston's shops, he says.

But Burnham is well integrated into the local community. Being army is just another job, says Payton. Its people have mortgages, partners out working, kids in ordinary schools. The other big reason why Burnham would be hard to uproot is the modern military doubles up as a front-line civil defence responder. And retaining a southern base makes sense from that point of view as well. For Christchurch, this was obvious with the earthquakes. The city quickly got used to the reassuring sight of soldiers in their Light Armoured Vehicles (LAVs). Van Welie says civil defence and humanitarian aid is something Burnham trains for. It is a recognised part of its mission – part of the capacity the Government purchases. And in New Zealand especially, where the disaster resources are spread thin, it is logical to take advantage of the equipment and expertise the military can supply.

Combat ready:  
Burnham's sole  
infantry battalion  
totals about 430  
troops – half the  
New Zealand  
complement.



For example, our engineers have reverse osmosis systems that can take salt or dirty water and turn it into potable drinking water. "We use them to support our troops. But also if there's just been a cyclone and no-one has fresh water, it's going to be really handy there as well."

Burnham's fire station integrates with the local fire brigades, turning out even for ordinary houses fires or car accidents. And the Port Hill bush fires saw the army showing up in force. Add in storms, earthquakes, cyclones in the Pacific islands and the calls for help seem to be coming ever thicker and faster. Burnham is involved in something major perhaps three or four times a year. So a South Island base is important just to fulfilling that natural disaster role.

"They're not dumb grunts anymore. The art of combat is far more technical now. We need soldiers who can work with communication and technology systems. And also who understand legal concepts – when it's right to apply force." At Burnham, the atmosphere is generally relaxed and informal. People are going about their 9-to-5 routine of training and paperwork. Another feature of military life is that NZDF doesn't promise a job forever. Staff are employed on contracts that get shorter as you get older. First, maybe a 15-year deal. Eventually a six-year offer or less.

The numbers out at Burnham are of course swelled by its logistics battalion, its field engineers, its signals squadron, its military police, its band, and its many civilian workers. As a Greater Christchurch employer, it is significant. And tucked away in the Estate Regeneration budget I spot a line item – \$5m allowed for a new camp entrance and spine road. Come back in a few years and possibly, with the new recruits, some new buildings, BMC will have become more noticeable as part of the city once again.





## F921408 John (Jack ) Blyth

Some of Jacks Highlights of his 25 years in the Royal NZ Engineers include Assisting the public of NZ by building bridges in flooded rivers Such as Turangi, Bulls, Rangatiki, Peel Forest.

Demolition using explosives of unwanted buildings etc, such as Waverley Water Tower, Christchurch Brick Works, Clarence River bridge.

Attending Territorial Annual Camps throughout NZ as Instructor in Field Engineering .

Taking a small team of 3 Costr Sqn tradesmen by Bristol Freighter to Fiji to assist a poor Catholic girls school in the jungle of Vetu Levu.

Playing many different sports including representing NZ Army at Soccer at inter service tournaments. Being a proud Sapper for 66 years, a member of the Sappers Association for about 64 years and Secretary of 3<sup>rd</sup> Branch for many years.



### Promotions and Rank

Sapper	Aug 52
L/cpl ( Temp )	Aug 52
2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant (Provisional )	March 53
Lance/ Corporal	Apr 54
Corporal	Apr 54
Sergeant	Apr 57
Staff/Sergeant	Apr 60
Warrant Officer Class II	Apr 63
Warrant Officer Class I	Apr 66

### Courses and Training

RF Instructors Course No 5	1952
RF Advanced Field Engineer Course	1955
Bridging Instructor	1955
Mine Warfare Instructor	1956
Demolition Instructor	1956
Roads & Plant	1957
Regimental Signals Instructor	1959
Soil Mechanics	1959
Film Projectionist	1958
Ramset Operator	1962
Advanced Bridging	1963
Basic Concrete	1962
RF Basic Survey	1963
Army Works Study	1964
Quarrying ( Dept of Labour )	1966
Basic Plant operators	1967
Demolitions Retest	1971
Safety Supervisor ( Building ) ( Dept of Labour )	1975





# RNZE

## 44 Riccarton Road

### 1943—2018

### 75 Yrs old



Time to reflect on the back ground of the current 3 Fd Sqn now based at Burnham Military Camp.

There has been a Engineer Troop/Sqn-Unit based in Christchurch since 1885 and at 44 Riccarton Rd since 1943 until its move to Burnham MC mid 1970s.

During WW2 NZE had a headquarters in Riccarton at **44 Riccarton Road** in which a lot of lucky sappers will have the privilege of serving at sometime or another in there military career

The property at 44 Riccarton Road was owned in 1920 by the Benjamin family who run a Timber and Joinery business from the site for many years, 3 Fd Sqn RNZE rebuilt the huge timber rack at the rear of property and the joinery shed which all that served there will remember well.

During WW2 Riccarton Road was the HQ for 36 Army Troop and known as Army Camp 59a after the war and a reorganisation of the Army in 1952 it become the HQ for 50 Construction Sqn since then it was the base for many RNZE units including 3 Fd Sqn - 2 Works Team - SD Construction - 3 troop 1 Sqn - 3 troop 6 Ind - Southern Construction Troop.



44 Ricc Rd 1940



36 Army Troop NZE 44 Riccarton Rd

**3 Branch of the Sappers Association intend to acknowledge and celebrate the occasion of 75 years of 44 Riccarton Road and RNZE presence there by a parade of serving and past members of 3 Fd Sqn and 44 Riccarton Road Veterans at the Papanui RSA Sappers day Monday 15 October 2018 @ 0930hrs**

**DEFENCE ENGINEER SERVICE CORPS.**  
COMPANIES of the above Unit will hold Full-day Parades as under:-  
Nos. 15 and 16 Companies, June 6th, 13th.  
All parades will be at Headquarters, 44 Riccarton road.  
No. 15 Company parades commence at 0900 hours, and No. 16 Company at 0930 hours.  
All parades will be in preparation for holding of bridging demonstration.  
M. A. GORDON, Lieut. N.Z.T.S.,  
6380 Adjutant, D.E.S.C.

Press, 4 June 1943



44 Ricc Rd 2018



Lowering the Flag for last time 44 Riccarton Rd



# Association Treasurer's Report



## Branch accounts As at 31 May 2018

Exec acc	2828.30	nil	2828.30
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EFTPOS	264.34	173.00	437.34
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Northern	7391.00	20.00	7411.00
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Reunion	666.03	nil	666.03
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3 Branch	2172.60	nil	2172.60
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Dunedin	225.62	nil	225.62
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AFS	1997.67	nil	1997.67
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Wellington	488.17	nil	488.17
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ERA Decade	100.00	- 8.50	91.50
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## Assoc Investments

Fixed term	11251.48	8 December 2018
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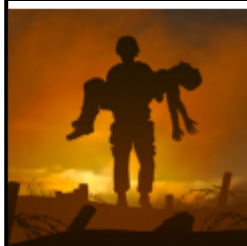
Term Deposit	8431.57	8 June 2019
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Term Deposit	7882.85	8 June 2019
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Term Deposit	7500.00	8 June 2018
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Total	35065.93	
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Cheers Nigel



## IF YOU NEED TO TALK OR HELP



If you need to talk to someone here is free helplines operating 24/7: NZDF 24/7 HELPLINE: 0800 NZDF 4U (0800 693 348 or 0800 189 910)

Veterans Affairs NZ: 0800 483 8372 (0800 4 VETERAN)

VITAE ( NZDF Civilians): 0508 664 981

NODUFF (Volunteer Veterans NGO): 022 307 1557 (noduff.ngo@gmail.com)

RSA: 027 217 2608

DEPRESSION HELPLINE: 0800 111 757

LIFELINE: 0800 543 354

## Did you know

### St David's Presbyterian Church Khyber Pass Auckland

The 1927 church building, constructed as a memorial, commemorates both World Wars, events that retain strong public interest. Dedicated to local men and women, St David's significance as a war memorial is enhanced by its continued use for Anzac Day services and for the Sappers (Corps of Royal New Zealand Engineers) Memorial Service (a tradition that began in 1927 and has continued every year ever since) demonstrating the on-going interest in remembering those who served and suffered in overseas conflict, and their families.



The St David's Church is a soldier's memorial church after World War 1. It was constructed to honour those who had served in the Great War and was designed to accommodate the disabled as all access ways are ramped and 'listening posts' were incorporated into the building to allow for the hearing impaired. The Corps of Royal New Zealand Engineers, the Sappers, have a particularly close association with St David's. From 1928 through until last year the Sappers have paraded at St David's on ANZAC Day. The most honoured member of the Corps, Cyril Bassett, who was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions on Chunuk Bair during the Gallipoli campaign, was a parishioner. He was married at the old St David's just after the war. Within the church there are a number of memorials in honour of those who served in both world wars.



RNZE march up the ramps of St David's: Sappers' Memorial Service, 2014, Image: Friends of St David's





## **Lt Col Terry McDonald CO of 2nd Engineer Regiment**

Greetings Sappers of the RNZE,

This is the second quarterly update for 2018 and again you will not be surprised, it is a long update as there is a lot going on across the Corps at the moment. RNZE have continued to sustain its deployments, individual training and build up for collective training. The Corps effectively deployed the Regiment in May 2018, with personnel across 12 different activities off shore in eight different countries (excluding postings). While this exercise, exchange, course and deployment tempo was met we have continued to have our members deployed to MANAWA (Iraq), MOHUA (Iraq), SUDDEN (South Sudan), TROY (Dubai) and FARAD (Sinai) as well as rotations preparing to go. Throughout the high activity period, it has been really pleasing to see the calibre of our Sappers, remaining leading edge and delivering military engineering solutions for NZDF – we continue to build upon our strong reputation as a Unit and Corps that delivers results.

Back home in New Zealand training has been largely focused on the soldier and sappers skills. The Regiment has now fully transitioned from IW-Steyr to MARS-L and from Sig Sauer to Glock. SME is successfully delivering or delivered the Basic Carpenter Course, Intermediate Plant Course, the Engineer Reconnaissance Sergeants Course and the first of the hazardous tree felling course, a requirement under the new Combat Engineer trade model. 3 Fd Sqn has done a considerable amount of work on small boats, with support from 2 Fd Sqn to prepare and successfully execute EX TROPIC MAJOR 2018 (VANUATU) and EX CROIX DU SUD 18 (NEW CALEDONIA). This achieved RNZE OLOC for small boating, working off HMNZS Canterbury delivering both conventional and non-conventional troops ashore by day and night. It tested the revamped safety system surrounding RNZE small boating and it met all objectives. The team put a considerable amount of effort into this and it paid considerable dividend with feedback from the CO of HMNZS CAN congratulating the Sappers on their approach, integration and professionalism. 2 Fd Sqn has been building on their section training and deployed in May 18 (with the balance of 2 Engr Regt) on EX ARRAS 2018, to do their sub unit build up prior to EX SARI BAIR / EX UBIQUE 18. The exercise linked in with other Brigade force elements and provided the normal hospitable weather conditions in Zone One, in winter. The team met their training objectives and will now join with the Brigade on SARI BAIR ready to go. 2 Fd Sqn also deployed its High Readiness section in support of 1 RNZIR into EX CROIX DU SUD which was good to get that team away. 25 ESS has successfully completed EX TROPIC TWILIGHT 18 (VANUATU), not without its challenges, however the team worked extremely hard to meet the timelines and were ultimately successful. It is noteworthy that this activity deployed steel frames to prove the FrameCAD experiment and it proved successful. The Corps also deployed a Mutual Assistance Training Team (MATT) to TONGA, exporting elements of the Task Managers to HMAF. Instructors for this training came from both RHQ and SME(NZ); it was very successful and gratefully received by the students. The Unit has also undertaken planning for, although not executed, support to New Zealand based civil defence emergency on the East Coast and options for Rural Fire Support to allied countries.

Currently the Regiment is taking a tactical pause and over the next week will celebrate Corps Week 2018. Commencing with the 25<sup>th</sup> Birthday Parade on 01 Jul 18 for 2 Engr Regt, followed by Corps Sports Week which includes the Corps Conference and concluded with the Sappers Ball on 07 Jul 18. All events are open to serving and retired Sappers alike.

Looking forward, post Corps Week, the Regiment will be gearing up to support multiple events / activities across the country. The Corps is preparing to support TE AURAKI (Fallen Repatriation) and in August the Regiment is duty unit for 1 (NZ) Brigade which is shaping up to be busier than our last duty period. The next quarter will be largely dominated by the preparation for and execution of EX SARI BAIR / EX UBIQUE 18 in Sept, including an AWQ. We will also be supporting SME(NZ) with both students and instructors for the RNZE Section Commanders Course, EDD Handlers Course, Plant Supervisors, Fire Intermediate and a myriad of other activities. Finally, the planning and preparation for MILCON 18.2 will be finalised to allow our trade capability bricks to deliver a construction effect to the NZDF.

Other things that you need to be aware of, in no particular order:

**Regiment Birthday** – As you are aware, the Regiment is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2018. It falls on a Sunday, however due to the forecasted weather we will continue with a parade to mark the event, but **will postpone the Family Day** component until Sappers Day 2018.

**Corps Sports** – Following the engagement of Corps Sports 2017, the 2018 sports will be conducted with the same format. The programme is out, if you have any questions, please direct them to your sub unit HQ.

**Corps Conference** – It is intended that Corps Conference is conducted on the **Thursday** (rest day) of the Corps Sports week. Invitations and the programme have been released.

**Corps Shop** – the Corps shop continues to run on TradeMe as well as a physical store at 2 Engr Regt. Should you want to see the items as they get added follow rnze\_corps\_shop as a store! We are expecting more clothing to come into stock with our suppliers in the next few weeks. Remember, all purchases through the Corps Shop bring money into the Corps Fund that supports our Sappers. It is sending care packages to deployed Sappers, supporting sapper initiatives (such as the Sappers Ball), however without revenue it won't be for long.

**Sappers Ball** – The Ball will occur on Saturday 07 July 18, in Palmerston North. It will also be the prize giving for the Corps Sports. The committee has done really well in organising the ball, including the fundraising, and it is shaping to be an excellent evening. I look forward to seeing you all there.



**Quarry Responsibility Handover** – RNZE is currently transitioning the responsibility of Waiouru / NZDF Quarries away from the Regiment and into Defence Estate and Infrastructure. There are interim plans / activities in place currently to enable this, and it is anticipated the handover will be complete by the end of Jul 18. This does not mean we are ceasing training in the Waiouru quarries, rather we will book the quarries as any other training zone with the requisite qualifications to work within it. At the conclusion of our training, we will hand responsibility back to WMTF and DEI. There are also courses of action being explored by DEI to contract out road maint in Waiouru. It is unclear how this will impact RNZE, however I am confident we will retain the Waiouru Plant Detachment and continue to work on the roading assets in Waiouru. This is not the first time this has been explored as an option, and again, more to follow as this progresses.

**EOD Trade** – You may be aware that recently the Chief of Army has directed that the OR trade of EOD will transition from RNZIR to RNZE. I am unsure of the specific date that this will occur, however it will be relatively seamless to the Corps. In short, the trade will be RNZE and new arrivals into the EOD Trade will complete BCE, however the trade will be managed (day to day and Career) through Regimental Colonel Special Operations. We welcome EOD back to the Sapper fold and look forward to greater engagement, particularly as an Expeditionary Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EEOD) Team arrives into the Unit in August 2018.

**Corps History Book** – You will be aware that the Corps History is nearing its final approach, after a considerable period of time, to completion. The final edit is currently underway and it will be with the publishers for printing on 31 Jul 18, for release in early 2019. As part of that there will be the ability for Sappers (both serving and retired) to pre-order books commencing in the next few weeks. There will be a limited window, discounted offer, for the books that can be paid for online through bank transfer of \$50 per book and an normal recommended retail price of \$60. You will see posters and online advertising for this, I would encourage you to get a copy. All currently serving Sappers have their names in the book, with a Corps nominal roll capturing you! We thank all involved with this project, from people providing input, oral histories, photos, book reviews, the author to deliver on behalf of Sappers all.

**Private Public Partnerships** – The Corps continues with its private public partnership with DownerNZ and has recently engaged in the Manawatu region to get more local placements, enabling more opportunities to be taken without the travel / cost overhead. We have also been looking at opportunities with Fulton Hogan, likely in the Auckland region to give experience to our supervisor / planner level of expertise. This continues to be championed by OC 25 ESS and the RSM.

All of the events are open to non-serving sappers and personnel outside of the immediate Unit / School environment. If you would like to be involved or participate in any way, please let us know.

There are a few more key things that I believe we should celebrate, in no particular order. This list is not exhaustive and there are plenty more on our Corps social media sites, however the things worthy of individual mention are:

1. MAJ Gabby Gofton, 2 Engr Regt who has been advised that she will be presented the Distinguished Service Decoration through the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2018 for her actions on OP FARAD. Congratulations and well deserved.
2. MAJ Jono Meldrum. 2 Engr Regt who was presented his Meritorious Service Medal for actions on OP SUDDEN, well done!
3. SPR Petra Dye-Hutchinson for making the Lion's Den during the Fire Combat Challenge Nationals,
4. SPR Petra Dye-Hutchinson, SPR Aidan Grant and SPR Tom Grant for being selected to attend the Scott Fire Fighter Combat Challenge World Championships in Sacramento in October. This is a great feat and first time we have been invited to participate in the United States competition
5. LCPL Thompson deployed as part of the MCG to France and Belgium. LCPL Thompson lead the Taua to bring the guests onto each ceremony which was great. He truly owned his role and was a master in its delivery. Also of note, was his exemplary reading in the Arras Tunnel service to honour the kiwi engineers who made that incredible space. Well done.
6. SPR Bridge, 3 Fd Sqn – while supporting the visit of the Commander US Army of the Pacific was a first arrival on the scene of an accident. In rush hour traffic he, and another service member, gave initial first aid to the people involved and on arrival of medical support took control of the traffic. His initiative keep the site save and traffic moving, preventing major delays until police arrived.
7. SPR Maaka had a tree planted on Sappers Lines to commemorate a year since his passing, thank you to his family and all of those involved for making that occasion memorable for the Corps.
8. Welcome to the fold Ms Janine Bevege, who is now working in the RHQ, she is making a considerable impact already! I would also like to make a special mention of Ms Natacha Cameron, the Linton Social Worker who is doing a lot of work around the Camp, including with Sappers. To you both, welcome on board!
9. I would also like to welcome back MAJ Joe Totoro, recently returned from operations and now in the role of OC 25 ESS.

As we look beyond September period we are starting to look towards the MILCON period and preparing for Cyclone season in the South Pacific. Course tempo will remain high, however our training model should start to provide some relief.

The last quarter has been particularly busy, deliberately so, and while at times it placed considerable pressures on parts of our organisation, the Corps delivered. I know that it was a high price at times, however we have reinforced to ourselves that we can meet multiple and diverse demands. You should all be proud of our achievements in this regard. I still very much encourage you all to make the most of the time you have to take leave during block leave periods and when you can, get your leave balances down. I mentioned it in the last update, but it is worthy of reinforcement, I would ask you all to check on your mates, a five minute conversation or coffee to ask 'how are you doing' is worth the effort to make sure our team

Keep up the good work and don't forget to follow us on social media to stay updated! I

Nga Wahi Katoa





Task Unit Holdfast got a break in the weather today, the exercise has moved into Section Battle Handling Exercises (BHE) with a number of discrete tasks being completed. It allows for the Sections to practice skills and go through a deliberate planning process, rehearsing core sapper skills. The tasks include building obstacles, demolitions, route search and infantry minor tactics.



Congratulations to A/MAJ Gabby Gofton who has been recognised in the NZ Queens Birthday Honours. She is awarded the NZ Distinguished Service Decoration for Services to the NZDF. A/MAJ Gofton is serving as the Executive Officer of 2 Engr Regt.





## RNZE Deminers Centre Fold

For that old Plantie  
that wishes if only we  
had one of those in my  
day



**GOOD OLD RNZE WAY**



# Trip Down Memory Lane

## Burnham Camp Oxidation Pond



The sole source of sewage for the Burnham scheme is the Burnham Military Camp, the average population of 1,300 which m3 fluctuates of treated considerably. sewage Anis discharged daily from the single 4.16 ha oxidation pond onto a 23 ha border-dyked disposal area. This disposal scheme has been operating since August 1974 and is a replacement for a now disused free flooding scheme on an adjacent site. The oxidation pond was constructed and completed by 3 Fd Sqn Plant Troop in the early 70s. Names of some of those sappers involved on the project include Swampy. Smokey. Bob Taylor .Dolly. Colin Morgan and many more that elude my memory.



Top: Birds eye shot of the pond today

Top left : Smokey checking how the height and levels are.

Bottom Left: Troop Scraper hard at work

Top right: Swampy in his favourite little toy doing his thing

## Exercise Tropic Major 2018



The lead elements of Exercise Tropic Major 2018 have arrived in Devonport to board HMNZS CANTERBURY. This team, comprised of elements from both 3 Field Squadron and 2 Field Squadron, will be conducting small boating operations based off the ship, a real step change for the contemporary boating capability. The Regiment is deploying force elements across the Pacific over the next few weeks on a variety of exercises.



Exercise Tropic Major, which concluded on 9 May, involved more than 500 personnel in a Joint Task Force of Navy, Army and Air Force elements operating from HMNZS Canterbury and HMNZS Wellington off Epi Island, in Vanuatu.

The fictitious scenario involved a breakdown of law and order on the island, prompting the Vanuatu Government to request help to re-establish the rule of law and stability for its citizens. A New Zealand Joint Task Force, embarked on HMNZS Canterbury and HMNZS Wellington, goes to the island to help restore order.





## Exercise Tropic Major 2018

Combat engineers engaged in amphibious assaults from a ship was another tick for new capability during Exercise Tropic Major.

Lieutenant Frankie Thompson commanded a team of 15 combat engineers from both 2 and 3 Field Squadrons, 2 Engineer Regiment, specialising in small boat operations from the loading deck of HMNZS CANTERBURY. During the exercise, the engineers were tasked with using their zodiacs to infiltrate the reconnaissance teams to Epi Island, then infiltrate army personnel during the early hours of D-Day to secure a beach. A tropical environment, including the sea state and coral obstructions, had to be factored in. The infill is precise, low-profile, slow, and near-silent.

"It's very cool to be able to do this from a ship," says LT Thompson. "It's something we've always talked about, but we've never had a chance to do it before." In fact, it is the first time LT Thompson has been on CANTERBURY. "It's great to take the team away, and great exposure to what our capabilities are."

Combat engineers are all qualified to handle zodiacs and a number of the team are coxswains, with day skipper and boat master qualifications. They are the experts in using their small boats to get people in, and their work during Tropic Major is a useful relationship exercise for them. "It's building trust of the other units with us. We enhance the plan, we get people to the beach, and we get them back."

Staff Sergeant Quentin Whanau says it was very pleasing to see the engineers being used in a combat role during Tropic Major. "Because the 'engineers' have done so much HADR work, there's been that stereotype, of doing bridging, and supplying water. But these guys aren't tradesmen." He noted the team had to perform a 'casualty' extraction as short notice. "There's a lot of complexity, with reaching the right point, dealing with the conditions—the sea state, the environment, and navigating through coral, to get to the beach and extract them."





Plant Operators from 25 ESS are rehearsing construction & reduction of obstacles in prep for Ex Arras. It's a rehearsal for 1(NZ)Bde Ex Sari Bair which will see a combat engineer squadron delivering core Sapper skills to a battalion group.





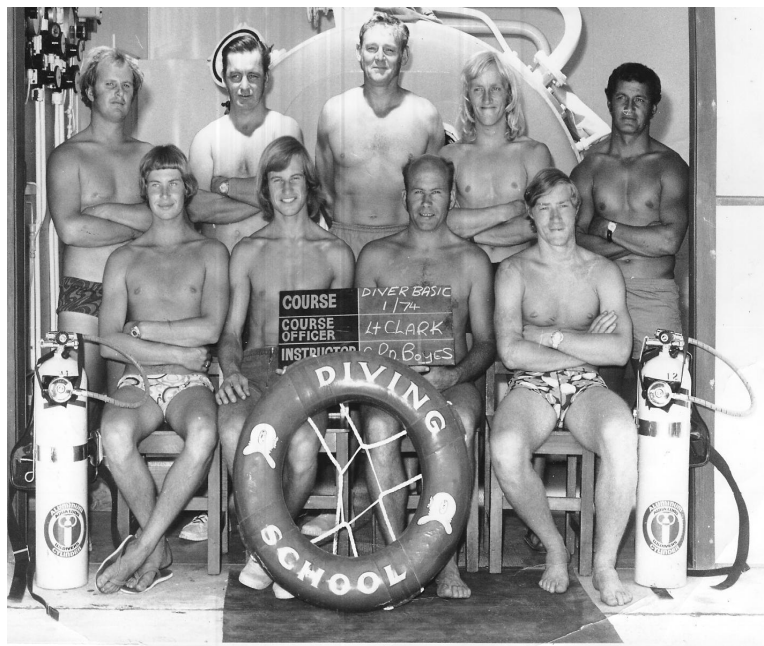
## 2 Engineer Regiment Dive Team



When most people think of underwater operations, including demolitions, the first thought may be that those tasks would be exclusive to the Navy. However that is not the case as demonstrated by Linton's 2 Engineer Regiment Dive Team during Exercise NEPTUNE FURY 2010. The exercise was conducted in two parts, beginning with underwater demolitions in Lake Moawhanga, Waiouru, followed by a basic CABA (Compressed Air Breathing Apparatus) phase conducted in Wellington Harbour. Despite high winds hindering the boat operators on Lake Maowhanga, the demolitions phase was conducted successfully. The targets for the exercise were timber piles, which were effectively attacked using both cutting and borehole charges. The focus for the demolitions practice was to refine the capability of the divers to conduct underwater demolitions using electronic initiation and remote firing systems. The team found that electronic initiation offered greater flexibility and control when conducting underwater demolitions. Wellington Harbour provided an ideal training ground for the dive team to practise basic engineer dive skills using CABA. Tasks included conducting various underwater search techniques, recovery operations using lift bags, basic underwater tools, and underwater navigation by night. The Wellington Harbour Authority kindly provided specific tasks around the harbour which included recovering disused mooring blocks in Evans Bay and locating fallen logs off Aotea Wharf. Overall the exercise was a success and provided the Dive Team with a clear indication of its current capability as well as how its future training should progress, especially relating to underwater demolitions.

The photos below are from the exercise Wellington Harbour

And two old RNZN Dive School photos from back in the 1970s when it all began for the RNZE Dive Team







Some of our engineers are working with soldiers from the Vanuatu Mobile Force to build two staff houses and an aid post for Vanuatu's Ministry of Health.



## The repatriation of New Zealand Servicemen 2018

I have been truly humbled. Today as Minister for Veterans I attended the ramp ceremony for the first repatriation for our returning fallen.

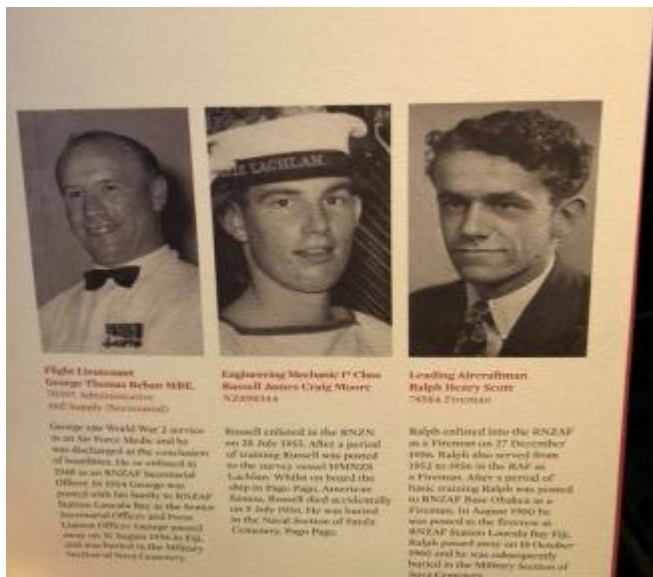
The repatriations are righting the inequity which happened between 1955 and 1971 when some families paid to bring their loved ones home, and those that could not afford to, had their loved ones buried overseas.

Today we brought home from Fiji, Flight LT George Beban and LAC Ralph Scott and from American Samoa, Engineering Mechanic First Class Russell Moore.

Thank you to those who looked after your graves while you were overseas, and everyone who worked to bring you home.

I'm elated that you are now with your families after all these years. May you Rest In Peace in Aotearoa.

**Lest we forget.**





## RNZE Sappers Q Store Is Operating Again

The Corps shop operating again, we have also bought in a few new trial items as well. If you are Linton based, have a look at the Regt HQ, otherwise orders can be placed by emailing [1.bde.2.engr.reg.t.s1@nzdf.mil.nz](mailto:1.bde.2.engr.reg.t.s1@nzdf.mil.nz)

### Current UPF Stock as at 25 January 2018

<b>2ER Lapel Pin</b>  <b>Price \$5.00 Each</b> <b>Stock Left 15</b>	<b>2ER Tie Clip</b>  <b>Price \$10.00 Each</b> <b>Stock Left 32</b>	<b>RNZE Lapel Pin</b>  <b>Price \$5.00 Each</b> <b>Stock Left 1</b>	<b>Cufflink Suite</b>  <b>Price \$25.00 Each</b> <b>Stock Left 32</b>	<b>Poker Chip</b>  <b>Sale Price \$3.00 Each</b> <b>Stock Left 260</b>
<b>RNZE Shaker</b>  <b>Price \$11.00 Each</b> <b>Stock Left 6</b>	<b>RNZE Stubby Holder</b>  <b>Price \$8.00 Each</b> <b>Stock Left 49</b>	<b>RNZE Bottle Buddy</b>  <b>Price \$6.00 Each</b> <b>Stock Left 10</b>	<b>RNZE Snack Cup</b>  <b>Price \$10.00 Each</b> <b>Stock Left 9</b>	<b>RNZE Bottle Opener</b>  <b>Price \$8.00 Each</b> <b>Stock Left 8</b>
<b>RNZE Luggage Tag</b>  <b>Price \$11.00 Each</b> <b>Stock Left 6</b>	<b>RNZE Tote Bag</b>  <b>Price \$5.00 Each</b> <b>Stock Left 10</b>	<b>2ER Cap (Blue)</b>  <b>Sale Price \$5.00 Each</b> <b>Stock Left 1</b>	<b>RNZE Tie</b>  <b>Price \$25.00 Each</b> <b>Stock Left 12</b>	<b>RNZE Sticker</b>  <b>Sale Price 50c Each</b> <b>Stock Left 364</b>
<b>Arabica Coffee Mug (Red)(Blue)</b>  <b>Sale Price \$7.00 Each</b> <b>Stock Left (6 Red)(5 Blue)</b>	<b>Café Thermal Mug (Red)(Blue)</b>  <b>Price \$10.00 Each</b> <b>Stock Left (1 Red)(1 Blue)</b>	<b>Chameleon Cup (Changes colour when hot)</b>  <b>Sale Price \$7.00 Each</b> <b>Stock Left 5</b>		



## RNZE Charitable Trust—Corps History Project

The RNZE Charitable Trust would like to recognise and thanks the donors who are supporting the RNZE Corps History Project and book .

The residual of these funds also go towards the management and upkeep of the ECMC at Linton Camp. Please provide recognition accordingly for the following organisations and personnel (initially in order of contribution):

Lottery Grants Board Community Trust	George Bunce Memorial Fund Sappers Association (NZ) Inc	RNZE Charitable Trust National Army Museum Literary Fund	Eastern and Central
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Mainland Foundation (Palmerston North)	Pub Charity	NZDF/Army	Infinity Foundation	Nepia Family
<u>(Total contributed to date = \$207, 173)</u>				

Ex-6 Fd Sqn personnel (including Christine Tracey & Ron Mark, Helen McKenzie & Warwick Potts, David Parry, Kevin Shoebridge and Ian Butler – total = \$840)

Auckland Sappers Officers' Mess (regular annual contributions via John Fitzmaurice of Auckland, averaging \$300 to \$500 each year)

Plus our regular fortnightly/monthly donors (as at June 2018) – Brendon McDonald, JM Fletcher, Mark Wing, Rob Giller, Reuben James, Carl Fairbairn, Paul Hayward, SW Forsyth, Mike Nochete, Paul King,

John Flintoft, Mike Oliver, Bryce Scholtens, Rod Masters, Awanui Melbourne, Lewis Wynne, Stu Telford, Lyall Mooney, Terry McDonald, Garth Boyd, Don Jones , Joe Hollander (averaging \$300+ monthly).

This project has been a 37-year journey both into the known and unknown, but those involved in the project have seen its immense value, both from a military engineering perspective, as well as a history of the development and building of New Zealand since the 1500s. It is therefore important that this is recorded and presented for the benefit of the people of New Zealand and as a record of worth for the future.

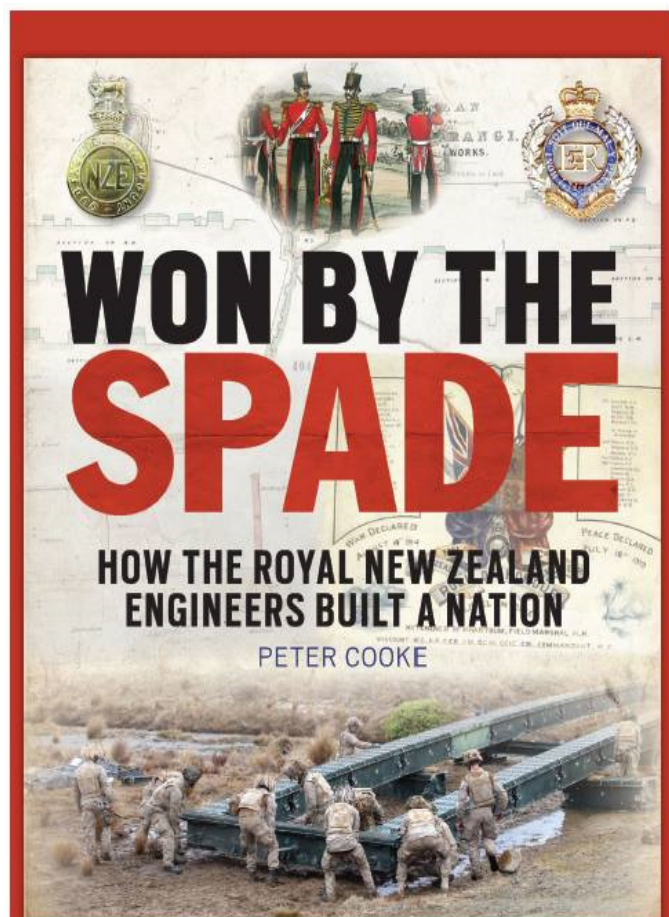
Project Manager and Chair, RNZE CT – Joe Hollander

# RNZE Corps History Project Progress Report:

## Updated Project Progress Summary:

The draft manuscript has been copy-edited by Brian O'Flaherty, who is now the publishing editor and Exisle's project manager for the publication. Peter Cooke has completed checking the edit-copy and providing further information requested from the editor. Brian has expressed his satisfaction for the draft and complimented Peter on the depth of research for the history, as well as the general flow and presentation of the manuscript. Imagery selection (by us) has been completed with 350 photos provided, plus captions completed and Exisle now has to finalise which images are going to be used. We have 64 pages (4 x sections of 16) of colour images provided for and all the rest will be B&W images, merged into respective pages and chapters of the book. This could realise more than 200 images throughout the book. At this stage, the page count is a total of 514, against a contract target of 512.

The Corps has still to purchase 350 copies (we have already had requests for around 120 copies from retired-Corps members) at a reduced price and a further 650 copies will be released world-wide in early 2019 by Exisle. A draft cover design layout is being considered, along with the internal design for the book. These are being circulated to the Corps History Advisory Group for consideration, but must be finalised by mid-May 18. It is still intended to commence pre-publication sales of the book in Jun 18, closing in late Sep 18. The special sale price (\$50 incl GST, plus P&P) will be available to all serving and retired members of the Corps, through Exisle. Exisle's pre-publication sale price will be \$60. The RRP is still \$69.99 (incl GST, plus P&P). We should also look at getting the author to sign the 350 copies for Corps purchase, prior to circulation. The process for pre-publication sales and identification of Corps' members requires further consideration and it is hoped that ordering through Exisle direct will be possible;



*Won by the Spade* is the definitive history of the Corps of Royal New Zealand Engineers, providing a comprehensive account of the Corps' actions, events and personnel from the New Zealand Wars of the nineteenth century to the present. It examines military engineering in New Zealand, including that of Māori and their influence on the Corps, the role of the Corps in overseas wars and home defences, and provides a contemporary record of New Zealand's contribution to military engineering, including demining operations, peacekeeping and civil aid missions. Key themes are those of military innovation and the Engineers' contribution to national infrastructure and professional development.

### Contents

- 1 1500-1800s: Māori Military Engineering
- 2 1840s-1870s: Royal Engineers in New Zealand
- 3 1870s-1900s: Rise of the New Zealand Engineer
- 4 First World War-1930s: Territorial Engineers and the Great War Sapper
- 5 Second World War: Mobilized Works in New Zealand and Pacific Defence
- 6 Second World War: Combat Engineering
- 7 1950s-1980s: Desert to Jungle
- 8 1900s-1980s: Inward Looking
- 9 1990s-2000s: Peace and Terror
- 10 2010s: Ubiquitous in Afghanistan and Iraq

### Conclusion Appendices:

1. Died in Service
2. Senior Appointments
3. Awards and Honours
4. NZ Engineer Units and Formations
5. New Zealanders in other Military Engineer Forces
6. The Corps of Royal New Zealand Engineers





Please send completed order form to:

RNZE CT (CHP), ECMC  
c/- DSS Registry  
Linton Military Camp, Palmerston North 4820, NEW ZEALAND  
OR [ecmc@inspire.net.nz](mailto:ecmc@inspire.net.nz)

I am a past or present member of RNZE :

Regimental Number: ..... Unit: ..... Rank: .....

Status (circle one):    Serving                      Retired                      RF                      TF

☐ units of *Won by the Spode* at \$50.00 (RRP \$69.99) incl GST    \$ .....

OR

(Non-member): ☐ units of *Won by the Spode* at \$60.00 (RRP \$69.99) incl GST    \$ .....

NZ Only Postage and Packaging    \$ ..... 9.00  
(Excluding serving RNZE and others in Palmerston North area)

TOTAL    \$ .....

All prices in NZD, incl GST. Pre-orders at the special price can only be made until 28 September 2018. Thereafter the normal retail price will apply. Postage rate applies to New Zealand only. For bulk orders or international postage, please email [ecmc@inspire.net.nz](mailto:ecmc@inspire.net.nz).

First Name: ..... Initials: ..... Surname: .....

Phone: ..... Email: .....

Delivery Address: .....

I wish to pay by:

☐ Internet Bank Transfer                      Order Date .....

Direct transfer to: 38-9811-8792649-00. Use 'RNZE CHP' as the Reference and your full name and initials as the Particulars.

☐ Cheque (enclosed)

Please note that a completed order form must be posted to the above address or emailed to [ecmc@inspire.net.nz](mailto:ecmc@inspire.net.nz) for every order regardless of the method of payment.



# Sappers Last Post

Our ranks grow thin but we  
will remember them

05/5/18	Colin Hargreaves	<u>Dunedin</u>
07/5/18	Ross Hargreaves	<u>Christchurch</u>
02/2/18	William Hall (Willie)	<u>Christchurch</u>
28/5/18	David Dorset (shorty)	<u>Picton</u>
29/5/18	Tim Wihapi	<u>Mohaka</u>
10/6/18	Vivian Hewson (Roy)	<u>Christchurch</u>



*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,  
We will remember them.*

This is the fourth stanza from Laurence Binyon's poem For the Fallen. Referred to as the Ode of Remembrance, it was first published in The Times of London in September 1914 and has been incorporated into the ritual of remembrance in many countries.



The RSA was formed in New Zealand in 1916 by returning Anzacs during World War One to provide support and comfort for service men and women and their families. The Royal New Zealand Returned and Services' Association is made up of over 180 local RSAs around the country, each an entity in their own right, with over 100,000 members. Local RSAs are managed by their own executive committee while being united with the RNZRSA in our strategic pillars, vision, and values. We believe in a nation joined by a heartfelt connection to the Anzac spirit of courage, commitment, comradeship and compassion.

**No Duff** provides first response support to assist veterans in crisis.

Veterans' Affairs partners with No Duff, which has been operating since the start of the year, to support veterans in critical need. No Duff and its team of service and ex-service volunteers, work with other welfare organization's to support veterans.

[Visit the No Duff website for more information.](#)  
(external link)



**The career of the military engineer SAPPER may not have the glamor of the fighter pilot or samurai warrior, but throughout the history of warfare, battlefields have been shaped by great feats of military engineering.**

Some feats of military engineering are about grand design, but others are about capability under fire. French sappers, trapped inside the airhead at Dien Bien Phu during the war for Indo-China, proved that they were soldiers as much as engineers. When the steel plate airstrip was broken by bombardment, they went out and welded it back together, in broad daylight and under enemy fire.

Napoleon's retreat from Moscow is usually associated with military failure of the most hubristic sort. But it was only through military engineering under pressure that any of the French forces escaped alive. Trapped against the River Berezina, and with Russian troops closing in, the Grand Army looked doomed. But it had brought a bridging column, with wagons full of engineering equipment, and this column built a pontoon bridge. Though they suffered terrible casualties from the two pursuing Russian armies, thanks to their engineers the French were able to escape across the river.

During the Vietnam War, the Viet Cong exhibited amazing resourcefulness, fighting and surviving against the technologically superior Americans. One reminder of VC ingenuity is the network of tunnels at Ben Duoc in the Cu Chi district, 60 kilometers (40 mi) northwest of Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon. This area was strategically important for its land and river routes, which were used by VC to infiltrate South Vietnam. In consequence, Cu Chi became the most bombed, shelled, gassed, and defoliated region in the annals of war.

To survive this hurricane of ordnance, the VC dug a network of interconnecting tunnels and bunkers over 200 kilometers (120 mi) in length, concentrated in a 40-square-meter (430 ft<sup>2</sup>) jungle stronghold called the Iron Triangle. The tunnels connected villages, hamlets, and support bases, allowing the guerrillas to move undetected. There was no master plan for these tunnels; they evolved as necessity dictated. Locals dug at the red clay with hoes and bare hands, eking out an underground city with living quarters, munitions factories, kitchens, hospitals, storage depots, and even a theater and movie halls. Some complexes had as many as four levels. Cleverly concealed ventilation holes provided air and some light.

The entire system was defended by secret trapdoors. Many GIs were blown apart by booby traps consisting of scavenged duds or impaled by *punji* stakes (sharpened bamboo). Spider holes concealed sharpshooters. Trip wires triggered grenades or overturned boxes of scorpions and snakes on the Americans' heads. The tunnels followed a zigzag pattern to defend against linear lines of fire and to deflect explosions. The red clay itself, malleable in the wet season but hard as concrete in dry weather, could withstand 40-pound cratering charges and hand grenades. In response to US carpet bombing, new cone-shaped shelters were excavated to resist deep-penetration artillery and bombs. Additionally, the unusual shape helped to amplify the sound of incoming B-52s, providing an early warning system.

Small-sized GIs, called "tunnel rats," were employed to penetrate the claustrophobic tunnels, and many died fighting the VC in close quarters. A search-and-destroy campaign in January 1967, dubbed Operation Cedar Falls, fell short of totally destroying the tunnels and VC Military Region IV Headquarters. In 1969, the US finally succeeded in wiping out most of the tunnels through incessant carpet bombing, but by then it was too late. The tunnels had already allowed massive infiltration of troops and supplies to the South. The Communists finally declared victory in 1975.



# APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP NZ SAPPERS ASSOCIATION



Qualification: Persons who have served, or are still serving, in any sapper unit of His/Her Majesty's Forces in war, or in peace, for any period.

*(Please print)*

Regimental No. .... Rank *(current or on discharge)*: .....

Surname: .....

First Name(s): .....

Nickname: *(optional)* .....

Address: .....

.....

Phone: ..... (Hm). ..... (Wk). Fax: .....

E-mail: .....

Next of Kin: ..... Relationship .....

Address (if different) .....

.....

Engineer Units served with: .....

.....

..... Year joined RE, RAE or RNZE .....

Honours and Awards *(optional)*: .....

.....

.....

Signature: ..... Date: .....

**Please forward a Life Membership Fee of \$60.00 which includes Life Membership Card and Lapel Badge.**

**If paying by Direct Credit: BNZ bank 02 0727 0629870-000. Particulars 'Membership' & Code 'Reg No'.**

**You may add a donation towards the "Serving Sappers Bursary Awards" if you wish.**

**Joining & Membership Fee: \$60.00**      Donation: \$ .....      Amount enclosed: \$ .....



## The last word for this Newsletter is mine

I hope you enjoyed the last newsletter but I'm still on the lookout for more articles and photos for future issues of the Newsletter.

***July-Nov-Feb-May.***

Many thanks for those of you that contributed to this issue of the RNZE Sapper Newsletter

If you know of any sapper or someone that should be receiving this Newsletter please send me the information via this email address so I can enter them on the mailing list

[rnzesapper@gmail.com](mailto:rnzesapper@gmail.com)

Don't forget you can follow us on Facebook @ Sappers of New Zealand

Also remember the Association Web site [www.sappers.org.nz](http://www.sappers.org.nz)

***Remember you will be able find a copy of the Newsletter on***

*Sappers of New Zealand*

*Sappers Mates*

*New Zealand Army Fire Service*

Facebook pages.



**Ubique**

"I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat... You ask, what is our policy? I say it is to wage war by land, sea, and air. War with all our might and with all the strength God has given us, and to wage war against a monstrous tyranny never surpassed in the dark and lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy. You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word. It is victory. Victory at all costs - Victory in spite of all terrors - Victory, however long and hard the road may be, for without victory there is no survival."

Winston Churchill

