**RNZE Charitable Trust (RNZE CT or “Trust”) Annual Report for 2019**

This is our eighth 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 2019 calendar year. Once again, we have had a very productive and positive year, focusing on our key objects and tasks. We have operated in accordance with our principle objective of “**Preserving RNZE Heritage**”, something we have continued to focus on since our formation in 2011.

Our main priority project during 2019 has again been the **RNZE Corps History project,** which has progressed well through to completion. The two book launches in Palmerston North (Mayoral Launch at the Globe Theatre - 11 April) and Parliament Buildings in Wellington (co-hosted by Ministers of Defence and Building and Construction - 6 May 19) were both very well attended and successful. Of the 1,000 books in the first print run, only a few (33) are left, plus a small (30) presentation stock holding at the ECMC (nil with Exisle Publishing). Feedback on the book content has been very positive from all quarters, both within NZ and from overseas. After all related accounts had been settled, a project surplus of approximately $16,000 had been achieved. A final accountability report was accepted by Lottery Grants Board (DIA) and the project closed off. Once again, our grateful thanks to all who were involved with the active phases of the project since 2012

Work on the **website** ([www.nzsappers.org.,nz](http://www.nzsappers.org.,nz)) has continued and become an excellent repository for all information generated by the ECMC and RNZE CT. We continue to upload a range of heritage material, both older print material (military engineering and history books and manuals) and photographic items in a separate gallery on the website. Our external contractor (Amanda Curnow) is doing an excellent job keeping the site as up to date as possible, as well as adding further heritage material to the site. 2ER is working on a section for the website, which should become available during 2020.

Progress on **rebuilding and refurbishing the museum** **displays** continues at a slower pace, as we have had to focus on other tasks throughout the year. We continue to appreciate and value the voluntary contributions made by Mike Early and Noel Woodley of Palmerston North, who have joined Curator Clas Chamberlain and the writer for our regular Thursday public openings and work days. Further good progress has been made in the **scanning, digitising and post-processing** of our **photographic collection**, where over 5,o00 of our collection of 20,000+ photos, slides, negatives, plates, etc have been scanned and stored digitally. We have completed Stages 2 and now onto Stage 3 of the project to **scan and digitise** many (over 170 publications to date) of our older (early 1800’s to early 1900’s) **heritage archival material and books**, using an external contractor and funded by ECCT. Once post-processed, this material is being uploaded onto our new website, where it is available for public access and use for research purposes. With assistance from 2ER, we have commenced the project of sorting, cataloguing and refurbishing the collection of **model Bailey** **bridge holdings**, which has now been passed to the ECMC as heritage equipment items. **Additional Bailey panels** have been mounted on concrete plinths constructed adjacent to the entrance to the ECMC, along with two “decorative lazy ‘E’s or engineer symbols at the entranceway. **Heritage RNZE equipment** will be mounted on some of these structures as part of an external display. The **security system** in the ECMC has also been upgraded thanks to support from DE&I, plus the **computer system and local area network** have all received some improvements throughout the year.

We have had over **6,110** **visitors through the ECMC** since commencing record taking in late-2013, with 1,267 in 2018 (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, RNZE Section Commander and Senior 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**. Several 1 (NZ) Brigade-hosted visits from Probus and Rebus clubs from the lower North Island have also visited the ECMC as part of this regular programme. 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 key object of “**Preserving RNZE Heritage**”. Visit feedback is that the ECMC is also becoming known as “**the best hidden secret in the Manawatu**” or “**Jewel of the Manawatu**” and is proving most popular

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 (“TIC RNZE”) for RNZE activities and deployments. This all still forms a part of our **information, communications, research and** **technology** (or ICR&T)initiatives for the ECMC and will be pursued in the new year.

We are continuing with the challenging task of **cataloguing all the “assets of the Trust”**, now with over 15,700 items of the ECMC/RNZE CT “collection” (8,570+ screens) inventoried (out of an estimated 60,000 items, including some 4,900+ photographic items and with an estimated recorded total value of $449,000. Our **comprehensive insurance cover** is reviewed annually and was increased in value to $400,000 (plus Trustee liability indemnity insurance). We changed our insurance broker from Crombie Lockwood to Future Risk, to achieve better customer service and more viable options to reduce our ever-increasing annual policy premium costs.

Our **financial situation** remains in a stable position, as the annual financial report (shown on our website) indicates. We did not apply or receive any external funding during the year, whilst focusing on the Corps history project and living within the bounds of our own financial resources. The total excess expenditure over income was $13,843, leaving a balance in various accounts of $58,019, as at 31 December 2019. Our **regular contributors** have increased up to 32 over the year, adding to other donation income, showing **total donations** from all sources for the year amounting to $8,195.

We implemented **a Corps bursary scheme** (for a 12-month trial), aimed at providing limited funds to support serving Corps’ members for hardship assistance, extra professional development (not covered by NZDF), adventure training/representation, pursuance of individual or team sports activities and representation and the like. There were five recipients during the year for a range of grants, totalling $1,750, out of a maximum fund limit of $2,500. Review of the scheme uptake and process will be undertaken in early 2020, to determine success, continuance or otherwise, but as the scheme has been successful and well received, it is likely to continue into the future.

The **monthly midday military history presentation (MMMHP) series** run in conjunction with the Palmerston North City Library, continue to be well attended and successful. Presentation topics are varied and topical and we try to link these across all services and to anniversaries of military heritage events and activities in the calendar. The 2020 programme is full and Speakers continue to volunteer and we are already compiling a list for 2021. This proves to be a good source of donation revenue for the RNZE CT. Audio recordings of all presentations are being made and uploaded to the website, for future access and reference purposes. We continue to be involved with the **evening public lecture** **presentation** **(EPLP)** programme, in concert with PNCC, Massey University and others to focus on major military history events, several times a year.

The **Trust Board** continues to hold quarterly meetings throughout the year, performing the requirements of our objects in accordance with the Trust Deed. All relevant **compliance requirements have been met** and reports have been prepared, approved and submitted to Charities Services and are all available on their and the RNZE CT websites. We have appreciated the excellent service provided by Treasurer and trustee, Greg Findon, as well as the Secretary, Lt Finn Cotterill-Walker, latterly of the SME. My sincere thanks go to all trustees including outgoing Lt Col Terry McDonald (CO, 2ER) and WO1 Greg Hinch (RSM, 2ER), their replacements **Lt Col Ian Brandon and WO1 Brendon MacDonald**, Clas Chamberlain, Greg Findon, Cliff Parker and Lt Col Paul Hayward (based in Wellington), for their assistance and support throughout the year. As the Trust has now been operating for more than eight years, we have **reviewed our composition, role, goals and purpose**, particularly looking at the sustainability and operation of the ECMC, a legacy provision, as well as succession planning. An amendment to the Trust Deed will be considered in early 2020, to meet these review requirements, as agreed by the Trust Board. The previous CO and RSM, 2ER stood down in the middle of the year upon posting and were replaced by the incoming CO and RSM (named above), plus a further change with **WO1 Tom Kerekere** (SSM, SME(NZ) taking over from the RSM, as well as **Sgt Rachel Boyce** (2ER HQ) replacing Paul Hayward as new trustees. Our new replacement Secretary, **2Lt Mike Johnston** (of SME(NZ) has also taken over from Lt Finn Cotterill-Walker in late 2019.

Over 110 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 initiated by a previous RSM, 2ER in mid-2014 and managed by the SSMs of each of the units of 2ER 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 management and 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 and preparation for other trade-training-based tasks to be undertaken in 2019. 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. Likewise, we have had excellent **support and assistance from** 2ER, in particular from the CO, XO, Adjt, and RSM, as well as unit commanders, SSMs 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, DEI Group 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 your ongoing assistance. Our wish is that more 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 in the future.

Finally, and to foreshadow our planned activities, objectives and focal points for 2019, here are our **aspirations for the coming year**. It will come as no surprise that these objectives, in no particular order, are much the same as for previous years as we continue to operate in accordance with the objects of our Trust Deed, and includes:

1. Keep the ECMC open to the public every Thursday and operating satisfactorily, and with more support, to be open on more days during the week;
2. Continue to rebuild, refurbish and refresh the ECMC museum displays;
3. Explore other means and modes to display RNZE activities, functions and heritage about the ECMC;
4. Continue to maintain and expand the new RNZE CT website;
5. Introduce an electronic system to support asset inventory and library collection work;
6. Continue to scan, digitise, post-process, store and upload (to website) heritage material for future public access and safekeeping;
7. Explore and introduce interactive electronic displays within the ECMC museum area; 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 2019