



RNZE Corps Trust Board

Corresponding Member's Report: February 2022

Greetings from a somewhat grey and dreary United Kingdom winter! The past couple of months have been a whirlwind of moving administration and handover, all in the midst of the Omicron wave. We've managed to navigate the various twists and turns successfully, and are now postured for what hopefully will be an enriching few years.

My initial impression is that it is a challenging time for the British Army, as it faces some significant organisational restructure as a result of the UK Government's Integrated Review. The Army's own strategy, Future Soldier, lays out how it will transform and modernise as a result. It will include some profound structural changes, to both the Field Army and the Army Headquarters.

This will all, in turn, have significant impacts on the Royal Engineers. Close support engineers will continue to support both 1st Division (light, agile, expeditionary) and 3rd Division (heavy, armoured) but with some Regiments re-structuring and moving locations in coming years. 8th Engineer Brigade within 1st Division will retain command of most engineer units within the Field Army, outside of the close support functions. Overall, the British Army will be seeking to achieve a broader range of effects, but with less personnel and additional niche capabilities such as Security Force Assistance, Ranger Regiments and increased investment in Cyber and Space. Prioritisation of effort will be difficult.

The UK Integrated Review also detailed a strategic tilt towards the Indo-Pacific, most recently illustrated by the deployment of their Carrier Strike Group into the region. The British Army will be looking for opportunities in our region to 'operationalise' this strategic tilt.

My focus over the next few months will be continuing to build contacts and relationships to support my Attaché functions, and this will include key personnel within the Royal Engineers. I am hoping to meet with the Commander of 8th Engineer Brigade, and also visit the Land Warfare Centre (which is the home of the RE Schools) before the middle of the year. I will be sure to look for opportunities to re-kindle our relationship with the Royal Engineers, and will be feeding these back to 2nd Engineer Regiment as they emerge.

I'll sign off for now by wishing you all the very best for the months to come. It feels like the UK is coming out of the pandemic now, and I hope New Zealand finds itself in a similar situation once the inevitable wave of Omicron has passed through.

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