



RNZE Corps Trust Board

Corresponding Member's Report: August 2023

So much has happened since I last wrote to you all in February 2022. The Russian invasion of Ukraine which occurred soon after my letter, and supporting the UK response, has consumed a large amount of our bandwidth for the past 18 months. We can be extremely proud of the NZDF's ongoing contribution. As I write these words, our latest NZ training team is commencing their first course with Ukrainian recruits – working alongside 4th Battalion, Duke of Lancaster Regiment on the Salisbury Plain. It's been great to see some Sappers as part of the teams coming up – feedback from the battlefield has attested to the fact that inclusion of their specialist engineer knowledge in the training programme has supported the enhanced survivability of the Ukrainian forces.

Additionally, since I last wrote the UK has celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, mourned the passing of Her Majesty and marked the Coronation of King Charles III. It has been a momentous period in history, and a privilege to be present to observe and participate in it – I'm sure the Sappers who came up as part of the various NZDF representative contingents would agree.

On the RNZE front, it was great having LCPL McGaw deployed here on Ex LONGLOOK with 21 Engineer Regiment. Sadly, I wasn't able to visit him in North Yorkshire. From all accounts however, he was looked after very well and had some great experiences. Hopefully we can continue to foster this link with 21 Engineer Regiment, in spite of the tyranny of distance.

The Royal Engineers have a new Chief RE – Lieutenant General Sir Chris Tickell KBE, and a new Corps Colonel – Colonel Dickie Hawkins MBE ADC. I will be hosting them both for lunch in London on 4th October, and will be presenting a copy of *Won by the Spade* to them on behalf of the Colonel Commandant. Some of you may be aware that earlier this year the King agreed to become the new Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Engineers. We remain hopeful that this will be extended to include RNZE in due course. The process through which these Royal appointments are made is opaque and time-consuming, to say the least.

I hope that the Trust has been able to continue its good work against the backdrop of continued challenges being faced back in New Zealand at the moment. I look forward to staying in touch and as always will keep my eyes open for suitable Sapper opportunities in my neck of the woods.

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