

## February Newsletter 2023 No 37

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

He mihi ana ki a koutou katoa - Greetings to you all.

Watching and reading the national and international news over the past few weeks with; the atrocities continuing to occur in the Ukraine, the heartbreak on the faces of folk impacted by the flooding in Auckland, Northland, the Coromandel and Te Kuiti, mass shootings that seem to be occurring on an almost daily basis in the United States, and the recent devastation and the incredible loss of life caused by earthquakes in Turkey and Syria, we really do have to be grateful for the relative peace and serenity we experience here in Taranaki.

That's not to say that everything is all hearts and roses for everyone in this part of the world, but the images surrounding those events definitely forces one to put our personal problems and issues into perspective.

It is pleasing to see our Pack Howitzer back in its rightful place next to the statue on the foreshore following its recent renovation, and we all owe a huge vote of thanks to the team involved in getting the gun back into a presentable state. We now just need to hope we can get the upgrade done on the New Plymouth cenotaph in time for ANZAC Day.

On the topic of ANZAC Day, and the associated Poppy Appeal Day on 21 April 2023, we need as many of our members as possible to be prepared to assist in taking up positions to collect donations from the public on Poppy Day - or to arrange friends, family members, or associates to assist with the collection.

It is the one time in the year where we get to top up our Poppy Trust coffers in order for us to be able to assist veterans and their families, not only within our branch membership but for veterans all across the country.

Vicki has already done a fair amount of preparatory work for both Poppy Day and for ANZAC Day but there is still a lot more to be done, so watch this space as we may need to put out a call for your assistance.

Our first RSA/Vets Day of the year had a much smaller crowd than normal in attendance, due to a combination of cool, rainy weather, and a number of our membership feeling the effects of flu and COVID bugs. As you will see further in this newsletter those who did make it got to participate in the presentation of Robbie Galvin's life membership – therefore on behalf of the entire RSA community “Thank You Robbie” for your contributions and for your years of service to the New Plymouth RSA, and we hope to be able to see more of you in the future.

Ka mutu taku korero mo tenei wa – that's all I have for now!

Mā te wā – till next time

Graham Chard

President

New Plymouth & Districts' Returned and Services' Association Inc



**POPPY DAY 2023  
COLLECTORS NEEDED FOR  
FRIDAY 21<sup>st</sup> APRIL**

**CONTACT the  
NPRSA OFFICE  
if you are able to assist**

Please call the Office if you are able to help as a  
**Collector Shifts: 9.00am -12.00pm OR 12.00pm - 3.30pm**

If you are able to assist with a plate of food to feed the cadets and collectors, this would be greatly appreciated, as we are lacking in this area.

## RSA WOMEN'S SECTION

### RESTARTING FEBRUARY

Venue yet to be decided

For more details phone  
Helen: 758 8979  
0274618577



### MERCHANT NAVY

All enquiries  
Please call Hamu Kinera  
06 7573663  
Mobile 027 2000 810



LAST POST FOR  
OUR MEMBERS

**Bob Jagger** Gunner. 161  
Battalion 16<sup>th</sup> Fld K Force

**Matua Hamilton T18279**  
RNZASC 1RNZIR L/Corporal  
South East Asia

**William (Bill) Chase**

**Roy Netherway** 599972, NZTU

**Marie McLean**

*We Will Remember Them*



### FUTURE MEETINGS

**NPRSA EXECUTIVE**  
20<sup>th</sup> March 13.00pm

**NPRSA SUPPORT TRUST**  
20<sup>th</sup> March 1300pm

**POPPY TRUST**  
20<sup>th</sup> March 1300pm

## MEMBERS BIRTHDAYS



### FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Vicki Bayly, Christopher Bond, Colin Cochran (104 years), Glenn Corbett, George Doeg, Rod Ehrhorn, Delanie Halton, Rayner Hodder, Bruce Hoskins, Lyle Johnson, Colin Kemp, Vi Kennedy, John Kinnell, Marian Kurth, Alastair R Lawson, John McKernan, Don Morton, Martin Nield, Mark Rhodes, Gilbert Sorensen, Trevor Wylde.

### MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Kevin Blundell, Gary Burn, Brian Dunn, Robbie Galvin, Helen Holswich, Peter Johns, Peter Kendrick, Caleb Knuckey, Warren Koia, David Lawrence, Merv Martin, George Markie, Lynne Phillips, Jim Stinson, Brian Spedding, Sylvia Way, Brian Zimmerman.

**Many happy returns to you all!**



### CLUB NIGHTS

**Friday Nights**

**4.30pm onwards.**

Raffles run by RSA  
NP Club Members Draw  
after 6.00pm

Ode Recital at 5.55pm.

*Please note we have several  
members that dine regularly on  
Friday Nights in the Restaurant.*



### Next RSA DAY

**6<sup>th</sup> March  
2023**

**NP Club Auditorium**

**Tony Kivell** Ph 755 2813  
1.30pm - 4.00pm

## NPRSA POPPY TRUST & SUPPORT TRUST



Funds from both Trusts are available for distribution to Returned & Service persons and their dependents, who require financial assistance with costs relating to health issues and independent living. To make an application please contact the Office where the necessary forms are available

## ALL SERVICES LUNCHEON

**2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the Month  
at the NP Club**

**NEXT**

**14<sup>th</sup> February, 2023**

**14<sup>th</sup> March, 2023**

**(COVID Dependent)**

Meet 11.30am – Lunch 12.00  
noon

**Contact Trevor or Cherry  
Ph 7515595**

## RNZ NAVAL ASSOCIATION

Taranaki Branch



**Next Meeting**

**3rd Tuesday of the month  
at NP Club**

**Meeting Room, Level 1  
21<sup>st</sup> February, 2023  
21<sup>st</sup> March, 2023**

**Contacts**

President: Graeme Marris  
Ph: 755 2258  
Vice President: Rod Ehrhorn  
Ph: 753 2338



**LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARD  
RSA DAY 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2023  
ROBBIE GALVIN**



Pictured: Graham Chard & Robbie Galvin



Pictured: Helen Holswich (NPRSA Vice President, Robbie Galvin & Graham Chard NPRSA President



Pictured: Helen & Robbie

  
**TEMPORARY  
WARTIME GOLF RULES**

1. Players are asked to collect Bomb and Shrapnel splinters to save these causing damage to the Mowing Machines.
2. In Competitions, during gunfire or while bombs are falling, players may take cover without penalty for ceasing play.
3. The positions of known delayed action bombs are marked by red flags at a reasonably, but not guaranteed, safe distance therefrom.
4. Shrapnel and/or bomb splinters on the Fairway, or in Bunkers within a club's length of a ball, may be moved without penalty, and no penalty shall be incurred if a ball is thereby caused to move accidentally.
5. A ball moved by enemy action may be replaced, or if lost or destroyed, a ball may be dropped not nearer the hole without penalty.
6. A ball lying in a crater may be lifted and dropped not nearer the hole, preserving the line to the hole, without penalty.
7. A player whose stroke is affected by the simultaneous explosion of a bomb may play another ball from the same place. Penalty one stroke.

**RICHMOND GOLF CLUB  
SURREY, ENGLAND  
1940**



# THE RETURN OF THE HOWITZER

In February 2022 Graham Chard, Rod Ehrhorn & Ron Prichard started looking at quotes for the restoration of the Howitzer Gun sited across the road from the New Plymouth Cenotaph. It had been noted that there were signs of corrosion, so it was recommended that the gun be stripped, cleaned, sandblasted and recoated with coatings appropriate for the salt air environment. Due to the costs involved for the gun to be restored to its original condition, it was more practicable to restore it to its best possible condition. Due to the original restoration quotes increasing from \$25,000 to \$40,000 the NPDC declined to assist with the restoration costs. Graham was advised that there were a group of gunners associated with the NZ Artillery Association who operate under the Op Ubique programme and is a RNZAA welfare initiative for ex-service personnel. They provide voluntary labour with only consumable costs to pay. In September the Howitzer gun was uplifted and taken to Porirua. The NPDC Parks Board, being the custodian of the gun, paid for the transportation costs to and from Wellington. It was estimated the costs for consumables would be under \$5000 and in fact the completed job cost \$2500.00. The NPRSA extends its appreciation to all those involved in this project, especially the volunteers



The NPRSA would like to acknowledge the work The Royal NZ Artillery Association and its sub group, Op Ubique (a RNZAA welfare initiative for ex- service personnel, some ex Vietnam vets that served on these guns), for the refurbishment of the L5 Howitzer on the NP foreshore

## ROYAL NEW ZEALAND ARTILLERY (RNZA)



**Gunners of 161 Battery RNZA conduct a fire mission during Operation Coburg, 1968**

On 27 May 1965 Holyoake announced the government's decision to send 161 Battery, Royal New Zealand Artillery to South Vietnam in a combat role. The New Zealand Army Detachment (NEWZAD) engineers were replaced by the Battery in July 1965, which consisted of nine officers and 101 other ranks and four 105 mm L5 pack howitzers (later increased to six, and in 1967 replaced with 105 mm M2A2 Howitzers).

Being part of the ANZUS pact Australia and New Zealand were asked to contribute military forces too. Up until this time the Australians had committed an Army training team and New Zealand had committed some non-combatant engineers. In response to the United States' request, the Australian government committed an infantry battalion and New Zealand committed an artillery battery. 161 Field Battery, RNZA arrived in South Vietnam on 16 July 1965.

161 Battery was initially under command of the United States Army's 173rd Airborne Brigade which had newly arrived to South Vietnam and was based at Bien Hoa Air Base near Saigon along with 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (1AFT), the first of Australia's ground forces. The 161 battery began its first major operation on 14 September 1965. Sergeant Alastair John Sherwood Don and Bombardier Robert White of 161 Battery were the first New Zealand casualties of the Vietnam War when the front of their vehicle was blown up by a Vietcong command detonated mine during the initial road convoy on *Operation Ben Cat*.

In their first year, under U.S command the battery took part in:

- Battle of Gang Toi during Operation Hump,
- Operation New Life (15 November – 16 December 1965)
- Operation Marauder (1–8 January 1966)
- Operation Crimp (8–16 January 1966)
- Operation Entrée in general support of 1/503 US Infantry's operations,
- Battle of Suoi Bong Trang during Operation Rolling Stone in support of 1RAR,
- Operation Abilene in support of 1st US Infantry Division,
- Operation Denver as part of "Force Essex", and
- Operation Enoggera in support of newly arrived 6RAR.

In June 1966 the Australian forces were detached from the 173rd and given their own tactical area of responsibility (TAOR) and tasked with establishing a base at Nui Dat ("Dirt Hill"), in Phuoc Tuy Province thus becoming the 1st Australian Task Force (1ATF). In June 1966, the New Zealand government was given the choice of allowing the New Zealand battery to remain at Bien Hoa with the 173rd under U.S command or integrate with the new Australian task force. It was decided the battery would join 1ATF and serve with Royal Australian Artillery field regiments.



**New Zealand gunners loading an L5 Howitzer into an armed personnel carrier.**



**Gun firing crew on L5 pack Howitzer**



Forward Observers for the battery would patrol with all infantry companies of the Australian and New Zealand infantry while on operations, as they did with American infantry during their time under the 173rd, to direct artillery support when called upon.

In 1967, the first company of New Zealand infantry arrived, followed by a second company in December 1967. The two infantry companies eventually amalgamated with one of the three 1ATF battalions in March 1968 to form the "ANZAC Battalion." This practice continued with each New Zealand infantry company rotating with or within 6 months of a new rotation of Australian infantry, designated "ANZAC Battalion" each time. When the New Zealand battery was called upon to support 1ATF infantry operations, Forward Observers from the battery would accompany the Australian, New Zealand, or U.S infantry units on operations to direct fire when needed.

The gunners were noted for their key role in assisting the 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, during the Battle of Long Tan on 18 August 1966. The battery also played important roles during the Tet Offensive and the Battle of Coral–Balmoral in 1968. The Battery left Vietnam in May 1971 after providing virtually continuous fire support usually in support of Australian and New Zealand infantry units for six years, with over 750 men having served with the Battery with a loss of five casualties during the period of its deployment and twenty two wounded.

The battery was involved in 17 major operations during their time in Vietnam. It was the longest serving Allied unit in South Vietnam after the 173rd Airborne Brigade, having been continuously deployed for six years, ten months and 21 days

Over the seven years New Zealand was at war, about 3000 Kiwis spent time in Vietnam; in surgical teams, as engineers, or as part of combat forces. In what some consider a bid to help play down our contribution, the government was careful not to have too many troops serving at any one time, with a maximum of about 548 soldiers at the peak of our involvement.

The effort in Vietnam cost the lives of 37 Kiwi servicemen, a nurse and a Red Cross member. As troops withdrew from the conflict in the early 70s, soldiers came home to widespread anti-war sentiment and a reception that was perceived by many as cold and indifferent.

For those who served in Vietnam, the war left a searing legacy. New Zealand Vietnam veterans, like their Australian and American counterparts, had to adjust to various consequences of fighting in an unpopular war. There has been much resentment within their ranks at perceived official and public indifference to the physical and psychological problems experienced by so many veterans due to exposure to Agent Orange and post-traumatic stress disorder. Another source of bitterness has been the sense that, unlike Second World War veterans, they did not receive adequate recognition for their professional service in a demanding theatre of operations.

In recent years, there has been greater official sensitivity to these concerns. Parade 1998, a national reunion in Wellington in June 1998, received government assistance. In 2006, the New Zealand government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Vietnam veterans and their families. The MoU included a trust to support veterans' children, a national reunion and official 'welcome home' parade named Tribute 08, and a formal apology for successive governments' failure to address veterans' concerns. The agreement also included an oral history project and the creation of a digital archive ([www.vietnamwar.govt.nz](http://www.vietnamwar.govt.nz)) for Vietnam veterans and their families. Oral historians recorded more than 150 interviews between 2008 and 2012, and the digital archive continues to collect memories and memorabilia related to New Zealand's Vietnam War.

The plight of the Vietnam veterans was addressed by Helen Clark in 2008, when she offered an apology to the soldiers and gave her support to those suffering from ongoing health issues as a result of exposure to the toxic defoliant, Agent Orange.

Decades after the deadly conflict in Vietnam, New Zealand's most unpopular war of the 20th century is still not widely spoken about. Although there are no small-town war memorials or remembrance days, the defeat in the Southeast Asian jungle helped our country to re-define its place in the world. The Vietnam legacy lives on in the form of a proudly independent New Zealand