



# RNZCT ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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Email (acting) Editor: andy-stewart1@xtra.co.nz

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**Newsletter of The Royal New Zealand Corps of Transport Association Incorporated**

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## **Presidents Ramblings**

Welcome to this edition of the Association Newsletter, thanks again, in no small way to Howard Weddell. Don't forget if anyone feels they have a story to tell regarding postings or work within the Army which may make interesting reading in our newsletter, please feel free to contact Howard. He is constantly seeking fresh stories we can use in future newsletters.

Membership. We are trying to ensure that all those who have served are made aware of the Association, the benefits, and the opportunities for the comradeship of us all.

If you know any ex-members of our Corps, or past and present members of the RNZALR, please let them know of the Association and encourage them to join. Bring them in. We would love to see them at the Tauranga reunion May 2023.

In the last couple of Months we have received applications for membership from a number of ex-Corps Members as a result of great work by existing members spreading the word and encouraging our mates to join the Association.

Our Secretary Gos has done some outstanding work tracking down and contacting members who have become unfinancial members in recent years. This has increased the number of full financial members. Our aim is to remind members of the yearly subscription and get as many as possible up to date with membership fees.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES**

### **Membership Fees**

Once again it is time for the annual subscription fees which are due by 1 April 2022. You can pay subscriptions by direct credit to the RNZCT Association Inc account which is:

**ANZ Bank 06-0501-064-3047-00.** Please ensure **your name is shown** on the payment.

You will be advised of your receipt number once the payment has been deposited with the bank.

**Please note** that if you are behind with your subscription, **we are not asking members to pay any arrears**, just the current due subscription which will make members financial for the 2022/23 year.

**AGM Voting.** As a point of interest for those who are attending the Tauranga reunion, only those members who are current financial members of the association can vote at the AGM.

### **Membership Register Record**

The Secretary is in the process of updating our membership records and it will be of great assistance to him to have as many members currently financial to ensure the records are as accurate as possible.

It is my aim for the 2023/24 financial year that all financial members will be sent a reminder by email when subscriptions are due.

I'm not trying to be negative but in accordance with the RNZCT Association Constitution (paragraph 9.4) any member whose subscription is over 12 months in arrears shall have their name removed from the register of membership. We certainly don't want this to happen.

If you have any questions, please contact the Secretary by email at [gosannesmagic@xtra.co.nz](mailto:gosannesmagic@xtra.co.nz) or his mobile 027-6248808.

Gos will be away in Australia for his daughter's wedding from the 11<sup>th</sup> of April to the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 2022. Please direct any enquiries to Andy at [andy-stewart1@xtra.co.nz](mailto:andy-stewart1@xtra.co.nz) or phone 027 4443 712 during this time.

## RNZCT Association Scholarship Programme.



The Association is delighted to advise that the Committee selected our first recipient of the RNZCT Association Scholarship. Hannah Capri Douglas was nominated by her Grandfather Max Gower for the award. Your committee unanimously agreed that Hannah was a great nomination and awarded the \$2000.00 to her accordingly. Hannah is full time student at Massey University at Palmerston North. She commenced her study this year towards a Bachelor of Science, specialising in Zoology Major and Ecology and Conservation Minor. This is expected to take her three years. This grant will assist Hannah to purchase textbooks, specialist graphic software, course related costs, stationary etc. Congratulations Hannah, and thanks for the nomination Max.

## LAST POST

Now for the sad part, acknowledging our comrades who have passed on:

WO1 (Retired) Frank (Frankie) Toeke      Passed away 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022

WO1 (Retired) Harry (Father) Haitana      Passed away 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022

“Rest In Peace Gentlemen”

***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,  
We Will Remember Them.***

## **Nil Sine Labore**

## OBITUARIES

At present the association only notifies obituaries in our newsletter for those who are members of the association.

We feel it would be fitting to notify all those ex RNZASC / RNZCT and RNZALR who have served and passed away.

In the future we ask that if you know of any Corps personnel who pass away, please notify the secretary Graham Gosnell (Gos) by email, so that they can be included in future newsletters. Graham's email is: [gosannesmagic@xtra.co.nz](mailto:gosannesmagic@xtra.co.nz)

## **RNZCT CORPS ASSOCIATION REUNION TAURANGA 12 – 14 MAY 2023**

Save the date, save your dollars, charge your hearing aids, service your zimmer frames and get ready for one hell of a time at our next reunion in Tauranga 12 – 14 May 2023. Planning is under way and progressing nicely, however costings are up in the air with being over 12 months away, so more on that as we approach registration time. Here's a bit of an overview to date.

### **Venue & Catering**

We are locked into a brilliant venue being the Mount Maunganui RSA, which is well organised, and has a spacious floor plan that caters for functions like ours. They are financially secure, well managed and are delighted to facilitate our requirements from start to finish. We can have a one stop shop with minimal disruptions to our social time.

Full restaurant and bar snack facilities are available for the Friday night at reasonable rates and their regular Friday night band will keep us entertained for those who want and are still capable of a boogie or sing along. If you want a quiet spot to reminisce or adjust your hearing aids, then that's available too. Check their restaurant facilities out here [https://www.tripadvisor.co.nz/Restaurant\\_Review-g1760740-d2459887-Reviews-Munro\\_s\\_Restaurant\\_Cafe\\_at\\_the\\_RSA-Mount\\_Maunganui\\_Tauranga\\_Bay\\_of\\_Plenty\\_Region.html](https://www.tripadvisor.co.nz/Restaurant_Review-g1760740-d2459887-Reviews-Munro_s_Restaurant_Cafe_at_the_RSA-Mount_Maunganui_Tauranga_Bay_of_Plenty_Region.html)

Breakfast Saturday and Sunday morning is potentially available in the RSA restaurant if we have enough bookings. More on this when completing the registration forms however there are plenty of quality cafés within a short distance of the RSA and surrounding accommodation facilities.

Saturday night dinner is taken care of, and we can have this in the RSA restaurant in a similar fashion to a Regimental Formal Dinner. Following the dinner, we simply adjourn to the bar area to partake in more entertainment complimentary of the RSA for those who still have the energy to do two big nights in a row.

For more of an insight into the Mt RSA check out their website <https://mtrsса.co.nz/>

### **Transport**

The RSA has a shuttle service which will be available for airport pickups and drop offs however the airport is only a \$10 Uber ride away (today's prices) if it's not available at the time of your flights in and out.

### **Accommodation**

There's an array of accommodation surrounding the Mt RSA at various rates. The closer you go to the vibrant downtown Mt Maunganui the more you will pay but there are some good facilities at reasonable rates within walking distance of the RSA. Given Mt Maunganui is a destination, early bookings are recommended.

The Mount RSA has plenty of car parking for freedom camping if you have a motor home or there are plenty of camping ground facilities for you to check out.

<https://www.tourism.net.nz/region/bay-of-plenty/bay-of-plenty---mt-maunganui/accommodation/campsites-and-holiday-parks>

## **Places of Interest**

We have tentatively organised the following options for Saturday 13 May:

1. Tour of the Waihi Gold Mine on Saturday morning followed by lunch at the Waihi Beach RSA. We are endeavouring to organise a Kiwifruit Packhouse tour for the afternoon on our way back to Tauranga.
2. Tour of the busiest port in NZ being The Port of Tauranga.

If your preference is to just chill and take in a beach walk or just enjoy what our coastal region has to offer, there's plenty to choose from. Mt Maunganui is very picturesque and flat so easy walking to wherever you want to go however if you venture to the Tauranga side of the Harbour you will encounter a slightly hillier terrain. For more information on what's available go to [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount\\_Maunganui](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Maunganui) – or <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tauranga>

## **Conclusion**

There's a bit of an overview so far team and we look forward to hosting you in May 2023. We will keep you updated as we transition through the year in anticipation that Covid is extinct, your heart pills are still effective, Viagra or Cialis still keeps a smile on your dial, hearing remains selective, and your glasses just need cleaning and not updating.

## **Victor 4's Chef – South Vietnam 1969 - 1970**

I was posted to 1 RNZIR based in Terendak Camp, Malacca, Malaya, in August 1968. At that time, I was not assigned to a particular company as I was a one for one swap as someone had just returned to New Zealand. I flew from Auckland on an Airforce Hercules to Canberra Australia, and from Canberra to Alice Springs for the night and then the next day from Alice Springs to Singapore where I was meet by a driver who also picked up the mail from the folks at home to the guys in Malay and Vietnam.

My wife and son arrived a few weeks later and we soon settled into the routine of the newly built 28<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Brigade purpose-built Camp. Terendak housed the entire brigade with its infantry battalions and support units, military hospital, airstrip, married quarters area and shopping precinct. Terendak was of substantial size and covered several square miles with its southwestern border being the Straits of Malacca.

Since 1967 1 RNZIR had had an infantry company attached to an Australian Battalion in South Vietnam. This was later increased to two companies. I was told in early 1969 that I would be posted for one year to Vietnam in May (this was a hard sell to my wife), to serve with a replacement company called Victor 4.

I was in the Company advance party as we flew from Singapore to Vietnam in the old Bristol Freighter – the flight was long and slow, loud, and dripping inside with condensation. When we landed, we were loaded on to trucks and set off for Nui Dat. This was the base camp that housed the gunners, the Australian battalions, two New Zealand Companies, Armoured and Support Companies.



RNZAF Bristol Freighter B-170, unloads at Nui Dat airstrip. Photo credit Bruce Drysdale.

It was a real eye opener on the drive to camp to see bombed out buildings where rockets had hit. Whole towns and villages were wiped out. This is when we really knew we were in a war zone. Hold on to those SLR's at the ready!

The Company cookhouse was a building not a tent, there was power on for fridges etc. but our cooking was on M37 cookers. All rations came from the Australians with the old army ration system of so much per man per day.



Victor 4 Company cookhouse at the Horseshoe, Nui Dat 1969. Photo credit Bruce Drysdale.

When the main party arrived, we got ourselves sorted in our tent – two per tent. My gang of four were myself, Cpl Ron Hands, LCpl Bruce Drysdale, Dvr Mike Evans (Groucho) & LCpl Bruce Collier. Bruce Collier was already in theatre and stayed over with V4 to complete his one-year tour, when he was RTU to Singapore, Cpl Warren Milne took his place.

That was my merry band of men. Our quarters were as I've said, tents. They had wooden floors and they were arranged door to door, so we ended up with a small porch between us. We set this up with a basin and a jerry can of cold water for our morning dobbie. Our beds were stretchers, and the walls were sandbags. Happy days! As there were four of us, we worked two to a shift.

When the company was out on operation there was still approximately 30 troops in camp (sick, lame and/or lazy). When a resupply was ordered we did not have much time to organise. Whilst the resupply was mainly ration packs, water, batteries, ammunition etc, we had the opportunity to get some fresh food to the boys. We had to be conscious of the limited time they had to eat any fresh food and the climatic heat.

I would have to go to the supply depot to get ham, bread mix, carton milk etc. Then the other cook and I, who was still in camp, would work into the night to make bread rolls, fill them, and pack them with milk to go off in the chopper the next morning. I remember once we got a resupply order and the camp was on stand to, rockets were

coming in on the airfield just below our kitchen (we were on the bank above). With no power for lighting, Mike Evans (Groucho) was holding a torch while I rolled out approximately 200 bread rolls ready to cook, then fill, as the chopper was flying out first thing in the morning. We made it and the boys enjoyed it.

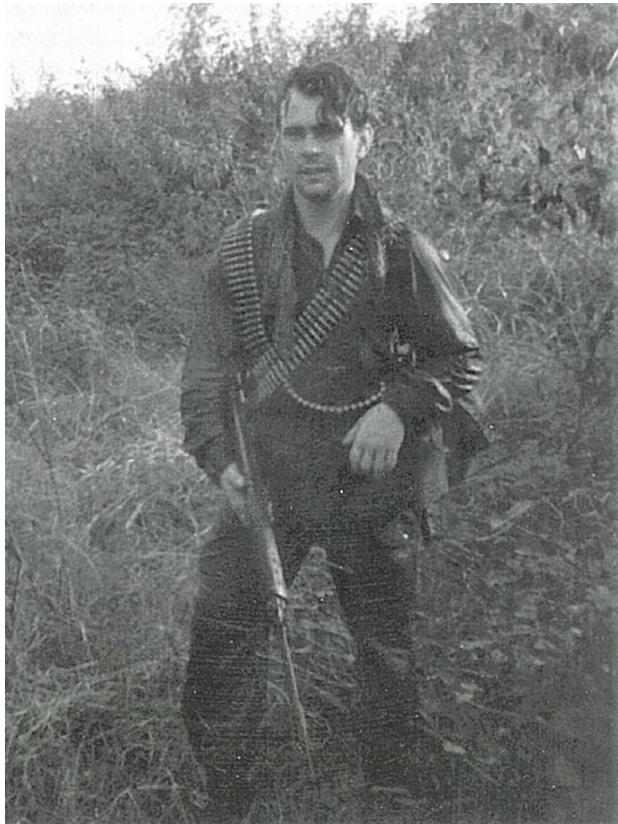
When the company left on ops, my first job was to go around the tent lines to get the pots etc. that the boys had "borrowed" for their cook-ups. When the company came back in from ops we would put on a BBQ for the guys. The BBQ was a M37, and it was a cook your own. I saw some very burnt steaks, if I had of served it up, they would've hung me up in a rubber tree! Before the BBQ I would get some local money and go to a small town not far from camp and buy fresh food and block ice from the markets. The ice was in a 1-ton trailer and lots of cans of free beer for the troops.

The next day we would all pack up and be off for a 36-hour R & C at the Australian R & C centre the Peter Badco Club in the seaside town Vung Tau. Sleeping in real beds in barrack type accommodation. Free to go to town and come and go as we pleased within reason. Don't get caught after curfew.

I had a couple of highlights of my tour. I was tasked to go to the Headquarters of the Allied Forces called the Headquarters of the Free World in Saigon to prep and serve a wedding meal as one of our guys married an American lady. The cooking again was on a M37.

Another one was when I was posted on a short exchange to an American troop on a one-on-one swap. Those yanks have everything in their cook house, even a snow freeze ice cream machine. I slept in the room of the Sgt who was sent out to our lines. I slept in a real bed, and we had a Vietnamese lady to do all the cleaning. The yank would have had a stretcher bed in a tent with sandbags surround. I hope he enjoyed it...I know I did

I was a Cpl during our tour so if I was in base when the company was on ops, I would have to take out patrols through the wire for an overnight local area protection watch somewhere on some track or road. At times we walked and sometimes driven out and collected. As my trade was cooking, I had passed the basic training all soldiers do on joining but had not done any advance infantry training so reading a map and finding where our location was, had me lost. So, on my first patrol SSgt Rex Bowman gave me a troop of guys who knew what they were doing, thank God, so when we reached the spot the lead scout turned around and said "this is it Ron" so we set out the M60 and Claymores, I made the sentry roster and we settled in for the night.



Cpl Ron Hand returns from a local area security patrol Nui Dat 1969. Photo credit Ron Hands.

Part of our tour was a company rotation to the Horseshoe, so named because it was not a high hill but was the shape of a volcanic cone with one side collapsed, hence the horseshoe shape. The horseshoe feature was occupied and reinforced as it protected one of the approaches that the Viet Cong could approach Nui Dat. The camp cookhouse was in the centre of the shoe and our sleeping quarters were dugouts in the hill. We would cook breakfast and the boys would come to the kitchen a few at a time, the same for dinner. Lunch was filled bread rolls, driven around the lines by the duty driver and dropped off to 1, 2 and 3 platoons.



Victor 4 Company lunch at the Horseshoe. Photo credit Bruce Drysdale.



Victor 4 Company cookhouse at the Horseshoe 1969. Photo credit Bruce Drysdale.

When I was on earlies with Mike, I would cook the eggs to order. We were cooking on M37 and anyone who has seen one or worked on one will know how high they are. As I am a shorty, my arm would near drop off, so I acquired a box to stand on. Some smart bugger wrote in big letters "Ron's Box" When V5 arrive Dave Cantell was the same size, so he took over the box. No problems with the tired arms after that.



Victor 4 cookhouse Nui Dat. Ron's box! Photo credit Bruce Drysdale

When the company was in base camp, each platoon would man their own gun emplacements and the sigs would man the exchange. When they were on ops the base guys would guard the wire and the exchange, cooks included. When there was a stand too which did happen often, all power was cut, and we would all stand too. It

did not matter where you were in Nui Dat, the possibility of an attack was anticipated. If you were on the M60 in a sandbagged bunker the whole team would stand too. When stand down was sounded only two at a time would be on duty while the rest slept until it was their turn on duty. The sentry posts were manned 24 / 7.

As I have mentioned, after the guys had come back from the bush there was a camp BBQ. One time I remember the BBQ had just started and word got around that there was a concert in the dust bowl. The dust bowel was an amphitheatre with a stage where visiting performers could perform for the troop. Anyway, once word got around a group of guys got hold of the trailer with the ice-cold beers, wheeled it to the bank looking down to the show. By the end of the show the trailer only had ice left. I do not know how many dozen cans there were, but all were consumed by the end of the show. They pulled the trailer back to the BBQ and Kevin Warren our barman had to open the bar, then the fun began.

With some fun memories and not so fun memories, however after twelve-months our tour was at an end. It was our turn to welcome our replacements Victor 5 and remind them they only had 365 days to go before they could go home!

Our company flew out of Vietnam May 1970, one year and a bit from when I landed in the advance party. Our company Victor 4 was a great group of guys, many with their own little personalities and quirks. They work hard, played hard and more importantly fought hard.

We lost seven men killed in action: Pte J Williams, 17 June 1969. Pte D Frith, 11 July 1969. Pte M Turnbull, 2 August 1969. Spr J Barrett, 24 November 1969. Pte P Rauhihi, 24 November 1969. Pte T Paenga, 19 March 1970 and Lt S Kidd 17 April 1970. We also had fourteen wounded in action. A casualty rate of 11%, however the full cost over the years is greater. We remember them.

Ron R Hands  
WO1 (Retired)

### **New Zealand Operational Service Medal (NZOSM) Are you Eligible?**

Eligibility for the New Zealand Operational Service Medal (NZOSM) has been extended to include a larger proportion of members of the New Zealand Armed Forces who served in Malaysia and Singapore - From the Army News Issue 528

The award of this medal recognises the valuable contribution to the defence of South East Asia by veterans who served in Malaysia and Singapore but were previously excluded as they were not required to deploy into combat areas, such as Borneo or Vietnam," Defence Minister Peeni Henare said.

"I am proud that around 4,500 veterans who served in South East Asia from February 1959 to January 1974 are now rightly able to be awarded a medal for their valiant service. I hope veterans and their whānau take this opportunity to have their service recognised in this way." The review commissioned by the government and carried out by the New Zealand Defence Force, showed there was a need for a wider

approach to medallic recognition for South East Asia than had been the practice in the past.

The 2021 review looked at the period between 1955 and 1989 and assessed that service between 1 February 1959 and 31 January 1974 should be qualifying service for the award of the New Zealand Operational Service Medal.

It was a unique period in New Zealand's military history including forward deployment and deterrence; operational readiness as part of the South East Asia Treaty Organisation plans for responding to the threat of communist expansion into South East Asia; an ongoing communist terrorist insurgency in Malaysia; the Cold War; a fraught relationship with Indonesia which resulted in conflict; and war in Vietnam.

It concluded that together during that period that these events justified the award of medallic recognition but not a campaign medal. Campaign medals (and the New Zealand Operational Service Medal) have already been awarded for related operational service including the Malayan Emergency, Thai-Malay border, Confrontation with Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam.

“An eligible veteran must have been posted or attached for seven or more days with the Far East Strategic Reserve, the Australia New Zealand United Kingdom Force or associated units during these dates,” Mr Henare said. “I implore all those who meet the new criteria to apply for the formal recognition that they and their whānau rightly deserve. The dedication and commitment both individuals and whānau make in order to keep our country and region safe cannot be overstated, and I wish to thank every one of the Defence Force whānau for their service.”

Those eligible under the revised settings, veterans and next-of-kin of deceased veterans need to apply to receive the NZOSM. The application form is on the New Zealand Defence Force Personnel Archives and Medals website: [www.nzdf.mil.nz/pam](http://www.nzdf.mil.nz/pam)

**CONTACT DETAILS FOR THE ASSOCIATION OFFICERS ARE BELOW:**

<b>Patron:</b>	Brig. Jon Broadley	<a href="mailto:jon@strategyplus.co.nz">jon@strategyplus.co.nz</a>	0272333111
<b>President:</b>	Andy Stewart	<a href="mailto:andy-stewart1@xtra.co.nz">andy-stewart1@xtra.co.nz</a>	0274443712
<b>Vice Pres:</b>	Grant Child	<a href="mailto:grant.child@realtygroup.co.nz">grant.child@realtygroup.co.nz</a>	0274780988
<b>Sec./Treas:</b>	Graham Gosnell	<a href="mailto:gosannesmagic@xtra.co.nz">gosannesmagic@xtra.co.nz</a>	0276248808
<b>Council:</b>	Paul Gundesen	<a href="mailto:paulgundy@xtra.co.nz">paulgundy@xtra.co.nz</a>	0220694964
	Lloyd Miller	<a href="mailto:bellarat158@yahoo.co.nz">bellarat158@yahoo.co.nz</a>	0272846015
	Leighton Cameron	<a href="mailto:l_kcameron@xtra.co.nz">l_kcameron@xtra.co.nz</a>	0272299449
	Lionel Orr	<a href="mailto:eorr@xtra.co.nz">eorr@xtra.co.nz</a>	07 8241713
	Dave Oldershaw	<a href="mailto:daveold4@gmail.com">daveold4@gmail.com</a>	0292003679
	Terri McClintock	<a href="mailto:sol4bus@xtra.co.nz">sol4bus@xtra.co.nz</a>	0276790660
<b>Historian:</b>	Howard Weddell	<a href="mailto:hs.weddell@outlook.com">hs.weddell@outlook.com</a>	0272494340