

# RNZAC ASSOCIATION CANTERBURY BRANCH NEWSLETTER #179 July 2019

**Meetings** Happy Hour: Thursday 1 August 2019 at 1700 hrs at the Papanui RSA  
Next Happy Hour: Thursday 5 September 2019 at 1700 hrs, Papanui RSA.

**Whose is it?**



## **Events Past and Future**



**SITREP from SGT Johnny Duncan, NZGD  
QAMR, QUEEN ALEXANDRA'S MOUNTED RIFLES, RNZAC  
DAVID.DUNCAN@NZDF.mil.nz**



Not much of an update this month as there is hardly anyone on the ground. The bulk of the unit is currently in the Shoalwater Bay Training Area (SWBTA), Queensland, conducting Ex Hamel (Ex H19). This includes all of Scots SQN, 1/2 of WEC SQN, 1/3 of SPT SQN and 1/2 of the RHQ.

The NZLAVs, MHOVs (trucks) and crews deployed on the HMNZS Canterbury from Napier to Gladstone in Australia while the rest of the personnel flew into Rockhampton.



NZLAV crew from 18 (workshops) conduct morning routine in the SWBTA.



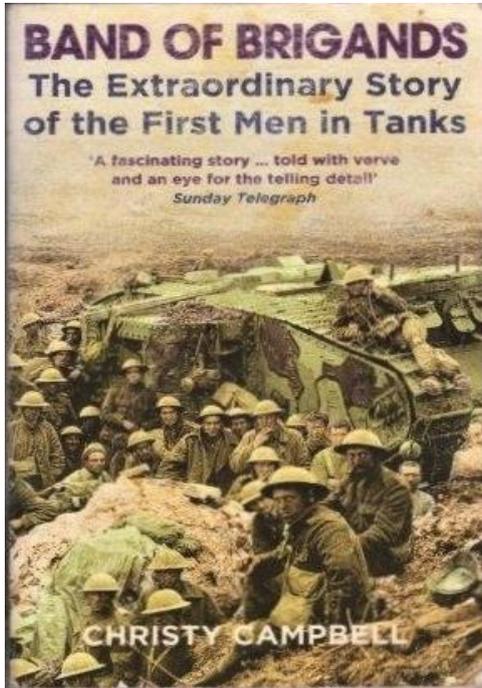
An NZLAV being loaded on to HMNZS Canterbury at Napier for departure to Exercise Talisman Sabre.

Most of those that are left are supporting the Crew Commanders course or out on Ex Rumani. Once the unit is back on the ground after Ex H19 we will have a story from someone who was on the exercise included in next month's update.

## Book Review by Bruce Keddie.

Band of Brigands: a fascinating book given to me by a retired infantry person from my pipe band.

Written by Christy Campbell, former defence correspondent for the Sunday Telegraph, it begins with him walking behind a tractor that is ploughing a field in North West France. He is watching for anything metal to emerge that the farmer may wish to add to his lifetime collection of items from WW I. The field is just outside the town of Cambrai.



The story then moves forward a few years as the author and the farmer try to follow up a story of a complete WW I tank buried near a local farmhouse. In 1988 permission is finally given to dig for the tank and with people from Bovington and the BBC on hand they discover it is there and nearly complete. It's a Mk IV and once a serial number is discovered the men from Bovington produce the names of the crew. Her commander was, 2/Lt George Ranald MacDonald, a New Zealander!

The story then moves back to the very first days of WW I as the author traces the story of the tank. He must have worked through a large collection of minutes from meetings, personal diaries, recorded memories of the time, plus a large number of other publications on the subject as it's a very, very, thorough and well-told story. We slowly move through from Rolls Royce Armoured Cars to trials of various "land craft" to finally the Battle of Cambrai and beyond to the end of the war. Included is much detail of the development of not just the tank itself, but the training of the

crews in great detail. Every battle tanks were involved in is covered, along with personal accounts from the crew.

If you are interested in armoured history this would be a "must read". Even that well-known author on war Len Deighton thinks so with his review on the back cover: "*A Military historian of the first rank. A completely satisfying investigation that is both chilling and startling*".

### One excerpt from the book:-

"Tank Tips "

Issued prior to the battle of Cambrai

*Remember your orders*

*Shoot quick*

*Shoot low, a miss that throws up dust is better than one that whistles by.*

*Economise ammunition and don't kill a man three times.*

*Watch the progress of the fight and your neighbouring Tank*

*Watch the Infantry whom you are helping*

*Use the 6 pdr with care, shoot to kill and not just to make a noise.*

*Never have any gun, even unloaded, pointing at your own infantry, or any 6 pdr at another tank*

*Never mind the heat*

*Never mind the noise*

*Never mind the dust*

*Think of your pals in the infantry*

*Thank God you are bullet proof and can help the infantry who are not.*

## Radio Check.

**From Stew Couchman. Received 22 Nov 18.** *[My apologies for the delay in sending this on. Editor.]*  
Attached please find docs associated with Ron Lee. When Christine & I were in Hastings recently we went to see Ron in the Masonic rest home, as is usual for us. Attached are 4 x docs that Ron shared with me: as I said to him there is some interesting history contained in them & I was concerned that potentially it was at risk of being lost for all time.  
You may be aware that I had recently emailed Neville with a copy of the UK enlistments.

I also have a typed copy of the voice interview that Ron did with Chris Wotton. Haven't spoken to Chris for some time now so have little idea as to how far Chris has gone with a book relating to QA etc. As I recall the last occasion I had a chat with Chris re the production of an RNZAC history book he reached a point where the cost of production had become too great.  
Cheers, Stew,

### U.K. ENLISTMENTS - RNZAC

The following is a personal account but should be typical of most UK enlistments experience. The main difference being that many endured a month on the immigrant ship Captain Cook, while later arrivals travelled by commercial liners, ie Canberra, Oriana.

During the 1950's and early 60's the NZ Forces were conducting an intensive recruiting campaign in the U.K.

Approaching the end of my engagement with the RTR, after a years extension due to the Korean War, I answered an advertisement in the "Soldier" for "Instructors with the NZ Army". I was advised to contact the NZ Army Liaison Staff in London following my discharge. Len Appleford also looked at the advertisement but decided to give Civvy Street a try first.

Turning up in due course for an interview I gave personal and service details and then the "Real Con Job" began! I was told by Major Gurr, of the RNZAC Centurions (I was thinking in the plural sense), the proposed purchase of Cromwells or Comets.

The virtues of Waiouru Camp as a training camp surrounded by magnificent scenery, etc, etc were then extolled by a Sergeant Clerk. It later turned out he had enlisted in London and had never been near New Zealand, let alone Waiouru! Some years later this NCO did arrive at Waiouru to a fairly frigid reception by some soldiers with long memories.

Having passed the medical and being accepted there was a wait of a few weeks before being attested in London and transported to Lynham RAF Base for movement to NZ by RNZAF Hastings. As the aircrew did not want another task before Christmas this turned into an eleven day saga via the Middle East in company with about 35 Army, Navy and Air Force types including Geoff Shrimpton for the RNZAC.

First impressions of Waiouru will be the subject of a later article.

MARSA  
BAHRA  
KARACHI  
COLOMBO  
CHANGI  
JAVATA  
DARWIN  
BAISBANE  
WHENUA PAI

### RECOLLECTIONS OF A U.K. ENLISTMENT

The following item, produced after some arm twisting is solely the memories of the writer after nearly fifty years.

With UK enlistment at its peak in the early 50's and most going to Waiouru from all Corps, it was a common saying that "It's a great little army, spoilt by a few Kiwis".

The introduction of soccer to Waiouru by the Poms (the real fanatic was Andy Lafferty of RNZASC) caused much ribald comment from the Kiwis, who dubbed it "Aerial Ping-Pong".

The often forgotten ones who deserved much credit were the UK wives, often having to wait in UK for up to a year for a passage. Then a month on the immigrant ship, Captain Cook, usually with small children. The last straw was arriving in the middle of the night to accommodation in a "flat" in camp, until allocated a house. These flats were usually a couple of rooms at the back of a "Q" Store or behind the old gym.

The concept of a "Dry Area" and having to travel to Taihape to the pub was received with some dismay. Each weekend tended to turn into something of a saga, involving the Gretna, huge mixed grills (the only meal available) and various transport options! The Kiwis soon initiated us into all of this.

The sheer numbers of CMT recruits to be trained, with three Armoured Regts, Div, Regt and NZ Scots. Classes of 30+ were not uncommon, on one notable occasion the writer plus one other instructor was confronted with 200 gunners at an Annual Camp 2 pdr refresher course!

The Garrison Club (Cpls and below) was on the same site, but was a huge open hall with no ceiling, decorated with Swastika Flags, ex Italy and also some slips flags "liberated" during the 1951 wharf strike. Kiwi/Pom arguments/discussions!! tended to be settled here.

Other "Oldies" must have many more memories of the period.

*[In light of the decision to go ahead with the history of the RNZAC book these are the stories, photos and historical information that is needed. Please contact Ian Bolton [ian.bolton@extra.co.nz](mailto:ian.bolton@extra.co.nz) if you have anything. Your stories when you were with an Armoured unit are now very much part of the Corps History. Editor.]*

**From Kenneth Johnson. (Continued)** *[This may bring a few memories back to many. Editor.]*

That is awesome. Kenneth Lee Johnson, (Johno is what I was called on occasion), is my full name and D52420 if my memory serves me right is my number. I was 17½ when I joined and I am thankful to this day that the NZ Army and the 1st Scots put me on the right track for life. The experience opened up my eyes to possibilities and got me out of my neighbourhood, which were all major positives. I was not in that long, so I would be surprised if anyone would remember me...

Cpl. David Webb was the first person that was super cool to me when I joined. My first roommate was Hoff (Hoffman) not the Sgt. that trained a lot of people, but his rather belligerent younger brother... He put me on track out the gate and was pretty awesome. He transferred to QA a short time after I arrived. My next roommate was (Steven?) Pickworth (Pick). The guy that took the pic of the Scorpions in the Waiouru was Rob Hill, who gave that to me when he was leaving.



Murts & Tarps, Shelly from the parts dept, who got "Made in Canterbury" tattooed around his belly button because we had some Pommies in from Hong Kong and one of them had "Made in Liverpool" tattooed around his BB, and Shelly thought it was cool. The story goes the tattoo guy got to the A in Made and Shelly was sweating and shaking so much the guy offered to stop, however the guys were like, that just say "MA" as in baa, but with an maa and so the tattoo continued.  
*More to follow:*

**Last Post.** Received from Brian Meyer. I have been advised that Graham (Wally) Nash marched off for the last time yesterday Wed 12 Jun in Auckland aged 87.



Graham enlisted Jan 1950 as an RF Cadet Graduated into RNZAC. Passed selection for the originals 55/57 was CSM C Coy 1 RNZIR 65/67 Malaysia . Served In 1 NZATTV SVN 70/71. Served until Dec 83 a total of 33 years and 11 months service.

Rest In peace Capt. Thank you for your service.

A Military Funeral for Graham was held at Papakura Camp at 1130 hrs Sat 15 Jun.

*[I knew Wally Nash, as he was always called, early in my army service. A man much feared and looked up to by us lowly soldiers. I unfortunately never realised he was ex RNZAC and in later days should have made the opportunity of getting to know him better. David Harrison.]*

Our condolences go to Wally's family, friends and comrades. Rest in peace.

**Humour** Quotable Quotes.

The best cure for sea sickness is to sit under a tree. ~ Spike Milligan...

Having more money doesn't make you happier. I have 50 million dollars but I'm just as happy as when I had 48 million. ~ Arnold Schwarzenegger...

As I hurtled through space, one thought kept crossing my mind - every part of this rocket was supplied by the lowest bidder. ~ John Glenn...

After the game, the King and the pawn go into the same box. ~ Old Italian proverb..

**Answer: Sweden.** In use by the US Army and ordered by the Australian Army. The Carl-Gustaf M4 (CGM4) is the latest generation of multi-role anti-tank weapon and can use thermal or image intensifiers for night operations. It weighs less than 7 kg and is less than 1metre in length. Using HE, HEAT, Anti-structure, multi target laser guided projectile ammunition it can destroy AFVs out to 500m and buildings or bunkers out 700m. It also can fire smoke and illuminating rounds. Some types of ammunition have a rocket booster for extended range out to 1,000 m. HEAT ammunition can penetrate up to 400 mm of rolled homogeneous armour. Fitted with a tandem HEAT warhead, penetration of rolled homogeneous armour behind explosive reactive armour is up to 500 mm.

**Reminders;** RNZAC Association Web site: [www.rnzac.co.nz](http://www.rnzac.co.nz) Contributions to this newsletter are gratefully accepted. Email: [jandavid@snap.net.nz](mailto:jandavid@snap.net.nz) Phone 03 359 6861. **David Harrison, Editor**