

RNZAC ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER #193 November 2020

Meetings Happy Hour: Thursday 3 December 2020 at 1700 hrs at the Papanui RSA

Next Happy Hour: Thursday 4 February 2021 at 1700 hrs, Papanui RSA.

Whose is it?



Social Events

Cambrai at Christchurch Sunday 22 November 2020:



The annual Cambrai service at St Paul's Church, was conducted by Rev Graham Button. Numbers were a bit lighter this year as several members took the opportunity to attend commemorations in Waiouru. Private Hayden Cullen of the NZ Army Band played the Last Post and the congregation was piped out by Bruce Keddie. Association members enjoyed a light lunch at the Papanui RSA. Then the AGM was ably and with some humour chaired by Mike Sheppard.

Admin & Log

The Christchurch Cambrai Address is attached at the bottom of this newsletter. Our President will provide a report on the Cambrai events at Waiouru for our next newsletter. There is no sitrep from QAMR this newsletter, but we will hopefully catch up for the next one.

In Appreciation

For a number of years now, Dave Harrison has very ably produced the monthly RNZAC Association newsletter. His combination of humour and informative insight has resulted in a very high quality newsletter that each of us looks forward to receiving. Dave has decided to step aside as editor, and we would all like to express our thanks for the work he has done.
Len Haynes, President.

From David Harrison. I would like to thank all Black Hatters who made my job as editor so enjoyable. Your input, support, articles, and feedback for the newsletter have been very much appreciated. What I particularly enjoyed was the keeping in touch. The Radio Check section, I am sure, informed us all what our armoured comrades, current and past have been up to. The SITREPs from QAMR kept us abreast with their news, trials, and tribulations. Thank you.

I wish Mike Smith all the best in his role as editor and feel very confident that he will produce very good newsletters. To you all, thank you, all the best, and I look forward to catching up with you.

Radio Check

From Sally Cole: Yes, KJ's funeral is one of many funerals that I have watched "on the computer" of late, and again, many fond memories arose plus a few tears. Thoroughly enjoyed Jim Coubrough's resume on 1 Scots as I could relate to every name mentioned, and reminded me that I was one of 3 Orderly Sgts in Burnham Camp HQ at the time plus Hamish in his Kilt, and the sound of those muffled drums for Tony Rice's funeral. Have never encountered them again. too too much. look forward to seeing you over Cambrai weekend.
Fond Regards Sally Cole (McHardy).

From Tony Connell: Please pass on my best wishes to all Black Hatters on the occasion of Cambrai. I will have a wee dram in memory of those who have gone before us. Ukraine is starting to feel the bite of old Man Winter. Still no snow but this morning we had -11 at 0630 & we managed to get to -1 at 1400 but it went rapidly downhill again once the sun dropped.
Kind regards Tony

From Geoff Kreegher: Cambrai has always been a special time of the year for people who have served in the RNZAC. It's a time for us to reflect on 'armour' and how it has evolved and influenced the battlefield since it was first employed in mass 103 years ago at the Battle of Cambrai. It is also a time for us to re-connect with old comrades and friends and to remember our mates and family who are no longer with us. Additionally, it is an invaluable opportunity to meet the soldiers who proudly serve today - they are us, and we are them. Cambrai is special, it is a spirit and a spirit which we will carry with us, and which will bind us together, for the rest of our lives.
Received pre Cambrai 2020 weekend and sums up what Cambrai for us is all about. Editor.

From Steve Thompson: Bonjour. Cambrai Day has dawned bright and sunny here in the Île de France, but sadly we are unable to celebrate in any meaningful way other than to raise a glass at home. Nevertheless, we take the opportunity to send our greetings to all Blackhatters and their families, to remember our comrades no longer around and to recall the many happy memories we share from our time in the Corps.

Please pass my apologies at the AGM and thank the Committee for another successful year.
Best wishes from a place not too far from the actual town of Cambrai,
Steve & Gaby

Humour:

The Scotsman



A Scotsman walks into the Bank of England in Threadneedle Street, Central London and asks for the manager.

He tells the manager that he is going to Australia on business for two weeks and needs to borrow £5,000.



The manager tells him that the bank will need some form of security for the loan, so Hamish hands over the keys and documents of new Ferrari parked on the street in front of the bank.

He produces the logbook and everything checks out.

The manager agrees to accept the car as collateral for the loan.

The bank's General Manager and its officers all enjoy a good laugh at the rough looking Scotsman for using a £120,000 Ferrari as collateral against a £5000 loan. An employee of the bank then drives the Ferrari into the bank's underground garage and parks it there.

Two weeks later, Hamish returns, Repays the £5,000 and the interest, Which comes to £15.41.

The manager says, "Sir, we are very happy to have had your business, and this transaction has worked out very nicely, but we are a little puzzled. While you were away, we checked you out and found that you are a multi-millionaire.

What puzzles us is, why would you bother to borrow £5,000?"

Hamish replies, "Where else in London can I park my car for two weeks for only £15.41 and expect it to be there when I return."

Ah.....the mind of the Scotsman...

Answer: Turkey and Indonesia. KAPLAN MT or Harimau is a modern 32 tonne medium tank being jointly developed by Turkey and Indonesia. An agreement for production of 18 Kaplan MT tanks for the Indonesian Land Forces was signed in May 2019 with will completed in 2021.

Crewed by a 3 man crew, driver, gunner and commander it is equipped with a battlefield management system (BMS), which offers, wireless intercom, navigation, third-generation day /night high-performance sights, thermal cameras and automatic fire extinguishing systems.

The AFV is fitted with a Cockerill turret which has an advanced autoloader 105mm high-pressure Cockerill gun and a 7.62mm coaxial MG. The main gun can fire standard NATO 105mm ammunition and can engage targets out to 10km.

Ballistic protection against 14.5mm armoured projectiles and 155mm shell splinters is standard. Add-on armour provides additional protection against 25mm (APDS-T) rounds. The AFV can withstand an explosion of 10kg TNT under the track and bottom of the hull. The KAPLAN is also fitted with laser and radar warning, NBC and radiological protection systems.

The Kaplan is powered by a new-generation diesel engine coupled to a fully automatic electronic controlled transmission which offers a 20hp/t high power-to-weight ratio. An APU is also fitted. The vehicle is designed to operate in extreme temperatures ranging between -32°C and 55°C and has a maximum road speed of 70km/h and a minimum operating range of 450km.

A link to view this medium tank: www.youtube.com/watch?v=U7V8LZaPdLY

Reminders; RNZAC Association Web site: www.rnzac.co.nz Contributions to this newsletter are Gratefully accepted. Email: smithmd@xtra.co.nz Phone 02108049178. **Mike Smith, Editor**

Cambrai Address Christchurch 2020

Mike Smith

It is good that we can be here today to commemorate the 103rd anniversary of the Battle of Cambrai. I was surprised that Lenny asked me to speak. It is 10 years since I served in the Army. I spent over 20 years in the Territorial Force and the Armoured Corps.

During my service I went from driving M113s to crew commanding open-top Landrovers. In 1990 NZ Scots was disbanded in Christchurch and I became an Armoured Corps member of an engineer field troop within an infantry battalion. It wasn't confusing at all.

It is traditional on Cambrai Day to give an address about how tanks were used successfully on-mass for the first time in battle. And we usually hear about the founding of the Royal Tank Regiment. Instead I thought I would talk about the origins of our own corps, particularly in Canterbury.

Officially the New Zealand Armoured Corps came into existence on the 1st of January 1942. The Corps was comprised of the Army Tank Brigade, the Waiouru School of Armour and the redesignated Mounted Rifles Regiments. Anyway the Army Tank Brigade didn't last long, as it was broken up in 1943. Two squadrons were shipped to the Middle East to join the newly established 4th Armoured Brigade. The 4th Armoured Brigade had been formed so that the 2nd New Zealand Division would have control of its own tanks instead of relying on the British. A third squadron of the Army Tank Brigade became the armoured component of the 3rd Division and was to serve in the Pacific.

The Army Tank Brigade however was not the first true New Zealand armoured unit to be formed. This honour goes to the Divisional Cavalry Regiment that was formed on 26 September 1939, as part of the 1st Echelon of the 2nd NZEF. Initially they only had 6 Bren-gun Carriers, as their armoured element. Once in Egypt however they were equipped with 28 light tanks, 44 Bren-gun Carriers, as well as motorcycles and other transport.

The Divisional Cavalry was the first true New Zealand armoured unit to be formed but as I said earlier the Army Tank Brigade was formed out of the redesignated mounted rifles regiments. So are the mounted rifles regiments the origins of our corps? The short answer is not really but they are part of our history.

On 20th November 1917, while the Royal Tank Regiment was advancing against the Germans at Cambrai, our New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade was in Palestine defending a line along the Auja River. Four days earlier they had captured Jaffa after a major offensive pushing the Turks back from the Gaza Beersheba line. They would go on to fight in the Jordan River Valley and participate in two major attacks on Amman. Finally they would be part of the successful defeat of the Turks.

The mounted rifles regiments at the time were the Canterbury, Wellington and Auckland Mounted Rifles in Palestine and the Otago Mounted Rifles in France attached to the New Zealand Division as Divisional Cavalry. The Canterbury Mounted Rifles had squadrons made up of the Canterbury Yeomanry Cavalry, the South Canterbury Mounted Rifles and the Nelson Marlborough Mounted Rifles.

The Canterbury Yeomanry Cavalry had been formed in October 1864. The Lyttleton Times reported that steps were being taken to form a cavalry corps and that gentlemen had been nominated as officers. At Easter the following year the Yeomanry Cavalry attended the first Volunteer Camp in New Zealand which was held at Hillsborough in Christchurch. Over the next few years the CYC conducted training camps, participated in parades and shooting competitions, and they were used as escorts for various dignitaries that visited.

In September 1868 the Government requested volunteers from Canterbury for active service in the war in the North Island. However there was general apathy about the war. Captain Moorhouse at a meeting of the CYC on the 22nd said that he did not think matters were in such a position as to

really require them in another part of the colony. Some men did individually volunteer and fought in the north but not many.

In 1875 three new troops of the CYC were raised in Leeston, Ashburton and Rangiora. By September 1881 there was some uneasiness about Te Whiti and his followers at Parihaka. And the Government called for recruits for the Armed Constabulary. There was a much better response this time and about 240 volunteers from the various corps in Canterbury left for Wellington in October.

The actions of the Armed Constabulary are controversial and the Government recently apologised for their actions at Parihaka. There has been some debate about whether the Armed Constabulary is part of our Corps history and I am awaiting Mathew Wright's book with interest to see how he handles it. Anyway on April 11 1885 a new mounted unit was formed in Christchurch, the Canterbury Mounted Rifles. Like the CYC they also conducted camps and parades.

One of the most significant events to occur for the mounted units was the outbreak of war on 11 October 1899 in South Africa. The volunteers in the mounted units were given preference for service. New Zealand sent 10 contingents totalling 6,495 men and 8,000 horses. Women also served as nurses and teachers. 288 New Zealanders died in the war. 59 were killed in active service, the rest dying as a result of accidents and disease.

One of the most remarkable aspects of involvement in the Second Anglo-Boer war was the massive increase in interest in the Volunteers and particularly its mounted units. In the Canterbury Military District there had been 2 mounted units in 1898, there were 4 by 1900 and 14* by 1903.

At the end of 1909 a new Defence Act was passed. The Territorial Force came into existence and compulsory military training was introduced. The Canterbury Military District now extended from the Waitaki River to Farewell Spit. It had a mounted rifles brigade with 12 regiments, 3 based in Christchurch and North Canterbury, 3 in South Canterbury and 3 in Nelson/Marlborough.

The First World War broke out on 4 August 1914 and a mounted rifles brigade was formed as part of the NZ Expeditionary Force. Each of the three areas in the Canterbury Military District supplied a squadron to the Canterbury Mounted Rifles Regiment. They went on to fight at Gallipoli, on the Sinai Peninsula and in Palestine. 17,723 New Zealanders served in Palestine, 640 died on active service and 1,146 were wounded.

The mounted rifles were reorganised after the First World War and you have the Canterbury Yeomanry Cavalry Regiment, the South Canterbury Mounted Rifles Regiment and the Nelson Marlborough Mounted Rifles Regiment until the disestablishment of the Mounted Rifles in 1942.

Post World War 2, in 1949 the New Zealand Scottish Regiment became an Armoured Corps unit, with D Squadron being based in Christchurch. Then there was the introduction of Compulsory Military Training and the establishment of the 3rd Armoured Brigade at Burnham. This lasted until the end of CMT. NZ Scots was disestablished in Christchurch in 1990. For a brief period QA was based at Burnham.

You may remember a young QA NCO, Pralli Durrer, who attended a couple of our Cambrai Day parades. I talked to him and he made an impression on me because we had both attended Linwood High School. In my civilian job I usually work as a Quarantine Officer and I have been fortunate to participate in several military clearances. In April 2011 I was in Dili in East Timor and Pralli remembered me from Cambrai Day. He invited me over to the QA hanger and quarters for a look around. Pralli was killed in Afghanistan on 5 August 2012.

Cambrai for me is a day to remember where our Corps, including the Mounted Rifles, has served and what it has achieved but it is also important to remember those who have served in it.

Thank you.

* CYC, CMR, Ellesmere MR, Malvern MR, Amuri MR, South Canterbury MR, Kaikoura MR, Cust MR, Waimakariri MR, Ashburton MR, North Canterbury MR, Mackenzie MR, Studholme MR, Geraldine MR.