



Royal New Zealand Armoured Corps History Project Charitable Trust

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29 October 2021

To all Serving Members and Members who have Served in the Royal New Zealand Armoured Corps (RNZAC) and its Predecessor Organisations

Greetings,

THE RNZAC HISTORY PROJECT 2019-2023-SPECIAL UPDATE

It is with great regret that I announce that yesterday we farewelled Chris Wotton from the Trust. Chris made the decision to leave the Trust for health reasons. He had been thinking about leaving for some time when he advised me that he would like to finish at the end of October. He has the Trust's absolute support for his decision.

Chris has been Deputy Chair of the Trust with responsibility for fundraising. From February 2020 the key role of fundraising has been particularly challenging because of Covid-19 and, more recently its Delta variant. The Trust has found that potential donors, in the main, prefer to support charities that are helping those at most risk in our communities; we understand that. Nevertheless, the Trust has received over 56% of its required funding; of the total funds received, Chris, assisted by Frances Russell, has been responsible for bringing in 70% of that. It is a tremendous effort by any measure in these times. In 2020, Chris and his son, Mark designed and produced the RNZAC History Brochure, at no cost to the Trust, which we continue to send to selected potential corporate and individual donors. It has been a valuable resource which effectively portrays in text and photographs an outline of the history of the Corps and the purpose of the Trust.

Frances Russell has helped Chris in the area of applications to Trusts. Her help has been crucial in this area, freeing Chris up for his other work in the wider fundraising area. Frances, who specifically came onboard to assist Chris, is also leaving this month. The Trust extends its thanks to Frances for her support of Chris and for the funds she personally brought in through her direct efforts.

During the past several weeks, we have approached a number of individuals who we thought had the skills, and experience with Corps matters to take over from Chris. Unfortunately, none of those whom we approached were able to take it on.

I will therefore be taking over fundraising in addition to my existing responsibilities within the Trust. In this regard, I assumed responsibility for the fundraising portfolio during September whilst I still had Chris to guide me and that has worked well. Together, we managed to release a number of applications to potential donors on 29 September as well as some more during October.



In September, I also took responsibility for the Business Plan and Budget; these are live documents which have been developed over time by Chris in parallel with and complementary to the fundraising role. His groundwork in these two areas has also allowed for a smooth transition to take place. I also have handover notes and electronic files from Chris. He has also kindly agreed to be available for advice in the future when I need it.

Whilst we were unsuccessful in seeking a replacement fundraiser, Alan Day, our Treasurer has very kindly agreed to be the “lead” in future online applications to key potential donors who have supported us in the past. Alan already does great work in the areas of our Trust Account, our Auditors, and our annual reporting to Charities Services. So, I appreciate his agreeing to provide additional help with this aspect of fundraising.

I also want to acknowledge Sean Trengrove who, when I explained the current situation to him, willingly agreed to provide backup to me on any Trust task during those periods when I needed a hand. I am most grateful to Sean who is busy enough running a business but is still prepared to put up his hand in this way. Sean joins other helpers from outside the Trust who have been quietly assisting us with this great task. They will be acknowledged in the History when it is published.

Finally, I want to emphasize that Chris Wotton’s work on the RNZAC History goes back beyond 2019. From 2002 to 2015 he led the RNZAC Oral History Project Team which recorded sixty interviews of serving and Ex-members of the Corps. Management of the project included raising (in conjunction with the RNZAC Association) the funding required, drafting the protocols to meet the standards set by the Alexander Turnbull Library for recording and archiving, training interviewers, digitalisation, assembling the supporting documentation for each interview and compilation of the RNZAC Oral History Collection which was progressively archived with the Alexander Turnbull Library for safekeeping.

Selected extracts from the 135 hours of recordings are now being transcribed for the book. In his latest Progress Report to the Trust on 1 Oct 21, the Author mentioned that *“the oral history project material will be pivotal to the final book, notably in terms of providing personal colour and depth.”*

In September 2011, following extensive research and wide consultation, Chris produced a discussion paper on how the publication of an official history of the RNZAC could be approached. Between 2011 and 2019 several attempts were made by Chris to launch the RNZAC History Project, but no organisation or individual were in a position to take it on. Following a discussion between Chris Wotton and Chris Cooper, President of the Mounted Trooper Association (MTA) and Geoffrey Kreegher, Secretary of the MTA in early 2019, during which support for the History was expressed, individuals were subsequently approached to consider forming the RNZAC HPCT and these volunteers established processes to launch the RNZAC History Project during 2019.



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I am therefore certain that you will join me and my fellow Trustees in thanking Chris for his contribution to our Corps history over many years and extending best wishes to Chris and his family for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Graeme Ready', written over a faint horizontal line.

Graeme Ready
Chair
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