

**RNZAC ASSOCIATION  
NEWSLETTER #229 March 2024**

**Meetings Happy Hour: Thursday 4 April 2024 at 1700 hrs at the Papanui RSA.**

**Whose is it?**



**QAMR**



2 March: The Bushmaster training cell from QAMR with help from the team at Protected Mobility Capability Project (PMCP) qualified its first 14 NZ Bushmaster 5.5 drivers and crew commanders. This course occurred over three weeks and trained those that are already NZLAV qualified on the new platform.

QAMR is tasked with introducing the NZ Bushmaster 5.5 capability and provide protected mobility to the NZ Army.

Well done to those that qualified.

10 March: Service Milestones. Congratulations on behalf of the corps and unit to the following personnel on reaching respective service milestones in the RNZAC:

10 Years January 2024

- CAPT Wright.

- CAPT Brown.

- CAPT Hooson.

20 Years March 2024

- WO2 Marsh.

We thank you and your families for your efforts, sacrifice and support during your careers, and wish you all the best as you continue to serve.

15 March: RHQ Presentations

Congratulations to MAJ Dunningham and CAPT Wright for their NZGSM Medal and RNZAC 10 Year Letter presentations today.



26 March: Winners of Skill At Arms 2024

Congratulations to the unit SAA Team for taking out first place in the brigade competition today. A well deserved achievement and recognition for the team's efforts over the last couple of weeks.

A big shout out to the coach, manager, organisers, support staff and all competitors who helped to make the activity a massive success.

28 March: NZLAV Gunners and Driver (Tactical) Courses

Congratulations to all students who qualified on the recently completed gunners and drivers courses.

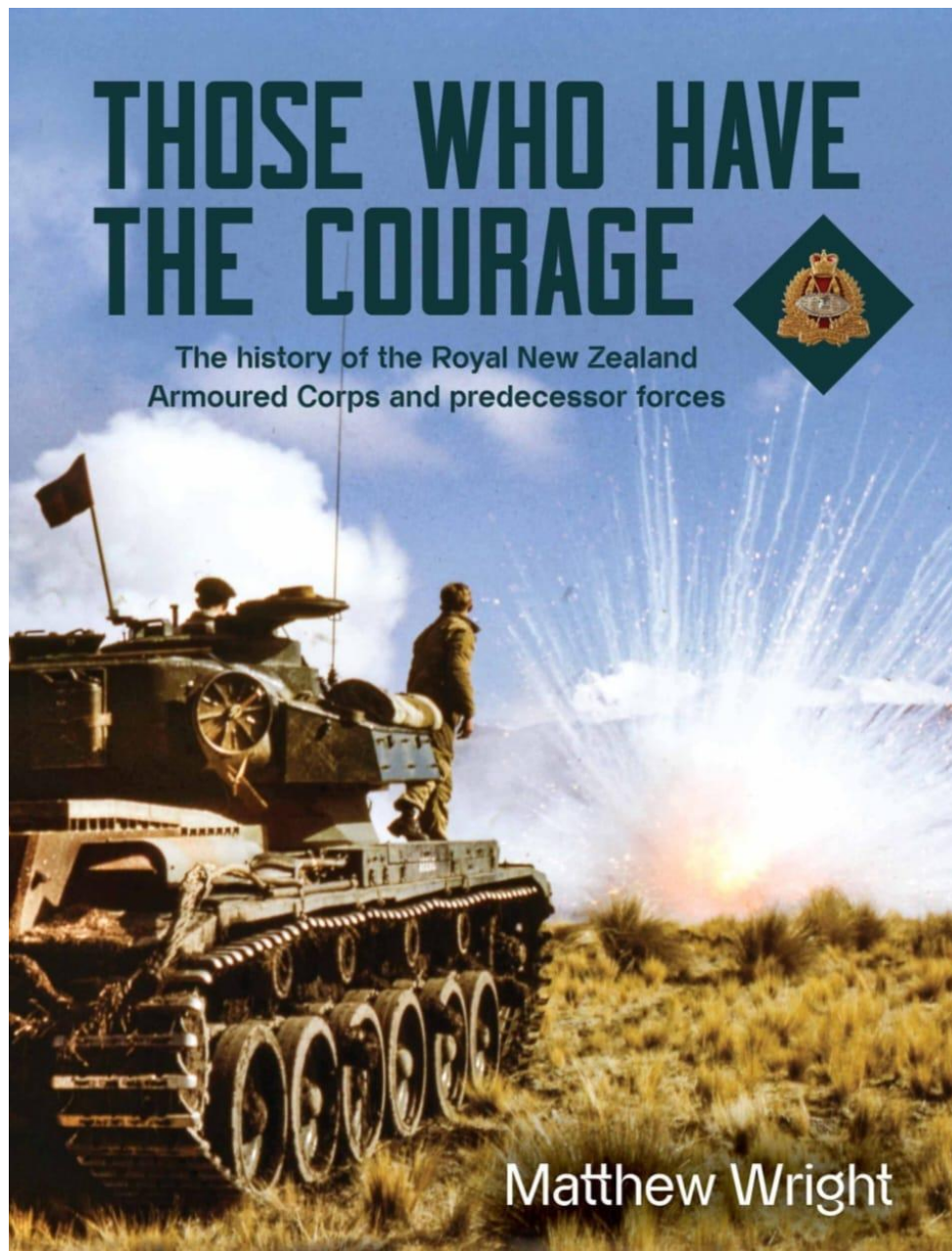
Big shoutout to LCPL Head for receiving the Top Student award on the gunners course and TPR McDonald as the Top Student on the drivers course. A special mention to TPR Bateson for his performance on the drivers course.

Thanks to the Combat School and support staff for their continued efforts and support to both courses.

## **Admin & Log**

**Those Who Have the Courage – The History of the Royal New Zealand Armoured Corps and Predecessor Forces**

Official launch of the book is on 5 April at Palmerston North. The Distributor has advised that distribution of pre-orders commenced on 26 March.



'Those Who Have the Courage will be a valuable resource for anyone who is interested in the military and social history of New Zealand. It is a comprehensive history of the Royal New Zealand Armoured Corps, the Mounted Rifles and predecessor units ...' — Governor-General Dame Cindy Kiro, from the Foreword.

The product of painstaking, multi-year research by esteemed historian and author Matthew Wright, this richly illustrated hardback is a must-have for the history reader. Part 1 covers the colonial cavalry that fought in the NZ Wars and Anglo-Boer War, then Part 2 moves to the Mounted Rifles distinguishing themselves in the First World War, at the end of which the tank came into play.

Part 3 describes the Armoured Corps' varied roles in the Second World War; Part 4 details what Wright calls an 'armoured evolution', through actions from the Korean War to Vietnam

and Part 5 records action in East Timor and Afghanistan, and modern challenges, rounding out this readable story. The appendices include rolls of honour, lists of vehicles and organisational charts.

### **Answer USA M1A2 Abrams**

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Army is scrapping its current upgrade plans for the Abrams main battle tank and pursuing a more significant modernization effort to increase its mobility and survivability on the battlefield, the service announced in a statement [September 2023].

The Army will end its M1A2 System Enhancement Package version 4 program, and instead develop the M1E3 Abrams focused on challenges the tank is likely to face on the battlefield of 2040 and beyond, the service said. The service was supposed to receive the M1A2 SE Pv4 version this past spring.

The SE Pv4 will not go into production as planned, Army Under Secretary Gabe Camarillo told Defense News in a Sept. 6 interview at the Defense News Conference in Arlington, Virginia. “We’re essentially going to invest those resources into the [research and] development on this new upgraded Abrams,” he said. “[I]t’s really threat-based, it’s everything that we’re seeing right now, even recently in Ukraine in terms of a native active protection system, lighter weight, more survivability, and of course reduced logistical burdens as well for the Army.”

The Abrams tank “can no longer grow its capabilities without adding weight, and we need to reduce its logistical footprint,” Maj. Gen. Glenn Dean, the Army’s program executive officer for ground combat systems, said in the statement. “The war in Ukraine has highlighted a critical need for integrated protections for soldiers, built from within instead of adding on.”

Ukraine’s military will have the chance to put the M1 Abrams to the test when it receives the tanks later this month. The country is fighting off a Russian invasion that began nearly two years ago.

The M1E3 Abrams will “include the best features” of the M1A2 SE Pv4 and will be compliant with modular open-systems architecture standards, according to the statement, which will allow for faster and more efficient technology upgrades. “This will enable the Army and its commercial partners to design a more survivable, lighter tank that will be more effective on the battlefield at initial fielding and more easy to upgrade in the future.”

“We appreciate that future battlefields pose new challenges to the tank as we study recent and ongoing conflicts,” said Brig. Gen. Geoffrey Norman, director of the Next-Generation Combat Vehicle Cross-Functional Team. “We must optimize the Abrams’ mobility and survivability to allow the tank to continue to close with and destroy the enemy as the apex predator on future battlefields.”

Norman, who took over the team last fall, spent seven months prior to his current job in Poland with the 1st Infantry Division. He told Defense News last year that the division worked with Poles, Lithuanians and other European partners on the eastern flank to observe happenings in Ukraine.

Weight is a major inhibitor of mobility, Norman said last fall. “We are consistently looking at ways to drive down the main battle tank’s weight to increase our operational mobility and

ensure we can present multiple dilemmas to the adversary by being unpredictable in where we can go and how we can get there.”

General Dynamic Land Systems, which manufactures the Abrams tank, brought what it called AbramsX to the Association of the U.S. Army’s annual conference in October 2022. AbramsX is a technology demonstrator with reduced weight and the same range as the current tank with 50% less fuel consumption, the American firm told Defense News ahead of the show.

The AbramsX has a hybrid power pack that enables a silent watch capability and “some silent mobility,” which means it can run certain systems on the vehicle without running loud engines.

The tank also has an embedded artificial intelligence capability that enables “lethality, survivability, mobility and manned/unmanned teaming,” GDLS said.

The Army did not detail what the new version might include, but GDLS is using AbramsX to define what is possible in terms of weight reduction, improved survivability and a more efficient logistics tail.

The Army awarded GDLS a contract in August 2017 to develop the SEPV4 version of the tank with a plan then to make a production decision in fiscal 2023, followed by fielding to the first brigade in fiscal 2025.

The keystone technology of the SEPV4 version consisted of a third-generation forward-looking infrared camera and a full-sight upgrade including improved target discrimination.

“I think the investment in subsystem technologies in the v4 will actually carry over into the upgraded ECP [Engineering Change Proposal] program for Abrams,” Camarillo said. “However, the plan is to have robust competition at the subsystem level for a lot of what the new ECP will call for, so we’re going to look for best-of-breed tech in a lot of different areas,” such as active protection systems and lighter weight materials.

For instance, the Army has kitted out the tank with Trophy active protection systems as an interim solution to increase survivability. The Israeli company Rafael Advanced Defense Systems develops the Trophy. But since the system is not integrated into the design of the vehicle, it adds significant weight, sacrificing mobility.

The Army plans to produce the M1A2 SEPV3 at a reduced rate until it can transition the M1E3 into production.

The M1E3 is expected to reach initial operational capability in the early 2030s, the Army said. “As longer-range threats increase in both lethality and survivability, the M1E3 Abrams will be able to defeat those threats,” the statement said.

Jen Judson Defense News 5 September 2023

## **Humour**

### **Worst Zoo**

"Did you hear about the worst zoo in the world; it only had one dog in it. It was a Shitzu."

"What's the difference between a hippo and a zippo?  
One weighs a ton, and the other is a little lighter."

Before you criticise someone, walk a mile in their shoes. That way, when you do criticise them, you're a mile away, and you have their shoes.

My wife and I laugh about how competitive we are. But I laugh more.

Two whales walk into a pub. They take a seat at the bar and the first one turns to the bartender and says: "Whhhhhoooooaaaaaeeyyyyyiiiiiaaaallllllloooooaaaaauuu?" The second one turns to the first and says, "Shut up Fred, you're drunk."

### **The Tomato Garden**

An elderly Italian man living alone in New Jersey wanted to plant his annual tomato garden, but it was very difficult work, since the ground was hard. His only son, Vincent, who used to help him, was in prison. The old man wrote a letter to his son and described his predicament:

Dear Vincent,

I am feeling pretty sad. It looks like I won't be able to plant my tomato garden this year. I'm just getting too old to be digging up the garden. I know if you were here, my troubles would be over. I know you would be happy to dig the plot for me, like in the old days.

Love, Papa

A few days later he received a letter from his son.

Dear Pop,

Don't dig up that garden. That's where the bodies are buried.

Love, Vinnie

At 4 a.m. the next morning, FBI agents and local police arrived and dug up the entire area without finding any bodies. They apologised to the old man and left. That same day the old man received another letter from his son.

Dear Pop,

Go ahead and plant the tomatoes now. That's the best I could do under the circumstances.

Love you, Vinnie.

### **Reminders**

RNZAC Association Web site: [www.rnzac.co.nz](http://www.rnzac.co.nz)

Contributions to this newsletter are gratefully accepted.

Email: smithmd@xtra.co.nz Phone 02108049178.

**Mike Smith, Editor**