

C-O-N-N-E-C-T-I-O-N-S

Newsletter of the Lower Hutt Memorial RSA — August 2019

E-mail: lhmrta@gmail.com — Website: www.lowerhuttrsa.co.nz

The Lower Hutt Memorial RSA meets on Friday from 4:30pm to 6:30pm upstairs in the Anzac Lounge at the Petone Workingmen's Club at 47 Udy Street, Petone

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE by Lars Millar

Greetings members,

It seems as if winter still has a bit of sting in its tail, but the days are getting longer, and spring is due to arrive next week – here's hoping.

This month sees the Trustees due to receive the Trust Accounts back from the accountants and auditors. It will be nice to get the accounts back, and to be able to get our collective heads around the reporting in a timely manner, and to provide the Executive with a thorough brief prior to the AGM.

The Executive is busy planning for the AGM that will be held on the 22nd Sept in the Anzac Lounge. The advertisement for this year's AGM was in this week's Hutt News, and a repeat of the same ad will be in next week's edition.

The executive have confirmed the cut-off dates for Notices-of-Motion, and the nominations for Executive Officers. LHMRSA currently holds elections annually, for the Executive Committee, who need to have been members of the LHMRSA for at least two years prior to nomination. The office of the President and Vice-President require potential office holders to have been members of the LHMRSA for at least three years before running for these roles. This will ensure that office holders have a degree of background knowledge of the organisation. I will be running again, along with sitting Vice-President Norm Rosser.

I wish to welcome all those who wish to, or are thinking about running for the Executive to please do so. To ensure that LHMRSA continues to grow and flourish we need our members to take an interest in the governance of the association.

The cut-off date for nominations is 1700hrs 6th Sept 2019.

It'll be fair to say that this year been a hectic one. Some key milestones have been seen;

- the hand-over of the \$50,000 contribution to the PWMC for the refurb of the Anzac Lounge,
- there is now a full complement of Trustees,
- the separation of Poppy Day money from the rest of the LHRSA Trust Money,
- the standing up of a dedicated mental health fund for qualifying people,
- an agreement to donate towards assisting Mariya Taylor,
- some good traction towards finally establishing a Trentham Hub – similar to the Burnham Model,
- financial review is underway,
- our rules are closer now to getting formalised – very close,

- our cadet forces now have a more streamlined process for grants, and 'force related' grant pools from which we can help them get overseas to further their experience,
- commitment to contribute \$30,000 toward the replacement of the old lift, which I think might become a museum piece.

These are a few from the highlight reel, best I get on with my President's Report for the AGM.

Speaking of which, I hope to see many of you there as it is an important date for the association.

Until then, take care of yourselves and those you hold dear.

The following article is the start of a new monthly series researched and prepared by Keith. They complement his Friday night's "This week in New Zealand military history" presentations. Naturally enough, these monthly articles will feature just selected highlights, and not everything that happened that month as far as New Zealand's military history is concerned. I'm sure you will find Keith's articles extremely interesting.

THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER IN NEW ZEALAND MILITARY HISTORY – Keith Garwood

Pre-First World War

New Zealand's first military aircraft, the Bleriot Monoplane Britannia, arrived in New Zealand on the 29th of September 1913. The aircraft was a gift from the Imperial Air Fleet Committee in Britain.

First World War

On the **4th of September 1916** British forces captured Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. One of the ships, HMS HYACINTH had a significant number of New Zealanders in her crew.

On the **15th of September 1916** the New Zealand Division took part in its first major action on the Western Front near Flers, as part of the Somme offensive. In 23 days of constant fighting 1,560 New Zealanders were killed and 5,440 wounded.

Also on the **15th of September 1916** near Flers, France Sergeant Donald Forrester Brown of the 2nd Battalion of the Otago Infantry Regiment earned the Victoria Cross for advancing under heavy fire on three separate occasions and on each occasion capturing enemy machine guns which were inflicting heavy casualties. He was killed in action on the 1st of October 1916 making the award of his VC posthumous.



Sergeant Donald Brown VC



Sergeant John Grant VC

On the **1st of September 1918** Sergeant John Gildroy Grant of the 1st Battalion of the Wellington Infantry Regiment earned the Victoria Cross for actions near Bapaume, France. When his battalion attacked German machine-gun positions on Bancourt Ridge, Sergeant Grant and another soldier rushed the guns, leaping into the machine-gun post in the centre of the defences to destroy it. He then eliminated a nearby position in a similar fashion.

Sergeant Harry John Laurent of the 2nd Battalion of the New Zealand Rifle Brigade earned the Victoria Cross for actions at Gouzeaucourt Wood, France on the **12th of September 1918**. A 12-man fighting patrol he was leading became lost behind enemy lines. In the process of extricating his men, Sergeant Laurent attacked a German trench system, killing 30 enemy soldiers and capturing 112 prisoners in fierce hand-to-hand fighting. He then led his patrol back to their own lines, managing to keep all the prisoners under control while at the same time fighting a rear-guard action.



Sergeant Harry Laurent VC



Private James Crichton VC

Private James Crichton of the 2nd Battalion of the Auckland Infantry Regiment earned the Victoria Cross for his actions at Crevecoeur, France on the **30th of September 1918**. Having rushed across an old stone bridge into the outskirts of the village, his platoon found themselves cut off and under heavy fire. Private Crichton, who was wounded in the foot, volunteered to take a message back to headquarters, swimming across the river and crossing open ground to do so. Re-joining his platoon, he defused an enemy mine attached to the bridge, before making another dash back to company headquarters to let them know the bridge was safe.

Second World War

On the **4th of September 1939** the New Zealander, Flying Officer Laurence Edwards became the first Royal Air Force Prisoner of the Second World War when his Anson aircraft was shot down over Heligoland, Germany. He served five years in German Prisoner of War camps.

488 (NZ) Squadron Royal Air Force was formed at Rongotai on the **2nd of September 1941** and equipped with the Brewster Buffalo aircraft. The squadron was shipped to Singapore to help defend it before being forced to evacuate from Singapore on the 23rd of February 1942.



HMNZS GAMBIA

The Colony-class cruiser HMS GAMBIA was commissioned into the Royal New Zealand Navy on the **22nd of September 1943**. At 10,850 tonnes the GAMBIA is to date the largest vessel to have seen service in the RNZN, but she will be eclipsed by the 24,000 tonne Polar-class support vessel HMNZS AOTEAROA when AOTEAROA is commissioned in early 2020.¹

On the **2nd of September 1945** Japan signed surrender documents on board USS MISSOURI in Tokyo Bay. Air Vice Marshall Leonard Isitt, who was at the time New Zealand's Chief of Air Staff, signed the surrender document on behalf of New Zealand. Lieutenant J.D. (John) Allingham RNZNVR from HMNZS GAMBIA was present at the ceremony in his capacity as aide-de-camp to Air Vice Marshall Isitt.¹

Post-Second World War

The first New Zealand force (NZFOR) of 250 personnel was sent to the former Yugoslavia as part of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) on the **5th of September 1994**. It joined nine New Zealand military observers already serving in Bosnia.

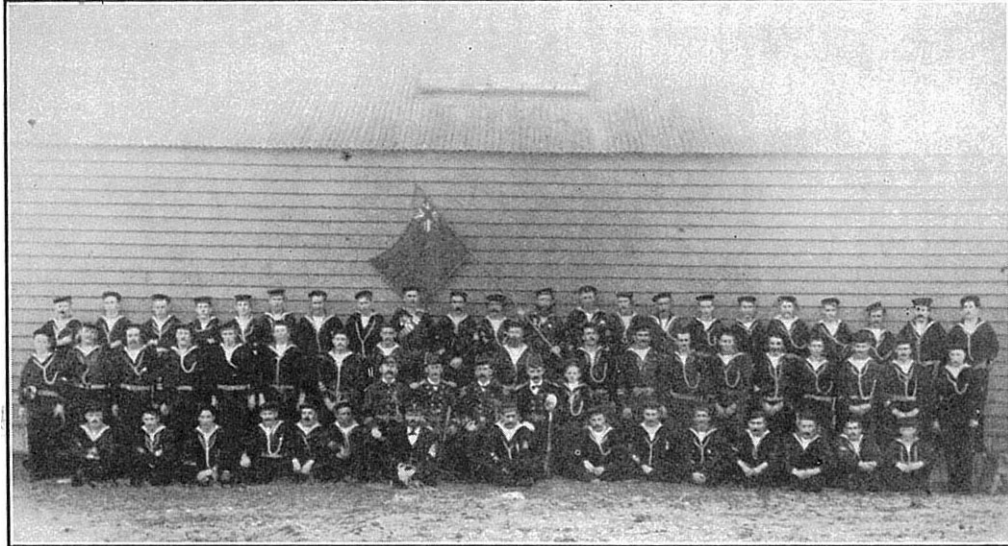
On the **29th of September 1999** the main body of Victor Company of the 1st Battalion, Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment deployed to East Timor to assist with security in the capital Dili as part of the Australian led International Force in East Timor (INTERFET). It was accompanied by four M113 armoured personnel carriers.

¹ AOTEAROA was launched on the 24th of April 2019, in that she was floated in her dry dock at Ulsan, South Korea.

¹ Lieutenant Allingham's eye-witness account of the surrender ceremony and signing was broadcast during the 'Sounds Historical' programme on National Radio on the 6th of September 2015. The audio file can be downloaded from:
<https://www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/soundshistorical/audio/201769537/sounds-historical-hour-one-6-september-2015>

THE PETONE NAVALS: Extract from "Petone - First 100 Years" (1840 -1940)

No history of Petone would be complete without a brief record of this famous old Corps. Formed originally as a Submarine Mining Corps, and closely identified with cutter sailing and boating, it was later converted into a Garrison Artillery Company (No. 2 and later No. 5 Coy. N.Z.G.A.), but it still retained its naval uniforms and cutters, also a boat station on the Petone foreshore. The Petone Navals were in the old days largely recruited from the Rugby football and athletic elite of the district, and these men and their devoted officers and N.C.O.s threw the same energy into their gun drill as into their games, with the result that for years, they qualified as the best heavy gun shooting battery in New Zealand, and were holders of the shield for the best shooting and best trained Garrison Artillery Company.



The Petone Navals

Originally, the company was a Petone contingent of the Wellington Navals, enrolled about the year 1880.

In 1883, it was decided to form a separate corps to be styled "The Petone Navals Artillery," and its first officers being Capt. H. S. Fitzherbert, Lieut. D. Buick, and Lieut. Jackson. The first meeting in connection with the formation was held at the "Marine Retreat," now known as the "Grand National Hotel." In June, 1883, the company built its own drill-shed, the opening being celebrated by a ball. The company first drilled as an infantry unit, and later on, an old 53 pounder on wooden mountings was installed on the Petone beach and used as a drill gun. About 1886, submarine mining work was commenced, the first submarine mining camp being held on Somes Island in 1887.

During 1887, the Kaiwarra Rifles were absorbed and detailed to man the old Kaiwarra battery.

The Petone Navals put up some outstanding performances in the course of their training at Ngahauranga, including in 1907, a world's record shoot of 40 hits out of 40 rounds fired.

In the late nineties and early 1900s, the company manned the three inner forts, Ngahauranga (Fort Kelburn, 2.6 inch E.O.C. guns on H.P. mountings), Kaiwarra Fort (2.64 lb.), and the Gardens Battery, now the observatory, a 7 inch M.L. Gun. The present Kelburn Scout house was originally the P.N.A.V. barracks for the Gardens Battery detachment.

The Kaiwarra and Gardens Batteries became obsolete, and the Company devoted its energies to Ngahauranga, where its annual camp was held, and where its shooting records were established.

The corps also owned a fine drill-shed in Nelson Street, Petone, and indulged in infantry drill once a month. On these evenings, it was a common sight to see the company drilling and manoeuvring along the Hutt Road and in Cuba Street, but later on, the advent of motor cars rendered this too dangerous. The "Fetories" were also famed for their rifle-shooting and put up some good performances at Trentham.

From the rapidity and success with which they launched their cutters to save people in distress on the Harbour, they were sometimes alluded to as the "Floating Ambulance." Certainly many a man owed his skill with boats in later life to the early training with the P.N.A.V., and this boating side of their activities was a great help to recruiting.

The two naval cutters brought the company equal fame with the six- inch guns. One of the first wins was the cup presented by Capt. Johnston (of the Wellington Navals) for competition between the two companies. A crew also beat the famous champion crew of H.M.S. "Espiegle," which had carried all before it in Australian waters. In 1886, a crew was sent to Auckland to compete in the £100 whaleboat event.

Other notable wins were the "White Horse" and "Mothes" cups. In 1911, on the introduction of universal service, the company donned khaki and was the first corps in New Zealand to receive and train its quota of compulsory recruits (66).

It still maintained its fame for shooting and retained many of its old N.C.O.s along with its old traditions; foremost of these we recollect were Sergeant-Major George Findlay and Q.M. Sergt. Robt. Cruickshank.

The company was commanded in recent years from 1900 by the late Major R. C. Kirk, Captain Ellis (deceased), Captain Richard Pryce (killed in action at Gallipoli), Major E. V. Bevan (1910/13) and Major A. H. Hollis. Many of those who passed through the company as volunteers or as Territorials served overseas in other units.

During the Great War, no less than five military distinctions were won by members of the corps, which already had the honour of Major W. J. Hardham's V.C., won in the South African War.

In 1922, as the result of experience of the war, the name and nature of the unit was changed. The unit has since then been equipped with 6-inch Howitzers and named the 17th Medium Battery, N.Z.A.

LEFT. LEFT. LEFT, RIGHT, OUCH!...

"Halt!" shouted the Petty Officer Gunnery Instructor. He had noticed that, for the umpteenth time, a recruit kept going to his right on a left command. The Petty Officer approached the directionally challenged sailor and stomped on his left foot. "Now," he said, "when I say 'left,' it's the one that hurts."

SERGEANT NIMROD...

A Sergeant was working in Army security when an officer from another base called to ask to whom he should address an important letter. Knowing my tough-to-spell last name would give him fits, the Sergeant said, "Just put down Sergeant Gary, as my last name is too hard."

The next day, the Sergeant received a letter addressed to Sgt. Gary Toohard.

ASSISTANCE FOR ALL VETERANS FROM VANZ:

Veterans did you know that you could get the following assistance to help you in your daily life, and also a possible payment to help you enjoy your leisure times, and help you stay in your own home?

Assistance with, and at no cost to you:

- Lawns and gardens
- House cleaning
- Gutters cleaned
- Windows and house washing (external only).
- Help may be available for internal windows
- Home modifications to assist entry and exit (ramps)
- Furniture modifications
- Attendant care (short term basis only)
- Adaptive clothing and footwear
- Personal alarms (in case of falls, etc)
- Assistance with applications for funding of mobility scooters
- Travel allowances (certain conditions apply)
- Medical costs
- Hearing loss

The above is available to all who served prior to 1 April, 1974 and includes all operational deployments and routine service deployments. This also covers those who served after 1 April 1974 and served in many theatres, or had routine service since Vietnam.

For further information or clarification, you may contact your Veterans' Affairs Case Manager directly on 0800 483 8372, or e-mail veterans@nzdf.mil.nz Alternatively, you may make an appointment through PWMC/LHM RSA Reception on 568-5404 for one of our Support Team to discuss your circumstances and complete a short "Needs Assessment" form.
Support Team: Dennis Cheetham, Peter Gooch, and David Weston

AN ARMY OF NONE...

They were an Air Force family, but their youngest son could not grasp that fact.. Anytime someone asked what his father did, he'd say, "He's in the Army."

The father was forever telling him, "Stop telling people I'm in the Army!"

It finally seemed to hit home because on the admittance form for kindergarten, under "father's profession," the teacher wrote, "He doesn't know what his father does, but he's not in the Army."

AN OLD ARMY TRUISM...

Coffee tastes better if the latrines are dug downstream from the encampment.

A MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE AVAILABLE FROM YOUR SUPPORT SERVICES:

The LHMRSA Trustees in concert with the Executive have allocated funding from the Poppy Day fund to investigate to what extent members and their families are suffering from mental illness and how the LHMRSA can be of assistance to them. It has been acknowledged for some time that mental health issues are on the rise with the last Government budget allocating many millions of dollars to attack the problem.

The LHMRSA has established a relationship with local counsellors who have proven very effective in assisting members in alleviating some of the issues.

This is a new initiative within the LHMRSA but we need your help. We are not medical experts in this field, but we are prepared to seek the help and advice from those who are.

If you and/or your family, or if you know of members and their families who may need our assistance, then please in all confidence make contact with a support committee member. Your discussions will be completely in confidence and if we can help, we will.

If you are a veteran already dealing with VANZ and are having to wait a long time to see an appropriate professional, please make contact, and if we can speed up the process we will.

Please phone the LHMRSA Support Team on 568-5404 and leave your contact details with the office.

NEED SOME HELP? CONTACT OUR SUPPORT SERVICES:

The Lower Hutt Memorial RSA offers support services for all Returned and Service members (or their widow / widower, spouse, children, or dependant) and they can apply for a grant for assistance with:

- Doctors' Visits and Prescriptions
- Dental
- Optical
- Hearing Aids
- Specialist Visits
- Funeral Expenses
- As well as home and hospital visits there are a number of Home Help services available too

If you need support, financial or otherwise, from the Support Team for any contingencies that Government agencies cannot assist you with, please phone 568-5404 and leave your contact details with the office.

IF YOU NEED SOMETHING DONE WRONG...

“Next time I send a damn fool, I go myself.”— Sgt Louis Cukela, reportedly said at the Battle of Belleau Wood, during World War One.

LHM RSA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 11:00am Sunday, 22nd September, 2019

The AGM of the LHM RSA will be held in the Anzac Lounge in the PWMC, 47 Udy Street, Petone. Only financial members of the LHM RSA can attend and there will be a Card Check at the door.

- Financial members of the LHM RSA who wish to stand for the 2019/20 Executive Committee of the Lower Hutt Memorial RSA must lodge their nomination on the requisite form that is available from the PWMC Reception Desk. Completed forms must be signed by the Nominee, Proposer and Secunder, and inserted into the designated Ballot Box at the Reception Desk. Incomplete forms will be considered non-compliant and therefore invalid. Nominations close at 5:00pm on Friday, 6th September, 2019.
- Any Notice of Motion needs to be with the President in a sealed envelope no later than 5:00pm on Friday 6th September, 2019.

AGENDA

Apologies

Minutes of the 2018 AGM

Reports: President; Support Services; Darts Adjunct; Trustees; Financial

Notices of Motion

Election of Executive Officers

General Business

Tea and Coffee will be available prior to the meeting – and there will be the “President’s Shout” at the conclusion of the AGM.

‘ARMISTICE DAY-100’ STREET BANNERS... Yours for \$5 (Limited supply)



In recognition of our valued association, the Hutt City Council has ‘gifted’ the LHM RSA the commemorative street banners marking 100 years since the Armistice of World War One.

Worth well over \$75, these RSA banners are made of top quality material by Flagmakers Ltd and measure 183cm (6ft) X 89cm (2ft 11in) and are collectable items for your den or your own flag pole.

Be advised; there is only a limited supply. The banners will be available at our AGM and Friday night meetings, or until supply runs out.

