

ARMY FIREFIGHTERS HELP COMBAT WILDFIRES IN NORTH AMERICA

by Luz Baguioro, Public Affairs Manager – Joint Forces New Zealand

Eight Army firefighters and one from the Air Force deployed in early August to help contain the massive wildfires raging in parts of the United States and Canada.

Brigadier John Boswell, the Land Component Commander, said the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) sent three firefighters to the United States and six to Canada.

The NZDF personnel form part of the teams deployed by Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ), in response to requests for assistance from United States and Canadian authorities.

“We always stand ready to lend a hand to a friend who’s in trouble,” Brigadier Boswell said.

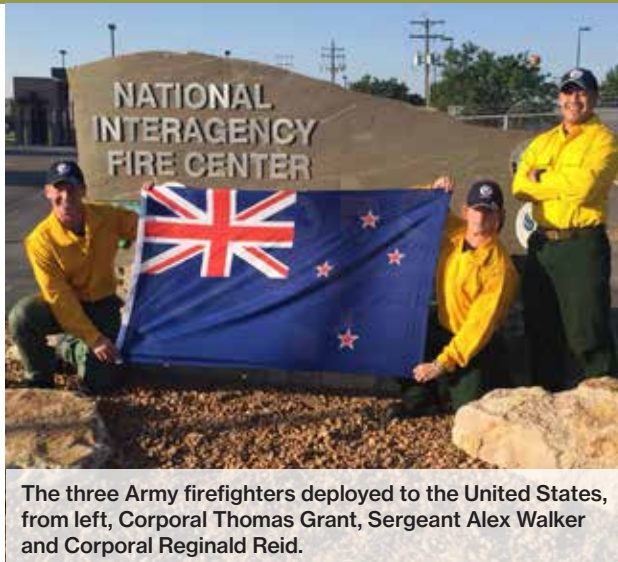
“Our firefighters are highly skilled and experienced. They are regularly called upon for emergencies in New Zealand and overseas, and while controlling extensive blazes is demanding work, their skills will make a significant contribution to the massive coalition effort to battle the fires.”

Cal Fire, California’s firefighting agency, appointed the NZDF firefighters deployed to the United States as Task Force Leaders to manage between 60 and 100 firefighters who are trying to suppress the Carr Fire. The fire has burned more than 170,000 acres and destroyed about 1800 structures so far.

Sergeant Alex Walker, who is leading the NZDF firefighting team in the United States, said they were all looking forward to support the multinational effort.

“It is a great opportunity to show that we are an asset not just in New Zealand but also internationally.”

“Working as part of a multinational team, especially with the Australians, is a great development opportunity for us,” Sergeant Walker said.



The three Army firefighters deployed to the United States, from left, Corporal Thomas Grant, Sergeant Alex Walker and Corporal Reginald Reid.

Corporal Thomas Grant said the deployment to the United States was his second overseas since he joined the Army as a firefighter in 2011.

“It’s an opportunity to help people, which is why I decided to join the Army, and showcase our skills,” said Corporal Grant, who was one of 10 NZDF firefighters who helped combat bushfires in northwest Tasmania in January and February 2016.

Fellow Army firefighter Corporal Reginald Reid said their training and experience had equipped them to deal with potentially challenging scenarios in the fire zones.

“Every fire is different and the situation on the ground changes every hour. But we’ve got heaps of training and experience in dealing with large bushfires and I am looking forward to the challenge.”

More than 13,000 firefighters are battling the estimated 90 bushfires raging across 14 states in the northwestern part of the United States. In northern California alone, the fire has scorched nearly 600,000 acres, killed seven people, destroyed more than 1000 homes and displaced more than 50,000 people.

In Canada, authorities have recorded 1,085 wildfires since the fire season began on 1 April, burning more than 173,000 acres of woodland.

A Message From **CHIEF OF ARMY**



This is my last Army News article as the Chief of Army and I will hand over the hoe and korowai to the next Chief of Army on the Ngati Tumatauenga marae on Monday 10 September.

Many years ago I was desperate to join the Army as a teenager, succeeded on my third attempt and since then I have had an incredible amount of experiences. Those experiences have covered the entire spectrum, from bloody fantastic to downright shit scared and miserable. Throughout it all, what carried me through the good and bad times was my family and fellow soldiers.

From my first experience of commanding a platoon of infantry, to a troop of NZSAS soldiers and then finally to leading the Army, I have been humbled by the many soldiers, NCOs, WOs, officers and civilians who have supported me throughout my 34 years of service. To you all, past and present can I simply say thank you; without your support I would not have been the leader and person I am today.

I wish you all the very best of soldiering – if you look after yourself and look after your mates then our Army and Defence Force will continue to be world class with mana.

Onward and Who Dares Wins

Major General Peter Kelly
Chief of Army

ARMY NURSES ACROSS THE AGES IMMORTALISED IN ART



From left: Major Hayley Claridge with a portrait of herself in WW1 nursing uniform, Captain Lauren Miller with a portrait of Lieutenant Majken Margetts in WW2 uniform, Major Debbie Cromie with the painting depicting Captain Megan Shaw in Vietnam-war era uniform, Major Ian Barrett with himself in the uniform he wore in East Timor, and Lieutenant Jolie Colliar with a contemporary portrait of Major Vanessa Leigh.

Artist and Army reservist Matt Gaudie has completed five paintings to mark the centenary of the New Zealand Army’s Royal New Zealand Nursing Corps. The paintings, which depict current serving nursing officers in period uniforms, have been presented to the New Zealand Defence Force’s Chief Nursing Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Lee Turner. The Corps has yet to decide where to hang the paintings.

The New Zealand Army has officially included nurses since World War One, although a small team of New Zealand nurses served with the British Nursing Service in South Africa before that.

Since WW1 the Army’s Nursing Officers have served in every major conflict New Zealand has been involved in. More than 500 nurses served in WW1, and more than 600 nurses joined the World War Two effort, serving in the Pacific, Egypt, England, Greece, Crete, Syria, Tunisia and Italy.

In 1953 the New Zealand Army Nursing Service became the Royal New Zealand Nursing Corps, and the first RNZNC Officer was later sent to Vietnam to work with the Australians at Vung Tau. In 1991 New Zealand sent a medical team to the Gulf War, and RNZNC Officers have served throughout the world on various deployments since then.