

TOD 13 JULY 2019

Gun to be removed for two-year repair

Eltham

Kris Boulton

Don't be alarmed if you notice Eltham's large World War I gun missing - it's just getting a makeover.

The Krupp field gun is a WWI trophy located on Bridge St in Eltham and will soon be removed and restored by a group from the New Zealand Antique and Historical Arms Association (NZAHAA) - a project the organisation estimates will take two years.

NZAHAA member Dave Crompton said most towns around the country had memorabilia from the world wars but most of it had ended up being disposed of as it had worn out over time.

"It needs saving otherwise it'll just rust away," Crompton said.

"We think it's worth saving for future generations. It's a memento that is in recognition of those who served. The Government bought it back for a reason so we need to preserve history."

The gun still has a distinctive hole in the top right of its shield and its capture is credited to the NZ Division on November 5, 1918. It was later gifted to the Eltham Borough Council in 1920 and was once situated near the grandstand at Taumata Park.

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NZAHAA member Dave Crompton

The gun travelled back to NZ with returning troops on HMNZT 293, the Arawa, leaving London docks on October 5, 1919.

Since returning to the country the gun is claimed to have been buried before WWII in order to keep it from Japanese hands and then exhumed in October 1983.

Woodwork was replaced some time after and it was put back on display at Beck Helicopters, then on the main road in the middle of Eltham, before finding a more permanent home on Bridge St.

It's the first restoration the NZAHAA has done but it has worked out a plan and taken loads of photos in preparation for the task, which will be carried out at Hoopers



Restoration on the Krupp field gun on Bridge St in Eltham will take about two years.

MAREE LIDDINGTON

Engineering in Kakaramea.

Eltham Community Board chair, Maree Liddington said in an emailed statement people shouldn't be alarmed if they noticed it was missing.

"The field gun will be taken off site for the work to be carried out and many hours will be put in to stripping, cleaning and refurbishing it before final presentation back to the Eltham Community," Liddington said.

"An important part of the agreement is the degree of restoration, which applies to general rust and ageing but any 'battle scars' will remain visible.

"It seems fitting that just over one hundred years after the end of World War I, that a German field gun gifted to the township of Eltham in recognition of the services given by our soldiers is about to undergo restoration."