

ESTABLISHED 1934  
**NEW ZEALAND PERMANENT FORCE OLD COMRADES  
 ASSOCIATION (INC)**

**Secretary.(John Rout)**  
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 WEB SITE - [www.riv.co.nz/rnza/](http://www.riv.co.nz/rnza/)

## NEWSLETTER No. 115

**September 2002**

**ROUTINE ORDERS**

**LAST POST:**

H.G. (Lofty) Bigg-Wither Suddenly on July 2<sup>nd</sup> 2002 in Kaitaia.

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS:**

Capt Trevor Higginson  
 Joyce Hankey

to: 53A Fields Parade, ALBANY  
 to: House 25, The Falls Estate, 94 Boundary Rd, Tikipunga,  
 WHANGAREI.

Maj R.G. Stephens

to: 23A Karina Crescent, BLENHEIM ( Got this wrong in the last  
 News Letter, sorry major).

Cap S.H. Bryant  
 Col Tom O'Reilly  
 Tony Pawlowski  
 Capt Mike Dakin

to: 9 Masonic Close, 25 Clausen Street, PALMERSTON NORTH.  
 to: 85 Oakwood Avenue, Maryhill, DUNEDIN.  
 to: 46 Burnham Street, Seatoun, WELLINGTON.  
 to: 1 Harbelle Close, Mayfield, TAURANGA

**NEW MEMBERS**

Mr B.C. (Barry) Cook  
 Mr Ron Fowell

18 Maahutaupoke Place, St Andrews, HAMILTON  
 21 Dunkeld Place, St Andrews, New South Wales 2566, AUSTRALIA.

**NEW LIFE MEMBER(On reaching the age of Eighty)**

Mrs Jackie Partner

**FROM THE EDITOR**

**2002 REUNION IN TAUPO**

The annual get together is to be held in Taupo over the weekend 1 to 3 Nov 2002. The programme of events is as follows:

**FRIDAY 1 NOV:**

**1600hrs.** Gather at the Taupo RSA - Horomatangi Street

**SATURDAY 2 NOV:**

**1000hrs.** Annual General Meeting at the **SPA HOTEL** Spa Road.

**Afternoon.** Free time.

**1800hrs.** Pre-dinner drinks at the **Bowling Club.**

**1900hrs.** **REUNION DINNER at the Bowling Club.**

**Dress:** **Gentlemen:** Informal: Jacket & Tie, Lounge Suit or appropriate uniform.  
 Medals and Decorations to be worn.

**Ladies:** Semi-formal

**Wine:** You will be able to purchase wine, for consumption during the dinner, from the Bowling Club bar. Port for the toasts will be supplied by the association.

**SUNDAY 3 NOV:**

**1000hrs.** Church Parade in the **SPA HOTEL LOUNGE** which is the historic meeting house "Tiki O te Tamamutu". The service will be conducted by the Rev Derm Buchanan the Taupo RSA Padre.

Medals etc to be worn.

After the Church Parade "One for the Road in the Spa Hotel Dining Room.

**Afternoon.** Disperse.

**NOTES:**

1. By November the Spa Hotel will be operating under a new owner. For those who elect to stay at the Spa there things will be no change from last year. We are not sure at this time if an evening meal will be available on the Friday night. The new owner intends to open up the large bar and a Bistro meal may be available. Please indicate on the Registration Form if you would like Dinner at the Spa on Friday night. We will inform you if it is not available when we know what is happening.
2. Breakfasts will not be available at the Spa this year. You will need to take your own Breakfast food or make other arrangements.
3. Accommodation Costs at the SPA HOTEL are as follows:
 

Studio Units:	Single \$30 per night (8 Studio Units still available)
	Double \$50 per night.
Chalets:	Double \$80 per night and any extras \$10 each a night.
	(7 Chalet Units still available)

We normally fill the all the Studio units, for these it will be a case of first in first served.

**REGISTRATION.**

**IF YOU ARE GOING TO ATTEND THE REUNION PLEASE FILL IN THE REGISTRATION FORM ON THE LAST PAGE OF THIS NEWS LETTER AND RETURN IT TO "THE SECRETARY. PO BOX 72 140., PAPA KURA" BY FRIDAY THE 27<sup>TH</sup> OF SEPTEMBER.**

**GOVERNMENT SUPERANNUATION FUND AND THE NZ GOVERNMENT SUPERANNUITANTS ASSN' (GSF/GSA)**

Expanding on the GSF/GSA article advised in News Letter 111, membership of the GSA is also open to the following:

- a. Spouses of annuitants.
- b. Surviving spouses of deceased annuitants.
- c. Defence personnel who have taken release under the 1985 scheme up to the closure of the GSF scheme in 1992 and have opted for COLA adjusted deferred option annuity, payable at age 55 or 60. Membership applies to spouses or surviving spouses.
- d. Defence personnel who have taken release as in c. and either left their contributions in that scheme or opted to maintain their contributions. Membership for spouse or surviving spouse applies.
- e. Payment of the Assn' subscription differs. As a deferred option retiree, no interim annuity is available for deduction at source. However, payment of \$11 can be made annually to the appropriate Branch covering the area of residence. This also applies to a member's spouse, should they elect to become a member. A surviving spouse would pay \$5.50. The other alternative would be a Bank Debit Authority, annually. Most Citizens Advice Bureaux will have details of provincial GSA secretaries for contact purposes. If that source cannot provide a contact apply to the NZGSA National Office, P.O. Box 5255 Wellington or Fax 04 473 7431 or email [rodga@xtra.co.nz](mailto:rodga@xtra.co.nz) the office is not manned full time. When you make contact please be sure to state that you are a DEFERRED OPTION RETIREE or the spouse of the retiree. You will need to give your Pension number. Surviving spouses have their own pension number.

If you are drawing a pension from the Government Super Fund, the GSF/GSA is your watchdog to ensure the Government of the day keep their greedy fingers out of the fund. It is not compulsory to join the GSA however, it does cost money to run it and your small contribution will help.

#### CAN YOU HELP

Allen Glasson from Ashburton is researching his Great Uncle – Norman Glasson. Norman served during WWI in the 7<sup>th</sup> Battery and the Divisional Ammunition Column. Allen is looking for good photographs of these units in action. If you can help email [Aglasson@electash.co.nz](mailto:Aglasson@electash.co.nz) or send your info to the NZPFOCA Secretary.

Maria Zanier is trying to locate or hear news of LIDIA ZOTTI. Lidia, an Italian, married a New Zealand Soldier in 1947 and left that year to live in NZ. Unfortunately Lidia's married name is not known. Maria's email address is [caccia8@vtown.com.au](mailto:caccia8@vtown.com.au) or you can pass info onto the NZPFOCA Secretary.

#### ARMY LAUNCHES

Brig Les Wright has supplied an article that was in an RNZAF Marine Section News Letter. The article is about the Launches used by the Army prior to, during and after WWII.

The New Zealand Permanent Air Force (formed in 1923 as a branch of the Army) acquired its launches by 1930, when the 8.5m (28ft) W2 was built in Auckland by Charles Bailey & Son. Late in 1939 a 19.5m (64ft) high-speed launch of the type used by the RAF for air sea rescue and target towing was delivered to the RNZAF by the British Power Boat Co, Hythe England. (The RNZAF was established 1/4/1937). Based at Hobsonville, and eventually not named, this vessel had three 500bhp petrol engines and a top speed of 38 knots. The cost was shared equally by the airforce and army. The army used it for towing targets for the Auckland Coastal Defence Batteries. It was also a regular visitor to Wellington and Lyttelton towing targets. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of June 1940 she took part in the rescue of Niagara survivors after she hit a mine off the east coast of Northland.

In about 1935 the RNZA planned to have a launch built for target towing purposes, but were later persuaded to share a high speed craft with the RNZAF. This standard RAF-type rescue launch was ordered late in 1938 and delivered soon after the start of WWII, late in 1939. Costs were split equally between army and airforce and the army use was for coastal battery target towing. This craft was based at Hobsonville and does not appear to have a name.

At the end of WWII some of the coastal gun batteries remained in commission. In the Auckland area a launch was needed to tow targets and to carry personnel and stores between Waiheke Island, Motutapu Island and the Torpedo Bay wharf, Devonport. The navy was asked late in 1945 for a surplus HDML. This was approved in Jan 1946 and HDML 1185 was converted by the dockyard, handed over to the army in March 1946 and renamed Bombardier. With a towing bit fitted Bombardier carried out her tasks for 9 Coast Regiment Auckland. In November 1953 she was delivered to Wellington where she carried out target towing duties for 10 Coast Regiment. This visit lasted 7 weeks. Bombardier made three more visits to Wellington to assist with CMT Training in November 1954, March 1956 and March 1957. RNZAF and RNZN Crews delivered Bombardier to and from Wellington, these crews had the necessary out of harbour qualifications. The RNZAF Marine Section also co-operated with the army towing targets with vessel no' W275. Most of this towing was for live shoots in the Whangaparaoa area and for night shoots off Fort Cautley in the Rangitoto channel early in the 1950s. The writer of this article Roy Mitchel, ex RNZAF Marine Fitter reports that the Coastal Gunners were pretty good shots.



Bombardier's dimensions were 72ft long with a beam of 15.8ft. She was twin screw and was powered by two Grey Marine Diesel Two Stroke Engines. Total Horsepower was 330bhp and with a speed of 10 to 12 knots. Many Old Comrades will well remember the Bombardier.

#### FROM THE WEBSITE(Webmaster Catherine Rivers)

Website Address [www.riv.co.nz/rnza/](http://www.riv.co.nz/rnza/)

A reminder that Catherine will be taking a computer to Taupo in Nov so that those who have not managed to see our Website can do so.

For those who are interested, here a couple of Websites worth a visit

[www.tomcohoon.com](http://www.tomcohoon.com)

This site will be of interest to WWII soldiers who were in at the end in Trieste. The site is called the "Old Soldiers Home" and has been set up by Tom Cohoon a US serviceman who served in Trieste with the Occupying Force. The site is in the process of being rebuilt but is worth the visit.

[www.oldoppos.co.uk](http://www.oldoppos.co.uk)

This is a site where old service personnel can log in to request information on long lost friends. Although the site was started in the UK it is now branching out to include NZ service personnel.

#### FROM AND ABOUT MEMBERS

**Barry Calder** is to move to Taupo shortly and hopes to attend the November reunion.

**Les Pye** has supplied a press clipping about Gilbert Ingster and Tony Cappiello who assisted with the transport of materials to the Gun emplacement sites round the Marlborough Sounds. As 14 and 17 year olds these two were crew on the Scows Pearl Casper and Kohi. For the first time in 60 years, they were visiting Blumine Island, one of the sites in Queen Charlotte Sound. Do we have any members who served on these Gun Positions we would be interested in hearing from you if you did.

**Matron(Retd) Pam Miley.** Although not one of us Pam will be remembered by many, those who served in Vietnam and others. On ANZAC Day Pam was in Hamilton, from Rotorua, to address the Waikato Civic Parade. She also attended the Dawn Parade and after the service was thrilled to meet and chat with a number of ex-gunners, including our president Bob Blankly. Pam is looking extremely well.

**Col Tom O'Reilly.** When Tom was in East Timor last year he was asked by a number of UN Agencies if he was interested in working with them and was offered a job with UNCHR. As a result of this Tom retired from the Army at the end of March this year and started work in Afghanistan in April. He is now in Jalalabad just north of the Tors Boras where he says it is hot in more ways than one. Good Luck Tom.

#### THE GUN

By Wally Ruffell

Continued From NL 114

As guns became longer they needed greater longitudinal strength. Instead of a series of comparatively short 'hoops,' from 1885 guns were made by substituting a number of longer steel tubes. A typical example of the new construction is shown in Fig. 132, which features the BL 6-in gun thirteen of which were purchased by the New Zealand Government in 1885 for installation in the defences of the main ports.

These guns, made by the Elswick Ordnance Company (EOC), owned by Sir WG Armstrong, proved an unfortunate purchase. Practice in the UK revealed a weakness in the chase. An Ordnance Committee recommended the guns be returned to the UK for 'chase hooping.' However, the Commandant NZ Defence Forces, Lt Col FJ Fox, in 1893 stated that with the exception of three, one each at Wellington, Dunedin, and Westport, the 6-in guns were secondary armament (main being BL 8-inch), and ".... will be quite sufficiently powerful when fired with reduced charges." He therefore

recommended that the three mentioned above be returned. As the cost was to be 700 pounds sterling per gun no further action was taken.

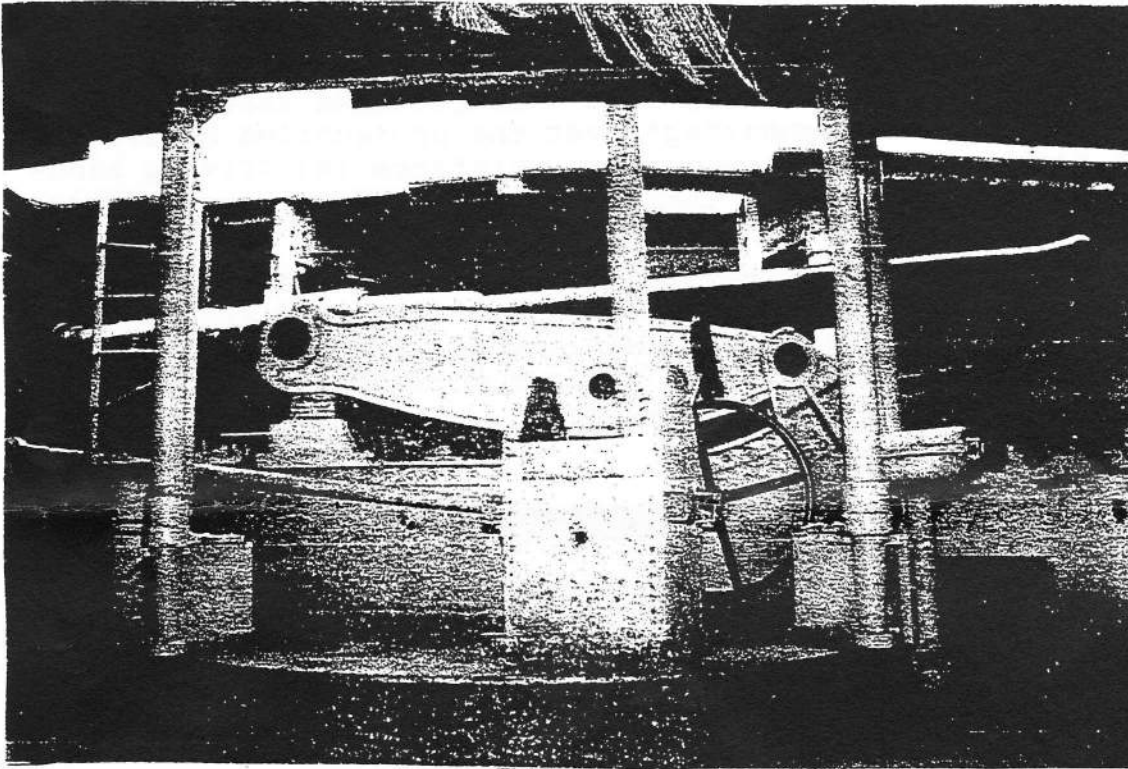


Fig. 132.

BL 6-in 5-ton Elswick Ordnance Co. (Armstrong) gun on disappearing carriage. Equipment is situated at Fort Jervois, Ripapapa Island, Lyttelton Harbour.

Lt Col Fox, referring to the weakness of the guns, stated "... blame cannot be attached to any individual in regard to these guns."

Yet one wonders to-day how the supplier of a faulty product could get away with demanding payment from the customer for its repair. Sir William Armstrong, having been trained as a lawyer, had no doubt catered for that eventuality!

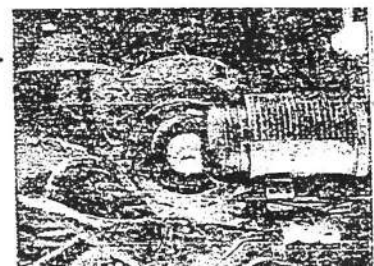
Two pieces are displayed outside the Army Memorial Museum, Waiouru. They came from Fort Fort Kelburne at Ngahauranga, near Wellington.

Purchase of the BL 6-in and 8-in equipments was prompted by the 'second Russian scare' of 1885, when the New Zealand Government realised the RML guns bought at the time of the 'first Russian scare' of 1878 were obsolete and would have been no match for warships armed with the latest BL pieces. Indeed, they had not even been mounted because when they arrived in the country in 1879 the 'scare' had passed. The N.Z. 'she's right' attitude is older than you think!

Like the 6-inch the 8-inch guns were also made by Armstrong. Despite the stated intention of an Ordnance Committee in the UK to switch to all-steel construction after 1882, the RGF BL 8-in Mk 7 made after that year and which closely resembled the EOC versions received in New Zealand, had 'A' tubes of steel but others of wrought iron.

Although guns first produced by EOC were fitted with cup obturators those supplied to New Zealand had parallel-screw slow-coned obturators See Fig. 132A.

The breech mechanism depicted in Fig. 132A. Fig. 132A is fitted to a 6-in gun at Fort Taiaroa, Taiaroa Heads, Dunedin, restored for World War 2. Hence the soldier.

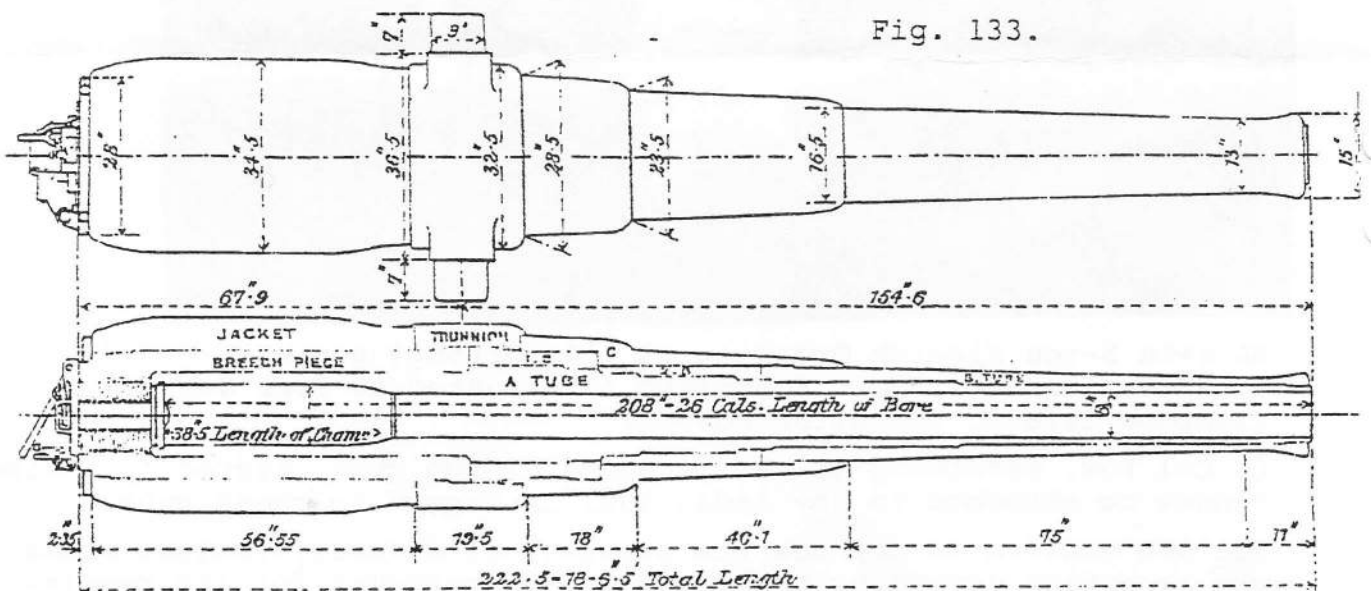


The first 8-inch gun was mounted at Summit Battery, (later named Fort Cautley), North Head, Devonport, in 1887.

Both 6-in and 8-in guns were maintained during World War 1 but some were showing their age, especially the North Head South Battery gun, that commonly used for practise shoots by the Auckland Garrison Artillery. The late WO1 Nelson Oram RNZA recalled that as a TF Gunner he had to fit 'bands augmenting' over the projectiles before loading during a shoot in 1910. They were to reinforce the driving bands which otherwise could not fulfill their proper function owing to excessive wear in the bore!

The EOC guns were finally retired in 1925 but two at Tairaroa Heads, near Dunedin, were restored for service in 1941 and were said to have performed satisfactorily. Fortunately they were not called upon to fire any shots in anger. Even with a trained detachment it took about 1½ minutes to get a single round away!

Fig. 133.



BL 8-inch 13-ton Mk 7 gun

Gun data:

	CHARGE	PROJECTILE	MV	RANGE
BL 6-in	Full 50 lbs	100 lbs	Not known	7200 (powder)
	Red 34 "			8000 (cordite)
BL 8-in	Full 110 "	210	1970 fs	8400
	Red 75 "		1690 fs	

The guns were also calibrated and proved for cordite but no details are available.

TO BE CONTINUED