

NEW ZEALAND PERMANENT FORCE OLD COMRADES ASSN INC

PO BOX 33 710, TAKAPUNA, AUCKLAND 9

NEWSLETTER No 55

September 1987

A Registered Publication

LAST POST: 1535 Lt Col W.E. (Wally) Colton, 23 Jun 87, at Auckland.
1679 Capt H. (Harry) Dudfield JP, (former MP for Gisborne), 22 Jul 87
at Wellington.

30049 Lt Col E.L. (Ted) Taverner MBE, 30 Aug 87, at Perth, Australia.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS: J.G. Murray to Box 76, Houhora, Northland.

Capt C.J. Hayden to 1/4 Kowhai Rd, Mairangi Bay, Auckland 10.

F.D. Foley to 92 Glanvar Rd, Torbay, Auckland 10.

Major B.K. Hendl to 29 Guthrie St, Lower Hutt.

WO2 L.G. Jackson to 2/21 Berwyn Ave, Takanini.

F.M. Lupo to 52 Oakleigh St, Maungaraki, Lower Hutt.

J.R. McMeiken to 19 Aramoana Ave, Devonport, Auckland 9.

D. Morgan to 26 Pitoitoti St, Otai'anga, Paraparaumu.

Major T. O'Reilly to Fort Dorset Officers Mess, Seatoun, Wellington.

A.E. Philpot to Alexandra Hospital, 100 West End Rd, Westmere, Ak 2.

Sgt B.L. Rigden to 161 Bty, Papakura Camp.

E.J. Ryan to 11 Mountfield Tce, Mt Albert, Auckland 3.

NEW MEMBERS: 1740 W.G. (Bill) Hopkins, 3/39 Oriana Ave, Lynfield, Ak 4.

1970 A.W. (Karl) Karlsson, 84 Bourke St, Palmerston North.

40049 A.M. (Alan) Young, 18 Sylvan St, Hillmorton, Christchurch 2
(Associate).

RESIGNATION: W.G. Mac Donald.

STRUCK OFF STRENGTH FOR FAILURE TO PAY DUES (RULE 4f):

H.B. Adams

Sgt G. Hays

WO2 G.D. McElroy

Sgt R.P. Barrett

A.E. Hellyer

WO2 J.W. Niwa

Bdr M.E. Bolton

Bdr K.E. Hinni

Major M. Pearce

D.C. Gunn

Lt L.H. Hughes

E.J. Quinn

D.E. Harrison

Capt G.C. Lough

R.W. Smith

Sgt C. Waitere

K.D. Williams

AMENDMENT TO NEWSLETTER No 52: Add to apologies for non-attendance
at 1986 Annual General Meeting: F.M. Lupo.

AFFILIATION WITH N.Z. ARMY ASSOCIATION. We have received from Col
James Brown CVO, President, an invitation to affiliate with the N.Z.
Army Association Inc for a once-only payment of \$20. I feel that we
should carefully consider this offer which can be of significant
benefit to both our Associations. I therefore give notice that at the
Annual General Meeting on 14 Nov 87 I will formally move that the
NZPFOCA affiliate with the NZ Army Association. W.L. Ruffell, Hon. Sec.

REUNION REMINDER: The last two pages of this Newsletter include the
reunion registration form which is to be returned by 31 Oct 87.
Include money for dinner only (\$18 per person.)

NEWS FROM AROUND AND ABOUT: Vic Svendsen and Ted O'Neill have both
retired, i.e. for the last time.

Jim Gilberd reports from Hawkes Bay that h's 'flock' is in good order;
Ivan Wilson busy as a City Councillor and training his trotters. He is
also President of the HB Trotting Club.

Ian and Rene McLean are keeping well.

Alex (Farouk) MacDonald is much better but still on medication. For

obvious reasons he has postponed his annual trip to Fiji!

Gordon Morley is fit and well.

Colin Cochran and his good lady have just returned from a holiday in Australia, one of the highlights of which was a visit to Fort Scratchley, Newcastle, N.S.W., which is being restored. He has given us a very interesting booklet describing the fortifications which has been printed by the city council. Some of our local bodies could very well take a lesson from it.

Dozey Murray has retired from the Police and has bought a house in Pukenui, a little fishing village overlooking the Houhora Harbour. He reports the fishing and the climate marvellous, and sends a special invitation to any ex-9 Coast Old Comrade to call in. Obtain directions from the local Post Office or Police Station

AN APPRECIATION

Captain Richard John Healey MBE mid, late RNZA (Retd)

Many old Gunners will have learned that Dick Healey died peacefully on 5 June 1987; he was 87. He had been a resident at the home of the Little Sisters of the Poor in Dunedin over the last six months of his life.

Dick had a long and distinguished career in the RNZA spanning a period of 37½ years. He joined the Regiment in Wellington in 1917, was appointed a Driver in the Field Artillery Section, and carried out his early training at the Alexandra Barracks, Buckle Street. Among the instructors at that time was the famous Lieutenant 'Blazer' Wilson, formerly RA, who was the Riding Master, and whom Dick told me instilled the principles of military riding and driving in a very forceful manner. Dick became one of that special group of horsemen that carried on the tradition of military equitation to both Regulars and Territorials.

After serving in Wellington he was posted in 1923 to the RNZA Cadre at Invercargill where he remained for eight years. His next move was to Dunedin where he spent most of his service.

On the outbreak of World War 2 he served in many appointments within New Zealand as our Army expanded.

In 1942 he embarked for overseas service and joined 5 Field Regiment early in 1943 as RSM. During the Italian campaign he was commissioned in the field, and posted to HQRA. Later he became Intelligence Officer 5 Field Regiment, and served in that capacity until the war ended. In recognition of gallant and distinguished service in Italy he was Mentioned in Despatches (London Gazette 24 Aug 1944).

On his return to New Zealand in 1945 he was posted to Dunedin in the appointment of Officer in charge Central Battery and Area Quartermaster until his retirement in 1954. He was awarded an MBE in 1949. On retirement he returned to civilian life for the first time since 1917, and worked for the Bank of New Zealand as a Security Officer. His other interests were the Otago Gunners Association and the Returned Services Association.

Dick became a member of our Association prior to World War 2, and served as a Vice President and Otago/Southland Representative for many years. He was a Life Member of our Association.

In his later years the annual highlight for him was our reunion at Taupo; he attended every reunion from 1972 to 1985 until declining health made it impossible for him to be with us.

Outside his Army interests he was a duck-shooter of some renown, and also enjoyed salmon fishing. The local A & P Society honoured him some years ago with Life Membership. He was particularly interested in light harness events, having his last drive from the 'box' seat at the age of 80 I understand.

Dick's wife Doris predeceased him many years ago. However, he continued to live in the family home at St Kilda until his hospitalisation earlier this year.

To his son and daughter Beverly we extend our sympathy at the loss of a father.

J.G. Gilberd.

UNOFFICIAL HISTORY 2

HOW THE RNZA 'LOST' THEIR COLLAR BADGES

The events described in this article occurred long before the integration of regular and territorial forces. Therefore please note that the term 'RNZA' refers specifically to regular force.

On the khaki service dress (SD) uniforms issued prior to World War 2 all Artillery Officers, both Regular and Territorial, wore collar badges similar to those worn to-day. Territorial WOs, NCOs and Gunners wore 'grenades universal', so-called because they were worn by certain other troops also, e.g. Engineers. However, RNZA, i.e. Regular Force WOs, NCOs, and Gunners wore no collar badges.

The reason, according to peculiar types who 'didn't like the Artillery', was that the RNZA had lost their guns at the Battle of Colenso during the South African War, and had been stripped of their badges as a mark of Royal displeasure. Why the Officers had escaped this disgrace no one seemed to notice, and as no lectures on Regimental history, customs, or traditions were ever given in those days, RNZA men taunted with the 'loss' were unable to refute it. Many remained silent because they had heard the story so often they believed it!

There is evidence that Officers, too, believed the story for Sir Stephen Weir in a speech near Enfidaville in 1943 when he was CRA NZ Division, is credited with stating that as the RNZA had redeemed themselves during the campaign in Africa, their collar badges forfeited at Colenso were to be returned to them.

Despite the lack of an official history of the New Zealand Forces in South Africa, the allegation that RNZA lost guns or collar badges is not hard to 'shoot down.' For a start the South African War ended on 31 May 1902, but the New Zealand Permanent Artillery did not become Royal N.Z. Artillery until 15 October 1902. So how could the R.N.Z.A. have lost guns - or anything else - during the conflict?

Next, apart from three or four young Officers seconded to Royal Artillery batteries for experience, no NZ Permanent Artillerymen were actually posted to South Africa. The Permanent Force, still suffering from the effects of the 1888 Government retrenchment, was under strength, and every available man was required for station

duties or to instruct the Volunteers who were to form the Contingents for active service. The few who did get away went as Mounted Riflemen.

When the Battle of Colenso was fought on 15 December 1899, the only New Zealand troops in South Africa were members of the First Contingent - who were all Mounted Riflemen. Furthermore, they were located in the de Aar-Colesberg-Arundel area, several hundred kilometres from Colenso.

A battery of Hotchkiss machine guns manned by New Zealand Gunners arrived with the Second Contingent in January 1900, but except for one Officer included no NZ Permanent Artillerymen. This battery was short-lived because the guns possessed no advantage in range over the Boer Mausers, and were too heavy for the horses. It was soon disbanded, and the guns returned to store - not lost.

Later in the war a New Zealand BL 15-pr field battery was formed from Mounted Riflemen 'converted' to Gunners for the purpose. Equipped and trained by the Royal Artillery, this battery actually saw service with the Rhodesian Field Force - and it didn't lose any guns either.

Now let us look at uniforms. The RNZA had always adopted the same dress, badges, and accoutrements as the Royal Artillery, and likewise followed the same customs and traditions. With the old full-dress blue uniform which ceased to be worn in 1914, WOs, NCOs, and Men of both RA and RNZA wore grenades universal as collar badges, i.e. RNZA WOs, NCOs, and Men were still wearing them 12 years after the South African War ended, as official publications and photographs testify. Would they have been wearing them in 1914 had they 'lost' them in South Africa?

In 1902 when SD was introduced collar badges were authorised for Officers only. Look at old photographs of RA personnel taken before and after World War 1; Officers are wearing collar badges with SD, but WOs, NCOs, and Gunners are not. Look at photos of RNZA taken during the same period and you will see the same.

Eventually in 1924 the RA authorised the 'grenade universal' on SD for WOs, NCOs and Men, but in 1926 approved a grenade of different pattern. Then in 1928 they authorised a different one again. Why none was adopted by the RNZA in the meantime I do not know but it is not hard to guess. By the time the RA had made up their minds the cupboard in this country was bare - we were in the depths of the 'great depression'. The New Zealand public begrudged the regular soldier his very existence let alone new badges for his uniform - which apparently had not been needed for the preceding 30 years.

Since Colenso has featured in this story let us take a look at the battle. The two units involved, 14 and 66 Batteries RA, came into action in the open within rifle range of some concealed Boer trenches. They remained in action under a murderous rifle and shrapnel fire until they had expended all their ammunition, when the few still alive and unwounded were ordered to leave the gun position and fall back to cover. Several gallant attempts were later made to recover the guns but only resulted in more casualties. Two were eventually saved, and for conspicuous gallantry on this occasion six VCs and 19 DCMs were awarded. Far from being disgraced, both batteries were subsequently awarded honour titles, one being 'Colenso'. Neither do their histories record the loss of any collar badges.

The story of the RNZA 'losing' guns and collar badges was nothing more than a malicious fabrication - a product of small minds in a small Army inadequately educated.