

NEW ZEALAND PERMANENT FORCE OLD COMRADES ASSOCIATION INC

PO BOX 33 710, TAKAPUNA, AUCKLAND 9

NEWSLETTER No 57

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A registered publication

SUBSCRIPTIONS are now due. Remember subs paid in advance escape future increases. The sub will probably increase to \$4 for next year, so for example, if you pay now for 1988 and 1989 it will cost you \$6 only instead of \$7. To be financial to 31 Dec 1988

YOU OWE US \$

LAST POST: 1512 Captain E.R. (Did) Hancock, 12 Aug 87, at Christchurch (Life Member)
1823 Major R.H. (Bob) Manson, 22 Mar 88 at Auckland.
30463 Major H.A.L. (Les) Laing, 25 Mar 88, at Masterton.

GONE NO ADDRESS

Bdr R. Werahiko
W.G. Anderson
R.B. Anderson
Major H.A. Weatherhead
WO2 P.M. Siddall
Sgt I.S. Trott

LAST KNOWN LOCATION

16 Fd Regt, Papakura
CSO Hostel, Waiouru
5 Nelson Ave, Auckland 9
2 White Rd, Burnham
3 Fd Regt, Burnham.
3 Fd Regt, Burnham.

Anyone knowing the whereabouts of any of the abovenamed please inform Secretary

NEW MEMBERS: 384339 R. (Ron) Agnew, Box 715, Thames.

U37232 Lt Col R.L. (Ron) Cross, 5 Lochiel Rd, Remuera, Auckland.

RESIGNATION: 1736 C.T. (Cyril) Jarden (going overseas).

CHANGES OF ADDRESS: Major F.H. Gibbison to Box 35758, Browns Bay, Auckland 10.

Brig G.A. Hitchings OBE to 'Karingal' RD1, Matakana via Warkworth.

Lt Col A.R. Vail to 1175 Cameron Rd, Tauranga.

D.T. Barkle to Box 3102, Onerahi, Whangarei.

Major M.D. Beattie to Officer Cadet School, ATG, Private Bag, Waiouru.

H.G. Bigg-Wither to c/o P. Nilsson, Private Bag, Kaitaia.

AMENDMENT TO NEWSLETTER No 55: Appreciation Captain R.J. Healey para 5: Delete 1942, substitute 1941.

AMENDMENT TO NEWSLETTER No 56: Add to apologies for non-attendance at 1987 AGM: Brig J. Burns, Capt G.W. Blandford, J.H. Keen.

'B' BATTERY - 125th ANNIVERSARY: 'B' Battery will celebrate 125 years of service to the people of New Zealand and in particular the people of Otago and Southland on 22 July 1988.

To celebrate this event the members of 31 (B) Battery are planning to hold a weekend of activities coinciding with Labour Weekend (21-23 October) this year. These will culminate with a formal ball to be held in the Dunedin Town Hall on the Saturday night.

All past and present members of 'B' and her sister Batteries are invited to contact the Battery Office, phone 51099 Ext 838, or write to 31(B) Battery, 3 Fd Regt RNZA, PO Box 2045, Dunedin, for further information and registration forms.

Auckland members intending to take part may obtain same from Secretary, NZPFOCA.

'J' FORCE FIFTH NATIONAL REUNION will be held in Nelson in the Trafalgar Centre from 24 to 27 February 1989. For further info write to The Secretary, 'J' Force Reunion Committee, PO Box 221, Nelson.

N.Z. PERMANENT FORCE OLD COMRADES ASSN REUNION 1988: Our reunion will again be held in TAUPŌ 11-13 November 88, same venue as last year. Mark these dates on your calendar and **START PLANNING NOW!**

NEWS FROM AROUND AND ABOUT: If any of you wealthy people are contemplating buying a personalised car number plate at S302-50 (plus S22 to the makers), you won't be able to obtain one reading 'GUNNER'. That has been acquired by Bevan Culhane who retired last year from the appointment of RSM, 16 Fd Regt. But, Bevan, with a GUNNER number plate you cannot have an all-red car; you must now get the lower half painted blue to make it 'right and proper'!

James Horne operates the Montecillo Travel Lodge, 240 Spey St, Invercargill, postal address Box 141, phone 021 82503. He and his good lady, Aileen, will extend a warm welcome to any Old Comrades passing through.

Jerry Dunn writes that he is happily settled in Brisbane, and finds living far superior to that in Milford, Auckland, where he was previously domiciled. Among his recent Australian acquisitions he mentions a 1984 Falcon XE 4.1 GL Station Waggon, automatic transmission, air-conditioned, electronic ignition, tinted glass, only 45000 km on the 'clock' - for S11000. And the price of the same car in Godzone? At least double. And don't forget petrol is only around 57c a litre over there. Who's for Aussie!

On a visit in March to the Queen Elizabeth II Army Memorial Museum, Waiouru, I was pleased to see for the first time Colin Young's collection of models of artillery pieces on display. They are beautifully made and a credit to him. Some are poignant reminders of interesting full-sized pieces thoughtlessly scrapped by the Army over the years, and should be viewed by anyone who spares a thought for Regimental history.

Zig Schroder writes from 31 Robert Garrett St, Coffs Harbour, NSW 2450 that his patch has the best weather in Aussie - the winter is like summer in NZ. He extends the Welcome Mat to any of his old Gunner mates who may visit Aussie.

A Mr G.W. Frye, Box 175, Wascott, Wisconsin 54890, USA, **wishes** to contact Mr & Mrs Robert Hayman whose last address known to him was 37 Market Rd, via Green Island, Dunedin. Records indicate 223803 L Bdr Robert Williamd Richard Hayman who enlisted in Dunedin and who saw service in the Pacific during WW2 might be the man. If any member can assist please contact Secretary.

Major Matt Beattie has recently returned from a successful year at Command and Staff College, Fort Queenscliffe, Australia, and is now the Resident Chief Instructor at the Officer Cadet School, Army Training Group, Waiouru.

Lieutenant General Sir Richard Webb KBE CB and Lady Webb will be our Guests of Honour at the 1988 reunion.

Bill Sewell and Gordon Weaver have recently been on the sick list but we understand they are now OK. We hope they stay that way.

Over the week-end 9-10 April 16 Field Regiment RNZA hosted the 1988 Triennial RNZA Conference at Papakura Camp. The Commanding Officer, Lt Col Barry Dreyer kindly invited 15 retired Officers

and Warrant Officers of the Old Comrades Association to attend a Regimental Dinner on the Saturday night. Unfortunately, owing to last minute sickness and job commitments not all could attend, but those who did without exception acclaimed the function the highlight of the year. We are deeply grateful to the Regiment for according such an enjoyable opportunity for serving and retired Gunners to meet and exchange experiences, fight old battles over again etc.

Our Treasurer, Des O'Connor, leaves New Zealand in May for a five-month tour of Europe to include Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Italy, but probably not France as that country has recently barred entry to New Zealanders unless they possess visas. Des is intensely interested in opera, including the history and architecture of the opera houses, and will be spending some time studying the subject, especially in Italy, for which purpose he has joined the Italian Club in Auckland, and has become fluent in the language. While in Italy he intends also visiting some of the battlefields with which he became familiar during World War 2.

Des intends travelling in Europe, including Scandinavia, on a Eurail pass which he highly recommends as the most economical means of travel. For \$A1260 you may enjoy unlimited first class rail travel for three months - and you can sleep on the trains as the seats can be adapted for that purpose. The Eurail pass being intended for tourists cannot be obtained in Europe but can be purchased in USA, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. It cannot be used in the Iron Curtain countries.

Terry Transom has kindly agreed to carry out the duties of Treasurer while Des is away.

ORIGIN OF UNIT AND SUB-UNITS

By W.L.R.

THE DETACHMENT: The Royal Artillery at its inception in 1716 comprised two companies of a total strength of 10 Officers, 18 NCOs, and 160 Men. It could hardly be called a 'regiment' in any sense of the word.

In fact it was merely a pool of trained personnel who could be parcelled out in small groups to the Infantry to man battalion guns, or to raise 'trains of Artillery'. When so dispersed individuals were said to be 'detached' from their parent companies. Hence the squad manning a gun came to be known as a 'detachment'.

THE TROOP: When formed in 1793 the Royal Horse Artillery were regarded in the same light as the Cavalry they were intended to support. As the RHA tactical fire unit was roughly equivalent in size to a Cavalry Troop it was given the same title.

RHA troops were re-designated batteries after the Crimean War but one survives, The King's Troop RHA, so-named by HM King George VI. A picturesque link with the past, this troop retains its horses, 19th century uniforms, and 13-pr guns of World War 1 vintage. Its duties are mainly of a ceremonial nature.

When the Artillery Brigade was re-named 'Regiment' in 1938 the organisers divided it into six packets each of four guns; these packets were called 'troops' because the word '... had the right mounted ring.'

ANZAC DAY 1988: was a glorious day but a disappointingly small number of Old Comrades paraded in Takapuna, our Headquarters. Our special wreath made of permanent materials ^{made} some years ago by Henry Salt, was laid by Terry Transom. Stan Perrett, Drm Major of the local Silver Band, put on his usual faultless display.

REVEILLE: Prior to World War 2 at least one man on each main RNZA station or other establishment could blow the trumpet and bugle. When the word 'Reveille' appeared on Routine Orders Reveille was sounded - according to the music and instructions laid down in 'Trumpet and Bugle Sounds for the Army' the official manual. But today, even in the Service, it appears customary to print one thing but mean another.

To members still serving, in how many establishment do you read 'Reveille' in ROs but hear the Infantry Rouse over the public address system instead? I do trust you know the difference! We see a similar situation in 'civvy street;' frêquently on Anzac Day parades, funerals - including funerals with 'full military honours' - one sees 'Reveille' printed on the programme but hears the Rouse. How has this heresy crept in?

Here is my conclusion based on observations made in camps during World War 2, more particularly in what was then Central Military District. Reveille is the correct call to be sounded first thing in the morning for all arms. It is a stirring tune, written expressly for that purpose. However, it is long and hard to play, while the Rouse is short and comparatively easy - and therein lies the answer.

Bandsmen too 'tired' to learn the harder call prevailed upon Army authorities to let them substitute the easier. Thus in the course of time heresy became custom.

I am pleased to name at least one discerning civilian organisation which takes the trouble to be correct. The North Shore Crematorium has a very nice recording of Reveille which is played at old soldiers' funerals, i.e. when the programme reads 'Reveille' Reveille is sounded.

We like to be correct too. It should not be too much trouble for others to follow suit.

THE LIGHT GUN v. THE 25-pr

by W.L.R.

'Light' is the name given to the new British (made under license in Australia) 105-mm field guns, a number of which 'marched' in to 16 Field Regiment RNZA during a ceremony at Papakura Camp on Sunday 6 Dec 87 to which members of our Association were invited (see Newsletter No 56). Having examined one of the new guns I could not help comparing it with the 25-pr.

Although the 25-pr became a legend during World War 2 you will recall from my remarks in Newsletter No 54 that its calibre was dictated by a parsimonious Government rather than the operational needs of the Regiment. Also, other aspects of its design left much to be desired. Consequently at the end of the war Gunners were still seeking the kind of gun they had wanted before it started.

In 1952 I remember the Gunnery Staff at the School of Artillery, Larkhill, where I was then a student, spelling out the 25-pr's shortcomings, once again describing the type of field gun they considered essential for modern warfare. Very briefly it was to

have a calibre of around 3.7 ins (94 mm), and a range of at least 15,000 yards (13 716 metres). It had to be capable of firing at high angle (above 45° (800 mils)), with standard sighting gear, and without having to dig a hole for the trail. It had to have a much simpler sighting system than that of the 25-pr which was far too complicated, difficult to adjust, and which possessed inherent inaccuracies. The carriage had to be as robust but more versatile, e.g. capable of being easily broken down for carriage by air, and if possible no heavier than its predecessor. Clearly, to produce such an equipment a major research and development programme was foreseen.

But during the years immediately following the war finance for new defence projects was at a premium, so as an interim measure the British Army in 1960 (after a two-year trial period) adopted the Italian-made Model 56 105-mm pack howitzer firing the American 105-mm M1 shell. The New Zealand Army adopted the howitzer in 1964, and altogether in the late 1950s and early 1960s twenty-one other countries also adopted it following high-pressure salesmanship by the Italians who sent a highly-trained detachment to a number of countries to demonstrate their product.

However, the equipment satisfied only some of the criteria outlined at Larkhill: its extreme range of 10,000 metres fell far short of the minimum Gunner experts felt essential. A single layer could not lay the howitzer; two men were needed, using a system reminiscent of World War 1 equipments long since declared obsolete. The carriage lacked strength, to the extent that on long hauls at high speed it could not be towed but had to be carried on the back of a 3-ton truck. To be fair to the Italians the carriage was never designed to stand such treatment.

Concerning ammunition, the U.S. 105-mm M1 shell was not considered as lethal as the 25-pr. The latter is a very efficient mankiller indeed; on detonation it breaks up into about 500 splinters each of which will kill or maim a man (if he is within effective splinter range), plus a number of smaller fragments each of which will inflict a nasty wound. Some thought we would have been better off staying with the 25-pr.

Gunners saw the 105-mm howitzer as a good replacement for the ML 4.2-in mortar - and Light Batteries RA are still equipped with the former. They did not see it as a suitable successor to the 25-pr.

In the meantime, to replace the 'Sexton' (25-pr on Sherman chassis), in 1965 the Royal Horse Artillery were issued with a new British-made 105-mm SP (self-propelled) gun which they called the 'Abbot' in deference to its ecclesiastically-nicknamed forbears the 'Bishop' and 'Priest,' 25-pr on Valentine and U.S. 105-mm gun on Sherman chassis respectively. The gun was mounted on a derivative of the APC (armoured personnel carrier) FV430 series chassis. It had a range of 17,500 metres and fired a shell of significantly greater lethality than the U.S. 105-mm M1 at a maximum rate of 12 rounds per minute. Having given the RHA a gun of such power the British Army now set about providing the field artillery with one of similar performance. The light gun was the answer.

Development of the light gun began in 1966, the first user trials were held in 1971, the gun was formally accepted by the British Army three years later, and by 1975 had been issued to most RA units.

To be continued.