

NEW ZEALAND PERMANENT FORCE OLD COMRADES ASSN INC

BOX 33-710, TAKAPUNA, AUCKLAND 9

NEWSLETTER No 62

June 1989

A Registered Publication

SUBSCRIPTIONS: If you are up-to-date with your subscriptions please ignore the next paragraph.

To members over three years in arrears, i.e. owing \$13-50 or more, if you have not paid by 31 Aug 89 your names will appear in the September newsletter labelled "Struck off strength for failure to meet dues," in accordance with Rule 4 F.

To be financial to 31 Dec 89 you owe us \$.....

LAST POST: 1961 E.W. (Eric) Collett, 12 Apr 89, at Waiwera.

S.W. (Wally) Sherson, 18 May 89, at Hamilton.

1657 D.H. (Hugh) Black, 25 May 89, at Auckland.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS: Lt Col P.J. Calvert to 7 Wandeen Place, St Ives Chase, NSW 2075, Australia - from 20 Jul 89.

Sgt T.J. Hemi to Land Force Comd HQ, Private Bag, Takapuna.

Sgt P.L. McInerny to WOs and Sgts Mess, Private Bag, Papakura.

Major P.G. Monk to 156 McCormacks Bay Rd, Redcliffs, Christchurch.

Major L.J. Pye to 5A Moana Cres, Elenheim.

Major D.H. Rollic MBE to 336B Kapiti Rd, Paraparaumu Beach, Wgtn.

J.H. Smith to 1 Viola Place, Papakura.

Col R.H. Smith OBE to 45A Killarney Ave, Torbay, Auckland 10.

Major G.D. Stevenson to Highway 18, Coatesville, RD3, Albany.

R.M. Urquhart to 20 Ngaio Rd, Waikeanae.

GONE NO ADDRESS

LAST KNOWN LOCATION

R. Mather

Waikuru

A.N. Cameron

3 Eybank Rd, Manurewa.

E.L. Goldsmith

23 Creere Pt Rd, Orere Pt, Auckland.

R.R. Edmonds

Mandelay Ave, Nelly Bay, Magnetic Is
Queensland 4816, Australia.

Bdr H. Meeuwssen

3 Rd Regt, Burnham.

Will any member knowing the address of any of the above please inform Secretary at the above address.

NEW MEMBERS: 754253 L. (Les) Bennett, 62 Lauderdale Rd, Birkdale, Auckland 10. (Associate member ex-Royal Artillery (RF)).

32683 E.C. (Ted) Morgan, 2/37 Riverside Rd, Orewa. (Associate member ex-RNZEME (RF)).

REUNIONS: 22 AA Battery NZA: 3 Sep 89 at Wellington. Contact Reg.

A. McDonald, 29 Maragarch St, Wadestown, Wellington 6001.

4 Field Regiment Assn: 29-30 Sep- 1 Oct 89, at Wellington. Contact Secretary, Box 5076, Wellington.

REUNIONS (Cont.): 7 NZ Anti-Tank Regt Assn: 3-4-5-Apr 1990 at Tauranga. Contact Secretary R.G. Simister, 29 Ngatai Rd, Tauranga. Phone 69 301.

No 1 Instruction Course Trentham March-April 1947: 17-19 Nov 89 at Nelson. Ex-staff and students contact C.M. (Doc) Schwass, 6A Ostend Place, Avonhead, Christchurch, Phone 03/429 764, or J.F. (Jack) Kearney, 7 Kelvin Rd, Maraenui, Napier, Phone 070/436 088.

AMENDMENT NEWSLETTER No 61: 'Soldiers Navy' para 8: Delete 171, substitute 170. Para 9 delete 170 substitute 171. Para 11 delete 167 substitute 169.

NOTICES: The next meeting of the Executive of this Association will be held at 1000 hrs 12 Aug 89 at the Birkenhead RSA. Any member not on the Executive may attend and speak (but not vote). We welcome visitors.

MOI GUN SITE, FIJI: The custodian of the Momi Gun Site, Fiji, would like to hear from any ex-Gunner who was at Momi during or after World War 2. Contact either Mr Arvind Singh, Momi Gun Site, PO Box 649, Nadi, Fiji Islands, OR Mr R.J. (Jock) Gunn, 28 Valonia St, Avondale, Auckland, of this Association.

NEWS FROM AROUND AND ABOUT: John Smith has relinquished the appointment of RSM 16 Fd Regt RNZA upon retirement, and is now working for Challenge Real Estate, Pukekohe. We wish him well in his new profession.

While visiting Palmerston North recently your Secretary was very hospitably entertained by Mr A.W. (Karl) Karlsson and his good lady. While being taken on a 'Cooks Tour' of the city and environs, he marvelled at the multitude of 'groppi' houses being erected at great cost in Linton for the battalion when it returns to New Zealand. He wondered also how long the soldiers would put up with Linton Camp after the bright lights etc of Singapore.

Older members of our Association will remember Fred James and Bill Dalton, now long 'gone west,' and will recall with pleasure not only how dedicated they were to the service of the guns, but also what 'characters' they were both on and off the 'job.'

Warrant Officers Class 1 James and Dalton joined the Royal Regiment in 1906 and 1919 respectively, later became Armament Artificers in the NZAOC, then in RNZEME. Their service to the NZ Army is probably unsurpassed; Fred saw service in South Africa, Bill during World War 1, while they both served in New Zealand throughout World War 2. Their full-time service totalled 45 and 41 years. But old soldiers 'fade away.'

To commemorate them two barrack blocks in Trentham Camp were named after them during the 1960s, a refreshingly different approach by the Army which invariably names barracks, streets etc - or anything else worth naming - after Officers.

Then came the 1980s and new buildings, the old blocks being demolished - but James' and Dalton's names did not appear on the new edifices. Were they 'conveniently' forgotten?

Jack Cook reporting from Upper Hutt intends to do something about the omission. We wish him every success.

NEWS FROM AROUND AND ABOUT (Cont): Lt Col Barry Dreyer, President, Artillery Band Association, very kindly invited Old Comrades and their wives to a concert by the Band in the Centennial Hall, Auckland Grammar School, on 28 April 89. Unfortunately your Secretary was away in Taranaki for the last two weeks of April, and therefore was not able to promulgate the invitation to any extent. Nevertheless, we sincerely hope the concert was a success, and extend to the Band every good wish for success in the future.

Incidentally your Secretary cherishes very fond memories of his association with the NMD Artillery Band (as it was then) over the years 1958-62. Particularly memorable were the occasions when the Band played at Rugby Test Matches - and your Secretary marched with them into Eden Park carrying an empty instrument case!

W02 Les Jackson, our Papakura/16 Field Regiment Rep. retires from the RNZA on 9 October 89.

Since the retirement of John Smith 16 Field has had no RSM. W02 Paul Gregg takes over the appointment in October 89.

The Rev. W.M. (Bill) McLeay, who has very kindly officiated at our reunion Church Parades for the last three years, was recently elected an Honorary Member of the Association.

Phil Calvert reports from Australia that he has a new lease of life. What his doctors thought was a malignant tumour turned out to be benign. We congratulate him on winning what we all hope is the final round in his dour battle against that cruel worm, cancer.

Colonel D.R. (Don) Kenning relinquishes the Office of Colonel Commandant, the Royal Regiment of New Zealand Artillery, in July this year. He will be succeeded by Major General R.D.P. (Ron) Hassett.

Colonel and Mrs Kenning will be our Guests of Honour at the reunion on 10-12 November 89.

Russ Martin from Whakatane regrets he cannot play a more active part in the affairs of the Association but reports he is valiantly attempting to keep an orchard up to scratch while holding down a 40-hour a week job in a training consultancy role with Tasman. He is still looking forward to playing his first round of golf since he shifted to Whakatane. Remember the old adage, Russ, '... too much work and not enough play ...'

The Gunners Day function on 24 May (as advertised in Newsletter No 61), was an outstanding success, thanks chiefly to our Auckland/North Shore Rep. Alf Smith. Members of the Association also took pleasure in welcoming a bus-load of young Gunners from 16 Fd Regt who thoroughly enjoyed themselves. One of them won the main prize in the raffle, a scale model of an 18th century 24-pr gun (made and donated to the Association by your Secretary); it was a popular win. Members present included: Harry ANDERSON, Eric and Patti AUTRIDGE, Bill and Val BAKER, George and Olga BLANDFORD, Allan and Elsie BOYD, Cliff COLE, Jack and Zita COOK, Slim and Mollie CUMMING, Dan FOLEY, Scotty FRAME, Frank and Joan GIBBISON, Slim GILMER, Jack GILLOOLY, Cyril HAYDEN, Pat HALL, Blue HIGGINSON, Jim HILL, Don KENNING, Bill and Estelle MORLAND, Mike and Mavis McMAHON, Harold NICHOLSON,

Reg NUTSFORD, Des and Bunty O'CONNOR, Bill and Joyce POWRIE, Jim ROSS, Ian and Iris ROWNTREE, Wally RUFFELL, Henry and Thelma SALT, Alf SMITH, Bill STEPHENSON, Vic and Marie SVENDSEN, Keith SIMMONDS, Terry and Joan TRANSOM, Les (Ghosty) and Joan WILSON, and last but not least Nelson McLEOD. We were especially honoured to have Colonel Don Kenning, Colonel Commandant, with us.

If I have made any errors or omissions, please let me know -Sec.

WELFARE: Add to the list of District Reps as published in Newsletter No 61: Waiouru: WOI (MG) B.S. (Brian) Frances, 0658/56111 Ext 565.

HISTORICAL: George Stuart, our indomitable Otago Rep, submits what he purports to be a hitherto unpublished chapter of the Book of Genesis recently unearthed during an archaeological 'dig' in some ancient cave on the Mainland. Here is a translation:

SONS OF St BARBARA

1. In the beginning was chaos and the chaos was the Infantry, for the Infantry was alone.
2. And fear was with the Infantry and they cried unto the Lord saying, "Lord save us for we are afraid."
3. And the Lord heard their grunts and set some of the Infantry on beasts of burden, and these he called Cavalry, and the Cavalry became Armour.
4. And when the Lord had seen what he had done he laughed, saying, "Well, you can't win them all."
5. The Infantry and the Armour again cried unto the Lord, saying, "Lord save us for we are afraid." And the Lord heard their cries and decided to end their weeping.
6. And the Lord said unto them, "Lo, I send you a race of men noble in heart and spirit." And the Lord created the Gunners.
7. And the Lord said unto the Infantry and Armour, "When it is dark the Gunners shall light your way."
8. And when you need smoke, there shall be smoke, and when you need HE, WP, H & I, and counter-battery fire, all this shall be given ye."
9. And the Lord gave the Gunners big guns and field guns, and the Infantry and Armour were jealous for they had nought.
10. And the Infantry cried out, saying, "Lord, thou hast created the Infantry Queen of Battles, but now thou hast made the Gunners King of Battles, and well knowest thou what King does to Queen!"
11. And the Lord replied, saying, "Like, man! Right on!"
12. And the Lord gave unto the Artillery rockets and missiles and, best of all, nukes. And when the Infantry and Armour saw this they fell on their knees in wonder, saying, "Surely God is on the side of the greatest - the Gunners."
13. And the Lord sayeth, "Right."
14. Now abideth Infantry, Armour, and Artillery; but the greatest of these is Artillery.

Hallelujah.

SOLDIERS NAVY

Continued from
Newsletter 61

By W.L.R.

Realising the limitations of the spar torpedo, Defence modified the Auckland and Wellington boats to carry Whitehead Fiume Mk IV torpedoes (named after Robert Whitehead (1823-1905), a Briton who operated an engineering works in Fiume (now Rijeka, Yugoslavia), where he built ships and engines for the Austrian Navy).

These weapons were forerunners of the modern torpedo; they were 14 feet (4.27m) long by 14 inches (356mm) in diameter, weighed about 300 lbs (136 kg), and carried a warhead containing 80 lbs (36 kg) of guncotton. Powered by a compressed air motor driving a single screw the Mk IV version is said to have achieved a speed of 25 knots and a range of 400 yards (366 m).

Each boat carried two torpedoes, slung from davits on either side. However, being rather narrow in the beam, the dropping of a single torpedo made a boat dangerously unstable. Even in calm water those of the crew on deck had to move smartly toward the empty davit to prevent the boat capsizing!

A normal crew consisted of five: one in the engine-room, another in the stoke-hold, two on deck, while the coxswain stood in the conning-tower.

The coxswain and the engineer were the most important members of the crew. To operate within harbour limits the former had to qualify for what seafaring men call a 'River Ticket' or (less politely) a 'Mud Ticket,' while the latter had to have a 'River Steam Ticket.' As most travel was by water in those days there were many in New Zealand who held such 'tickets' including a number serving in the Armed Constabulary. Thus the Defence Department had little difficulty recruiting suitable men.

Torpedomen could qualify for either river ticket after training at Shelly Bay or on their home stations.

When the torpedo boats were delivered to their stations in 1835 the New Zealand Permanent Militia (later renamed the Permanent Force), was being formed, chiefly from the Armed Constabulary Reserve, which meant the Constables had to be reclassified as soldier-tradesmen according to their respective abilities and according to service requirements. Thus the original nominal roll included torpedomen, artificers and engineers - the foundation members of the New Zealand Torpedo Corps, who were to man and maintain the torpedo boats.

In the United Kingdom a century ago the Royal Engineers (RE) were responsible for manning harbour defence torpedo boats, so the New Zealand Government imported RE Officer and NCO instructors to train the NZTC in their technical duties.

New recruits (if not ex-AC), underwent basic training at the NZ Permanent Artillery Depot, Mt Cook, Wellington, while all received technical training at the NZTC Depot, Shelly Bay, in the same city. They were then posted to stations as required.

By 1896 harbour defence by torpedo had given way to defence by minefield, so the NZTC became the NZ Submarine Mining Corps (NZSMC). The torpedo boats continued to be maintained but used mainly for general purposes. Eventually they were broken up around the turn of the century.

In 1897 the NZSMC was reorganised into No 2 Service Company, NZ Permanent Force, the men being redesignated 'Sappers' in the process. Then in 1902 they became Royal New Zealand Engineers (RNZE). The Sappers continued to operate all defence vessels, which from 1885 had included a number of steam launches and smaller boats as well as the torpedo boats.

In 1907 the RNZE were absorbed into the RNZA, after which the latter continued to operate the launches. After World War 1 the General Duties Section, NZ Permanent Force, took over. The Section included personnel from all arms but was dominated by ex-RNZA WOs, NCOs and Men.

At the outbreak of World War 2 RNZNVR sailors manned defence vessels employed in the Examination Service. After the war RNZA personnel resumed control until the demise of Coast Artillery.

Certain Naval historians referring to the 'naval defence of New Zealand' have claimed the torpedo boats formed the nucleus of the Royal New Zealand Navy, and that they were manned by New Zealand navalmen. Such claims are fallacious.

Because boat No 170 when delivered to Auckland in 1885 was kept at the Royal Navy's Devonport station until a boatshed could be built for it at North Head, the historians possibly assumed the boats 'belonged' to the Navy. Such was never the case.

The New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy was not formed until 1921, while the Royal N.Z. Navy did not come into being until 1941. Harbour defence in 1885 was the responsibility of the New Zealand Forces, i.e. soldiers.

A century ago the naval defence of the country meant command of the seas surrounding it by ships of the Royal Navy then stationed here and in Australia. Our torpedo boats were of the Second Class, fit only for harbour defence. They could not operate in the open sea.

At the time the torpedo boats arrived in New Zealand there were a number of part-time servicemen in the forces calling themselves 'Naval Artillery Volunteers' (NAV). They formed part of the volunteer system of the period which can best be described as a collection of 'private armies.' Although they affected naval-style uniforms and ranks they were administered, paid, trained, and equipped by the NZ Defence Office, i.e. by soldiers. Most of them were, in fact, coast gunners. A few did spend time on the torpedo boats where they were instructed by the NZTC.

The Royal Navy did assist to a minor degree in instructing the NAV but generally in Auckland only - and then only providing an instructor happened to be in port and available. Under the Defence Act of 1909 the NAV were absorbed into the Garrison Artillery Volunteers - except certain diehards who refused to wear khaki uniforms!

Many of the fortresses built during the 120 years coast artillery existed in New Zealand could not be reached by road except with some difficulty. Some could not be reached by road at all since they were located on islands. Once the guns had been emplaced the Defence Department therefore found it necessary to keep suitable vessels to service them. They were called 'defence vessels.'

To be concluded.