

NEW ZEALAND PERMANENT FORCE OLD COMRADES ASSN INC

PO BOX 33 710, TAKAPUNA, AUCKLAND 9

NEWSLETTER No 63

September 1989

A Registered Publication

SUBSCRIPTIONS: If you are up-to-date please ignore this notice.
To be financial to 31 Dec 89 you owe us \$

LAST POST:

1849 G. (George) Henry MBE, 17 Jun 89, at Wanganui.

31287 J. (Jack) Cook, 17 Jul 89, at Upper Hutt.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS:

R.T. Barkle to 1 RD, Howick.

W.J. Breen to 4 Michael Place, Rotorua.

B.R. Edmonds to Bellevue Hotel, 103 George St, Brisbane,
Queensland 4000, Phone (07)221 6044.

Major J.L. Gillooly to 8 Rimu St, Mangakino.

B.T. Newell to 33 Mavin Rd, Hoon Hay, Christchurch.

R.O. Robinson to 9 Green St, Newtown, Wellington.

GONE NO ADDRESS

PREVIOUS LOCATION

Captain C.C. Pipson

33 Sumner St, Devonport, Auckland 9.

Bdr H. Meeuwsen

3 Fd Regt RNZA, Burnham.

Any member knowing the whereabouts of the above please inform
Secretary at above address.

AMENDMENT NEWSLETTER No 61:

District Reps phone numbers: Against Captain A.J. Baigent
delete 04/85493, substitute 058/85493.

AMENDMENT NEWSLETTER No 62:

To the names of members attending Auckland Gunners Day Social on
24 May 89 add: Lt Col Spenser Cocks OBE. We regret the omission.

STRUCK OFF STRENGTH FOR FAILURE TO PAY DUES:

Sgt D. Bull

Sgt S.P. Richards

Bdr S.V. Haines

Sgt G. Robb

L Bdr R.T. Hills

Bdr T.A. Sandilands

Gnr R. Mather

WO2 B.L. Soper

Sgt B.J. Merrivale

L Bdr L.J. Webster

Bdr A.L. Portman

S Sgt A.H. Whyte

L Bdr T.M. Rautahi

Bdr R. Werehiko

Most of us in the older age groups consider an Association worth
joining is worth supporting. If we come to believe otherwise we
say so, try to improve it, or resign.

Obviously the above-named no longer consider the Association
worth supporting. But without exception they have continued to
accept our transactions for well over three years without saying
a word - or sending us a cent. It makes us wonder what the modern
Gunner is made of.

RULE BOOKS: The objects of the NZ Permanent Force Old Comrades
Association are fully set out in Constitution and Rules, last
published in 1986. Any member wanting a copy has only to ask;
there is no charge.

BADGES: Available @ \$4 each. The new badges are smaller than the older, measuring approximately 23mm wide x 17mm high.

NEWS FROM AROUND AND ABOUT:

Mike Wicksteed is on an extended workinh holiday in England.

Brian Edmonds is now General Manager of the Bellevue Hotel, Brisbane. Should any member of our Association be contemplating a trip to Brisbane he will be happy to help and advise on accommodation. See Changes of Address for phone number etc.

Dutch Holland reports that over fifty-five years have elapsed since 5 Wing RNZA marched into Trentham on 1 May 1934. He appeals to all survivors to make a special effort to attend our annual reunion at Taupo on 10-11-12 November 89.

To save \$60,000 a year in wages, Land Force Command are to close their Warrant Officers and Sergeants Mess on 30 Sep 89, after which members must join the Senior Rates Mess, HMNZS Tamaki, or some other service mess. Associate members, several of whom are member of our Association, must make application to join another mess - and wait for vacancies. Thus the WOs and Sgts revert to a situation similar to that of almost thirty years ago when they had to share the same mess facilities with the Navy.

Jim Gilberd reports from Napier that our Patron, Major General McKinnon and Mrs McKinnon are in the UK for a month. Also, Ivan Wilson is about to step down as a City Councillor, and take on a job as manager of a youth academy.

He further reports that a bronze plaque has been erected on the site of 77 Coast Battery NZA to commemorate the battery's presence there over the period 1942-52.

Those addicted to the outpourings of the square-eyed monster (TV), will have seen a re-eractment of the manning of the battery on Motutapu Island on 3 September 1939 broadcast as part of the programme commemorating the 50th anniversary of the outbreak of World War 2.

A reunion of RF and TF personnel who were actually present on Motutapu at the commencement of hostilities was organised by Major Frank Whiting and held on the island on Monday 4 Sep 89. The 40 who attended enjoyed a very interesting and successful day helped to no little extent by an excellent luncheon.

Alf Smith, our Auckland/North Shore Rep, who was one of the RNZA (RF) employed mounting the BL 6-in Mk 21 guns at Motutapu before the war, and subsequently served at the battery, reported the following members of our Association present: Butch Barclay, Duke Lambie, George Miln, Herb Milne, Mike McMahon, Alf Smith, and Roy Spence. Over 30 TF also attended.

Officers of 9 Coast Regiment who were mobilised on 3 Sep 39 were entertained by the Navy at the Narrow Neck Officers Mess (combined Army and Navy), on Sunday 3 Sep 89. Among those present were: Reg Nutsford, Joe Hahvey, Frank Whiting.

Bob Blankley is about to enter his second season as a blueberry grower. He says the work is very hard, very rewarding, but not enough to live on, so he still has to work part-time elsewhere.

Now and again he sees the lads from Ngaruawahia - who are not happy over the forthcoming closure of the camp, but like good soldiers have accepted it.

From Christchurch Brian O'Connor sends regards to all Old Comrades, reports that he and Joan are still reasonably fit, and that he still plays golf a couple of days a week.

Having researched the service record of his late father, 1272 Major J.P. (Jim) O'Connor, Brian mentions a few points which might be of interest to members. When Jim enlisted in 1912 he had to pay his own way from Christchurch to Wellington for interview and medical board, the cost to be refunded if he was accepted! On joining the Regiment he was paid 6/- (60c) per day, from which the cost of his uniform was deducted over the ensuing six months. However, a generous administration allowed him 1/- (10c) a day pocket money!

Brian's elder son Paul still soldiers on as RSM 3 Fd Regt, while Philip, who was stationed at Defence HQ has just retired from the Army. Thus three generations of the O'Connors have seen long service in the New Zealand Army - and in the Royal Regiment in particular.

SOLDIERS NAVY

(Continued from Newsletter 62)

Included in the great coast artillery defence construction programme beginning in 1835 were plans for minefields to be laid at the harbour entrances of the four main ports - and some mines were actually laid during the Russian 'scare' of the same year. Thus vessels equipped for mine-laying had to be obtained.

The torpedo boats were not of much use in this role. Although they were often utilised for general purposes their carrying capacity was extremely limited.

Vessels specifically designed and equipped for mine-laying were readily available in England. There the equipment scales also included other craft standardised for use in the coast defence role. However, the New Zealand Government in their wisdom chose to buy locally-built second-hand steam launches differing widely both in pattern, age, and serviceability, then modify them for mine-laying, but use them for general purposes as well. As might be expected such a policy proved far from satisfactory.

The first of the steam launches so acquired was the SL Ellen Ballance, bought in 1835 and stationed in Wellington. About the same time the SL Isabel was obtained for Auckland and SL Gordon for Port Chalmers. The SL Lyttelton for the port of the same name was purchased in 1836 - when she was already ten years old. In addition each port had a few small 'local pattern' boats, e.g. dinghies, whalers, etc. All these vessels were manned by Permanent Force men.

The Ellen Ballance was not modified for mine-laying until 1895 - and then it was found she could not always be used for that purpose in harbour. In a typical Wellington southerly she became unmanageable!

None of the launches was entirely suitable. A further handicap was the claim on their time by other Government agencies,

for when the submarine miners wanted a launch for use in its officially designated role often it was not available. This state of affairs brought forth the inevitable complaints but usually they fell upon deaf ears.

By 1899 the steam launches had become unserviceable; one was even described as dangerous! As the minefields were at this time still considered an essential part of our defences the Government at last did the right thing. Two new replacement vessels especially designed for submarine mining were ordered in 1900, one for Auckland, another for Wellington.

No new vessels were ordered for Lyttelton or Port Chalmers. In keeping with the official attitude then prevailing - that the country could afford to up-date two ports only - Port Chalmers had to continue to make do with its aging and unserviceable steam launch. Lyttelton at this time had no launch, but was obliged to hire one at great expense from civilian sources when the necessity arose. An oil launch was eventually supplied in 1908.

The two new vessels arrived in Wellington in January 1902. Unlike the torpedo boats they were sea-going steamers, having sailed to New Zealand under their own power. Built by Fleming and Ferguson of Paisley, Scotland, they were said to be of the latest pattern in every detail.

Sister ships, they were named Lady Roberts after the Governor General's wife, and Janie Seddon after the wife of Richard J. (King Dick) Seddon, Premier of New Zealand. The former went to Auckland, while the latter remained in Wellington.

Being expensive 'new toys' the authorities decided not to entrust them to Permanent Force personnel, but appointed civilians as Masters and Chief Engineers because '.... the value of the vessels demanded these appointments.' Two ex-Royal Naval Reserve Lieutenants were appointed to command, and two civilians appointed Chief Engineers.

In December 1902 the Masters were made Honorary Captains and the Engineers Honorary Lieutenants in the Royal New Zealand Engineers. One suspects a 'jobs for the boys' exercise.

In 1906, the newness having worn off, and the need for economy being on, Defence decided to replace these Officers with men holding substantive ranks in the RNZE, '.... the course carried out in the Imperial Service.' Thus the new Masters became Sergeant-Major Coxswains (Warrant Officers Class 1), and the Engineers Warrant Officers Class 2.

In 1908 the minefields were dismantled but the two ships as well as the launches in the South Island were retained.

During the two World Wars the principal defence vessels became port examination vessels. Little is known of their crews during World War 1, but for the whole of World War 2 they were manned by RNZNVR sailors.

Between the wars the vessels were manned by men of the Permanent Force General Duties Section, most of whom commenced their service in the RNZE or RNZA. After World War 2 they were manned by RNZA (RF) until coast defence in this country was abolished.

To be concluded.

NEW ZEALAND PERMANENT FORCE OLD COMRADES ASSN INCPO BOX 33710, TAKAPUNA, AUCKLAND 9PROGRAMME ANNUAL REUNION 10-12 NOV 89 AT TAUPUFRIDAY 10 NOV 89: March in; 1600 hrs drinks at Taupo RSA,
Horomatangi Street.SATURDAY 11 NOV 89: 1000 hrs Annual General Meeting, Taupo Senior
Citizens Assn, Story Place (adjacent Library/Museum).

1800 hrs: pre-dinner drinks at Taupo Senior Citizens lounge.

1900 hrs: reunion dinner at Taupo Senior Citizens premises.

Dress: Gentlemen informal - jacket and tie. Lounge suit or
appropriate uniform may be worn.

Ladies: semi-formal.

Medals and decorations: To be worn.Wine: BYO; may be purchased at wholesale rates at SPA
WHOLESALE, who will label bottles with buyers' names,
place in cooler if desired, and deliver to dining room
at 1830 hrs. Bring corkscrew; there will be no wine
stewards.SUNDAY 12 NOV 89: 1000 hrs Church Parade in SPA HOTEL lounge (the
meeting house 'Tiki o te Tamamutu'). Medals etc to be worn.
After Church Parade 'one for the road' in Suite 'A'.Saturday and Sunday afternoons are free. See overleaf for details
of accommodation etc.REUNION REGISTRATION FORMPlease detach and return to reach Secretary at address shown above
not later than 24 October 89.NAME I will/will not be attending reunion.NB: A negative answer received will be recorded as an apology for
non-attendance at Annual General Meeting.

• I will be accompanied by (include first name)

I require/do not require accommodation at SPA HOTEL over nights

. (insert dates)

I enclose cheque for S.....to cover persons for dinner at
\$22 a head. Do NOT enclose payment for accommodation.

Please delete sections NOT applicable.

To those requesting accommodation at SPA HOTEL, I will let you
know whether or not you are successful. In the event a chalet is
not available please indicate if you will accept a room in lieu.

ACCOMMODATION:

a. General: There is no shortage of accommodation in Taupo during November, which is one of the reasons we hold our reunions then. It is still the 'off' season which means reduced rates are often available. Tariffs for Lake Establishment and Acapulco have been taken from the 1939 AA Directory and may have changed by the time you receive this letter.

b. Spa Hotel: We make the Spa our HQ because it is part of our history, the tariff is very reasonable, and it is one of the few 'pubs' with character still left in New Zealand. We have already booked all available accommodation, so book through me on Registration Form if you are not already booked. Types are as follows:

c. Chalets: Competition for these is very keen; you will have to be quick if you want one. Tariff: \$68 double; \$50 single; extra adult \$12, child \$10. Each contains a double bed on ground floor, two single beds on mezzanine floor, and will sleep one more on a convertible couch in the lounge. Each has full kitchen facilities. colour TV, phone, plus private spa pool. For maximum economy share a unit with another couple.

d. Rooms: Spa rooms are all self-contained with shower and toilet. Double \$50 bed and breakfast; single \$31 bed and breakfast. Some rooms will sleep three, e.g. with a double and a single bed in which case extra adult costs \$17, or extra child \$13, both b and b. Tariff includes GST. These rates are hard to beat.

e. Acapulco Motel: We recommend as RSA members get 10% discount. 4-star; 19 Rifle Range Rd, Box 347, Taupo, phone 074/87174. Tariff \$49-50 to \$60-50 single; 80-50 to \$88 twin or double, \$13-20 each additional person. 15 minutes' walk to RSA and shopping area. Make your own bookings.

f. Lake Establishment: Cnr Tongariro and Tuwharetoa Streets, phone 074/86165. Tariff \$34-10 to \$48-40 single; \$35-20 to \$55 double or twin; suite \$70-40 per night. Cobb & Co restaurant, prices reasonable. Located five minutes' walk from Senior Citizens Assn where we hold our reunion dinner. Make your own bookings.

g. Army Motel Units: Located at Acacia Bay. Make your own booking through your local Army Office.

Best regards,

Wally Ruffell

Hon. Sec.

Phone: 09/453 567.