



Incorporated

NEW ZEALAND PERMANENT FORCE OLD COMRADES ASSOCIATION INC.

PO BOX 33 710, TAKAPUNA, AUCKLAND 9

NEWSLETTER No 73

March 1992.

A Registered Publication

SUBSCRIPTIONS for 1992 are now due. Rates are as follows: Honorary and Life members free; Lady Associate members \$2-50; all other members \$5-00. Remit to Secretary at above address. The amount shown below will make you financial until 31 Dec 92; if no amount is shown you are financial. Members who are over three years in arrears, i.e. owe over \$15 may be struck off under Rule 4F unless there are extenuating circumstances, in which case inform Secretary or your District Rep.

You owe us \$ . . . .

LAST POST: T335817 R. (Roy) Huston, 27 Nov 91, at Hamilton.

1749 I.M. (Johnny) Meikle, 23 Feb 92, at Lower Hutt.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS: N. Moros to 42 Westpark Drive, West Harbour, Auck.  
P.B. O'Connor MBE to 14 Cortina Ave, Johnsonville, Wellington.  
Sgt L.T. Riwaka to School of Artillery, ATG, Waiouru.  
Lt Col M.D. Beattie to Command & Staff College, Queenscliff, Melbourne.

GONE NO ADDRESS

LAST KNOWN ADDRESS

Lt Col J.S. Heard

100 Beach Rd, Castor Bay, Auckland 9.

Mrs I.H. Henry

19 Talbot St, Wanganui.

Anyone knowing present addresses please inform Secretary.

NEW MEMBERS:

L814072 G.S. (Graeme) Henderson, 224 Rocks Highway, Riverton, S/Land.  
Mrs C.R. (Carrie) Hall, 7 Hukutai St, Elsdon, Porirua. (Associate)  
Mrs E.J. (Ella) Sutherland, 113 Hine St, New Plymouth. "  
22817 Captain J.B. (Jack) Tankard, 9 Clifton Rd, Browns Bay, Auck 10,  
has been elected an Honorary member.

COMMITTEE MEETING: The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be held at the Birkenhead RSA on Saturday 11 April 92 commencing 1000 hrs.

AUCKLAND SOCIAL: The Gunners Day social will be held in the Birkenhead RSA main lounge on Wednesday 27 May 92 commencing 1100 hrs. Any non-Auckland members who happen to be in Auckland at the time are of course welcome to attend, and THIS INVITATION INCLUDES LADIES! A comprehensive luncheon menu is available at \$7 all items. To keep the caterer happy please inform Alf Smith on 410 4564 or Secretary on 445 3567 if you intend coming.

REUNIONS: 6 Field Regiment NZA: National reunion will be held 3-4-5 Oct 92. Contact 6 Fd regt Reunion Committee, Box 69, Palmerston North. Phone 06/357 7522 or 06/358 6287.



REUNIONS (CONT): 4 Field Regiment Assn 23-25 Oct 92, Eden-Roskill War Memorial Hall, Auckland. Contact F.A. DOve, 12 Vodanovich Rd, Auckland 1208.

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NZ Korean Veterans Assn: 17-18 Oct 92, Christchurch. Contact GINA WALL, Box 1765, Christchurch.

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NZWRAC Assn; 2-4 Oct 92. Current and past female soldiers welcome. Contact Marylynne Tilleyshort, Secretary Reunion Committee, Box 8248, Riccarton, Christchurch.

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RNZAOC 75th Jubilee: 10-12 Jul 92. Contact Secretary, Reunion Committee, 1 Base Supply Bn, Trentham Camp, Private Bag, Upper HUTT, Ph. 04/5275370.

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NZ Army Assn Inc, Taranaki Branch: 12-14 Jun 92 at West Point Complex and New Plymouth RSA. Eligible to attend: all who served in any way in the TF, incl those who served under the CMT scheme 1949-59, the National Service Scheme 1962-72 and those who are still serving. Also welcome are RF personnel who served with the TF plus spouses and partners. For Registration Forms apply Secretary, Murray Moorhead, 12 Kauri St, New Plymouth.

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AMENDMENTS NEWSLETTER 72; Page 6 para 2 line 4: Between "Gunner" and "Officers" insert "General."

Page 7 para 2: Delete "Dick Healey, Phil George, the writer, Geo Martin, and Fred Eastgate."

MEDAL MOUNTING: Our member Ross Goldsworthy, 27 Fraser Rd, Devonport, Phone 445 9245, will mount your medals, court mounting or loose.

ARTILLERY JERSEYS: may be obtained from 16 Fd regt UPF. Contact our 16 Fd Rep, WO1 I.S. (Ian) Foster RNZA on 09/570 0356. The Regiment is now located at Mt Wellington Barracks, 39 Mt Wellington Highway, Auckland (once part of the Fisher & Paykel complex). Postal address is Private Bag, Panmure, Auckland 6.

RNZA BLAZER BADGES in gold wire may be obtained from English Tie, Box 9373, Newmarket, Auckland for \$25. Send SAE for catalogue.

NEWS FROM AROUND AND ABOUT: Ian Rowntree, our Thames/Coromandel Rep. reports: Charlie Anniss is well apart from some trouble with his back, and has had to give up golf. He is still active in other clubs and sends regards to all Old Comrades.

Bruce Tolson is well and enjoys his round of golf. He is still involved with the Whangamata RSA.

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Fred Prior had a few ups and downs during 1991 but is improving and is playing golf occasionally.

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Bob Rudge is well; he and his good lady send their regards to all, especially Joe and Zita Cook, and wish them well on their trip.

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Hobby Hobson is OK and sends his regards to all. He's had a bout with bronchitis but is getting over it.

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Ron Agnew is well, keeping busy working with the Police at THAMES, and sends regards to all his Gunner friends.

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Mike McMahon has had a minor op. for cancer and at time of writing was still in hospital, but is progressing satisfactorily.

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CONGRATULATIONS to Jim Kirk who turned 80 on 5 Oct 91 and thus qualifies for Life Membership.

WELCOME to WO1 I.S. (Ian) Foster RNZA, RSM 16 Field Regiment, who is our new 16 Field Rep.

### THE THUNDER OF THE GUNS

Like the storm thats in the making  
When the rumbling thunder runs  
And the hills and valleys tremble:  
THATS THE THUNDER OF THE GUNS.

When the aiming posts are planted  
And the firing order comes,  
Then the layers work their magic  
With their sight and bubble runs.

Then the check is on the charges  
And the range that's on the drum,  
Then the muzzle flashes lightning:  
THATS THE THUNDER OF THE GUNS.

Its in the fury of the battle  
When the understanding comes  
That the gunner is forever,  
A partner with the guns.

The gunner's pride is legend  
And the battles he has won,  
Bring Regimental Honours:  
THROUGH THE THUNDER OF THE GUNS.

With the smoking breeches empty  
And the dust and cordite gone,  
There's a rumble in the distance:  
THAT'S THE THUNDER OF THE GUNS.

The Gods of War have finished  
And the Sands of Time have run,  
But always there's the memory of -  
THE THUNDER OF THE GUNS.

And as today becomes the future  
Our sons will tell their sons,  
That the men whose blood they carry:  
KNEW THE THUNDER OF THE GUNS.

In the valley of the shadows  
When his comrades are as one,  
Their hearts will surely gladden  
For they're the only ones -  
That understand the music:  
IN THE THUNDER OF THE GUNS.

By NX12891 Gnr WST Stacy,  
2nd/3rd Field Regiment,  
Royal Australian Artillery.

(The poem was written during  
active service in WW2).

Contributed by Jim Gilberd.

### GUNNERS AND HORSES

Continued from Newsletter 72

By Jim Gilberd

### FIELD ARTILLERY BRIGADE AND AMMUNITION COLUMN

During the Militia and Volunteer era Field Batteries were not brigaded. They were independent units at locations throughout the country. 1912 saw the re-organisation of the Military Forces following a visit by Lord Kitchener and so the Citizen Army or Territorial Force came into being.



The organisation of our Artillery on the outbreak of the Great War was four brigades of two batteries plus an ammunition column. With the exception of 'D' Battery, Wellington, all the batteries were equipped with the new 18-pr and 4.5-inch howitzers. 'D' Battery was awaiting the arrival of its guns from England; until then it was a Pack Bty with its 2.95-inch howitzers.

The 18-pr batteries were 'A' Battery, Auckland, and 'G' Battery, Hamilton of the Auckland Brigade, 'F' Battery, Napier, of the Wellington Brigade, 'E' Battery, Christchurch, and 'H' Battery, Nelson, of the Canterbury Brigade, and 'C' Battery, Invercargill, of the Otago Brigade.

The two 4.5 howitzer batteries were 'B' Battery, Dunedin, and 'J' Battery Palmerston North.

Following the debacle of Gallipoli, the NZEF was reorganised. The composition of the Artillery was as follows:

1st Brigade (Lt Col F B Symon)

1, 3, 7, 8 Batteries

2nd Brigade (Lt Col F B Sykes)

2, 5, 13, 14 Batteries

3rd Brigade (Lt Col I T Standish)

9, 10, 11, 12 Batteries

4th (Howitzer) Brigade Lt Col N S Falla)

4, 6, 15 Batteries

#### DIVISIONAL AMMUNITION COLUMN

In the reorganisation the Brigade Ammunition Columns were abolished and in their place the new Divisional Ammunition Column known as the 'DAC' came into being. The DAC was to have three sections and a Howitzer Ammunition Section. The first Commanding Officer of the DAC was Lt Col Murray Gardner RNZA - later Lt Col Alf Evenden took over the Column. He was previously Battery Commander of 4 Howitzer Battery. The four Brigades and the DAC were commanded by Brigadier General GN Johnson as CRA NZ Division.

The job of the DAC was to move ammunition for the guns from rail-head dumps and other locations. This was a dangerous and arduous task as Driver Stratton's memoirs tell us.

It is interesting to note that each 18-pr Battery of six guns carried 1056 rounds made up as follows:-

Gun Limbers	24 rd x 6	=	144
Firing Battery Wagons	76 rd x 6	=	456
First Line Wagons	76 rd x 6	=	456
			<hr/>
			1056

#### BATTERY STAFF AND SIGNALLERS

These were the specialists in the battery. The staff were responsible for gunnery and observation of fire drills, while the signallers provided communications between the guns and the observation post (OP), and also



to the wagon lines.

In the battery, staff were 6 to 8 gunners who were called observation post assistants (OPAs), and the gun position assistants GPOs. Their duties were to assist the officers at the observation post and gun positions.

The battery signallers numbered 12 to 14. Their equipment was signal lamps, field telephones, Morse and Semaphore flags. Signal lamps, phones and flags were used for visual signalling by day, lamps and telephones by night.

Heliograph signalling was taught but very seldom used by the gunners.

Battery staff and signallers were mounted and carried their equipment on their horses.

The principal items of equipment were:-

Rangefinder and stand

Director and stand

Plane table and stand

Associate stores such as beam compasses etc

Field telephones and exchanges

Field cable and flags

Special fittings for housing this equipment on saddles was provided and if not properly fitted could cause problems for the riders.

### CEREMONIAL

Unlike our opposite numbers in the British Army we were not involved on ceremonial duties very often. However, during the Volunteer period it was customary for soldiers to be paraded in full-dress uniforms at public functions and on the Sovereign's birthday. Ceremonial occasions that I can recall consisted of military tattoos and firing of salutes and there were other parades such as presentation of guidons and of course the famous musical drive performed by the RNZA. Also State and military funerals where the RNZA were required to provide a horse-drawn gun carriage. This was in charge of a mounted Sergeant, with a dismounted gunner walking behind the shield to apply the hand-brake if required and to ensure the casket was secure on the coffin board.

In 1936 following the abdication of Edward VIII a large military parade was held in Wellington. The Regulars from Fort Dorset turned out a four-gun 18-pr battery - 55 horses, 24 drivers, 24 gun numbers, three mounted officers plus Battery Sergeant Major.

### MUSICAL DRIVE

In 1927 to celebrate the visit to New Zealand of the Duke and Duchess of York, Searchlight Tattoos were held at Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. Dunedin was included but the Tattoo had to be cancelled because of inclement weather. Men of the Royal NZ Artillery, New Zealand Permanent Forces, under the direction of RSM J Loper RNZA, performed the drive at each of the three venues. This is an exciting and spectacular display of driving carried out at a full gallop. Four 18-pr guns, 24 horses and 12 drivers take part.

The drive begins with the teams entering the arena at a gallop, one gun behind the other, then moving down the centre to form circles in each corner of the arena. The next move, and the most dangerous, is the



'scissors' movement, where the teams cross at the centre with no visible gap between them. The finale is when the four guns swing into line - 'dust-cap to dust-cap' at a hand gallop, straight up to the grandstand where they are pulled up, the drivers saluting.

When performing before the Duke and Duchess in Auckland, two gun teams collided, killing one horse and hurling the drivers from their saddles. The result - a heap of guns, horses, and drivers seen by the crowd. Lights were extinguished, reserve drivers removed the dead horse, drivers mounted up. When the lights came on, teams were in line, the drive was successfully carried out to thunderous applause from the spectators.

Regimental Sergeant Major Johnny Loper who was in charge of the drive had a support group of six spare horses plus Bdr Charlie Rudd, Gunners Ensor and MacDonald as spare drivers.

The drivers taking part in the drive came from the three commands. They were:-

#### Lead Drivers

Sgt Mick Heaphy, Bdr Tommy Mahony, Bdr Chapman and L Bdr Alex Tierney.

#### Centre Drivers

Gunners Phil George, Ernie Hancock, Eric Day, and 'Ginger' Bambridge.

#### Wheel Drivers

Bdr Dick Healey, Gunners Geo. Salt, Tommy Arthur, and Alf Heyward.

In a display such as this, horses and drivers form a well-understood unity, each depending on the other for a good response.

The last time the drive was performed in this country was in Trentham in 1933. I was a wheel driver in "C" Sub-section, my wheelers were named Nugget and Joe. It was our final rehearsal before performing at Newtown Park in Wellington. The General and Director of Artillery were watching the drive, everything was going well until the final movement. Two teams galloping abreast towards two other teams prior to the turn into line, a mistake in judgment regarding the turning point caused a collision. Four guns, twenty-four horses and their drivers all mixed up. One horse had a broken leg and was destroyed on the spot. Two drivers were injured. Colonel Symon DRA cancelled the drive. Colonel Symon decided the horses available were unsuitable.

The drive, despite its dangerous nature, was something the horses and drivers enjoyed - an exciting event to be part of.

#### MOUNTED SPORTS

During the Annual Camps a visitors day was held where local residents and friends were invited to the Camp. The troops were on hand to show their guests around and to explain the various facets of an Artillery unit. Included in the activities were the mounted sports. Some of the more popular events were the Sub-section Tug o'war, wrestling on horseback, and flag race. The Regulars gave a display of tent-pegging. This was done at the gallop, using a cavalry lance. Pegs were hammered into the ground and the idea was to 'pick up' a peg with the point of the lance. Both horses and riders enjoyed this sport.



Then followed a jumping competition for the more experienced riders in the battery. The final event was a game of polo played between an Officers' team and local farmers. The Gunners were at a disadvantage as our Artillery Riding horses were no match for the farmers' station hacks. However, it was good fun.

Throughout the proceeding the Artillery Band, when in camp, played lively music.

As a tailpiece: The RNZA in Central Command mounted a reasonable polo team on occasions. Members of the team were Major Ron Park, Lt Pat Joyce, Bdr Alex Tierney, Gunners Geo Martin, the writer, and Fred Eastgate.

#### ARTILLERY CAMPS AND STATIONS

This account dates from the 1890s in the days and times of our volunteer and militiamen. The troops were 'under canvas' (tents and marquees) when called out for training. Camps for the Gunners were held at Race-courses, showgrounds, and farmland. Bell tents were used to house the troops and marquees for mess rooms and use was also made of any existing buildings for stores, harness, and the like. Gun ammunition was located in marquees in an isolated part of the Camp, being identified by the flying of a red flag.

Following the end of the Great War many more permanent buildings became available.

Permanent stations were located at Auckland, Hamilton, Napier, Palmerston North, and Wellington in the North Island. Down south we see artillery depots at Nelson, Christchurch, Timaru, Dunedin, and Invercargill.

Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch were old brick stables and gun parks dating back to the Armed Constabulary era. About 1909 the Defence Department erected a standard type of Artillery barracks at the other stations. These were made of steel trusses, heavy duty iron, all bolted together and were capable of being dismantled and re-erected at another location.

They were designed to house 4/6 field guns, either 18-prs or 4.5-in howitzers in a gun park, with an area for artificers shop, stables for 18/20 horses, harness, store and forage rooms being adjacent to the stable areas. There was a battery office, with sleeping accommodation upstairs, which included a bathroom, kitchen, and a separate bedroom for the NCO i/c. In the barrack room was an open fireplace.

Adjacent to the gun park was a covered-in drill hall. There was usually a large yard with horse-lines for use in fine weather. The yard area was used for driving drill. The regular staff was an RNZA cadre of 4/6 NCOs and Gunners.

My first recollections of the Artillery in Napier was as a small boy. I was fascinated with the Artillery drivers and their horses drilling in a large paddock close to the barracks in Owen Street.

'F' Battery NZA (later 6 Fd Battery) was in residence at the time.

Other stations were the old Mount Cook area, near Buckle Street. Here were the large Alexandria barracks, with its brick gun parks and stables. At this time there were mule stables in Tasman Street - as 'D' Bty at that time was a pack Bty. Later in the days of the Territorials, stables still remained in Tasman and Buckle Streets, where 5th Bty carried out their training.



Still in Wellington (it was 1934), a disused barracks in Nelson was dismantled and re-erected at Fort Dorset. It was located on the eastern side, near the beach. From then on Battery training was concentrated at Dorset. Grazing areas were at Fort Ballance and here we had horse lines for 50 animals.

Another station I was familiar with was Central Bty at Dunedin. Here again were the old brick buildings for gun parks, stables and stores.

When compulsory service was re-introduced in 1921 the territorials and other branches of the Army carried out out-of-camp and in-camp training. Again, like the volunteer era, camps were located at race-courses and show-grounds with the exception of the Southern Command where they camped at Sutton in Central Otago.

These camps were under canvas, use being made of existing buildings, stables and the like. Inbetween units moving in and out of camp, the horses were turned out for a rest in the ovals of race-courses.

These camps were hard work for the RNZA Camp Staff and instructors.

Advance parties moved into camps in late January each year of the 'camping season.' Horses, guns, ammunition, forage, tentage, and all the many items required were moved by rail to the camp. Horses were trucked from the various stations and numbered 100 plus. Some of the journeys were long, particularly from Wellington to Waipukurau and Christchurch to Sutton. Once the camps were established the Territorial arrived, again by train and marched from the station to Camp.

Then at the end of the camping season the rear party had to dismantle the Camp, pack up stores for return to ordnance, and guns etc to home stations. At the end of the Artillery Camps in the Central Command, three mounted rifle regiments then entered Camp. Some RNZA Horses were used as pack and general purpose animals. RNZA personnel were detailed for extra camp duties with their horses at these camps.

The final tasks at race-courses and show-grounds for the rear party were to repair any damage to buildings, gates, and fences, leaving the site in a tidy state.

Other locations used as Camps were:-

Ngaruawahia	Trentham	Burnham
Rotorua	Waipukurau	Redcliffs
Frankton	Featherston	Scarborough
Foxton	Waiouru	Sutton

### LIVE SHELL PRACTICE

The highlight of annual camps was live shell practice, which extended over the last two days of the troops' stay in Camp. Prior to this the RNZA staff (Range Party) rode out to the range to erect targets. Materials for the targets were hessian and wood. The targets were assembled on site. The materials being taken by pack horses. I remember this quite well at both Waipukurau and Waiouru Camps as I was a members of the Range Party many times. It was a long day being away from Camp for about 12 hours. After the firing ceased for the day the Range Party had a long ride home, often reaching Camp after dark.

To be continued.



TELEPHONE: (09)

5700360



16TH FIELD REGIMENT  
ROYAL NEW ZEALAND ARTILLERY  
MOUNT WELLINGTON BARRACKS  
PRIVATE BAG  
PANMURE  
AUCKLAND

OPENING OF THE RNZA FOYER.

Date/Time: 261400 May 1992

Location: 16th Fd Regt  
Mt Wellington Barracks  
39 Mt Wellington Highway  
Panmure  
(North end of old Fisher & Paykel Building)

Dress: Informal

Programme: Official Opening  
Presentation on RNZA History and past/present  
equipment  
Afternoon Tea

Miscellaneous: Partners Welcome  
A bus will uplift the Old Comrades from the  
Birkenhead RSA at 1300 hrs. All personnel who  
wish to use this service MUST RING TO BOOK BY  
10 MAY 1992.

R.S.V.P.: By Phone to LBdr Huiriana (09) 5700360  
or Contact the RSM WO 1 Ian Foster (09) 5700356.

A General Plea.

. We require information/articles on the 3.7" Howitzer. Any person that served on these guns in NZ or Overseas and can help us please contact the RSM WO 1 Ian Foster.

16th Field Regiment is going to open a RNZA Corp History Room. Any information/stories/photos/artifacts will be gratefully received. All articles will be catalogued. Any person who wishes to help trace and organize the Corp history please contact the RSM.

UBIQUE