



Incorporated

NEW ZEALAND PERMANENT FORCE OLD COMRADES ASSOCIATION INC.

PO BOX 33 710, TAKAPUNA, AUCKLAND 9

NEWSLETTER No 74

June 1992

A Registered Publication

LAST POST:

32524 J.R. (Jimmy) Trotter, 7 Apr 92, at Waiouru.

31273 L.H. (Laurie) Clark, 9 Apr 92, at Auckland.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS:

G.J. Cassidy to 12 Sefton St, Twizel, South Canterbury.

R. Harman to c/o PDC, Clarks Beach, RD 4, Pukekohe.

Brig. G.A. Hitchings to 'Karingal', RD 5, Warkworth.

SSgt R.P. Kinzett to LAN Manager, NZ Army Material Agency, Messines
Army Centre, Trentham.

Major R.O. Meyer to 98 Churchill Rd, Murrays Bay, North Shore City.

Major N.B. Mitchell to 3 Parker St, Blenheim.

Lt Col M.J.R. Pearce to c/o Officers Mess, Linton MC, Linton.

Col. F. Rennie to Box 370, Paihia, Bay of Islands.

Major D.H. Rollo to 57C Tiromoana Rd, Raumati South.

Bdr P. Storey to 3 Lonsdale Cres, Rongotai, Wellington.

J.D. Waters to 2/29 Edmund Hillary Ave, Papakura..

GONE NO. ADDRESS:

LAST KNOWN LOC

D.C. Gunn

78 Mere Rd, Taupo.

NEW MEMBERS:

G48628 W02 L.A. (Leroy) Forrester RNZA, School of Artillery, Waiouru.

41970 Mrs I. (Iris) Boyter, 449 Parnell Rd, Parnell, Auckland 1.(Assoc.

STRUCK OFF STRENGTH FOR FAILURE TO PAY DUES:

Captain G.B. Black

Bdr B.J. Gordon-Glassford

D.G. Maxwell

B. T. Newell

C.J. Pearce

REUNIONS:

NZPFOCA: Our next reunion will be held at the Yacht Club, Taupo, over the week-end 20-22 November 92. Further details will be issued in the September newsletter.

'J' FORCE: The 7th National Reunion will be held at Christchurch 5-8 March 93. Contact Secretary, Eric Dewar, 162 West Belt, Rangiora.

COMMITTEE MEETING:

The next NZPFOCA Committee Meeting will be held on 8 Aug 92 in the main lounge, Birkenhead RSA, commencing 1000 hrs. Non-committee members are welcome to attend.

REUNION 1991

The following letters from General Sir Martin Farndale KCB and Brigadier John Salmon OBE who were our guests of honour at the 1991 reunion, are here reproduced. They should have appeared in an earlier newsletter but were inadvertently omitted, for which oversight Hon. Sec. apologises:

Seabarn Manor
Kingston Gorse, E. Preston,
Sussex BN 16 1SB,
11 Nov 91.

Dear Alan,

Thank you so much for inviting me to that splendid Association dinner on Saturday. I found it to be a most enjoyable occasion and it was nice to meet so many distinguished Gunners in such a warm and friendly atmosphere.

I do congratulate you on the way you hold it together. This, to me, is so very important. Please thank all members of your committee for making the arrangements for a most memorable evening for me.

May I wish all members of your Association every good fortune for the future. I hope that it is not too long before I am able to return.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Farndale,

Master Gunner, St James's
Park.

95 Wybalena Grove,
Cook, ACT 2614,
10 Nov 91.

Dear Alan,

It was indeed an honour to be with you last night for the annual reunion dinner of the RNZA Old Comrades Association.

I greatly treasure my service in Korea with 16 Fd Regt RNZA in 1952 and I was grateful to again catch up with so many old friends. Thank you personally for making me so very welcome and do please express my appreciation to all your members who greeted me so affably and made me feel very much at home.

It was also a memorable experience to join you this morning for your Church Parade and Service of Remembrance in what is truly the home of the New Zealand Army. The setting is most historical and I regret time did not permit us to explore it further.

Kindly accept my thanks for all the many kindnesses I received and for the very happy privilege of sharing your reunion.

Yours sincerely,

John Salmon.

RNZA FOYER MOUNT WELLINGTON BARRACKS:

We are pleased to note the response to the invitation to the opening of the foyer by Lt Col P.S. Southwell RNZA, CO 16 Fd Regt RNZA, (included in Newsletter No 73), was most gratifying. All those attending enjoyed an interesting and instructive afternoon.

GUNNERS DAY SOCIAL 27 May 92; Quite a successful function at the Birkenhead RSA. The following attended: Eric BICKERTON, Win BLACK, Guy BLACKWELL, Allan and Elsie BOYD, Bevan CULHANE, Nev FISHER, DAN AND Dot Foley, Barney HARROP, Cyril and Ngaio HAYDEN, Dutch HOLLAND, Pat HICKEY, Jack and Joan KEINZLEY, Vic and Audrey MEYLE, Bill and Estelle MORLAND, Reg NUTSFORD, Des and Bunty O'CONNOR, Bill and Joyce POWRIE, Jim ROSS, Wally RUFFELL and Daughter Lorraine, Ian and Iris ROWNTREE, Margaret STITT, Henry and Thelma SALT, Sham and Joyce SHAW, Vic Svendsen, Jack and Kate TANKARD, Les and Joan WILSON, Gordon and Nora WEAVER, Yogi YOUNG. If I have omitted anyone please tell me - Sec. Apologies were received from Alf Smith, Bill and Val Baker.

NEWS FROM AROUND AND ABOUT:

Lindsay Skinner is taking his release from Army after 30½ years' service to take up the appointment as Administration Manager, Porirua City Council.

Arthur Kilmore tenders his condolences on behalf of his old friend Johnny Meikle, and sends his regards to another old friend, Jack Baigent.

Jack Basham, 12 Papa Place, Birkdale, Auckland 10, has had to suffer a premature retirement owing to two major strokes but is recovering slowly. We wish him a speedy return to full duty.

Dave and Averill Jones are well and recently enjoyed a trip to Norfolk Island. For the last forty years Dave has been busy building rammed earth buildings, and reports that interest in the technique is on the increase, both in New Zealand and throughout the world, a phenomenon always occurring during economic downturn.

Our Patron, General Ron Hassett, recently suffered a broken arm which unfortunately caused him to miss the opening of the RNZA foyer at 16 Field as well as our Gunners Day social at Birkenhead RSA. We wish him a speedy recovery.

Malcolm Tyson has just taken off for Australia. High on the agenda is a visit to the museum at Manly 'to see if they are as good as they say they are.'

Herb Milne and his good lady Doris have been Honorary Members of the Takapuna City Silver Band since 1976. On 5 Aug 91 Herb was made a Life Member of the band, now known as the North Shore Brass Band. Herb's only regret is that his activities with the band as librarian and on fund-raising activities have been curtailed by cataract operations on both eyes. To Doris, our thoughts are with you; don't let things get you down. They are never so bad as they seem.

Stan Perrett, one time Drum Major of the band mentioned above, is now playing side-drum for Warnocks Wanganui Brass Band, and says Herb, his carriage is as good as ever. Stan sends regards to all Old Comrades.

Jim Gilberd reports from Napier that most of his flock are OK except that Gordon Morley and Alex McDonald are having health problems. We wish them well.

Jack and Zita Cook, 50 Bowater Place, Manurewa, recently went on a tour of Italy but experienced extremely bad luck, Jack becoming ill during the trip and Zita immediately afterwards. We sincerely hope they both make a rapid recovery.

Jim Gilberd is considering re-writing 'Gunners and Horses' in the light of additional information he has acquired, and putting it into book form. Members on numerous occasions have expressed their interest in this and other newsletter articles, and how much they appreciate them

We are pleased to report that Charles Cranmer BEM, our "In Memoriam Book" scribe has had his eyes finally and successfully repaired, and is now able to continue writing.

Our thanks are due to Jack Tankard who so ably kept our "In Memoriam Book" up to date while Charles was indisposed, and who provided lapel stickers (at no charge) for our last two social functions.

JEFF WRITE SERVICES

John B. Tankard

Calligraphy, Medal and Photo/Picture
Mounting

Dining place names
Introduction lapel stickers
Executive desk plaques
Personalised Genealogical Charts

Jeffrey D. Waters
2/29 Edmund Hillary Ave.
Papakura
Telephone
(09) 296-2457
(24 Hours)

9 Clifton Rd. Browns Bay. +79-7770

Shown (above right) is a copy of Jack's card and an example of his work. Jack will quote for any member wishing to avail himself of his skills.

Also (above left) we display the card of the opposition, our member Jeff Waters who undertakes similar work.

The Association now subscribes to GUNNER, the magazine of the Royal Artillery, the first issue received being that for May 1992. Copies will be available for perusal at committee and other meetings, and may be borrowed by arrangement with Secretary.

Peter Joplin writes with best wishes and a hope he will be able to join us at Birkenhead RSA one of these days. I quote (with Peter's permission) an extract from his letter: "I read with interest Alan Boyd's report to the AGM as printed in Newsletter No 72. When posted to the School of Artillery in Waiouru in about 1947 Or 48 I would arrange with Scotty Galloway (I think) to take Barbara or Howitzer for an outing on the ranges on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon. Elizabeth, who used to stay with Howard and Joan Jones in the Homestead, joined me on several occasions and of course when Howitzer slipped her reins and we had to come home together on Barbara in view of the whole camp, we had no alternative but to get engaged and subsequently to marry!!"

Sandy Bissett always looks forward to our newsletters, especially Jim Gilberd's contributions. Unfortunately he is not enjoying the best of health but realises "...as the years roll on we have to try and keep up with them."

Norm Mitchell (see changes of address) has moved to a smaller place because, he says, he is getting lazy (er). Actually its not a bad idea; the writer has been thinking about it for years but can't quite get around to it.

Congratulations to Eric Autridge who turned 80 on 9 Jun 92, and thus qualifies for life membership.

Russell de la Cour is having trouble with his hip and may have to go into hospital. We wish him well.

We welcome two new District Reps:

R.R. (Rex) Hudson MBE, 94A MacKenzie Ave, Christchurch 2 (Canterbury).
A.S (Darkie) McWhinnie, 57A Lismore St, Unit 2, New Plymouth (Taranaki),
who have replaced Colin Young and the late George Sutherland respectively

John Masters reports he has failed again for the third time to sustain a period of retirement, and is now working full time with Milburn NZ Ltd in a corporate appointment which, he says, keeps all systems going flat out. John made it to our 27 May social at the Birkenhead RSA so please add his name to the roll of those attending, and correct another inadvertent omission by Hon. Sec. who must be getting old!

THE KOREAN MEMORIAL ROCK will be unveiled at a ceremony to be held at the Sir Dove Myer Robinson Park, Gladstone Road, Parnell (Parnell Rose Garden), Auckland, at 1500 hrs 27 Jul 92. For further details (available later), contact Secretary or 16 Fd Rep.

GUNNERS AND HORSES

Continued from Newsletter No 73

By Jim Gilberd.

LIVE SHELL PRACTICE (Cont):

The allocation of ammunition was 100 rounds per battery. Before firing could begin the Range Party had to be in position. This party consisted of an Officer and junior NCO who acted as safety officers. They were also required to plot the position of any 'blinds,' that is unexploded shells. Other duties were to keep the range clear while firing was in progress. If firing was to be stopped, the Range Party raised a large red screen, indicating danger. On the range being clear, the screen was lowered and firing could commence.

In most commands the RNZA had a 'live shoot' at the end of the Territorial training. We looked forward to this, because most of our time was spent as instructors, and to be part of a gun detachment and to have a 'shoot' was good.

The RNZA gun detachment shown in the illustration entitled "Waipukurau 7.03.34" were:

Bdr Alex Tierney No 1, Gnr "Slim" Cumming No 2
L Bdr Ron Bolton No 3, Gnr Tom Chapman No 4
and Jim Gilberd No 5.



-Target Party - Waipukurau - 1934

Jim Gilberd

Les Boulton

DRESS AND SMALL ARMS:

Dress for mounted Gunners like the rest of the Army saw many changes. During the militia and volunteer era the soldiers wore uniform in style akin to their British counterparts. It was not until the 1890s that we saw a trend towards a colonial type of dress. Khaki came into use and there were variations in style. Collars and cuffs were of navy blue or veldt green. Head-dress also was of many styles, including the round Pill Box cap, Shakos, Cloth-covered helmets and the "Slouch" hat. Drivers at this time wore a navy blue jacket, Bedford cord breeches, a brown leather strap type leggings with box spurs. A brown leather belt and slouch hat completed their attire.

In 1912 we see Service Dress introduced. This consisted of a khaki jacket, riding breeches, puttees, black boots and spurs. A "lemon-squeezer" hat and 50-round bandolier were worn by all other ranks below the rank of Staff Sergeant.

Mounted men rolled their puttees from the top of the leg down, with the "tapes" rolled round the ankle. This was to prevent them from unrolling through friction with the saddles, I understand.

Small arms weapons available to H.D. Artillery were carbine and later the Short Lee Enfield rifle. Normally six carbines or rifles were carried on limbers housed in spring-loaded steel brackets. The Gun Sergeant carried a rifle in a leather bucket attached to his saddle on the "off side."

STABLES AND HORSE LINES

Stables were available from the time when permanent horses were on strength. They consisted of individual stalls with feed bins and bars for securing the horses. The floors were cobbled with a large passage down the centre. Forage and harness rooms were adjacent to the stalls and there was a room close by for the stablemen. Here they had facilities for tea-making and refreshments.

In the yard outside were troughs for watering the horses.

Horse lines were used when animals were tethered in the open. This was

the normal method for securing, feeding and harnessing up area at camps where possible hard standings of river metal and cinders were provided.

The lines consisted of strong posts dug into the ground with breast high picket ropes attached, the horses being tied to the picket line. Usually 30/40 horses per line.

When in bivouac horse lines were not erected as such, picket ropes being attached to ammunition limbers and the horses secured between the limbers. When this method was used an extra stableman was on duty as the horses were closer together.

Stablemen's duties, whether in stables or on lines, were to make sure horses were secure, removing nose-bags when finished feeding and keeping lines or stables clear of "droppings."

In stables there was an extra "chore" each evening, that being the "bedding down" of horses with straw. The following morning the stables were "mucked out."

TRUMPET CALLS

Each battery had two or three trumpeters on strength, and besides sounding calls they acted as mounted orderlies and horse-holders.

Apart from normal trumpet calls such as "Reveille", "Defaulters", "First and Last Post," and "Lights Out," there were special calls.

The first of these was "Stables;" this meant "turning to," grooming, watering and feeding the horses. The horses soon learned the calls and reacted to them.

When grooming was finished, trumpeters then sounded the "Water Call," when the animals were led to the troughs for a drink. The call the horses enjoyed most was "Feed." Hearing the calls, ears were pricked, and general excitement prevailed until they received their food.

After the troops had had their breakfast, the next call was "Boot and Saddle" which meant harnessing up and being ready to move out of stable or horse lines to the gun park for "hooking-in." Other mounted calls sounded by trumpeters were "Trot," "Canter" and "Gallop." One of the more notable trumpeters I remember was Bombardier George Salt; to see him, bandolier polished, buttons and boots shining, mounted on his horse with a shining trumpet slung over his shoulder was a sight to behold.

THE MOUNTAIN GUNNER

Included in the illustrations to this story is a painting of the Mountain Gunners. It was painted in 1925 by Snaffles - otherwise known as Charles Payne (1884-1967), a celebrated military and equestrian artist. It depicts a section of B (Peshawar) Mountain Battery RA (Frontier Force).

In New Zealand we had two Pack/Mountain Batteries at various times. "D" Battery in Wellington was a Pack Unit during the Volunteer era. Their barracks and stables were in Tasman Street area, and their guns were the 2.75 howitzers. These guns were broken down to about eight pieces and were lashed on to the mules pack saddles. Their stables were known as the "Mule Stables" until 1937, although mules had long gone by that time.

The other Pack Battery was "E" based at King Edward Barracks in Christchurch during the period 1925-35. The guns were 3.7-inch Pack Howitzers and were carried by Artillery Pack horses instead of mules.

It is understood the 2.75 howitzers were sold following the introduction of the QF 3.7 howitzer in 1917. However, "D" Battery did not get replacements for its 2.75s; the new 3.7s went to Auckland.

The organisation of these batteries was such that the mules or pack horses and their loads were arranged so that the leading animals carried the wheels and axle trees, followed by the trail, cradle, recoil system, piece and the sighting gear. Lastly the ammunition animals brought up the shells. There were four guns to a battery, their range about 6000 yards (for the 3.7).

The ammunition was shrapnel and high explosive, the filling being lyddite and they were fuzed with a time and percussion fuze.

TAIL PIECE

Sends "Gunners and Horses". Here I have tried to recall times, places animals and people who were part of our Army of long ago. Maybe this account will interest future researchers of New Zealand military history. I hope so.

APPENDIX: Extracts from memoirs of Driver A.T. Stratton NZA.

Here are some interesting excerpts taken from Arthur Stratton's life as a driver with the Divisional Ammunition Column during the Great War 1914-18. His typescript records the appalling conditions on the western front that drivers and animals had to endure. Depending on conditions of terrain and weather, these artillerymen laboured to move ammunition from railheads and "dumps" to the guns. Four or six horse teams were used and in the extreme conditions the ammunition was "packed" in using horses and mules. So Arthur recalls -

"We loaded up at a little shed of roofing iron which was in a small depression, but still under observation by Fritz. We had not been there long before one of his shells exploded about 50 yards short in soft ground. The next one landed just past the shed and dirt rattled on the walls. The next one would surely get us, but we were not waiting and were quickly off and out of sight. I thought what a lively start to my service in the D.A.C!"

"As the winter rains set in on the Somme in 1916, and turned the ground into liquid mud, the ammunition was taken to the guns by pack horse or mule."

"In the winter of 1917 we were at Passchendaele front and what a front. Again the ammunition was taken up by pack horse. We operated mainly along the Saint Julian road but sometimes along the road to Gravenstofel. Between these two roads was a desolate wilderness, an awful churned up mess of mud and water, wrecked vehicles and dead animals. A place where no one in his right senses would want to venture, but a place where man had been and put his mark!"

To be continued.

STOP PRESS: We regret to announce that our Honorary Auditor, Allan Wordsworth ACA, has gone west. As it is essential we obtain someone to replace him as soon as possible, we would be pleased to hear from any member in the Auckland area with the necessary qualifications willing to take on the job.

Best regards

Wally Ruffell.