



P.O. BOX 79-371, ROYAL HEIGHTS, AUCKLAND 1230. PHONE: (09) 416 8662

NEWSLETTER No. 105

MARCH 2000

ROUTINE ORDERS

SUBSCRIPTIONS: For 2000 are now due.

Honorary and Life members pay no subs. Lady Associates pay \$5, all others \$10 p.a. These rates were set at the AGM held in Nov 98: some folk who have paid at the old scale will find they have been billed the extra amount. All members are eligible for election as Life members on reaching age 80, when they should notify the Secretary as records of birth dates are not held. To be financial to 31 Dec 2000 you owe us \$..... If no amount is shown you are financial.

LAST POST:

87368 Maj R.A. Williamson
1834 R.J. Gunn

18 Jan 2000 at Wellington
30 Dec 99 at Rotorua

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

Capt R.W.G. Bennett to:
R.V.G. Wilson to:

346A High St, Motueka
21A Woodlands Rd, Opotiki

LIFE MEMBERS:

M. McMahon w.e.f.
A.F.W. Powrie w.e.f.

20 Feb 2000
26 Nov 1 998

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

At 1000hrs on Saturday 8 Apr at Birkenhead R.S.A. All members are welcome to attend.

EDITORIAL

WE FEW, WE HAPPY FEW

Defence of New Zealand, which has been steadily declining for decades, is reaching a crisis point. There are signs of renewal, with a new government, a new Minister, and, in particular, a brand new Secretary of Defence.

This column has noted in the past the false assumptions on which official defence reviews have been based. These include the "No Threat" delusion, the Moat Myth ("We have the world's widest moat"), the "Can't Afford It" syndrome, and the "Yanks (or Somebody) Will Look After Us" illusion.

Such errors have resulted in a mission statement for the Defence Force which avoids any mention of actually defending the country. These matters are explained in an article, on the Four Fallacies of Defence, published in the NZ Herald of 2 Feb under the title of "We Couldn't Even Fight Our Way Out of a Paper Bag". Copies are available from the Secretary, NZPFOCA, on request.

The new administration started inauspiciously with the announcement that a reviewer had been appointed to carry out a review of the F.16 aircraft procurement, to be followed by an assessment of New Zealand's defence needs.

The reviewer's method is to take the Defence Force vote as a Procrustean bed, use it to measure the Defence Force, then chop bits off the Force until it fits the vote. As "affordability" is made a governing factor, expensive items of essential firepower, such as the F.16's are the most vulnerable. The "niche" defence is, in fact, "nil" defence, for the simple reason that no foe will restrict operations to the cheap "niche" areas selected.

These views have been conveyed to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defence. There may be a turning point, in that the wider defence assessment is now to be carried out by Mr G. Fortune, the new Secretary of Defence. The Minister says the "Defence Beyond 2000" report will be considered, but that we may be assured that other views, such as ours, will also be taken into account.

An opportunity, crucial to the defence of NZ, is therefore open to those of us happy few who have left the service, and have experience and training behind us, to express our views in a way which may tip the scales. Write to the

Minister (The Hon Mark Burton, MP, Parliament Buildings, Wellington (no postage required), fax: 04-495 8465) to support a balanced force, or alternatively, send a barbed shaft to the defence review when its details are published.

Make the point that attack on this country will come across the sea or through the air, but probably both. It follows that we have to control the approaches to our main harbours, the airspace above our airports and main cities, and, to be effective, defence systems must be able to inflict unacceptably high losses, regardless of the mode of attack. This cannot be done by warships which lack their main armament, an Air Force reduced to a transport role, or an army without coast, heavy AA, or sufficient field artillery. Take post.

WEBSITE SITREP

The web address is www.riv.co.nz/rnza/

There is now a section for Songs and another for Poetry (both accessed from the Tales From The Trails page), so be sure to send the Secretary or the Webmaster (crivers@clear.net.nz) your favourite artillery song/poem/story. Wally Ruffell's article on "The Development of the Mortar" is updated each month. "The Gun" is updated with the publication of each newsletter. Our mini-series on ranks and appointments in the Gallery continues and Mac McDonald's photos from the 1970s are on the 3 Fd Regt page.

ECHOES FROM THE SERVING REGIMENT

At short notice, Maj Shay Bassett replied to the toast of "The Regiment" at the '99 Taupo reunion dinner. Here are excerpts from his address:

"This year has been a very busy year for the Regiment. We have had to grapple with not only the existing workload, the hardest I have seen in 20 years, but we have also had to provide assistance to a number of activities ranging from the funeral for Lt Gen Sir Leonard Thornton, to the supporting and training for East Timor.

In early 1999, we hosted the Singaporeans during "Thunder Warrior 99". This exercise lasted throughout January and was a continuation of the relationship the NZ Army has built up with the Singaporean Army over many years. February to April saw the majority of the unit either being instructed or instructing on courses at the School of Artillery in an intensive individual training period designed to leave the rest of the year free for collective training.

Unfortunately there wasn't much chance to fully test this new programme as the Regiment was required to send a 120 man battery to Australia in May, for a month, on exchange with a battery from 4 Fd Regt in Townsville. Never the less, Kapyong Battery (A title we use to avoid arguments when both RF Batteries are involved together in an activity) acquitted themselves well as always.

Of course, I can't omit the rigours of APEC from any summary of 1999. As part of the largest troop movement in recent memory, around 600 soldiers were moved by troop train to Auckland for the APEC leaders meeting on 10 September, and were quartered at the Stanley Street Tennis Courts until we left on 13 September. During this time 161 & 163 batteries, along side 1 RNZIR and a squadron from QAMR, provided security for the leaders meeting on two of the sectors in the domain. At the same time, a number of officers and soldiers from 16 Fd Regt were conducting their final preparation for deployment to Darwin, then East Timor. An event which, as you know, grew to a battalion deployment which the Regiment became responsible for training and deploying.

There have been a number of structural changes in the organisation of the NZ Army that have had a significant impact on the RNZA. As part of the continuing rationalisation of the TF and move towards the one Army concept, the TF Batteries have been placed under the command of the new regional Regiments. These units are based on the former TF infantry battalions, with each having a specific role, as well as an all arms training function.

In the changes at this stage are as follows; 1 (A) Battery and 4 Medium (G) Battery have now become the Indirect Fire Support Company of the Auckland Regiment, while 22 (D) Battery and 32 (E) Battery have become OP troops for the Wellington and Canterbury Regiments respectively. 31 (B) Battery has unfortunately met its demise, however, on the positive side the TF are now taking a far more active part in what were previously regarded as purely RF activities, to the benefit of all concerned.

HQ Battery managed to squeeze into Linton at the beginning of the year, leaving 163 Battery and the School of Artillery as the last RNZA elements in Waiouru. It is anticipated that they will join the rest of the Regiment within the next two or three years.

2000 already looks to be another busy year for the RNZA, and of course of particular significance to 16 Fd Regt, it is the 50th anniversary of the Korean War."

FROM AND ABOUT MEMBERS

R.A. Harris, OBE: (Remember the special Aussie meaning of those letters?) Remembers Roy Barlow (ex 18 Wing) on a tour of duty to Motutapu in '39 under L/Bdr Roy Spence, with Gnrs Harris, Pratt and Mitchell, and thinks he disappeared from North Head on outbreak of war. "He was a good bloke — "Gunner" in all respects, and if he got overseas good luck to him. I went over in 1941 with 5th Reinforcements... At no stage did I ever hear of Roy being there unless he went to infantry under a nom-de-plume... He was a quiet modest chap, well spoken. I thought he came from the South Island" So the mystery remains, as does the bottle of whiskey.

SOCIAL EVENTS AND REUNIONS

GUNNER'S DAY 2000:

In 1715, during the rebellion in Scotland, the system of drawing guns, assembling personnel and hiring horses and drivers to form a temporary "Train of Artillery" broke down. Therefore on 26 May 1716 King George I issued a Royal Warrant establishing two permanent artillery companies, increased to four in 1722, forming the Royal Regiment of Artillery. Hence this date is celebrated by the Royal Artillery as "Gunners Day", and likewise by the Royal Regiment of New Zealand Artillery. Events this year include:

(a) **LADIES FORMAL DINING-IN**

At Papakura RSA on Fri 26 May. Time: 1800 for 1900hrs. Cost: \$40 per head. Dress: Formal, with medals(atleastjacketandtie). YouGet:Pre-dinnersherry,dinner,tablewine,port,musicfromtheBand of the RNZA, after dinner dancing. Attendance is limited to the first 200.
Enquire from Jeff Waters, 14A Dittmer Pl, Papakura. Phone: 09-296 2457

(b) **GUNNER'S DAY LUNCHEON**

At Tauranga RSA on Fri 26 May. Time: 1100 for 1200hrs. Cost: approx \$12 per head. Contact: Matt Crawley, 2/159 16th Ave, Tauranga. Phone: 07-577 0502

(c) **GUNNER'S DAY LUNCH**

At Birkenhead RSA on Thu 25 May. Time: 1100 for 1200hrs.
Contact: Jim Ross, Sec PFOC Assn. Phone: 09-416 8662

K FORCE: 50TH ANNIVERSARY:

This year heralds the 50th anniversary of New Zealand's commitment of forces to the United Nations in the repelling of aggression against the Republic of Korea. The New Zealand Korea Veterans Association (NZKVA) has appointed a Commemorative Committee to oversee the observance of significant events during the period June 2000 to July 2003 and, possibly, beyond. It is anticipated that CDS may well support a pilgrimage type revisit to Korea in 2001 similar to those of E1 Alamein, Crete and Italy. 16 Field Regiment RNZA is already designated to support the 16th NZKVA National Reunion at Palmerston North, 27-30 October 2000, the date in 1950 that the Regiment received its posting of personnel.

Veterans should be aware that costs will be involved if selected for any return to Korca on either the annual revisit programme or other pilgrimages, should such arise. The Korean Veterans Association host annual revisits during April. To be eligible, service in Korca or Korean waters between 25 June 1950 and 27 July 1953 and full membership of NZKVA are prerequisites. Five nights' accommodation, meals and visits to places of interest, including the New Zealand Memorial at Kapyong, are provided free of any charges. This is extended to include the immediate family of the veteran or surviving spouse and immediate family.

NZPFOC members who served in Korea 1950-57 and are not members of a NZKVA Branch or the National HQ, are encouraged to become members by contacting the National Secretary General, Mr B. Goodhue, 17 Rosewarne Cres, Glendene, Auckland. Phone: 09-818 8359, fax: 09-818 8329.

This info comes from Les Pye, Secretary NZKVA.

CMT REUNION:

This year is the 50th anniversary of the first intake going into camp. Events in commemoration include:

- (a) A CMT Reunion on weekend 16-18 Jun under auspices of the NZ Army Assoc (Taranaki Branch), an official Millenium event at the TSB Stadium, New Plymouth.
- (b) A CMT display at the Army Museum, Waiouru.
- (c) A CMT Commemorative medal is being produced by an Auckland commercial company.

All this info comes from the NZ Army Assoc Inc, 12 Kauri St, New Plymouth.

NOTICES

SWORD WANTED A second-hand RA/RNZA sword is sought. Contact Maj Shay Bassett at 163 Bty, 16 Fd Regt, Waiouru Camp, Pte Bag 1702, Waiouru. Phone: 06-387 6111 xtn. 7320, fax: 06-387 5595

ARTILLERY INSIGNIA Are needed by Jeff Waters for a display under solid glass on a leaner (what does that mean? Ed) to be presented to Papakura RSA on St Barbara's Day next. He already has a helmet plate from the century before last, and as the cost will be around \$1000, he would be grateful for donations.

FROM BERT DYSON (NOT an admitted self-portrait)



« Dear Mother—We are now living in a mansion. It is good to feel civilised again! »

THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

A lucky Tp Comd remembers "Gnr Mansfield helping me dig a fox-hole — I was more frightened than he was, and dug faster. When the mortaring started, the hole being unfinished, he said "You take the deep end, Sir — you're paid more than me" — Pinched from the Journal of the Royal Artillery.

THE GUN.

By Wally Ruffell.

Continued from NL 104

HOWITZERS:

ORDNANCE: In smooth-bore days howitzers were employed on what was called 'curved' or 'indirect' fire, e.g. firing at a target obscured by some intervening obstacle. On rare occasions they fired over the heads of troops they were supporting.

During the Armstrong RBL era SBML howitzers continued to be used; no RBL howitzers were introduced.

Field howitzers were normally found either singly or in pairs in each fire unit, e.g. a battery might have four guns and two howitzers, or five and one respectively. Being mounted on the same carriages as the guns, the pole-type trails of which restricted elevation to about 16°, their capabilities in the howitzer role were rather limited.

Then in 1864 Field Marshal Sir J. Burgoyne drew attention to the necessity of improving the capabilities of existing howitzers, resulting in the Ordnance Select Committee of the day proposing a heavy rifled howitzer to fire up to elevations of 30°. Three 68-pr (8.05-in) carronades (short guns used mainly by Navy) were rifled, and the success of the experiments carried out with them led to a 32-pr bronze block being bored up to a calibre of 6.3 inches and rifled to take a 64-pr shell. The excellent results obtained with this piece prompted the Committee to propose a RML 6.3-inch howitzer. However, no further action took place at this stage.

The power and advantages of high-angle fire from rifled artillery observed during foreign wars led in 1867 to a recommendation that an 8-inch rifled howitzer be produced. Designs from the Royal Gun Factory (RGF), for 8, 9, and 10-inch were considered, and in 1872 adoption of the 8-inch was confirmed. A number were made in 1873-74, constructed of steel and wrought iron and rifled on the Woolwich system with four grooves with a uniform twist of one turn in 16 calibres. The extreme shortness of the piece made this degree of twist necessary. See Fig. 104

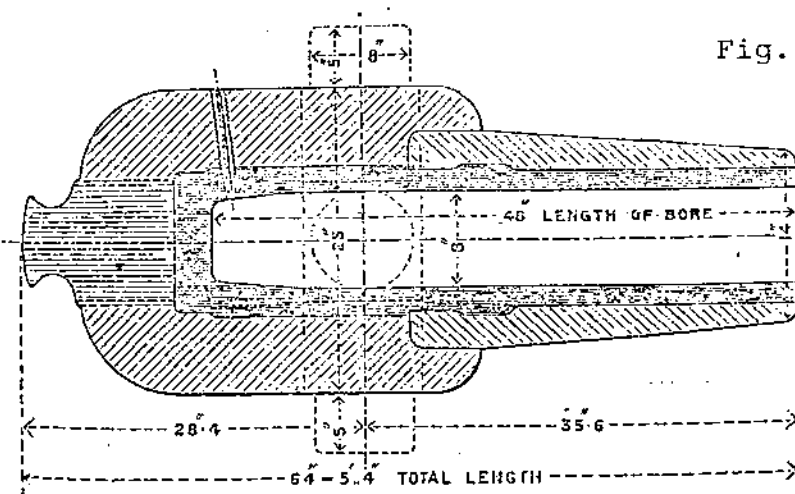


Fig. 104: RML 8-inch 46-cwt Howitzer Mark 1.

Except for size the 8-in howitzer closely resembled the 6.3-inch 18-cwt howitzer described below.

The 8-inch had three clinometer planes (not shown on drawing), two on the jacket, one on the cascable.

In 1874 the same committee, no doubt recalling the experiments of the 1860s, decided that a howitzer lighter than the 8-inch would also be desirable, and again proposed that one of 6.3-inch calibre be produced to fire the same projectile as the 64-pr gun. After lengthy trials a 6.3-inch 18-cwt howitzer was adopted in 1878. The rifling was changed to the polygroove system, consisting of 20 grooves 0.1-inch deep and 0.5-inch broad. Twist increased from one turn in 100 calibres to one in 35 at the muzzle.

With a full charge of 4 lbs RLG powder and a common shell of 69 lbs MV was 751 fs.

The 6.3-inch 18-cwt howitzer was the first piece in which projectiles without studs were fired, gas checks being attached to their bases. See notes on RML ammunition to follow.

These early howitzers were exceedingly short, especially the 8-inch. In 1876, realising that length was essential to power, new designs were submitted. However, owing to the time it took the authorities to decide what form the rifling was to take, manufacture of the longer designs was not completed until 1880.

Fig. 105 shows an 8-inch 70-cwt howitzer which superseded the 8-inch 46-cwt and illustrates the differences in design.

Rifling in the heavier piece consisted of 24 grooves 0.05-inch deep and 0.7-inch wide. Twist increased from one turn in 90 calibres at the breech to one in 35 at the muzzle.

With full charge of $11\frac{1}{4}$ lbs RLG (rifle large grain) powder and a common shell of 180 lbs an MV of 956 fs was achieved. Note that howitzers fired shells only.

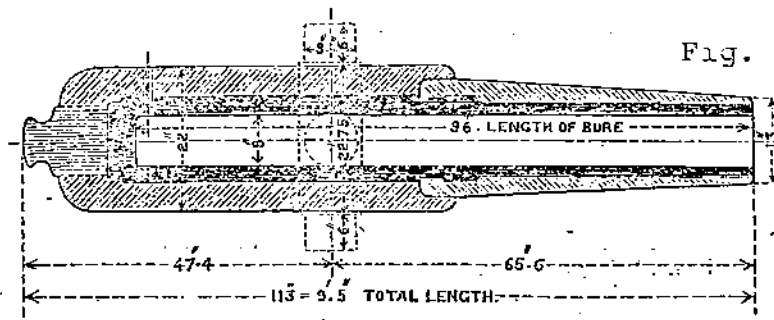


Fig. 105: 8-inch 70-cwt howitzer.

Instead of producing a heavier (and longer) 6.3-inch howitzer to match the 8-inch 70-cwt piece a 6.6-inch howitzer was adopted in conjunction with the 6.6-inch gun. It closely resembled the 8-inch 70-cwt in form.

Rifling of the 6.6 was PPS of 20 grooves 0.05-in deep, 0.7-in wide, with a twist increasing from one turn in 94 calibres to one in 35 at the muzzle. With a 100-lb shell and 5 lbs RLG powder MV was 839 fs. Although manufactured in 1877 the 6.6-inch howitzers were not rifled until 1880.

The last RML howitzer to be made was the 4-inch 600 lb jointed piece. of all-steel construction.

The piece consisted of the breech, trunnion, and muzzle portions, weighing 209, 192, and 199 lbs respectively. Each end of the trunnion ring was threaded internally to take the inner ends of the breech and muzzle portions. A quarter turn of the trunnion ring effected the union. Suitable rings at the junction prevented escape of propellant gas.

Presumably the howitzer was intended to be packed on mules but no record of its being so employed is known; possibly it was found to be too heavy. See Fig. 106.

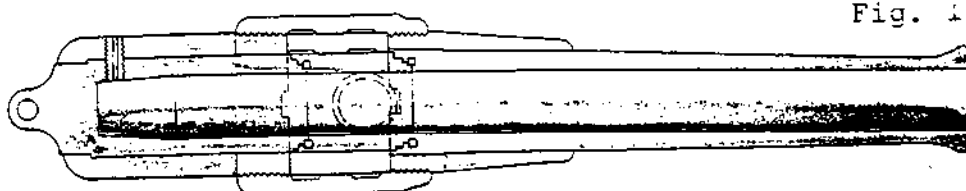


Fig. 106: RML 4-in 600-lb Howitzer.

Rifling PPS
Grooves 13
Depth 0.05-in
width 0.5-in.

Twist of rifling increasing to one turn in 25 calibres 38.7 inches from breech thereafter uniform at one turn in 25 calibres. Note drawing is not to same scale as those for other howitzers. Length 57.45 inches.

(to be continued.)