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NEWSLETTER No. 106

JUNE 2000

ROUTINE ORDERS

LAST POST:

E.C. Morgan	7 Feb 2000 at Orewa
38096 C. Cranmer, BEM.	8 Jan 2000 at Auckland
34817 I.A. Rowntree	6 Mar 2000 at Ohinemuri
1539 Capt. G.H. Martin	3 Dec 1999 at Nelson
31049 R.W. Smith	10 Jan 2000 at Wanganui
207713 Maj. G.M. Connor	2 May 2000 at Rotorua
Gen. Sir Martin Farndale, KCB	10 May 2000 in U.K.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

J.D. Waters	to:	33 Arimu Rd, Papakura
Lt Col M.J.R. Pearce	to:	16 Opepe St, Taupo
J.R. Barrett	to:	71 David Ave, Manurewa, Auckland
G. Robb	to:	3B Te Arawa Place, Welcome Bay, Tauranga
S/Sgt P.L. McInerney	to:	14 Sunnyview Drive, Brown Owl, Upper Hutt
E.T.K Naden	to:	Potae St, Tokomaru Bay, East Coast
Maj. K.F. Lee, ED	to:	27 Burns Grove, Upper Hutt
R.J. Goldsworthy	to:	28 Palamino Drive, Western Heights, Waitakere City 1008
D. (Barney) Harrop	to:	11/72 Birkdale Rd, Birkdale 1310
L.T. Riwaka	to:	76 Devon St, Picton 7372
Lt Col R.L. Cross	to:	296 Matangi Rd, R D 4 Hamilton
B.R. Edmonds	to:	Gt. Northern Hotel, 3 Earl St, Launceston, 7250 Tasmania

NEW MEMBERS

Mrs Iris Rowntree	Knockbain Cottage, 33 Claremont Ave Paeroa (<i>Associate</i>)
41278 W.G.C. Subrizsky	13/4 Fyfe Ave, Papatoetoe, Auckland
Mrs Pat Connor	14 Luke Place, Rotorua (<i>Associate</i>)

LIFE MEMBERS

Mrs Joyce Vine	w.e.f.	20 Sept 1999
Mrs Kathleen Kitney	w.e.f.	29 Aug 1999
D.N. Delaney	w.e.f.	2 Sept 1999

RETIREMENTS

Retired from the Association due to advancing years:

1066 A.L. (Lloyd) Rowsell (ex RNZAOC, NMD, 6 Fd Regt – 7 ATK Regt, Italy)

ADDRESS – E MAIL

Maj R.B. Potts:	wharemoana@win.co.nz
Lt Col R.L. Cross	rcross@expio.co.nz

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- (a) At its meeting of 8 April 2000 it was resolved that:
"This Committee places on record its congratulations to Capt. J. Gilbert on reaching the age of 90 and the gratitude of the Association for his long and faithful service."
- (b) Next meeting: 1000 hrs, Saturday 10 June and 12 Aug at Birkenhead RSA.

EDITORIAL

ATTENTION BOOKWORMS

"Ack Ack" by Gen. Sir Frederick Pile should be required reading for Gunners, detailing the constant pressure of technical, tactical and even political factors affecting the artillery air defence of Great Britain in WW2. A notable break-through was the enlistment of large numbers of women to provide the necessary manpower (you know what I mean). "The women", writes Gen. Pile. "worked like men, fought like men and in many cases, died like men". We are proud to have at least three of these ladies as members of this Association. There is a parallel in this country's history, when, in 1864, the Maori Garrison of Orakau Pa were surrounded by imperial and colonial troops. General Cameron, impressed by the defenders' courage, offered them an opportunity to surrender, which was promptly refused. The interpreter then said, "...it is not right that the women and children should die. Let them come out". But the women did not wait for the decision of the Chiefs. Ahumai, a tall handsome young woman, stood up and replied; "If the men are to die, the women and children must die also." There will be a need for that brand of guts in years to come. It would be nice though, to have some firepower as well.

DEFENCE POLICY

"The Government is set to fast-track its controversial defence policies, abandoning plans for a comprehensive review" says a national Sunday Paper. Instead, Defence Minister, Mark Burton will issue what the Prime Minister calls a "formal statement of policy on defence," adding "I'm rather keen to move to some practical issues and move off navel-gazing". Even although this breaks promises, in her election manifesto, of a White Paper on defence, the Prime Minister expects to make an announcement in a few weeks, but this has not happened as we go to press. It will not be, therefore, until the September issue that this Newsletter will be able to give her its customary constructive criticism.

When, as the land lies fenceless, we find ourselves under foreign occupation, she will have provided a splendid Symphony Orchestra to fiddle away the threat, and a lovely Ballet Company to entertain our masters.

SITREP FROM THE INTERNET

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

The website was launched in Dec 98. It has had over 15000 visits since Sept 99 with hits in recent weeks from UK, Australia, Canada, USA, Sweden, Malaysia, Japan, Germany, Peru, France, Romania, Mexico, Spain and Brunei. Photos and stories have been sent to us from members, the public and Territorial Gunners.

We have had lots of e-mail asking for help on getting records, wanting more information on unit histories (especially 5 Fd Regt and 6 Fd Regt) and even asking for the words to Binyon's Lines. Most requests are dealt with by the webmaster but we need your help in these in particular:

- We have several short articles that we need authors for. If you would like to write a short article but can't think of a topic, contact the webmaster.

Keep those stories and articles rolling in. Please contact the secretary, Jim Ross, or the webmaster, Catherine Rivers (e-mail: crivers@clear.net.nz, phone: (06) 327 8831, address: CM Rivers, RD3, Marton), if you can help.

FROM AND ABOUT MEMBERS

Blackie Burns – adds colour and light to the days of late '39 in connection with the mystery of what became of Roy Barlow (NL 104)

"At the outbreak of war Bill Gilbert went down to Motutapu (6-in Mk 21's on Mk 5 Mtgs) as Battery Commander. I was posted to the Examination Battery (4-in Mk 7 on P2 Mtgs – guns off the HMNZS New Zealand) at Narrow Neck as 2 i/c to Major Marshall (TF) and on his departure became BC. Bill Gilbert was soon called up to join the newly formed 6 Field Regiment then being assembled at Papakura under Steve Weir prior to embarkation for the Middle East. At this stage I

took his place down at Motutapu as BC. George Salt was BSM and we had a very capable quota of Regulars as well as a select group of Territorials and new enlistees. No doubt everyone on the Island had a desire to join the Echelons then forming to go overseas and a trickle of Regulars and Territorials succeeded in getting away. But Roy was not included. I remember him very well as he was a broad shouldered fine looking soldier posted with other Regulars (including his friend Bill Cox) down to Motutapu. One day he sailed off on routine leave with his Watch but when the Watch returned to duty Roy Barlow failed to show. So after a couple of days he was posted 'absent without leave'. Days pass into weeks and still no sign of Roy. When the mandatory period of 21 days elapsed there was no option but to post him as a deserter. The story got around that he had opted for a name change and enlisted in the Infantry."

George Miln – continued to correspond with Roy, who rejoined the Army in Burnham under an assumed name and was there spotted, but not 'potted' by a fellow graduate of 18 Wing. His last address was the Long Range Desert Group, but George lost touch on his own departure to the Pacific and cannot remember the name adopted. What became of Roy Barlow therefore remains a mystery, but our investigator has gathered more clues and hopes for a solution in due course.

Henry Salt – reports our signals from Gatton, Queensland, and joins in our joy at winning that Cup (we agreed that we were up top yacht-wise, though we've stuffed out Air Force – Ed)

Jim and Aileen Horn – are venturing from the Mainland to visit their daughter in Tauranga, which seems to be a Mecca for grey-haired gunners.

Kerry Lee – and Missus, now retired, are off to the U.K. for a couple of years.

Charlie Priestly – according to Olive, still keeps up with our news, in spite of suffering several strokes in the last three years.

Larry Riwaka – (see changes of address) sends 'Ubique' from Marlborough. (This brings that detachment to a neat 6 for that OQF 25 pr you have down there. Ed.)

Don Donaldson – reports on Bill Giles, back from the South Island; Bill and Emma are heading North and have bought a house in Dannevirke. He meets Ted Morrissey at Foxton RSA: they have good intentions to making it to Taupo.

Bill Weatherhead – writes that 8 Mar 00 is "60 years to the day I entered Trentham as a recruit – my birth date was 15 Aug 20, so you can let **Harry Honnor** know I shall be a Life Member before him". He reports Dan Foley in good shape in Maroochydore.

Edrich Theodore Kismet Naden – (see Changes of Address_ send "Kia ora Tena tatou te whanau o Gunners..." from his new address, the family home to which he has returned after 44 years, "finding people have changed, but the crayfish, Kina, Paua Pupu Parengo and fish are still around but not in as big numbers. During the last New Year / Millennium period I cooked up a pot of Karaka berries (they are not poisonous to eat after boiling the sh... out of them for 6 hours) and had the first feed of them since I was a boy..... they are delicious". (Alyson Gofton is grateful you won't be competing on 'Food in a Minute' – Ed). Another two ex-gunners in Toko are **Stan King** & **Pete Kearney** (K Force and then SAS, Malaya. **Tommy Gwynne**, from Te Kaha, brought his recently departed father's 'Kawe mate' (spirit) back to his home Marae there. " The only other gunner I know of is **Jack Takarua**, who lives in Ruatoria... Regards and Happy Gunners Day to all," concludes Ed, with a message passed to Jeff Waters. Tena koe, E hoa, kia ora te whanaunga, tika hoki mo tau reta. (Ed)

Hello's – Cheerful signals have come in from H.Bigg-Wither, Tony Tustin, Bill Godfrey, Spencer Cocks, A. Rowsell, Les Pye, Bill Beveridge, C.E. Batchelor, Jackie Partner, Andrew Lister, Alistair Ross, Lin Smith, Jerry (RO) Meyer, Ray Cousineau (Canada), Amy Monk, Clyde Stewart and Ron Cross

EVENTS AND REUNIONS

ANZAC DAY, 2000

The Associations' wreath was once again laid at the ceremony at Birkenhead Memorial Park by Wally Ruffell and Des O'Conner. Vic Meyle and Dick Mitchell were there.

The Dawn Parade at Brown's Bay started under a canopy of umbrellas, a sight to turn any old RSM purple with pleasure (?), but the rain passed over. The address was impressive, but rather too truthful to be reported in the media. We saw faithful attenders Les Pearce and Vic Meyle.

GUNNERS' DAY

Tauranga's - first celebration. Matt Crawley reports on a lunch on 26 May attended by 20 - odd including Graham Birch, Matt Crawley and Rita Moore, Mike and Elva Dakin, Neville Fisher (Whangamata) and Iris Rowntree (Paeroa), Hugh Gibson and Audrey Alphors, Jim Kirk (in his 89th year) and Marie, Bert and Shirley Dyson, Doug (RSA President) and Carlyne Moore, Bill Round, Eddie and Mary Taylor (Orewa), Lin Smith, and Henry Stephens (ex Gunner). It was agreed to have another one next Gunners' Day. Tauranga RSA has 3 Motel welfare units available for visitors. Matt concludes: "Best wishes to all old comrades. See you at the Taupo Reunion."

Bluff RSA - was introduced to Gunners' Day on Friday 26th May by the irrepressible Spencer Morrison. "The introduction went down very well - 97 tots of Artillery Port for the toast which was proposed by Keith Westbury and myself the reply. I am sure that there is now only one corps which makes up the army - yes, artillery."

Invercargill - "We held our usual parade at the Cenotaph, with bugler, pipes and drums and, again NO GUN; our number down a little, 40 attending. The toast to the Regiment was given by WOI Warren Jones, RNZ Inf, senior TF WO for the South Island. Graeme Henderson went to see Jim Fitzgerald and said he looked a lot better.

Dunedin - was visited by Spencer and Graeme Henderson on Saturday 27th May to bid farewell to Central Battery. "But oh! what a shame - the loss of all that history and now no sign of artillery in the deep south, the deep south, the home of 'B' Battery. The org for the function was really (not very good) but we did have a 1940 Morris Quad in going order, now in the hands of "Fangs" MacLeod a returned Gunner from WW2." Spencer remarks unkindly on the present officers (NO, commissions are NOT purchased in the NZ Army [as far as I know] but don't EVEN SUGGEST IT, - Ed). "With half our Army in Timor and the other half on leave, Australia must be very worried about their defence partner and the Pacific Rim countries bubbling away." Concludes Chief Greenhills (aka S. Morrison)

Christchurch - John Masters tells us, celebrated the day on Friday 26th with a dawn parade and breakfast at the Police Club for 30 - odd, then again on Sunday, with a church parade, wreath laying at the Bridge of Remembrance, and an address by Col. Warren Whiting.

Papakura - saw the Ladies Formal Dining In, on the actual day - 26 May when 109 sat down. As in the past, the band of the Royal Regt played: Bob Kerlslade presided, Lt Liz Furket vice'd, and attendance included the Col. Comdt., Brig. Ray Andrews, and Maj. Chris Bath, Dennis Dwane and Mel Nowill. The local Cadet unit were waiters, and two WW2 veterans, Eric Bickerton and Vic Meyle were at the top table. Jeff Waters laid it on.

THE HARD CORE - all nine of us, gathered for lunch on Thursday 25 May at the Birkenhead RSA.

The Capital - On Friday 26th May eight Wellington NZPFOCA members met at the Lower Hutt Memorial RSA Clubrooms for drinks and a meal, writes Roger Newth. Others present were Doug Adams, Eddie Forbes, Wally and Allison Fraser, Frank and Denise Lupo (plus friends Bob and Ann Wallis), Rob Munro and Robbie Robinson. He received nine apologies (including two deserters to Papakura) and intends to make this an annual event, with greater attendance next year. We can see a mighty Oak tree growing there, Roger.

ANNUAL REUNION 2000: TAUPO 10 – 12 NOV 00

Note those dates. You may reserve accommodation at the Spa Hotel from now by notifying the Secretary, and should start now to book Army leave centre units at Acacia Bay if desired. By promises coming in, this year's gathering will be a bobby-dazzler.

ARMAMENT DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

India – 1897 – the Malakand Field Force.

"Unused to artillery fire heavier than the mountain batteries (7lb), the tribesmen were soon disconcerted by the 12 pounders of 10th Battery, Royal Artillery, and.... they disappeared towards the Buner Hills."

"The North-West Frontier" by Michael Barthorp

STOP PRESS

Mrs Iris Rowntree – (see I.A. Rowntree – Last Post)

Writes – "Also I must tell you I was very proud for my Ian to see so many of the Gunners at his service and I do thank them very much. Matt Crawley too has been a most caring, kind and thoughtful friend over so many years." Thank you, Iris: that's what this association is all about: Ed.

Queen's Birthday Honours.

The only Gunner:

The only Gallantry Decoration:

As it should be!

NZ GALLANTRY AWARDS
NZ Gallantry Decoration

Lieutenant-Colonel John Charles Dyer, Paraparaumu. Royal Regiment of NZ Artillery. For service in Sierra Leone.

THE GUN.

By Wally Ruffell.

Continued from NL 105.

CARRIAGES: In construction RML howitzer carriages resembled RML gun carriages, and notes on the latter equally apply. The principal difference lay in the amount of elevation possible; RML howitzers were designed to permit 30°.

Also, the heaviest types were designed to fire with the wheels removed, e.g. in prolonged siege operations, with the carriage and piece sitting on a prepared platform.

Fig. 102 shows a typical example; the modifications to accommodate the different pieces of ordnance consisted mainly in adjusting the spacing and diameters of the trunnion bearings.

Fig. 107 shows a RML 4-in howitzer mounted on its carriage.

No drawings of the RML 8-in howitzer are available

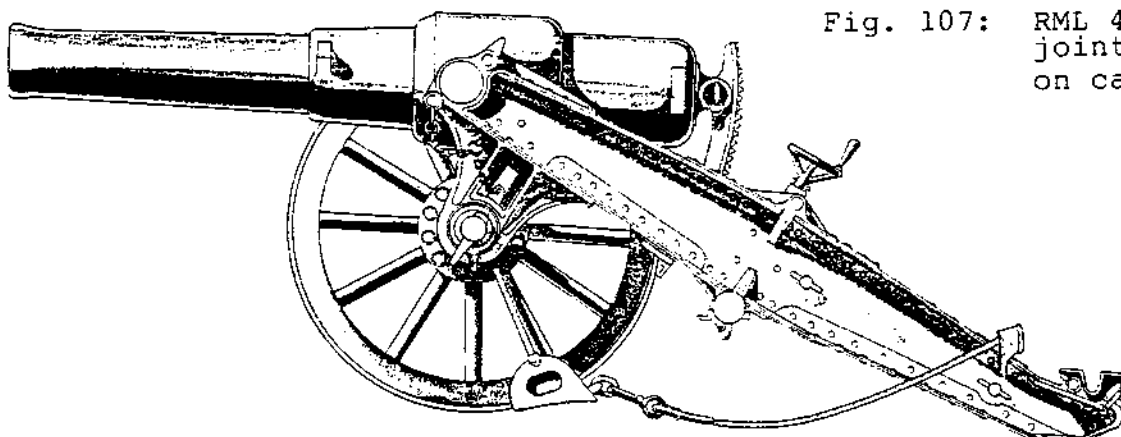


Fig. 107: RML 4-inch jointed howitzer on carriage.

FIELD ARTILLERY:

ORDNANCE: Manufacture of RML field guns began in 1871 with a 9-pr 8-cwt (3-inch) followed by a lighter (6-cwt) gun, both for horse artillery. At the same time a 16-pr 12-cwt (3.6-inch) gun was introduced for field batteries. Each was constructed of a steel barrel over which was shrunk a wrought iron jacket. Rifling on the Woolwich system (Fig. 87), consisted of three grooves with a uniform twist of one turn in 30 calibres.

In 1879, following complaints that the 9-pr lacked power, a 13-pr 8-cwt (3-inch) gun was proposed for both horse and field. By this time improvements in equipment and ammunition, e.g. the de Bange obturator. (1872), Vavasseur's copper driving band (1874), plus the fact that guns were becoming too long to be conveniently loaded from the muzzle, strongly supported a return to breech-loading. Consequently, two guns were prepared for trial, a breech-loader and a rifled muzzle loader.

Compared to other field guns then in use, both BL and RML, local and foreign, both performed remarkably well in power as well as in accuracy. But it was the RML piece which went into production; the diehards had won again!

As the 13-pr closely resembled both the 9-prs and the 16-pr, a drawing of it is reproduced as Fig.108. It differed from the latter guns mainly in its rifling, a polygroove plain section (PPS) system of 10 grooves with a twist of one turn in 100 calibres increasing to one in 30 at a point nine inches from the muzzle where it became uniform. The 13-pr developed a muzzle velocity of 1390 feet per second and achieved a range of 6000 yards at 19° elevation.

The 13-pr proved unpopular with Gunners who complained of excessive recoil so its issue was limited to a few batteries only. In those days a gun had no spade; when fired it recoiled several feet and had to be 'run out' to the firing position after each round, a tiring business in a prolonged action. Makeshift arrangements with brake and drag shoe to deal with the problem were ineffective. Although Armstrong's design of 1859 had included a recoil mechanism and Dr Siemens in 1867 had suggested a hydraulic buffer, progress in handling recoil in field artillery was to be painfully slow.

For an explanation we must look at the problem of mobility. Guns were horse-drawn; the heavier the load behind the team, the shorter the distance it could cover before the need to rest. Therefore designers of carriages were obliged to keep them as light as possible; indeed the obligation became an obsession. Positive steps to include recoil mechanisms were not taken until the adoption of more powerful BL field guns in 1881.

CARRIAGE, FIELD R.M.L. 13 PR

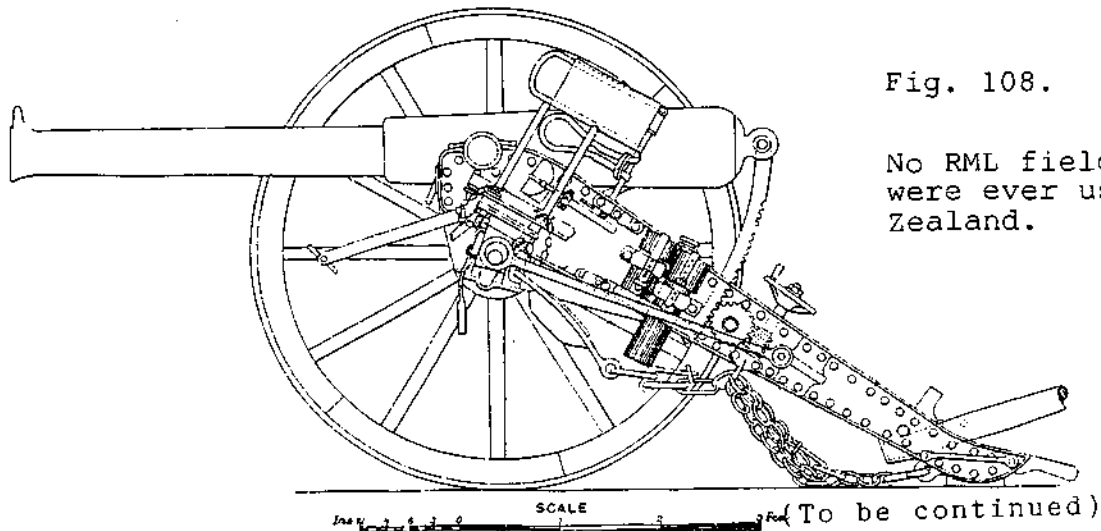


Fig. 108.

No RML field equipment were ever used in New Zealand.