

NEW ZEALAND PERMANENT FORCE OLD COMRADES' ASSOCIATION (INC)

Secretary.

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NEWSLETTER No. 109

MARCH 2001

ROUTINE ORDERS

SUBSCRIPTIONS: For 2001 are now due.

Honorary and life members are not required to pay a subscription. Lady Associates pay \$5, all other members pay \$10. All members are eligible for election as Life Members on reaching the grand old age of 80, when they should notify the Secretary as records of birth dates are not held. To be financial to 31 December 2001 you are required to pay \$.....

If an amount is not shown you are financial. If paying by cheque please make the cheque payable to NZPFOCA. To save postage receipts will not be returned to members but will be held by the Secretary for audit requirements and members inspection if required.

The production of this news letter and other administration requirements need your subscriptions to exist. Most members are very good with prompt payment some not so good. Please send back your subscription noted above as soon as possible.

LAST POST:

306106 WOII F.M.(Frank) Lupo

16 January 2001 at Lower Hutt

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

Lt Col R.L.(Ron) Cross

to: "Chantemerle", 43 Cherry Lane, Tamahere,
RD 3 HAMILTON.

O.R.(Owen) Dance

to: 10 Salisbury Avenue, Mount Cook, WELLINGTON

T.J.(Trevor) Higginson

to: 15 Madison Place, Forrest Hill, AUCKLAND 10

WO1 (MG) Paul Galloway

to: Headquarters 16 Field Regiment, RNZA
Linton Camp, LINTON

NEW MEMBER:

John Halladay Smith

46 Logan Reserve Road, Waterford West,
Queensland 4133, AUSTRALIA.

FROM THE EDITOR

NEWS LETTER CONTRIBUTIONS:

The News Letter belongs to you the members of the NZPFOCA. Although the committee use the letter to publish items like those above, we also rely on news from members throughout New Zealand, Australia and wherever Old Comrades may reside. If you have an item about yourself, other members or a general interest item, please let me have it so that it can be published and passed on to the rest of our membership. We are especially interested in the health, good or bad, of members, we need to know when members reach the age of eighty so that they may be granted Life Membership. It is important for us to get news of a members death as soon as possible so that we can quickly perform our requirements related to the unfortunate event.

EAST TIMOR

On behalf of the Association, Christmas and New Year best wishes were sent to all members of the RNZA, (most of our Regular Force Gunners) serving in East Timor.

POW RE-UNION

Each year the verger of St Barnabas Anglican Church in Bathurst New South Wales organises a reunion for POWs, Padres, their relatives and their friends and civilian internees. This year the re-union is to be in August. The verger has issued an invitation to Old Comrades who would like to attend. The guest speaker this year is a soldier from the Australian 6th Division who was captured during the Battle of Crete along with many Kiwi soldiers. If your interested, or know of someone who may be interested, please contact Verger Greg Standen at the church mentioned above. His Email address is: standen_lrtc@yahoo.com

DEPLOYMENT AND PROCEDURE FOR A SURVEY TROOP R.A.

The following is a light hearted look at what some of our older fellow gunners got up to during WWII. It was copied years ago from a. a NZ Surveyor Journal.

(Editorial Note. - Between spells of admiration at the remarkable feats of our gunner friends many of us have wondered just what their daily routine was like, and how they managed, with such apparent ease to set standards so far beyond all ordinary men. By a great stroke of fortune, a paper discovered in the Middle East has become available to us. It was, perhaps naturally, unintelligible to the finder, but we believe that it is undoubtedly a secret document bearing upon the above. No gunner will admit any knowledge of it, having doubtless been sworn to silence, but experienced surveyors should understand parts of it without great difficulty.)

1. *Deployment in Action:*

On arrival in the Combat Area the following action sequence will be observed:-

- a. All trucks will boil-up.
- b. Contact will be made with Artillery H.Q.
- c. Pack up and move somewhere else.
- d. Boil-up.
- e. Fresh contact made with Artillery H.Q.
- f. Officers order about everybody else in Troop.
- g. Officers order Sergeants to order about everybody else.
- h. Officers order personnel to change trucks.
- i. Officers select working (?) parties by secret ballot.
- j. Working parties change trucks.
- k. Trucks check loads.
- l. Contact made with Regiments and work carried out as detailed in "Procedure."
- m. On return to Troop H.Q. results (if any) will be handed to the Calculating Bombardier, who will know what he can do with them.

- n. Working parties change trucks. Boil-up and Bed down.
- o. Truck loads to be: Chocolate, cigarettes or V's (a type of free issue cigarette), matches, food, thermettes, magazines, bed-rolls, prismatic compass etc.

2. *Procedure in Action:*

On arrival at the indicated area Sergeant will observe the following sequence:

- a. Order driver to boil-up.
- b. Look for Regimental Survey Officer (RSO) and Reconnaissance Party.
- c. Look again for RSO and Reconnaissance Party.
- d. Move to an area not indicated by artillery H.Q.
- e. Look for RSO and Reconnaissance Party.
- f. Find RSO.
- g. RSO indicates all the wrong areas for Bearing Pickets (BPs).
- h. If the areas are under fire the survey sergeant will order gunners to set up in the area and start observing.
- i. Sergeant will remain by truck and start computing.
- j. Observer and Booker will return with observations and will start computing.-
Sergeant gives up computing.
- k. When some result is reached a BP Card is completed and handed to RSO.
- l. RSO will indicate a new point for the BP as the present one is invisible.
- m. Procedure (h)-(k) repeated.
- n. RSO being satisfied and Sergeant satisfied nothing is right, he will order party to return to Troop, marking BP Card "Provisional"
- o. Repeat (a)-(n) following day.

To be continued.

BOOK REVIEW

'**We Band of Brothers**' - by Brian McFarlane, reviewed by Mike Dakin.

An excellent book, it's one of the very few I've read where the Forward and Reviews are actually true to the text.

The book will interest anyone who has served in Vietnam, but especially those who served there at the time 1 ATF was established at Nui Dat. The author gives excellent accounts of the action over the 12 months Jun 66 to Jun 67, including the Battles of Long Tan and Bribie. He deals in detail with 6 RAR, in particular C Coy, and covers the part played by infantry, artillery, armour and air support. 161 Bty RNZA was in direct support of 6 RAR for the first 6 months and associated with 6 RAR's other actions after that. Many Kiwis are mentioned by name and deed. The accounts of the many actions paint a full picture and spare no truth, especially where casualties are concerned and the support ~ sometimes lack of ~ given to troops in the field.

The book is more than a story of the 66-67 period. The first half of the book takes you interestingly through the authors life from 1932 and his military career from 1951.

I thoroughly enjoyed Brian's book page by page. The A4 size book of 450 pages includes sixteen pages of coloured photo's and 500 black and white photo's dispersed throughout, it's a big book.

The cost A\$69.50 (approx NZ\$87 delivered) is not cheap, but has been worth every cent to me for the mine of information it has.

Copies are available from: EXACT PRINT + DESIGN, P.O. Box 250 Broadmeadow, NSW 2292, AUSTRALIA. There is also a Website,
<http://www.acenet.com.au/~brianmcf/index.htm>

GUNNER'S DAY 2001

Matt Crawley is organising a Lunch at the Tauranga RSA on Saturday the 26th of May 2001, at 1100hrs for a 1200hrs lunch. Contact Matt at 2/159 16th Avenue, TAURANGA or ring 07 577 0502. Tauranga RSA has 3 on site Motel/Welfare units available at reasonable prices, first in first served, phone 07 578 9654.

Jeff Waters is once again organising the Northern Region Gunners Day dinner at the Papakura RSA. Gunners in the North can expect to hear from Jeff in April or early May.

OLD COMRADES - WEBSITE. (Address is: riv.co.nz/rnza/)

WEBMASTERS REPORT

Not a lot to report since November, nothing unusual has come through my email since then. The website continues to be popular with visitors from all over the world. I do have a couple of requests for assistance, from members, for upcoming articles. If you have info or old pamphlets on how to read artillery slide rules (including equipment specific one s) please contact me (ph 06 327 8831, write to C.M. Rivers, RD 3, MARTON) or Email crivers@riv.co.nz. Also we need the names and years of appointment of NZ Master Gunners(SMIGs until 1980), particularly 1948-1954 and 1959-1977.

FROM AND ABOUT MEMBERS

St Barbara's Day was celebrated by a lunch time gathering at the Birkenhead RSA. Present were: Eric Bickerton, Alan & Elsie Boyd, Barney Harrop, Vic & Audrey Meyle, Bill Morland, Des O'Connor, Bill & Joyce Powrie, Jim & Ruby Ross and Yogi Young.

Fred Bigg-Wither organised a gathering of gunners and others from the Papakura area to bid farewell to our good mate Frank Lupo who passed away suddenly on 16 January. Fred presented an excellent run down on the life and times of Frank and his life was toasted with Artillery Port. Members who attended were: Brian Millynn, Jeff Waters, John Rout, Fred Bigg-Wither, Peter Anderson, Kevin & Jan Burnell, Eric & Joyce Bickerton, Yogi Young, Don Potter and Collin Moors.

There was also a good turnout of members at Frank's Funeral in Lower Hutt including Dennis Dwane, Chris Brown, Bob Kerslake, Roger Newth, Dave Roberts, Wally Fraser, Lindsay Skinner and Mal Nowill.

Bob Kerslake is back in Papakura after his latest pilgrimage to the far south. Besides visiting many golf courses he had time to meet up with several members and non member gunners in particular: Paul O'Connor, Pat Duggan, Morrie Chitock, Spenser Morrison, and Graeme Henderson. Bob phoned Jim Horn while in Invercargill and Jim answered from Haast where he is baby sitting a Motel. It has also been reported that Bob, while travelling in the South Island, kindly donated some funds to the South Island Traffic Police for their next Xmas Party.

John Masters reports that his quadruple by-pass operation has been a success with all long term prognosis very positive. He is now recovering well. Hope your return to full good health is rapid John.

John Halladay Smith found us through the Website and decided it was time to re-join. John and his wife Rona are manager/caretakers of a 44 unit complex in Waterford West which is in South Brisbane on the way to the Gold Coast. John's Email address is: smithybigboy@bigpond.com. Those who know John will no doubt understand the relationship to his Email address.

Joe Fallon, now living in Australia, recently made a brief visit to Papakura. Joe is working with Alcoholics Anonymous in the Brisbane area and has spent time talking to school children about the disease, he is amazed at the number of these young people who need help. Well done Joe, keep up the good work.

Matt Crawley sends his regards to all members and reports that all members in his area are at present in reasonable health.

THE GUN

By Wally Ruffle

Continued from NL 108.

RML PROJECTILES:

These were shot, Palliser shot, common shell, Palliser shell, shrapnel, case and star..

Palliser projectiles, both shot and shell, were cast hollow and closely resembled one another. Designed for the attack of iron-clad ships and masonry, filled shell were not fuzeed; the heat generated on impact was sufficient to explode the gunpowder filling.

Early projectiles of all natures except case were fitted with brass or gunmetal studs shaped to run in the grooves of the rifling according to the 'Woolwich' system copied from the French, as illustrated in Fig. 87.

As they had to be pushed by hand down the bore against accumulated fouling from gunpowder cartridges - and often in a hurry - projectiles had to be loose-fitting. In other words windage had to be generous.

In addition to windage there was 'clearance,' i.e. the space between the height of the stud above the body of the projectile, and the depth of the groove into which that stud fitted.

When a shot or shell was rammed home the studs bore on one side of the groove, and on being fired they bore on the other. The former was called the 'loading edge,' and the latter the 'driving' edge.' Designers hoped that by inclining the sides of the studs and making the sides of the grooves similar in shape, on firing the studs would have a tendency to run up the sides of the grooves, and so centre the projectile in the bore. The idea was only partially successful.

A more positive method of centring was invented by Armstrong - who smartly switched to making RML guns in 1864 when his RBL types were no longer wanted. In his 'shunt' system of rifling each groove may be considered as two grooves, a shallow groove towards the driving edge, and a deeper one towards the loading edge. In loading the studs followed the loading edge, keeping in the deep groove, but on coming out bore against the driving edge, shunting into the shallow groove. Thus the projectile was properly centred. Fig. 114 shows a section of a shunt bore.

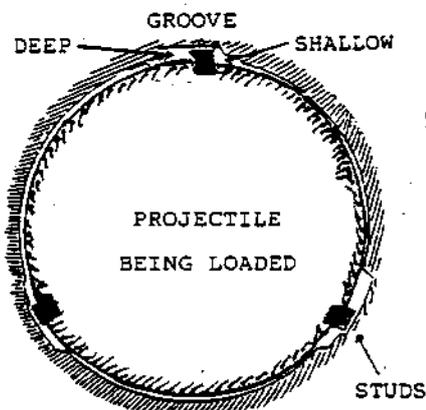


Fig. 114: Section of bore and projectile showing Armstrong's shunt system.

Armstrong's system was adopted for some heavy equipments, notably the RML 7-inch but in 1870 was discontinued, no doubt over expense not only of the composite groove but also the studs which were of pure copper.

From the drawing it will be seen that the studs will be 'shunted' into the shallow grooves, thus centring the projectile.

As windage and clearance allowed a significant amount of propellant gas to escape over the RML projectile, RML guns were not as efficient as their RBL equivalents. When the Ordnance Select Committee concerned reported that their RML guns compared favourably with the RBL they did not mention that the former required rather more powder in their cartridges than the latter!

Not only did windage and clearance adversely affect the efficiency of the RML gun but the hot, high velocity gases rushing over the projectile caused severe erosion of the bore, particularly in the grooves. This wear greatly exceeded that in RBL equipments.

Strange to relate, some of the anti-BL Officers saw the situation as an advantage as it enabled continued use of the old SBML wooden time fuzes initiated by the flash from the propellant charge!

To cut down wear at first a papier mache (moulded paper pulp) gas check was inserted between the cartridge and the base of the shot or shell in the chamber, but in 1878 was replaced by a corrugated copper disc bolted to the base of the projectile as shown in Fig. 115.

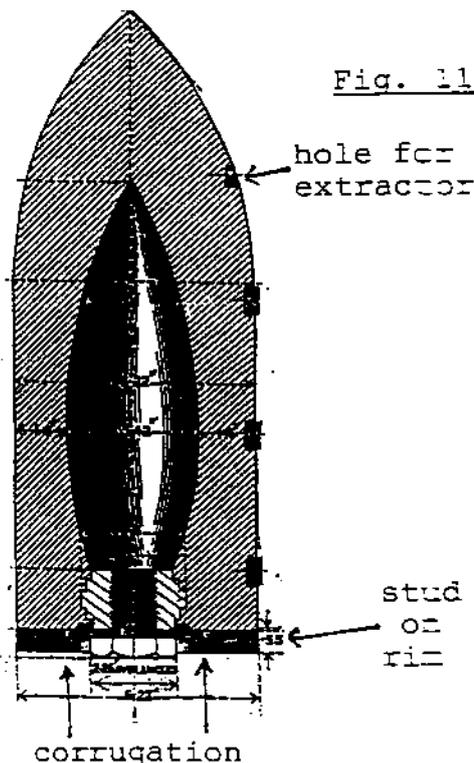


Fig. 115: Showing corrugated copper gas check fitted to base of shell.

When the gun fired propellant gas pressure tended to flatten the corrugation in the copper disc, thus expanding the rim against the lands and into the grooves of the rifling. On some of the heavier projectiles, including Fig. 115, the rim of the disc was formed with studs in line with the projectile studs.

On projectiles for guns with an increasing twist in the rifling the gas check was permitted to rotate.

The shell illustrated is of Palliser form, of cast iron with hardened head, a 64-pr intended for use against masonry.

As might be expected the use of gas checks resulted in a significant increase in muzzle velocities.

Then the experts woke up! Gas checks also blocked flash from the propellant charge from reaching the old wooden fuzes still

used with common shell and shrapnel! Fire holes had then to be drilled in the rims of gas checks to allow enough flash to reach them!

Later it was found that the gas check alone could provide the means of rotating the projectile, so studs were dispensed with. Also, it was realised they did not have to be bolted to the projectile. In some of the very heavy equipments the gas check was loaded separately.

Readers will no doubt have noted the comparatively slow rate of twist in the rifling of RML guns; a faster twist would have sheared the studs off the sides of the projectiles. Hence shot and shell were short; between two and three calibres in length. So-called 'double shell' were slightly longer than the normal but could be used for short ranges only. With heavier guns on sloping platforms, e.g. the 64-pr in Fig. 94, a 'wedge wad' (Fig. 115) had to be loaded after the projectile to prevent it 'setting forward' when the gun came to a sudden stop at the end of runout. Without this precaution a gun was likely to burst on firing. Wedge wads were used with guns of 64-pr and upwards, and were issued in two sizes.

TO BE CONTINUED.