



ESTABLISHED 1934
**NEW ZEALAND PERMANENT FORCE OLD COMRADES
 ASSOCIATION (INC)**

Secretary.
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 Web Site - riv.co.nz/rnza/

NEWSLETTER No. 112

DECEMBER 2001

SEASONS GREETINGS

Our president and Executive send all members their best wishes for a merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year. At this time our thoughts are with those of you who have lost loved ones during the year and for those that have not been in good health we wish you a speedy recovery.

ROUTINE ORDERS

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

There are still about eighty members who, according to our records, are behind with their subscription payments. Those that have yet to pay will receive a reminder on a Yellow slip that will show the year of their last recorded payment and how much they owe. **If we don't hear back from members who are three or more years in arrears they will be deleted from our roll.**

LAST POST:

Capt Jim Gilbert

Life Member at Napier on 22 September 2001

Capt Joe Hanvey

Life Member at Albany on 22 November 2001

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

Mr N.A. Davey

to: P.O. Box 425 WESTPORT 7615.

Mr Brian Edmonds

to: 2/271 The Esplanade, Cairns, Queensland 4870, AUSTRALIA.

Mrs Iris Rowntree

to: c/o Northshore Home Park, 146-152 Northcote Road, AUCKLAND 1309.

Col Mike Harvey

to: 157A Weston Road, St Albans, CHRISTCHURCH 8005

SSgt Daryl Burton

to: 31 Rata Street, PALMERSTON NORTH

Bill Beveridge

to: Unit 1 RSA Village, 48 Clarke Street, TAURANGA

NEW MEMBERS.

Master Gunner Mike Phillips

School of Artillery.

GONE ADDRESS UNKNOWN

Mr T.S. Young

Last known address was Oakura Bay, NORTHLAND

Mrs Pat Connor

Last Known address was Luke Place, ROTORUA

Mrs Helen Parks

Last known address was PO Box 124, LEIGH

Mr H. Milne

Last known address was Bentley Ave, Glenfield AUCKLAND

LIFE MEMBER

G.C. (Darkie) Forrester

On reaching the age of 80.

FROM THE EDITOR

REUNION 2001

Once again the gathering in Taupo was a huge success and the change of venue for the AGM, to the Spa Hotel, and the dinner, to the Bowling Club, was well received. As you will see later we have some new committee members and several have decided to stand down after giving the Association sterling service, some for many years.

For those of you who were not able to attend this year, you missed a good show and we hope some of you can make it next year, especially those who live handy to the venue.

THE AGM

PRESENT

See the list of those who attended the dinner.

REPORTS

A copy of the Presidents report is included and reports from the following district reps were received, Matt Crawley, Tom Roche, Harry Honnor, and Roger Newth. (Jack Kearney has very kindly volunteered to fill the gap, left by the death of Jim Gilbert, in the Napier area)

RESOLUTIONS

The following resolutions were passed:

- The Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement
- Annual Subscriptions to remain at \$10 and \$5 for lady associate members.
- Secretary's Annual Honorarium to remain at \$300.
- Election of Committee as follows:
 - President, Bob Blankly
 - Secretary, John Rout
 - Treasurer, John Barrett
 - Committee, Shay Bassett, Graeme Black, Iris Boytor, Ted Lile, Bill Morland, and Jeff Waters.
- Committee Resignations accepted as follows:
 - Dick Mitchell, Wally Ruffell, Des O'Connor and Jim Ross.

SOUTH ISLAND MEMBERS

The secretary explained that 12 of the 40 South Island members had responded positively to a return sent out to gauge the feeling for an organised gathering in the South Island. Because of the low result the meeting decided not to follow this up at this time. The secretary would advertise known Gunner activities in future News Letters so that South Island members can be involved if they wish.

THE BOOK. Our Patron told the meeting that the RNZA Book was due to have the writing completed by July 2002 and after necessary checks etc, published by July 2003. There was to be a competition to find a name for the book and the dust cover design.

NEXT AGM/REUNION. This will once again be in Taupo over the weekend 1 to 3 November 2002. **Keep this period free so that you can attend.**

THE DINNER

This year the dinner was held in the Bowling Club opposite the Yacht Club. 72 members and guests sat down to dinner and although the table layout was a little tight this was soon sorted out. We have decided to use the same venue next year and there is room for expanding the seating if more decide to attend.

Members and Guests attending were: Doug Adams, Ray & Laurie Andrews, Robert Barker, Shay & Jacqui Bassett, Bill & Jasmine Beverage, Graeme Black, Bob Blankley, Allan & Elsie Boyd, Iris Boytor, Blackie & Shirley Burns, Ian & Sue Foster, Spencer & Joan Cocks, Matt Crawley & Rita Moore, John & Bev Blaker, Paul & Colleen Galloway, Bill & Emma Giles, Ron & Mike Hassett, Harry Honnor, Jack Kearney, Don & Noeline Kenning, Bob & Betty Kerslake, Ted & Nes Lile, Brian Meyer & Linda Novotny, Vic & Audrey Meyle, George & Patti Miln, Dick Mitchell, Bill & Estelle Morland, Roger & Lois Newth, Des & Bunty O'Connor, Deborah Lane & Clive Holt, Mike Phillips,

Don & Lorraine Potter, Bill & Joyce Powrie, Dave & Marie Roberts, Tom & Barbara Roche, Jim Ross, John Rout, Wally Ruffell & Daughter Lorraine, Enid Standen, Glenys Gilbert, Padre Derm & Aileen Buchanan, Helen McMahon, guest speaker Major Ben Green & Rose Haynes.

THE LOYAL TOAST The President, Bob Blanley, and Mr Vice, Paul Galloway, proposed the toast to the Queen our Captain General.

THE REGIMENT John Rout proposed the toast to the Royal Regiment.

REPLY. The guest speaker Maj Ben Green, Battery Commander 163 Battery, 16 Field Regiment, thanked all present for the manner with which they had performed the toast to the Regiment. He then gave a short address including the present state of the RNZA. 163 Battery would be back with the rest of 16 Field Regiment in Linton Camp by the end of November. All gun and mortar fire support training was now being conducted by the RNZA, this included 81mm mortar training. The purchase of a vehicle to replace the present Landrovers was being looked into. The long barrels for the 105mm Light Guns, that enabled them to fire the Abbot ammunition, had been returned to Ordnance, no longer required. During their 6 month tour as peace keepers in East Timor 161 and 163 Batteries had performed their duties to a high standard. To end his talk Maj Green thanked us for the invite and mentioned he would see what he could do about involving more of the present day gunners with our reunion next year so that they may meet and talk with the old and bold.

OUT GOING COMMITTEE MEMBERS. The president thanked out going committee members, Wally Ruffell, Des O'Connor, Dick Mitchell and Jim Ross for their outstanding service and all present showed their appreciation with thunderous applause.

ABSENT FRIENDS. Des O'Connor proposed the toast to Absent Friends. During his speech Des made special mention of the service that Jim Gilbert had given not only to the Old Comrades Assn but to the NZ Army, in particular the RNZA. He further mentioned that the performance of the 16 Field Regiment Gunners at Jim's Military Funeral was excellent and as good as any he had witnessed during his lifetime.

CHURCH PARADE AND DISPERSAL

In the absence of Padre Bill Mcleay the church service in the meeting house at the Spa Hotel was conducted by the Taupo RSA Padre, Derm Buchanan. Music, as usual, was supplied by Helen McMahon. Wally Ruffell read the lesson and during the service a period of silence was observed to mark Remembrance Day. After an excellent service one for the road took place in the Spa dining room. As in the past this was paid for from the proceeds of the raffle for Wally's Gun. This year the gun was won by George Miln who had previously won the same raffle. George very kindly asked for a re-draw and this time it went to Don Potter.

THE PRESIDENTS REPORT

Membership. The Total membership of the association at the moment is 315 made up as follows:

Members (Normal)	202,	Life Members	63,
Associate Members (Men)	15,	Associate Members (Ladies)	14,
Associate Life Members	14,	Honorary Members	6.

During the year to date we have recorded the following changes.

Last Posts	6,	Resignations	3,
Gone Address Unknown	7,	New Members	7.

As can be seen from these figures the balance between normal members and life members is changing, caused by our membership average age increasing annually. There is therefore a need to attract more young members and suggestions on how to do this would be welcomed by the committee.

AGM & Reunion. The Taupo Yacht club was not available for our AGM and Reunion Dinner this year forcing a change to the Spa Hotel for the AGM and the Taupo Bowling Club for the dinner. This could be a sign of things to come, as changes appear to be norm now days. We must also keep in mind that the future of the Spa Hotel is by no means certain. To lose this historical link with our past would be a sad blow however, we will continue to use the Spa as long as it is possible.

Committee. The committee is just managing to maintain it's numbers because of the unfailing loyalty of some long service members. As some of these people would like to stand down, I am putting out a call for members of the Association who are prepared to serve on the committee to contact the Secretary. The committee meets once every two months at the Papakura RSA, for a period of 1 to 2 hours.

Conclusion. In closing I wish to mention the passing of Captain Jim Gilberd and hope the association, to which he gave so much of his time and energy, will continue to serve its members, as a fitting memorial to a truly loyal member.

R.G. Blankley
President

Editors Note. Bob's report was read to the AGM before the election of officers and the plea for new committee members was almost completely answered on the day. Bill Morland is a long serving committee man and still is. Bill would like to give it a rest so if you are interested please get in touch with the secretary.

WEBMASTERS(Catherine Rivers) ANNUAL REPORT
(Website Address is: www.riv.co.na/rnza/)

Since the 2000 AGM the website has had 118,000 hits, up from 40,000 the previous year, and we have been informed by an organisation that monitors these things that we are in the top ten personal websites in NZ. We continue to attract interest from professional gunners and other interested parties from all over the world.

A feature of this years contributions has been the superb work done by Mike Dakin in the processing and presentation of maps of Vietnam. Such work is laborious and time-consuming , and it is a measure of the high standards he has achieved that the finished product appears so professional.

The website is the result of the combined efforts of many people and has been blessed this year with articles and photographs from Mike Subritzky, Kerry Lee, Tony Tustin, John Nagle, Murray Broomhall, Lindsey Skinner, John Masters, Robin Wait, Ngaire Subritzky, Bert Dyson, Matt Crawley, Graham Dallas, Struan MacGibbon, Doggo Downs, and Roger Newth, with helpful comments and suggestions from many others.

The monthly additions to the website would be incomplete without the splendid articles from Wally Ruffell on equipments, and I often receive email from strangers saying how pleased they are to have found the webpages. This is summed up by a passage from a recent email from an American.

"Today I stumbled across your website and was elated to find information I wanted. I had no 'redlegs' available here to ask for such information as our army tends to know only it's own history. I would like to thank you and your comrades for providing an excellent website and solid historical information." Stev Lenon, Vietnam Medic, USA.

Catherine Rivers, Webmaster NZPFOCA.

Editors Note. Catherine has thanked many people for their contributions and that is fine however, without your dedication and hard work, Catherine, the website would not exist, so on behalf of the association. Thankyou Catherine.

FROM AND ABOUT MEMBERS

Iris Rowntree has moved to be closer to her son and his wife and she is very happy to be back on the North Shore.

Neville Davey The item on the North Head tunnels reminded Neville of the time 163 battery shifted the stores and ammunition out of the Godley Head tunnels. The goods were loaded aboard HMNZS Endeavour and dumped at sea in the Canterbury Bight. Neville also mentioned that Barry Hardie, ex 16 Field Regiment, sends his best wishes to members.

Norm Bennetts sends best wishes to members, he enjoys keeping up with the news in the News Letters and in particular enjoys Wally's The Gun.

Charlie Priestly. On behalf of Charlie his wife Olive wished everyone a happy reunion. Charlie's health is not the best he is badly crippled with Arthritis.

Phil Calvert is still enjoying his small farm on the north coast of New South Wales. He is breeding Herefords and fattening Black Angus. He states he is enjoying the rugby a little more than we are. Look out Phil your lot got beaten twice in Europe, they could be on the way down.

Matt Crawley wrote to thank the committee for once again providing members with an excellent reunion. One of his highlights was meeting Enid Standen and he hopes to see her again at next years reunion. He enjoyed talking to all the old and bold who turned up and although he had trouble reading the name tags he could still pick out the ladies, got a few kisses too!!

OBITUARY The following is an abbreviated version of the obituary very kindly supplied by **Wally Ruffell** with grateful assistance from **Glenys Gilbert**. The full version will shortly be available on our Website.

James Gatland Gilbert
"Jim"
2 Apr 1910 -21 Sept 2001



Jim was one of the 'Old School'. He joined the NZ military forces in Jul 1932 and after initial training was posted to Fort Dorset as a Gunner.

Jim's above average ability was marked by his rapid rise in rank from Gunner in 1935 to Sergeant in 1938. At that time this normally took nine years.

Jim's Long Suit was Equitation (Horse-mastership), in this he was both a skilled Horseman and Instructor. He was employed in this trade instructing recruits, W. Ruffell included, until 1937.

During WWII, in Feb 1940, Jim began service with 7 Anti-tank Regiment NZA and in Feb 1940 was promoted to WO1(RSM). The Regt left NZ with the Second Echelon in May 1940 and arrived in the UK in Jun 1940. No Anti-tank guns were available and the unit trained as Infantry until Aug when they were issued with 2Pdr Guns. The unit sailed from the UK in Dec 1940 and arrived in the Middle East, at Port Tewfik, in Feb 1941.

During operation Crusader, Nov 1941, Jim commanded a Platoon, made up hurriedly of 'odds and sods,' and led a successful foray against enemy troops that were threatening their position. This exploit is recorded in the Official History of the 2nd NZ Divisional Artillery in WWII. Not many individuals are mentioned in this book.

Jim returned to NZ in 1943 to the Artillery Training Regt in Trentham where he was employed as an Instructor and RSM. After a period at Army Schools Trentham he spent a short time in Burnham Camp and in May 1947 was commissioned in the rank of Lieutenant and Quartermaster.

There followed a brief period with 10 Coast Regt in Fort Dorsett and in Sep 1947 he became Camp Commandant Army HQ.

In Oct 1948 the School of Artillery was established in Waiouru. Jim was the first Chief Instructor. In Jul 1949 he was appointed Adjutant 2 Field Regt in Napier and in Jul 1951 went back to 10 Coast Regt where he performed the duties of Adjutant, Quartermaster and District Officer. He was appointed Camp Commandant Base Camp in Jun 1952.

Jim's Horsemanship was never forgotten and during the ceremonies connected to the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, in 1953, he was given the honour of serving in Her Majesty's Mounted Escort. (see photo above).

Jim returned from the UK to 10 Coast Regt and in 1957 he was retired from the Army at age 47.

Jim's retirement was forced upon him, as Regular Recruits he, and others, had been promised employment until age 55. Jim had planned on retiring at this age and when the Army lowered the age to 45 it was a great shock. As a mark of Jim's ability he managed to serve an extra 2 years, but the Army had gone back on its word and the treatment Jim, and others, received after 25 years of efficient and faithful service was disgraceful.

In civilian life Jim was employed by the Ministry of Works Wellington until 1961. He moved back to Napier and was employed by the City Council as Civil Defence and Purchasing Officer until 1970. He then served for 5 years on the Hawks Bay Regional Council as part time Civil Defence Officer until, at 75, he retired from active duty.

During retirement Jim continued to be active especially with the Napier RSA where he served on the committee for many years and was made a Life Member. For 23 years he was the Parade Marshal at the Napier ANZAC Day Parades.

Jim was married in Nov 1938. His good lady, Dorothy (Dot), passed away in Nov 1994. They are survived by daughters Lois, Glenys and Jill.

Editors Note. Jim was a long serving and loyal member of our association. He served as our President in 1985-1986 and again in 1994. He was a regular attender at our Taupo reunions and had every intention of attending this year, but alas that was not to be.

THE TROPICS

The tourist brochures paint the ideal picture of a tropical island, white sand, gentle breezes, waving palm trees and dusky maidens serving long cool drinks. Those of us who have served in the tropics know better. Here, copied from "The Gunners a record of the 3rd NZ Div Artillery in the Pacific", is a reminder of what it is really like.

Picture it instead in wilting heat and sweaty humidity, with mosquitoes singing their high song of triumph, with rain pouring down only to rise again in billowing steam: with black thunder clouds masking the molten sky, with sheet and fork lightning splitting the heavens, and perhaps you will understand why we didn't like it much. An electrical thunderstorm in the Pacific doesn't mean the little penny-flare we see in New Zealand; it means a full-power show with billions of volts dancing and threatening, and sometimes striking. And rain so solid that it blankets out everything; thunder so intense your little soul thinks it's the Day of Judgement and shrinks in craven fear. Heat so all-pervading that the night brings little relaxation and you lie with only a sheet over you to prevent a chill and a mosquito net to get some peace from the little devils. In the morning your bedding is damp with your sweat and you feel like a log of rotting wood as you climb back into your damp sweat smelling clothes.

Good eh!!!!

THE GUN

By Wally Ruffell

Continued from NL 111

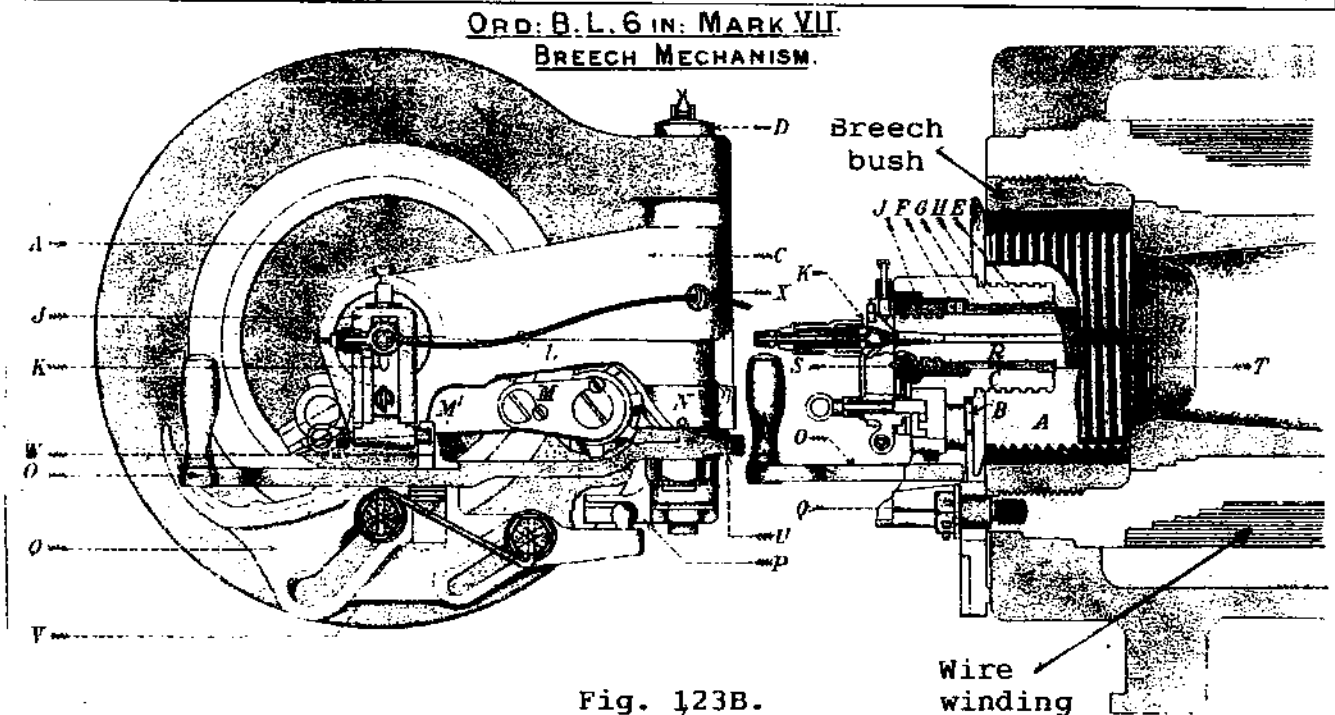


Fig. 123B.

- | | |
|---|--|
| A. Breech-screw. | M'. Link breech-screw, Part II. |
| B. Breech-screw stud. | N. Link pinion. |
| C. Carrier. | O. Lever breech mechanism. |
| D. Carrier hinge bolt. | P. Lever shot guide. |
| E. Sleeve. | Q. Guide shot. |
| F. Nut vent axial, with anti-friction washer. | R. Vent axial. |
| G. Washer vent axial. | S. Extractor. |
| H. Spring vent axial. | T. Pad obturator with discs. |
| J. Box slide "A." | U. Lug lever breech mechanism. |
| K. Lock electric and percussion "F." | V. Adjustable bush and cat retaining lever breech mechanism. |
| L. Catch retaining breech-screw open. | W. Bracket safety, lever breech mechanism. |
| M. Link breech-screw, Part I. | X. Hook supporting cable. |

Note that the breech screw does not screw into the inner 'A' tube but into the breech bush which screws into the jacket.

Earlier marks of BL 6-in guns were fitted with long-screw mechanisms similar to that depicted in Fig. 122. All guns were fitted with percussion locks except the Mk 2 which used a simple tube holder for percussion or elementary electric tubes.

The Mk 7 and later guns were fitted with 'E and PF' (electric and percussion firing) locks as shown in Fig. 123B.

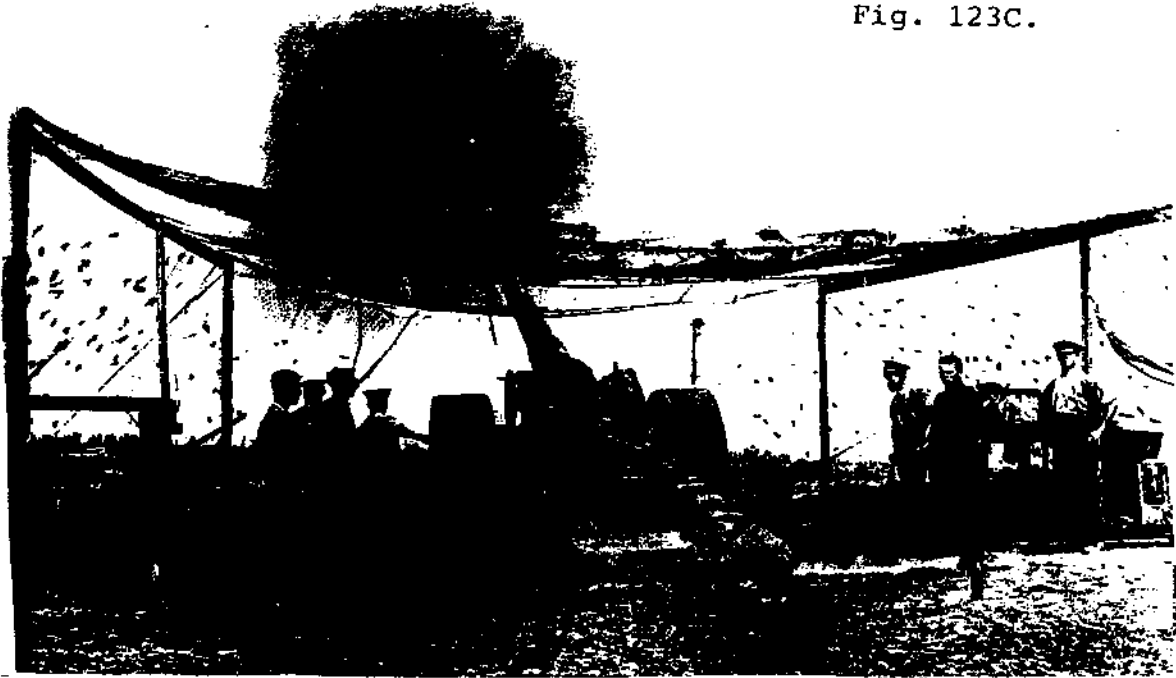
As well as being employed in coast defence and the Navy the Mk 7 gun saw extensive service in the field during World War 1. For this purpose it was mounted upon a heavy 'siege' travelling carriage drawn by a tractor and manned by Royal Garrison Artillery Gunners.

The Mk 8 gun was identical to the Mk 7 except that the breech opened to the left, i.e. it was designed to be 'twinned' with a Mk 7 in a Naval turret.

Guns designated 'BLC' were those converted by having their breeches and breech mechanisms modified from long-screw four-motion to short-screw single-motion.

Mark 7 guns outlived some later marks; they remained in service until the abolition of coast artillery in 1956 (UK) and 1959 (NZ).

Fig. 123C.



BL 6-in Mk 7 gun manned by Royal Garrison Artillery (RGA) in action in France during World War I. It is mounted on a 'Percy Scott carriage,' i.e. similar to a 'local pattern' wooden carriage devised by Captain Percy Scott RN in 1899 for use in the South African War. See Fig. 154 and detail. A Mk 2 carriage of steel later replaced it.

OBTURATION:

Although the Director of Artillery (UK) favoured the French system of obturation (Fig. 122), as already stated, manufacture of new equipment promised to be a lengthy business, so in the meantime the British Government bought a number of BL 6-inch and 8-inch guns from the Elswick Ordnance Company (EOC). Although these guns were fitted with screw breech mechanisms, obturation was by Elswick cup, as shown in Fig. 124.

The cup system consisted of a shallow steel cup 'C' held against the face of the breech screw by a spindle and nut. While the back of the cup was flat, the face of the screw was slightly convex. When the gun fired the cup was expanded into contact with the copper ring 'R' thus sealing the breech and preventing the escape of propellant gas to the rear.

Among the guns fitted with the Elswick cup were the BL 12-pr of 1881, and the BL 6-inch Mk 5 gun. The BL 9.45 howitzer also employed a similar system of obturation. In it the cup was much longer and acted rather like a cartridge case.

TO BE CONTINUED