

NEW ZEALAND PERMANENT FORCE OLD COMRADES ASSOCIATION ::

NEWSLETTER NO. 38 :: FEB. 1982 ::

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P.O.Box 33-710
TAKAPUNA,
AUCKLAND. 9.

1. LAST POST -- ROLL OF HONOUR :

WO.II I.R. (Baldy) TRUEMAN at Invercargill on

1669 W.J.S. (Jack) TAVENDALE at Palmerston North on 8 Sep 1981.

1487 Major W. (Bill) LANGEVAD. MBE.MM. at Napier on 25 Sep 1981.

It is very much regretted that a lack of accurate information on their careers is held, thus suitable "Appreciations" are not yet possible. Precise of their Service is being sought from Base Records, and will be published later.

2. CHANGES OF ADDRESS ::

A.F.W.POWRIE, To :-
7 Princess St.,
Northcote, AUCK.9

Lt-Col. A.R.VAIL
Karehana Lodge,
49 Moana Rd
Plimmerton

WO.I L.J.SKINNER
RNZA Directorate
HQ.NZDEF, WGTN. 1.

Capt G.C.LOUGH
16 Fd Regt RNZA
PAPAKURA CAMP
Bdr K.I.BENSEMAN
1 Loc. Tp.
WAIOURU CAMP
Bdr A.W. MUNRO
3 Auck/North Regt RNZIR
359 Queen St. AUCK

Sgt S.A.ASHWORTH
32 Bty, 3 Fd Regt RNZA
Addington, CHCH
Lt C.M.GREGORY
Arty Tag Depot,
BURNHAM CAMP
Ssgt NOWILL
Sch. of Admin.
WAIOURU

Ssgt H.B.ADAMS
161 Bty, 16 Fd Regt
PAPAKURA CAMP
Ssgt N.P.MOROS
HQ. Fort Dorset
SEATOUN. WGTN.
Sgt J.W. NIWA
HQ. 1 TFR
PAPAKURA CAMP

2Lt M.J.WITHERS
16 Fd Regt RNZA
PAPAKURA CAMP
Correct Address :-
Rae'id D.F.POLLARD
HQ. S.O.A. EZKI CAMP
Box 897, MUSCAT
Sultanate of Oman.
Brig.G.P.CADE
3/105 Landscape Rd
Mt Eden, AUCK. 4.

Lt-Gen Sir Richard WEBB
Waimate North
RD. 1, OHAEWAI, Bay of Is.

I.A.STRANG
5 Milton St.,
GORE, STHLAND
Col. J.O'B.HORSFORD
"Thomond", Pakiri,
RD.2. WELLSFORD

A. PILCHER
13 Bledisloe St
PAPATOETOE

Col.R.K.G. PORTER
19 Worley Place
Remuera, AUCK. 5.
R.G.BLANKLEY
61 Walter Strevens Br.
TAKANINI
G.R. (Yogi) YOUNG
29 Bexley Place
PAPAKURA

M.W. MAUNSELL
8 Resolute Way
PAPAKURA
H.G. BIGG-WITHER
c/- P.J. Nilsson
Private Bag
KAITIATA.

3. COMMITTEE NEWS ::

Extract from "General Business" - Meeting of 23 Jan '82. ::

"Pres. opened General Business by reading a letter to him from Brig. Burns. The subject matter was the great concern now being shown in circles possessing some influence, with level of Govt. Superannuation being received by Old Soldiers of RF who Retired at varying stages on very low Salaries by today's standards. Coupled with this, they are forced to retire early, and cannot achieve the level of other Govt Depts. i.e. 40 yrs service.

This follows exactly the theme written in a section of the Newsletter of the N.Z.Army Assn. (also circulated at the Meeting). The new President, Major R. Pope has stated, "that Superannuation and Pensions are the main objectives of the Army Assn. this coming year" ; and seeks every assistance from other bodies such as this Assn. Some approaches have already been made by Defence Ministry Officers to the Associate Minister of Finance, and to Minister of Defence by Major Pope himself.

Newsletter No. 38. ::

The Newsletter states : "it is acknowledged by Govt that current super-annuation conditions, particularly for soldiers who retire after 20 years service are inadequate. There appears however, to be no scope within the Act for conditions to be improved. Major Pope does not agree that the Act cannot be changed. He is determined to see that the Soldier gets a better deal."

"Simultaneously, Col. Bert Dyson has completed an all-embracing research programme on all aspects of Govt. Super., particularly with Retired Army Personnel. It is intended that Major Pope and Col. Dyson will combine with Officers from Treasury and other Govt. Depts. -- this group is to report to Govt. by the 30th April 1982

President urged Committee Members to submit some case histories - even their own, as soon as possible. The following format was suggested :-

Rank on Retirement,
Particulars of Dates of Service, Enlisted - Retired etc,
Salary on Retirement,
Was any Super "commuted" ?
Was a variable Allowance accepted ? (i.e. £1 p/week forfeited at 65).
Super received NOW. (Cost of living adjustment was brought in in 1975)

We also need examples of Soldiers who have recently retired. Since 1966 an "End of Service Grant" or Gratuity, dependant on length of Service - sometimes a considerable sum has been paid in addition to Super.

Earlier Retirements received nothing.

Pres. said it would be our intention, once we had some submissions, for he and Sec. to seek an interview with Major Pope, who lives in Devonport, to acquaint him of our discussion here, and to offer every support by this Assn. from a Minute

The fol are some extracts sent out to Dist.Reps. on 2 Feb. :-

"It is our determination to follow this matter up with close interest and assistance. To this end we should begin by assembling the max number of "case histories" possible.

Case Histories of everyone your Members know, even from other Corps. This is particularly relevant also to widows of deceased Members. Name need not be necessarily be mentioned unless the writer wishes, provided it is a bona fide case.

They should be posted either through us, or better still directly to :-

The Secretary,
The Army Association,
P.O. Box 6469,
Te Aro, WELLINGTON.

or to :-

Col. R.H.DYSON,
104 Oriel Ave.,
Tawa, WELLINGTON.

Noting the Target Date, "by 30th April 1982", it seems the Deputation would have to prepare its Petition well before that ; so we are anxious that any cases we can submit should be sent in as quickly as possible."

A survey shows that we have 242 Members who could be affected by the above ; there must be equally as many if not more from other Corps.

I'm sorry we seem to be a bit short on "news from and about" etc ; but we feel we are ALL concerned with the Super. negotiations.

The Appendices - President's Report, and the story of "The Rammer" we hope are interesting - the latter, it can be seen we've kept in view for a long time. Please work on those Case Histories !

All the best. Terry. Tranter

Army Welfare Fund: This fund is available to assist deserving cases among retired soldiers, ex-RF, TF, NZEF, etc, where other welfare agencies cannot act. It now stands at around \$7000,000. District Reps may make application for grants through the Association or direct to any Army Office. Usually grants are made for a specific purpose, e.g. a retired soldier not being able to afford what is now considered an essential such as a TV set, may be assisted to buy one.

District Social Activities: I shall leave this subject to District Reps.

RNZA Council: The third meeting of the Council I was not able to attend mainly owing to the extremely short notice given. However, I did attend the meeting held on 22 May 82, at which I tabled a draft of 'Facts for Newcomers', a booklet eventually to be issued to all new recruits. The Colonel Commandant having previously expressed the opinion that the original format was too ambitious, the draft was restricted mainly to customs and traditions of the Regiment.

Places of Gunner Interest: One of the Council's projects is to compile a list of places of Gunner interest. Jim Gilberd has supplied an account of the Napier Barracks, but we need many more, and you are the people who can provide them. What about Palmerston North, Nelson, Waipukarau etc etc.

Liaison with Army Association: Since Major Bob Pope (ret'd) took over as President Terry and I have had several sessions with him over matters which are of prime concern to both our Associations, in particular the welfare of retired soldiers. We find we have very similar aims, appreciate his cooperating with us, and deem it appropriate to support him in every way.

Membership NZ Army Association: The NZ Army Association, which embraces all soldiers, both serving and retired, is conducting a membership drive at the present time. A number of members of the NZPFOCA already belong to the Army Association, and I strongly recommend it to you. There are branches at Auckland, Palmerston North, Wanganui, Wellington, Christchurch, and New Plymouth, annual subscriptions for which range from \$2 to \$5, with life membership at \$15. At their functions you will meet a true cross-section of the Army of today, and ex-soldiers of yesterday.

NZPFOCA 'IN MEMORIAM' Book: Charles Cranmer, one of our Associate members, has completed the book up-to-date, and what a wonderful job he has done, which those of you here present may see for yourselves. Although your Committee voted him a suitable reward for his time and trouble, not to mention the special pens and ink he bought for the purpose, he refuses to take anything. We may have to 'put him on the mat' and order him to take something!

We must also give due credit to our Secretary, Terry Transom, for the immense amount of research he did to provide Charlie with the details upon which to work - research begun when he first received the book three years ago.

Waiheke Island Defence Works: You will have noted the controversy over the proposed sale of the land called 'Stony Batter' where the BL 9.2-in guns were sited. Your Committee fully discussed the matter, and as a result I sent the following telegram on your behalf to the Minister of Lands: Members of the NZ Permanent Force Old Comrades

PRESIDENTS REPORT

Gentlemen,
Welcome to Taupo. On behalf of your executive I have much pleasure in presenting this the 46th report on the activities of the Association for the year 1980-81.

Office Bearers:

Patron: Lt Gen Sir Leonard Thornton KCB CBE.

President: W.L. Ruffell

Vice-Presidents and District Representatives:

Auckland and North Shore:	J. Keinzley
South Auckland:	E.T. O'Neill
Thames/Coromandel:	J.L. Gillooly
Hawkes Bay/Taupo:	J.G. Gilberd
16 Fd Regt RNZA:	WO2 L.G. Jackson
Waiouru:	Secretary, Waiouru Gunners Club
Wanganui:	D. Jones
Taranaki:	G.E. Sutherland
Wellington/Hutt Valley	A.J. Baigent
Otago:	G.A. Stuart
Southland:	S.E. Morrison
Canterbury/Westland/Nelson:	J.B. O'Connor
Secretary:	J.T. Transom
Treasurer:	D.P. O'Connor
Auditor:	W.A. Wordsworth ACA

Executive Committee:

A. Boyd	E.T. O'Neill
A.F.W. Powrie	H.G.C. Salt
A.J. Smith	J. Keinzley
L.E. Autridge	

Finance: The Association is in a sound position financially, as you will see from the Treasurer's Report and Balance Sheet.

Assets: Jim Gilberd and Dick Healey have presented to the Association an Armed Constabulary cap badge and an RNZA helmet plate respectively. As both are in excellent condition as well as being valuable collectors' pieces we extend to Jim and Dick many thanks for their generosity. I intend to add an RNZA cap badge and combine the three into a suitable ornament.

Anzac Day 25 April 1981: About thirty members of the Association attended the parade and ceremony organised by the Takapuna RSA, which we look upon as our Headquarters. Our special wreath was laid on this occasion by Jack Osmer and our Secretary, Terry Transom.

As I myself was in Waiouru on 24 April attending a function at the Museum for the launching of Michael King's book New Zealanders at War, I took the opportunity of attending the Dawn Parade the following morning. It was held in the Camp where in recent years a place has been especially prepared for the purpose, with garden, Field of Remembrance etc.

Although the parade was not compulsory for military personnel, most of the troops under training as well as many of the Camp Staff attended in uniform. The local RSA with whom I paraded fielded a strong detachment, and the civilian population was well represented.

Heralded by the traditional shot at dawn the ceremony was most impressive, and held under perfect conditions.

At its conclusion all present, both servicemen and civilians, were invited to the 800-man mess where all partook of a first-class breakfast.

After the meal I was invited by School of Artillery staff to the Warrant Officers and Sergeants Mess, where despite my protestations I was not permitted to 'shout.' Being obliged to return to Auckland the same day I reluctantly tore myself away at 0900 hours.

Imagine my surprise some two hours later when I saw two platoons of the same soldiers who had attended the Dawn Parade in Waiouru again on parade in Taupo!

The morning's proceedings I shall not soon forget; not only did the Army effectually emphasise to young and old the significance of Anzac, and the importance of remembering it, but they turned on a wonderful exercise in public relations. All ranks deserve full marks.

Gunners Day 26 May 1981: The Association was well-represented at the usual parade at the Auckland Cenotaph held under the auspices of 16 Fd Regt RNZA. Members combined with the Officers' Club to form a troop.

After the parade all adjourned to the Auckland RSA for a very pleasant lunch and afternoon session.

Welfare: No cases of need have been brought to the notice of the Executive this year.

Roll of Honour: We regret to have record the passing of the following Old Comrades:

1443	W.L.C. (Bill)	Shilton, Life Member,	Paraparaumu 8 Dec 80
1402	G.H. (Geoff)	Roche, Life Member,	Manurewa 3 Feb 81
210204	L.O. (Len)	Gordon,	Auckland, 6 Aug 81
1883	C.S. (Carl)	Lee,	Auckland, 20 Aug 81
1669	W.J.S. (Tav)	Tavendale,	Palmerston Nth, 8 Sep 81
1487	Maj W. (Bill)	Langevad MBE MM, Life Member,	Napier, 25 Sep 81
33127	I.R. (Baldy)	Trueman,	Invercargill, Oct 81.

Gentlemen, I ask you to stand for a few moments in silent tribute.

Membership: Present effective membership is as follows:

Life Members	13	(16)	Figures in brackets are for 1980.
Associate "	13	(13)	
Ordinary "	413	(385)	
Total	442	(414)	

Again we are happy to report a healthy increase over last year's figures, largely due to the efforts of our District Reps who are to be commended.

District Social Activities: There have been several local functions brief details of which have appeared in Newsletters, and which will be amplified by District Reps in their reports.

RNZA Council: As you know I undertook on behalf of the Association to produce a booklet containing facts for newcomers to the Regiment. At the April 1981 meeting the following format was tentatively agreed:

- Part 1: Introduction and Role of the Regiment.
- 2: The RNZA (RF) - A Short History.
- 3: The RNZA (TF) - A Short History.
- 4: The Royal Artillery - An Outline History.
- 5: Colours, Battle Honours, Mottoes, etc, etc.

Parts 1 and 5 are virtually complete, 2 and 4 completed up to WW2. I would appreciate accounts of conditions on the South Island RNZA stations immediately after the war from members who served there prior to 1939.

The Council would also like the Association to:

1. Make suggestions regarding obituaries (called by the Royal Artillery 'appreciations'), and Gunner funerals.
2. Examine the possibility of compiling a Roll of Gunners to include a limited Whos Who.
3. Assist in compiling a list of places of Gunner interest (in NZ).

Our Personal Records pro forma is designed to assist in 1 and 2.

News from Directorate: The Association is included on the Directorate's mailing list for their monthly Newsletter 'Gunfire', which contains a wealth of information on the activities of present-day serving Gunners. Our Secretary will reprint extracts in our Newsletters, space permitting.

News from 16 Fd Regt RNZA: Similarly we receive copies of the Regiment's bi-monthly Newsletter 'Fire for Effect', and are fortunate enough to get sufficient for circulation to District Reps.

Personal Records Pro Forma: Response to our second request for personal details has been gratifying, but many members have not yet supplied them.

Conclusion: Again may I express my appreciation for the support and assistance so readily given by members of the Executive Committee and Vice-Presidents representing Districts over the past year.

Very many thanks are due to Takapuna RSA who continue to give us the use of rooms for Committee Meetings and local reunions free of charge, and to the Assistant Secretary-Manager in particular for doing the major part of our duplicating, also free of charge.

Taupo 14 Nov 1981

W.L. Ruffell.

FIREPOWER

Do you know that the latest projectile intended to be fired from the NATO 155-mm howitzer is designed to take on individual tanks from 3000 to 18000 metres, i.e. beyond the range of conventional anti-tank weapons? With the first production models 70% of rounds fired were direct hits.

Known as 'Copperhead' it is fired from the howitzer in the usual manner. A slip ring allows just enough spin to stabilise the round and release four control fins which emerge when it leaves the muzzle. Later in its flight wings emerge, and the stabilising spin is stopped.

The projectile can now follow a normal ballistic path or be guided on to the target by a laser device, either hand-held or mounted in a truck or aircraft. It can hit a moving target or be switched to a fresh target while in flight.

The shaped charge in the warhead detonates on impact but grazing sensors are fitted in case the projectile does not strike head-on.

As improvements are made the percentage of hits attainable is expected to rise in future production lots.

WLR.

The following is the text of an article submitted for publication in the Takapuna RSA's Annual Magazine "Reveille", going out to its 1400 - plus Members.

It has been gathered from various sources ; but mainly from The Official History of 2nd New Zealand Divisional Artillery ; Chapter 6.

N.Z. PERMANENT FORCE OLD COMRADES

ASSOCIATION.

"THE RAMMER".

The Battle of Belhamed was fought on 1 December 1941, and was part of the Eighth Army Cyrenaican Campaign code named "Operation Crusader" - more colloquially known as "The Second Libyan Campaign". Its aim was the relief of Tobruk which had been surrounded and under siege for some nine months ; supplied only by sea.

Rommel, in the particular counter offensive on that day, forced it withdraw from the Sidi Rezegh/Belhamed area -(although called the Battle of Belhamed, the Gun Positions were actually on Sidi Rezegh), and cut the "Tobruk Corridor" which had been tentatively opened.

"On 1st December in an action which lasted all day, the Gunners helped to hold the German and Italian Armoured and Infantry columns at bay, enabling the NZ Division to extricate itself at nightfall to the East in temporary safety.

Losses in men and material were heavy - particularly in 6 Fd Regt - 29 and 30 Batteries were annihilated, (8 Guns each), and 48 Bty managed to withdraw only three of its Guns. 47 Bty, 5 Fd Regt, (under Command 6 Fd at the time), suffered equally, and lost half its complement of men and Guns.

Personnel losses on that day were 57 Killed in Action, 113 Wounded, and 96 taken prisoner, many of whom were wounded. Rommel personally visited the Main Dressing Station which had been captured, where many of them lay. He spoke to many New Zealanders and congratulated them on their performance. The MDS was later re-captured.

Among those taken prisoner was the Commander Royal Artillery of NZ Div. Brig. R. Miles, whose HQ was also overrun.

At Belhamed the NZ Artillery suffered its heaviest losses ever in a single action.

The Battle was witnessed by Brig. H. B. Latham, Commander Royal Artillery of 13 Corps, to which NZ Div. was attached.

He went over the battlefield two or three days later, and was much moved by what he saw; he later wrote :-

"The first thing one noticed was that the Gunners had obviously put up a hell of a fight, and I was so impressed that I picked up a rammer, and after having it roughly inscribed, sent it off to Freyberg.

Practically every Gun was a "write off" though in the shops it might have been possible to make one out of two.

The dead were lying around each Gun, each man nearly in his place, and burnt-out tractors and trailers were just in rear.

Here undoubtedly there had been no thought of surrender or withdrawal, and all had died in the service of the Guns, they had certainly played their part to the bitter end, and I can imagine how bitter that end was.

I went back sadly to Tobruk to ask the New Zealanders there to send out a party to clear the battlefield and bury their dead".

The inscription on the rammer reads :-

"This Rammer was recovered with a 25 Pdr Gun from the Belhamed position 18 miles S. East of Tobruk, and presented to the CRA 1st New Zealand Div. by HQRA 13th Corps in Memory of the very gallant stand made by the Div. in that area on Dec 1st 1941".

"The Rammer"

In reply Maj-Gen Freyberg wrote :-

23rd January 1942,

My Dear Latham,

I have handed over the precious rammer to Colonel Weir to show it and your letter to the Officers and Men of the NZA, and it is then to go to the NZ. War Museum.

Your letter also will be sent. Needless to say we all feel Miles's loss a great deal and also the number of men that were lost on Dec 1st. However that is all in the run of War and we have emerged just as strong at the finish as we were at the start.

May I take this opportunity of thanking you for what you have said about the NZ. Division.

Training yes ! they were trained. But Training is not all. They are such wonderful material I feel there is no better in the world.

Again so many thanks for your kind action which is not wasted upon our "Gunnery".

Yours Sincerely,

B.C.FREYBERG.

The Rammer was Paraded and its story told throughout Div. Arty before being sent home to New Zealand for safe keeping.

During the confused and bitter fighting in this Campaign, which lasted exactly one month, the NZA of five Regiments lost 198 Killed, 326 Wounded, and 223 taken prisoner, many of whom were wounded.

After the War, in 1948/49 the Director RNZA instituted a survey to locate the whereabouts of all Artillery Trophies -- but where was The Rammer. ?.

It was discovered that the Miles family held it.

In 1977, this Association raised correspondence in order to again locate it ; and put a strong case for its return to the Regiment.

Since then it has been the subject of frequent letters to the appropriate Authorities, and much deliberation at Committee and Annual General Meeting levels.

In November last year The Rammer was kindly loaned to the Queen Elizabeth II Army Memorial Museum by Mrs J. Polyblank, a daughter of Brig Reg Miles.

It was Dedicated and Unveiled at the Museum at an impressive Ceremony on 1 Dec 1981 - the Fortieth Anniversary of the Battle.

It is to remain on Public Display for three months in each year - Dec to Feb.

"and so - this simple tool which the 25 Pdr Gunner had used to service his Gun on that fateful day is now lodged in its proper and last resting place.

Among all other Mementoes of Deeds of Heroism, we sincerely believe that it is, because of its story ; the most significant of them all.

We reflect upon this - and of where it was found - and think of the boy who last used it - for in that lonely desolate place, far from his homeland, amid the dreadful noise and destruction and carnage, he was doing his duty as he knew it ; and we pray God, such dedication, whatever in future may happen in this world - will live with New Zealanders forever".

Terry Transom,

Secretary.