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NEW ZEALAND PERMANENT FORCE OLD COMRADES ASSN INC

NEWSLETTER No 49

A registered publication.

LAST POST: 1597 LH (Len) Barnes, 12 Apr 85, at Christchurch.
32954 JDA (John) Wright, 21 Apr 85 at Christchurch.
1825 WA (Alistair) McLeod, 22 Jul 85, at Christchurch.
(Confirming entries in previous newsletters).
1966 JB (John) Hipkins, 6 Jan 86 at Wellington.
1808 GD (George) Standen, 28 Jan 86 at Wellington.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Brig RJ Andrews OBE to Land Force Comd, Takapuna.
Brig GA Hitchings MBE to NZ Force SEA, Singapore.
Major T O'Reilly to Division II, Army Staff Course, Kitchener Hall,
HM College of Science, Shrivenham, Swindon, Wilts, SN6 8LA, U.K.
H. McKinnon to 1/25 Mariposa Ave, Lynfield, Auckland 4.
PL Gray to 65 Links Rd, Mt Maunganui.
WO1 KC Burnell to 5 Westland Ave, Whangarei.
FB Schroder to 74A Lamb St, Lilyfield, Sydney, NSW (after 19 Apr 86)
GR Young MBE to 6A Nelson St, Papakura.

AMENDMENTS TO NEWSLETTER 48: Add to list of those attending 1985
reunion: Les and Emma JACKSON, Slim and Molly CUMMING, ED MORISSEY,
Pat and Muriel FOX.

After Capt CM Gregory in Changes of Address delete 'RNZA'
Substitute 'RNZAOC.'

TO CANTERBURY/WESTLAND/NELSON MEMBERS

Colin YOUNG, your District Rep, is organising a function to be
held in the Christchurch Central RSA at 1430 hrs (2-30pm) on Tuesday
17 Jun 86.

So you can't say you have not been given sufficient notice.

Colin states attendances at week-end functions in the past have
been disappointing, and hopes this one will be better attended. He
is anxious to know WHAT MEMBERS WANT, so please phone him WHETHER YOU
INTEND GOING TO THE JUNE FUNCTION OR NOT.

Any members from outside Colin's 'parish' are welcome to attend.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE: The President, Executive, and Members extend their
deepest sympathy to Old Comrades who have lost loved ones since we last
went to press, in particular Brig Harry Honnor and Henry Keen who lost
their wives, and Eric and Patti Lutridge, mother and mother-in-law.

Will Members please note District Reps are not clairvoyant; we do
not issue them with 'balls, crystal, for gazing into' for seeing who
is sick, in hospital, etc etc. Someone has to tell them. If you are
down on your luck and need assistance LET YOUR DISTRICT REP KNOW, or
if you cannot personally call him get your wife or a friend to perform
that service. Only by obtaining such info can he fulfill one of the
most important objects of our Association '.... to extend where
possible a helping hand to all Members of the Association who may be
in need of assistance.'

Widows of Members 'gone west' are welcome to attend annual
reunions. We therefore request District Reps to contact our widows,
find out who among them are interested in attending, and forward their
names and addresses to the Secretary, who will then send them the
necessary notices.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE (cont.): When ordering flowers for funerals we strongly advise you have the florist specify the type he intends to supply, then if possible check that he has in fact supplied them - and not some cheap substitute. In lieu of flowers we recommend a card to the bereaved plus a donation to some organisation dedicated to research, e.g. Cancer Society, Heart Foundation, etc. Your money will be more faithfully applied.

FROM OUR AUCKLAND REP: Alf Smith announces he has arranged for the next Social to be held in the lounge, Takapuna RSA, at 1930 hrs, Wednesday 28 May 86.

All members from northern districts, as well as any visiting Auckland are welcome.

Will ladies please bring a plate.

FROM AROUND AND ABOUT: Jim Gilberd, Slim Gilmer, Norm Bennets, and Gordon Weaver report that the 7 A Tk reunion recently held in Tauranga was a great success.

Colin Young, our Canterbury/Westland/Nelson Rep is a keen restorer of old ordnance and carriages, and an active supporter of the Army Memorial Museum, Waiouru. He is seeking a 25-pr telescope and case, and a sight clinometer, and would appreciate assistance in locating such parts.

Lt Col Angus Rivers has been appointed Visiting Defence Fellow at Waikato University from 27 Jan 86 to mid-December, and will be living in an RNZAF house at Te Rapa.

Charlie Anniss was recently in Auckland for the launching of the Spirit of New Zealand. For some time he has shipped as cook in the Spirit of Adventure during that vessel's cruises for young people, and also assists elsewhere in the running of the ship. An excellent cure for blowing away the cobwebs!

Slim Gilmer is to have an operation on an eye for a cataract. We wish him well.

Zig Schroder is off to Australia. He has presented to the Association a set of excellent 40-mm cartridge cases belled and plated, and mounted with badges, as well as an ash tray similarly embellished, plus a Japanese round, some badges etc. They have been duly taken on charge and will make an excellent show at the formal dinner at next reunion. Very much appreciated, Fred.

Dan Foley is off on a world tour. How do these blokes do it and remain honest?

Here is another gem from our irrepressible Sandy Bissett:

A Thought to Steer by

If there is right in the soul,
There will be beauty in the person;
If there is beauty in the person,
There will be harmony in the home;
If there is harmony in the home,
There will be order in the nation;
If there is order in the nation,
There will be peace in the world.

Chinese proverb.

GUNNERS WEEK-END PAPAURA 24-25 MAY 1986

Bevan Culhane, who is RSM 16 Fd Regt RNZA, and also our Rep in the Regiment, hopes to see as many Old Comrades as possible at a Gunners Week-end to be held in Papakura Camp Saturday and Sunday 24-25 May 86. He can arrange accommodation in the Camp (males only) for any members of our Association wishing to stay overnight, and has given us the following programme:

Saturday 24 May: Mobile and static displays - Papakura Camp, 1300 hrs.

1500: Afternoon tea - 16 Fd Regt RNZA.

1630: Medal presentation - Parade Ground.

1635: Retreat Ceremony - 161 Battery.

1650: Memorial Service - Unit Padre.

1700: Flag lowered.

1705: Binyon's lines - Youngest Gunner.

1715: 1812 Overture by RNZA Band, Papakura City Silver Band, Guns and Gunners of 11 (A) Battery, 16 Fd Regt, RNZA.

1900: All Ranks function, Holloway Hall, Papakura Camp.

Sunday 25 May: 1400: Rugby: RNZA v RNZE.

1530: After-match drinks, Barbeque.

THE BOMBARDIER: References to 'bombardiers' go back over 400 years, but the Bombardier has been officially part of the Artillery establishment for just 300.

In 1686, having added a substantial number of mortars to the equipment of his army, King James II appointed a Chief Bombardier and twelve Bombardiers to specialise in their use. The Chief, who was a commissioned Officer, seems to have been dropped from the establishment around 1688, but the Bombardiers remained; whenever a train of artillery included mortars a proportion of Bombardiers accompanied them.

Similarly Bomb Vessels equipped with a main armament of two heavy mortars intended for the bombardment of enemy coastal defences and shipping in harbour, carried detachments of army artillerymen, a proportion of whom were Bombardiers. These men were borne on the ships' books in the same manner as Royal Marines, an arrangement which continued until 1804, when they were withdrawn after conflict between the Royal Artillery subalterns in charge of them and Royal Navy Officers. The latter tried to make the Gunners and Bombardiers carry out ships' duties, to which the RA Officers strongly objected. The Royal Marine Artillery was then formed to take their place.

Although the Bombardier was created to specialise in mortars it was not long before he added guns to his repertoire. In 1697 we find the guns of a train of artillery in general worked by ordinary troops of the line under the direction of Bombardiers, Petardiers, and Gunners, assisted by Matrosses. At this stage Corporals and Sergeants who were few and far between were engaged mainly in administrative duties; later, when the artillery became established on a regimental basis, they proliferated on the gun position, and the Bombardier found himself a comparatively junior member of a gun detachment.

In 1920 the rank of Bombardier in the Royal Artillery, then denoted by a single chevron, was upgraded to replace that of Corporal, the latter rank being abolished. At the same time the rank of Lance Bombardier was introduced.

The Royal N.Z. Artillery followed suit in 1925.

became the 'basic structure,' the wording 'NZ' and 'Old Comrades Assn' being substituted for 'Ubique' and 'Royal N.Z. Artillery' respectively. When stocks ran out the Association adopted a somewhat larger badge, changing the 'NZ' back to 'Ubique.' The price to members in those days was 2/6 (25c); to-day the same (larger) badge costs \$2-50. It should be worn on the right lapel below the RSA badge, or as a tie pin.

Although membership remained more or less static during the war years the Association was active and well-supported. The President on one occasion congratulated the ex-Armed Constabulary men on the strong contingent they always turned out at the annual reunions. The writer well remembers those old grey-beards at the first reunion he attended in 1947; obviously to them it was the high-light of the year, they enjoyed every minute of it, as raconteurs they were without equal - and their capacity for beer few of the younger fry could beat!

Having failed in an earlier attempt to obtain a grant from the Reward Fund through the Minister of Defence (Chapter V), the Executive approached the Minister of Internal Affairs, who not only gave them a sympathetic hearing but expressed a sincere interest in the Association's welfare work. He was instrumental in their receiving a number of grants from the current 'Art Unions, the forerunners of the modern Golden Kiwi lotteries. These additions to the Benevolent Fund were greatly appreciated.

In 1938 the old age pension had been increased to 30/- (\$3) a week, but it was still only 39% of the basic wage set in 1936, and thus could hardly be considered more than a subsistence allowance. With the cost of living steadily rising, and members growing older, rarely did an Executive meeting pass without cases of hardship being dealt with.

Subversion of the war effort having occurred in certain quarters in Wellington, members of the Association undertook to report to the authorities any cases they might detect. Several were reported; in one case the President had occasion to highly commend a member who took appropriate action even though the culprits had threatened to take his life if he did so. Unfortunately further details are not available as in 1966 the Secretary was authorised to destroy all records over five years old. Subversive activities decreased when Russia entered the war on our side!

CHAPTER VII

REWARD FOR DEDICATION

With the surrender of the Japanese on 15 August 1945 the war ended, and the disintegration of the New Zealand Military Forces, already under way, proceeded apace. 2NZEF men were being brought home as fast as shipping space could be found, the Territorial Force had been disbanded once the threat from Japan receded, and other soldiers enlisted for the duration were being rapidly released. No regular force personnel had been enlisted since 1940, nor apparently had any plans been made to resume enlistment. All training ceased.

A year later, while still trying to make up their minds what to do, the politicians authorised the formation of a conglomeration which they charitably entitled the 'Interim Army.' Into this make-shift 'organisation' were absorbed home-service duration-only

bodies, most of whom were camp staff, had avoided overseas service or were medically unfit for it, had no civilian jobs to take up, and saw an opportunity of continuing the easy life they had enjoyed during the war. Required standards of medical fitness and education were lower than those prevailing in the pre-war Regular Force. Until weeded out some years later a significant section did little to enhance the image of the New Zealand Army.

Worse, a number continued to hold appointments which in all fairness should have gone to Regular Force men returning from service with 2NZEF.

In the same year (1946) training resumed with the formation of New Zealand's contribution to the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan ('J' Force), and with RNZA refresher courses in field, coast, and anti-aircraft drill and equipment, which carried on into 1947. Squads on each course were virtually the same, field men being sent to both coast and AA courses '... to make up the numbers,' for the strength of the RNZA was now but a shadow of its pre-war figure. The reasons deserve to be recorded.

Sadly there had been those killed in action. Others had been invalided out through wounds, sickness, or injuries. Still more, having completed their engagements during hostilities were so unimpressed with the conditions they encountered and the treatment meted out to them on returning to their pre-war stations, that they lost no time in tendering their resignations. They saw the regular force, and the RNZA in particular, as a 'forgotten legion.'

While civilian remuneration had kept pace with the rising cost of living (two 14% wage increases were made during the war), regular soldiers found themselves still on 1939 rates of pay, for a Government promise to review them had not been kept. Warrant Officers and Sergeants with many years' service found they would be better off as recruits in the Police Force or Transport Department, and changed the colour of their uniforms accordingly.

Those RNZA NCOs and Men who decided to stay with the Regiment were put to work cleaning, painting, and otherwise maintaining the large quantities of equipment relinquished by the Home Defence Force: much of it in a state of neglect. On at least one main RNZA station they were quartered not in their comfortable 1935 barracks, but in sub-standard tin-hut dormitories of 1914-18 vintage. Their status had been reduced to that of underpaid labourers.

There was talk of 'one army,' i.e. that the Regular Force and Territorial Force (when and if reactivated), were to be integrated. It seemed to the 'other ranks' as the hierarchy incorrectly and discourteously called their WOs, NCOs, and Men, that the first step in the process was to deprive them of the little things they had once appreciated as setting them apart as Regular soldiers in peacetime. No longer were they permitted to wear SD caps; WOs and Staff Sergeants were no longer permitted to wear SD type jackets, brown boots and shoes, or Sam Browne belts, although many were in possession of these items. The blue dress uniforms issued with such a fanfare in 1938 and withdrawn on the commencement of hostilities were not re-issued - and never have been - although they were restored to Royal Artillery WOs and Sergeants in 1950. Of course none of the restrictions applied to Officers.

Then came the nastiest shock of all, worse than the one they had suffered in 1932, when men were prematurely retired upon reaching the

age of 50. The Army Council, chaired by the Minister of Defence, decided the forces should have younger soldiers, to which end they forthwith lowered the retiring age from 55 to 45 - except, of course for senior Officers. The idea was sound enough, but not original. Hitler had employed such a scheme in the mid-1930s - after having made suitable adjustments to pensions - in order to build up a trained reserve. It might have been well-received in the New Zealand Army had it included a modicum of consideration for the men most affected, i.e. those on the lower rungs of the ladder. They had enlisted in good faith on the understanding they would retire at 55, and many had planned their lives on that basis. Instead men who had completed their initial engagement while overseas with 2NZEF, and had not been given the opportunity of re-engaging to retiring age, were called to the office where they were invited to complete the prescribed form - after deleting 55, substituting 45, and being made to initial the alteration. No explanation of any kind was made - and certainly no offer of adjustment to superannuation as might have been expected in an organisation claiming efficient regulation.

Older soldiers who had signed re-engagement papers before the war had them torn from their personal files and destroyed, after which they were ordered to sign new forms. Those who demurred were threatened with the sack unless they did so.

Having subscribed to the Government Superannuation Fund for, say, 35 years, the regular soldier retiring at 55 was not quite so well endowed as the public servant who had contributed at the same rate but who could serve for 40 years. However, the soldier was not too badly off; if he so desired he could at least live on his retiring allowance without being obliged to seek further employment.

On the other hand at 45 the soldier could not afford to retire on an allowance 30% less than the one he had been led to expect. To continue living in the manner to which his rank and 25 years of dedicated service entitled him, he had to find another job. If he had trade or professional qualifications he was fortunate; if he had none save those of soldiering, he was at a disadvantage. Unlike the United Kingdom, for example, where the qualifications of professional fighting men, particularly Gunners, are recognised by certain civilian organisations, in New Zealand forty years ago they were not, either by Government Departments or industry.

Even in the Public Service, including the civilian section of the Defence Department, civilian educational qualifications only were taken into account when considering ex-service applicants for clerical appointments - although having engaged a man the Department made good use of his service experience and knowledge. No appointments were made to grades above basic.

To add insult to injury a serviceman entering the Department after many years' service with a faultless record was made to serve 12 months on probation - during which time no promotion was made.

No matter where the retired soldier took up employment invariably he had to start from the bottom on significantly less pay than he had enjoyed as a serviceman. If he joined a Government Dept he could not resume contributions to the Super Fund unless he gave up his retiring allowance - and that he could not afford to do.

To requests for appropriate adjustments to retiring allowances the Government answers either that National Superannuation compensates for all inequities, or the economy cannot stand any increases - massive handouts by the Higher Salaries Commission excepted, of course.

The results of the injustices described above the writer sees daily; men in their late sixties or early seventies doing menial work, e.g. maintaining gardens, relieving caretakers, assisting part-time in shops or stores, working at home on monotonous piece-work for manufacturers - not through mere hunger for the dollar, but to acquire a few of the comforts and amenities other retired citizens take for granted. In addition there are a few crippled by diseases not attributable to service in the forces who cannot work, and these when brought to its notice the Association endeavours to assist.

One worry the ex-Army superannuitant who retired in the 1950s or 1960s does not have - his National Super is hardly likely to be surcharged!

To be continued.

MORE CHANGES OF ADDRESS: J.F. Frame to 15 Rattray St, Devonport, Ak 9.
Lt Col B.J.L. Hewitt to 3 Beatty Ave, Karori, Wellington 5.
D.J. Hughey to 12A Croffon Rd, Christchurch 5.
D.G. Maxwell to 22 Gazelle Ave, Beachhaven, Auckland 10.
W.G. Morland to 69 Lloyd Ave, Mt Albert, Auckland 3.
R.B. McIver to Flat 4, 47 Woodside Rd, Henderson, Auckland 8.
E. Peck to 181 Te Moana Rd, Waikanae.

HANDBOOKS FOR OBSOLETE ARTILLERY EQUIPMENTS: On behalf of the RNZA Council our Colonel Commandant, Col Don Kenning, is seeking copies of handbooks in order to complete the Regiment's historical records. Any member prepared to donate such a handbook please contact Secretary.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: These are now due for 1986. The annual sub is still only \$2-50, and members are asked to forward their subs to the Secretary, Box 33710, Takapuna, Auckland 9, at earliest convenience.

DEFAULTERS: Members who are more than three years in arrears with their subscriptions have been circularised separately and warned that they are liable to be struck off strength in accordance with Rule 4F, unless through some misfortune they have been unable to pay.

ANZAC DAY: Anzac Day at Takapuna, our Headquarters, was the best yet, the Old Comrades Association being well-represented as usual. The 25-pr gun outside the RSA where the service was held looked a picture credit for which is due to Terry Transom who organised its annual face-lift, ably assisted by Des O'Connor, Bill Powrie, and Alf Smith. This year in addition to a re-paint the gun was varnished, which it is hoped will enable the equipment to better stand the salt-laden atmosphere of the area.

THE PETARDIER: In case you are wondering who or what he was, his story will appear in the June Newsletter.

Best regards,

Wally Russell

Hon. Secretary.