

NEW ZEALAND PERMANENT FORCE OLD COMRADES ASSOCIATION INC

PO BOX 33 710, TAKAPUNA, AUCKLAND 9

NEWSLETTER No 56

December 1987

A registered publication

SEASONS GREETINGS

From the President and Executive best wishes for a convivial Christmas, and we trust you will all enjoy good health and happiness throughout the coming year.

LAST POST: 1534 Brig. G.P. Cade DSO, 26 Sep 87, at Auckland.  
Brig. Sir William Gilbert KBE DSO, 26 Sep 87, at Wellington.  
1653 Capt R.W. Stitt, 9 Oct 87, at Auckland.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS: J.F. Frame to c/o J. Ormerod, 63 King Edward Pde  
Devonport, Auckland 9.

J.W. Monk to 5 Opotoro Rd, Raglan.

Major R. Newth to c/o Support Branch, Defence HQ.

Major D.H. Rollo MBE to 95A Manly St, Paraparaumu.

Capt L.J. Skinner to Box 50183, Porirua.

Lt Col M.J.R. Pearce to 103 Ruapehu Rd, Paraparaumu.

GONE NO ADDRESS:

LAST KNOWN ADDRESS OR LOC

W.A. Cooper

45 Mack Pl, Papakura.

S.J. Harvey

45 Rosario Tce, Red Beach, Orewa.

R.T. Hills

161 Bty

B.C. Prosser

6 Solo Place, Manurewa.

Major R.H. Williams

HQ NZ Force SEA, Singapore.

NEW MEMBERS: P972039 J.P. (James) Horn BEM, 240 Spey St, Invercargill.

U380829 E.L. (Goldy) Goldsmith, 23 Orere Pt Rd. Orere Pt, Auckland.

AMENDMENT TO NEWSLETTER No 55: From the list of names of those struck off strength for failure to pay dues DELETE Major M. Pearce, WO2 J.W. Niwa.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 15 NOV 87:

PRESIDENTS REPORT FOR 1986-87

A very warm welcome to all members who are here today. And a most hearty thanks to all members of the Committee who attended the Meetings during the year so conscientiously, and so helped with decisions which were to be made.

One little thing which looked as if it could have developed occurred at the beginning of the year. That is someone reported to Helen Clark M.P. on the text of Lt Col Lough's talk at the last Annual Dinner. I don't intend to dwell on the matter, but please remember that whatever is told us or whatever we hear is for our ears only. It would be interesting to know just whether the reporting was done out of mischief, or loyalty to the Party. That is all I have to say on the subject, but from reports it did no harm, but maybe a little good to the Army as a whole.

I happened to be in Christchurch Feb/March and whilst there with the help of Bryan O'Connor and Colin Young, managed to meet up with a few of the members. Among who was Bryan O'Connor, Colin Young, Pete Delaney, Darkie Forrester, Harry Fantham and Malcolm Tyson. Doc Schwass and Jack Pope came in to say Hello.



The reason for the trip south was a 5th Field Reunion in Timaru. George Stuart was one of the organisers and the week-end went off very well. I met George again at the R.S.A. in Christchurch, and also ran into John Masters. So I can report that all seems well down South.

If any member should be in Christchurch it would pay them to find the time to get around and see Colin Young's collection of guns. It is nothing short of marvellous what he has in his backyard. I can assure you all that it is well worth a couple of hours time to visit 47 Cowlshaw St, Avonside.

Anzac Day I picked up Joe Cook, and Nev Fisher, but this year not Swede Svendsen. We visited the Mess at Papakura and met a lot of our members. Then spent an hour or two at the Papakura R.S.A. where we spent a little time in the company of Yogi Young. Joe Cook and I have been doing this little jaunt for 14 years since Les Auty died. And I must say it is very pleasant meeting up with some of the members.

In Auckland our little get-together twice a year has fallen down. No fault of Alf Smith, but in the main, our members are getting older, and the thought of travelling over the bridge at night is a little daunting. However Alf is looking at having the gathering during the afternoon and I am sure with a little organising this will become a reality and once again, for a couple of hours twice a year, we will be able to meet up with some of our Old Comrades. Remember though you can always meet up with some of the old stalwarts should you visit Takapuna R.S.A. on a Friday at midday.

There is not a great deal more that I can say, but I would like to say thanks to our Patron General McKinnon. General McKinnon has been a power of strength to the Association since taking office, and has always been available to give advice, or make enquiries on our behalf. So on behalf of the Association our thanks to General McKinnon. We are indeed fortunate to have him for our Patron. A man who takes an interest in the affairs of the men.

Also I would like to thank Wally Ruffell, who likewise since taking over as Secretary has worked long and diligently to make the Newsletters something well worth reading. I am sure you all join me in thanking Wally for the work he is doing.

As you all know Wally lost his wife Ailsa in October this year. Ailsa had been ailing for some years, but was always interested in members and what was happening. Although it must have been a sad loss to Wally I am sure to see the number of members who turned up to the funeral must have been most gratifying. Thank you one and all for the consideration shown.

To conclude I would like to say that our present numbers are as follows:

Ordinary	373
Associate	12
Life	19
Honorary	2

406

S.O.S.	20
New	9
Resigned	4
Died	9
GNA	7

49

Allan Boyd

PRESIDENT, OLD COMRADES ASSOCIATION

TAUPO, 14 Nov 87



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 14 Nov 87: Apologies for non-attendance were received from the following: JJ ADAMS, CW ANNISS, RE ATKINS, LE AUTRIDGE, WK BAKER, BP BANKS, RJ BENNETT, NE BENNETTS, EG BICKERTON, HG BIGG-WITHER, RG BLANKLEY, GD BIRCH, Tawhiwhi BROWN, PJ CALVERT, R de la COUR, RW COE, IJ DOAK, BD DREYER, PJ DUGGAN, JD GIBB, JL GILLOOLY, RJ GOLDSWORTHY, J GRAHAM, LV HANKEY, HJ HARVEY, JS HEARD, BK HENDL, BJL HEWETT, RG HICKSON, EG HIGHT, AGS HILL, HB HONNOR, WG HOPKINS, DR HUGHES, LH HUMPHRIES, WE JENNINGS, D JONES, FR JONES, AW KARLSSON, RJ KEINZLEY, AN KING, ELA KITNEY, HS LOVELL, WBF McCALLUM, RB McIVER, WN McLEOD, AS McWHINNIE, HJ MACOWN, JW MONK, PG MONK, JGR MORLEY, H MEEUWSEN, RM NUTSFORD, J, O'MEARA, ET O'NEILL, HJ OSMERS, PJ PAGE, AM PETRIE, A PILCHER, CC PIPSON, RKG PORTER, LJ PYE, F RENNIE, DH ROLLO, JMcL ROSS, WL RUFFELL, KR SIMMONDS, LJ SKINNER, VG SKILTON, JR SPENCE, JF SPRING, IA STRANG, JT TRANSOM, Sir R WEBB, GL WILLIAMS, SD WRIGHT, RN WYLDE.  
NB: This list will be referred to at the 1988 AGM. Anyone whose name has been omitted please inform Secretary.

Treasurer's Report and Balance Sheet: A copy was supplied to each member attending the meeting, and copies will be sent to those District Reps who did not attend. Any member who did not attend and who wishes to peruse the report should therefore contact his District Rep or Secretary.

Affiliation with the NZ Army Association: Notice of motion in Newsletter No 55 refers. The motion was carried unanimously.

Subscription 1988: This will remain at three dollars. Members are reminded that subs paid in advance will escape future increases.

Executive Committee: All members were re-elected.

Secretary's honorarium to remain the same.

Next Reunion: To be held in Taupo week-end 11-13 Nov 88 in Taupo Senior Citizens Assn premises.

REUNION 1987: Reports indicate the reunion was equally as successful as last year's. Those who attended were: Harry ANDERSON, Capt Jack BAIGENT and Theo, Des BARKLE, Allan and Elsie BOYD, Brig Graham and Janine BIRCH (guests of honour), Dorothy COCHRANE, Tom and Margaret CHAPMAN, Jack and Zita COOK, Dave and Mollie CRICHTON, Col Bert DYSON, Dan and Dorothy FOLEY, Jack FRAME and partner, Capt Jim and Dot GILBERD, Capt Joe HANVEY and partner, Capt Keith GILMER, Pat HALL, Bill and Emma GILES, Maj Frank GIBBISON, Maj Gen Ron and Mike HASSETT, Maj Dutch and Joyce HOLIAN, Maj Jack and Pat KEARNEY, Frank and Denise LUPO, Maj Bob and Barbara MANSON, George and Patti MILN, Aussie MOORE, Bill and Estelle MORLAND, Maj Gen Walter and Anna McKINNON, Ian McLEAN, Lt Col Tony McLEOD (DRNZ), Harold NICHOLSON, Johnny and Leone MEIKLE, Des and Buntly O'CONNOR, Paul and Lynda O'CONNOR, Maj Gen Les and Fay PEARCE, Maj Len PARTNER, Tony and Helen PARKES, Morry (Dad) and Sybil PHILLIPS, Bill (Wire Wheels) and Joyce POWRIE, Capt Dave and Marie ROBERTS, Robby and Joyce ROBINSON, Eric (The Count) and Ellaine ROLLE, Maj Bill and Muriel ROUND, Ian and Iris ROWNTREE, Henry and Thelma SALT, Alf and Vicky SMITH, Bill and Elaine STEPHENSON, George (Hook) STUART, Capt George and Ella SUTHERLAND, Vic (Swede) SVENDSEN, Capt Tan and Joyce VINE, Gordon and Nora WEAVER, Bill and Barbara WINTER, Cora WOODS and brother Doug, Yogi YOUNG, Pat and Muriel FOX.

To Cliff and Babs BRAGG, Dave and Averill JONES, Bill HOPKINS, Col Don and Noeline KENNING, Rene McLEAN, Wally RUFFELL, Charles and Dorothy WOTHERSPOON who had to cancel their trip at 'the last minute' through illness etc, the Executive extend their sympathy and trust their troubles have now been resolved.



# AN APPRECIATION

## Brigadier Sir William Gilbert KBE DSO

I am glad of this opportunity to pay a tribute to our "Old Comrade" Brigadier Sir William Gilbert who passed away in September of this year.

Brigadier Gilbert's service firstly in the army and subsequently as Director of the Security Intelligence Service was one of singular distinction.

Educated at Wanganui Collegiate he went in 1934 as a Cadet to the Duntroon Military College and graduated into the Royal New Zealand Artillery as a Lieutenant at the end of 1937. His first posting was to Auckland where he was stationed at North Head. There he took part in the mounting of 6-in guns on Motu Tapu Island. However with the outbreak of war he was switched to Field Artillery and was promoted to Captain and appointed Adjutant of 6 Field Regiment under the then Lt. Col. Steve Weir. His unit sailed with the Third Echelon to the Middle East in 1940.

War service had a pressure cooker effect on army careers and Capt. Gilbert's was no exception. Promotion came early and he was successively a Battery Commander, Brigade Major of Artillery, Divisional Staff Officer, Regimental Commander and finally by the end of the war he was principal Staff Officer (GS01) to General Freyberg in the rank of Colonel. For his war service he received the DSO, OBE and US Bronze Star and was twice mentioned in dispatches.

Post war found him for some time at Army Headquarters in appointments related to planning and other general staff functions.

In 1954 he was promoted Brigadier and given command of SMD. From there he went to London as Senior Army Liaison Officer. It was in 1956 while holding this appointment that he was recalled to New Zealand and asked to take up the appointment as first Director of SIS. This was an exceedingly difficult and sensitive task and it is a mark of the distinction with which he handled it that he received in 1976 a Knighthood (KBE).

To relate in this manner the main elements of his career is to reveal only part of what went to make up our "Old Comrade". Possessed of a warm personality he was the valued friend of many. As a family man he and his wife Patricia were justifiably proud of their daughter Caroline and their two sons Richard and Christopher. Caroline lives in Washington DC with her lawyer husband while both sons are in legal practice in New Zealand.

I know he valued greatly his service with the RNZA and through this his membership of our Association. A number of "old comrades" attended his funeral service at Old St Pauls, Wellington on 30th September 1987 and his family did appreciate this.

We have lost a friend but it was good to have had him as an "Old Comrade".

W.S. McKinnon.



REGIMENTAL DINNER: Lt Col Angus Rivers, CO BAW, and Lt Col Tony McLeod, DRNZA, in conjunction with the Wellington Artillery Officers Mess are putting on a regimental dinner in the new Trentham Officers Mess on Friday 29 January 1988 on a 'user pays basis'. Col Rivers would be glad to hear from anyone who can be there with summer mess kit/dinner jacket for the occasion. He will be issuing a newsletter this month.

#### MEMBERSHIP

As our Patron Major General Walter McKinnon pointed out at the A.G.M., our members are ageing, and at present the intake of new members is not keeping pace with the casualty rate. To keep the Association alive we must boost our recruitment of younger members.

Therefore if you know any serving or recently retired members of the RNZA (Regular Force) who qualify but have not yet joined the OCA do your best to 'rope them in'. Remember that members of attached corps, e.g. EME, Sigs, may also qualify as associate members in terms of Rule 4b.

14 WING REUNION: The planned 14 Wing 'reunion within a reunion' was a disappointment with only five members turning up. They were A.J. (Alf) SMITH, W. (Bill) WINTER, J.J. (Joe) HANVEY, E.W. (Bill) ROUND, and I.M. (Johnny) MEIKLE. Three more, W.G. (Bill) HOPKINS, D. (Dave) JONES, and W.L. (Wally) RUFFELL fully intended coming but were prevented by unforeseen sickness or other reasons at the last moment. We are extremely grateful to Bill Hopkins and Allan Petrie (also 14 Wing) who although unable to attend the reunion each made a donation of \$50 towards proceedings.

Referring to the list given in Newsletter No 54 we are pleased to report the re-location of Terry Hynes and Bill Hopkins, but sadly have been informed that Ted Stokes and Terry Trotman have 'gone west'.

NEWS FROM AROUND AND ABOUT: Alan Hobson writes that he is crippled with gout, which may I remind you, even teetotallers can contract. He is hopeful current medical treatment will be successful, and we sincerely hope it is.

Members who receive the 'RSA REVIEW' will recall in the August issue a photograph of four members of NZPFOCA alongside the 25-pr gun at Takapuna RSA. Unfortunately RSA omitted one name from the caption; from the left the members are: Alf Smith, Des O'Connor, Terry Transom, Bill Powrie.

Lofty Bigg-Wither from way up in the winterless north contributes an interesting item from naval Gunner history. Doubtless, he says, you have all heard someone at some time exclaim, 'It's cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey.' Believe it or not, the saying has nothing to do with metal animals; here is how it originated: In the Royal Navy back in the early smooth-bore era a stack of cannon balls was kept stable by a brass fitting called by sailors in their inimitable fashion a 'monkey'. Now in extremely cold weather a monkey sometimes contracted to such an extent that it failed in its purpose, allowing the balls to roll free. Hence the expression. NB: This is not just one of Lofty's tall stories. Experts at the Naval Museum confirm it as fact.

On Sunday 6 Dec 87 Lt Col Barry Dreyer, CO 16 Fd Regt RNZA, kindly invited our Association to attend a ceremony marching out the Regiment's old 105-mm howitzers and marching in its new 105-mm light guns, followed by afternoon tea and a ceremonial retreat. Although the invitation was read out at the reunion, we regret it was not more widely promulgated, mainly owing to the Secretary being on the sick



list. The resulting attendance by our members was therefore poor. We hope the Regiment does not get the idea we have forgotten them.

### COLOURS

By W.L.R.

Infantry Regiments once employed banners called 'colours' to provide a rallying point in battle. During the ceremony of Trooping the Colour the Colours are carried along the line of troops in slow time, a drill once carried out to impress their image upon the soldiers' memories that they might always recognise them in action, and so know their rallying point. Colours were last taken into action in 1881; nowadays they are carried on ceremonial occasions only.

Colours are of two kinds, the 'Queen's Colour'\* and the 'Regimental Colour'. The former is the Union Jack charged with the Regimental Numerals, and some or all of the Regimental Devices; the latter carries the Union Jack in the top corner nearest the staff, and bears the Royal Crown, Regimental Numerals, crest, motto, and battle honours. The term 'colours' includes Cavalry Standards and Guidons.

The Artillery have no colours, because the guns have always been their rallying point. Therefore, on ceremonial occasions, the guns should be paid the same compliments as the Colours of the Infantry and the Standards and Guidons of the Cavalry. On all other occasions they are to be treated with the respect thus due to them.

\* Or 'King's Colour' if the reigning sovereign is a King.

### BATTLE HONOURS AND MOTTOES

Colours bear Battle Honours, i.e. names of battles or campaigns in which Infantry and Cavalry (or Armoured) Regiments have distinguished themselves.

Prior to 1832 such distinctions were awarded to the Royal Artillery, but as the Regiment had no Colours a different system was used. For example, by General Orders of 31 Oct and 1 Nov 1803, Officers, NCOs and Men of the Artillery units which had served in Egypt were permitted to wear the Sphinx with the word 'Egypt' on their caps. Similarly the Honours 'Waterloo', 'Peninsular' etc were granted. These distinctions were personal ones, not to be perpetuated in the units concerned, nor to be worn by units not taking part in the actions or campaigns for which the Honours were granted.

But as Gunners took part in every battle or campaign the system became too unwieldy. At the same time the authorities realised the Artillery's outstanding record called for special recognition.

Accordingly, in lieu of Battle Honours, in 1832 HM King William IV granted the Royal Artillery (Regular Army), the privilege of wearing the Royal Arms over a gun bearing the motto 'UBIQUE' meaning 'EVERYWHERE', and beneath it the motto 'QUO FAS ET GLORIA DUCUNT' meaning 'WHITHER RIGHT AND GLORY LEAD'. Note that he did not extend the privilege to Volunteer Artillery or Militia.

In Britain in October 1917 HM King George V was pleased to approve Territorial Army units being permitted to wear the mottoes and honours of their Corps, Regiment etc in consideration of their services during World War 1, and from that date Territorial Gunners in the UK wore the same badges as their Regular Army colleagues.



In 1947 with the implementation of the 'one Army' concept the New Zealand Artillery, i.e. the Territorial Force Artillery, became Royal New Zealand Artillery. From that time Territorial Force Gunners were permitted to wear the same badges as worn by the Regular Force.

NB: From the foregoing you will note that the Regiment has not one motto but two.

### HONOUR TITLES

Since 1925 Honour Titles, the counterpart of Battle Honours, have been awarded to a number of Royal Artillery units. A typical example is 94 (New Zealand) Battery RA, awarded the Honour Title 'New Zealand' on 13 Nov 1934. As 3 Bty 4 Bde ('C' Bty 4 Bde RA from 9 Sep 1861), the Battery gave distinguished service during the New Zealand Wars of the 1860s.

Having just been re-equipped with the new Armstrong rifled breech-loading (RBL) 12-pounder, the Battery first went into action with half its guns at Te Arei Pa near Waitara, Taranaki, on 15 March 1861. There in a few days the superiority of their firepower hastened the capitulation of Maori defenders who had previously withstood a lengthy bombardment by Major General Pratt's imposing array of smooth-bore ordnance.

Later the Battery varied the task of breeching Maori stockades with road-making and general transport work - including the carting of gravel for the Great South Road, Auckland.

In March 1863 Captain Henry Mercer RA, the Battery Commander, was ordered to mount 100 Gunners and Drivers as Cavalry, and train them accordingly for which purpose each man was armed with a regulation cavalry sword and either a cavalry pattern carbine or a Dean and Adams revolver. Thus equipped they were employed on cavalry patrol work and as mounted orderlies.

On 20 Nov 1863 following the failure of the Infantry to carry the Maori fortifications at Rangiriri, General Cameron ordered the Gunners to assault the work. Captain Mercer himself led 36 NCOs and Gunners armed with swords and revolvers in the attempt which they made with great gallantry although no more successful than the Infantry. Lt A.F. Pickard RA and Assistant-Surgeon W. Temple RA were each awarded the VC for bringing in the wounded under fire. Captain Mercer was badly wounded and later died of his wounds. The town of Mercer in the Waikato is named after him.

### UNOFFICIAL HISTORY 3

#### IT PAYS TO BE NEUTRAL

By W.L.R.

Members who suffered the 'discomfort' of being shelled by Jerry's field artillery during World War 2 will no doubt recall how accurate were his airbursts. He achieved this accuracy by the use of mechanical time fuzes.

We had similar fuzes, but they were considered too expensive for field artillery use, and most were reserved for anti-aircraft purposes. In the field we were restricted to a great extent to powder-burning fuzes which were not so accurate.

On the heights overlooking Trieste Harbour was an abandoned German 10.5-cm AA battery which we examined closely, mainly for anything saleable, but were unlucky for others had been there before



us. However, I did find a box of brand-new fuzes labelled ZtS30, i.e. zeitsunder = time fuze S30, and urged on by a thirst for knowledge resolved to find out how they worked.

The fuze bodies were of aluminium and quite easy to dismantle. Inside was a compact precision-made clockwork mechanism obviously designed to be installed as a complete unit. It was a Thiel-type mechanism of Swiss origin.

But what intrigued me was the certainty I had seen a very similar mechanism before - in one of our fuzes. Having brought two of the German fuzes back to New Zealand after the war, I was able to compare their mechanisms with one of ours. Not only were they identical, but I would have sworn they were made in the same factory!

Eventually my suspicion was to be confirmed; in 1952 while enjoying a pint in my favourite London pub I met an ex-RAF Officer who insisted on fighting the war over again for my benefit. One of the duties allotted him during the conflict was the collection of air freight from an airfield in Switzerland, at which would also arrive a Luftwaffe pilot doing the same for der Fuehrer. Indeed, the two pilots would exchange banter in a not-unfriendly manner while waiting for their respective aircraft to be loaded. And among both cargoes were boxes of Thiel fuze mechanisms! Believe it or not.

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From Secretary: I wish to thank members for their many expressions of sympathy following my sad loss of 12 October, and for the many 'Get Well' cards received after my more recent mishap. I am slowly getting back to normal and hope to return my crutches to store in the near future.

Best regards,

*Wally Ruffell*  
HON. SECRETARY