

NEW ZEALAND PERMANENT FORCE OLD COMRADES ASSN INC

PO BOX 33 710, TAKAPUNA, AUCKLAND 9

NEWSLETTER No 59

September 1988

A registered publication

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Are payable in advance. To be financial to 31 Dec 88 you owe us S..... Please forward this amount to Secretary at the above address as soon as possible.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS: Lt Col E.W. Anker to NZFPO 5 Singapore, c/o CPO Auckland

R.J. Bennett to 21 Pope Ave, Berrara 2540, N.S.W.

Sgt J.E. Farmer to 3 Fd Regt RNZA, Burnham Camp.

R. Huston to 386 Great South Rd, Huntly.

A.E. Philpot to 31 Churchill Rd, Murrays Bay, Auckland 9.

P.N.H. Shepherd to 7 Ridgewood Cres, Birkenhead, Auckland 10.

GONE NO ADDRESS:

Major R.A. Colquhoun

Sgt R.W. Jarvie

Bdr B.W. Joule

H.C.J. Penrose

PREVIOUS ADDRESS

14 Wainara Ave, Waikanae

3 Fd Regt, Burnham

Waiouru Gunners Club

182 Normandale Rd, Lower Hutt.

'J' FORCE 5th NATIONAL REUNION, Nelson 24-27 February 1989. So far nearly 500 have registered for this event, but the venue, the Trafalgar Centre, holds 3000 so there is still plenty of room. For further info write to: 'J' Force Reunion Committee, Box 221, Nelson.

REGULAR FORCE CADET SCHOOL: To mark the 40th anniversary of the School a reunion of former cadets and staff will be held over the week-end 16-18 December 1988. For further info write to: Secretary, 40th Annual Reunion Committee, RF Cadet School, ATG, Private Bag, Waiouru.

DECEMBER SOCIAL: Alf Smith, our Auckland/North Shore Rep has organised a social to be held at the Birkenhead RSA, Birkenhead Ave, from 1100 hrs Wednesday 14 Dec 88. The restaurant provides excellent meals at \$6 a head, and he hopes members from both the city and north shore will take the opportunity of spending an enjoyable couple of hours with Old Comrades. To find Birkenhead RSA city dwellers take the Northcote turnoff on the north side of the bridge, go to the top of Onewa Rd, turn right into Birkenhead Ave, then left just before the traffic lights. Those who can make it please phone Alf on 410 4564.

NEWS FROM AROUND AND ABOUT: Jack Baigent, our Wellington Rep, accompanied by 10 members of the Horowhenua Artillery Association travelled to Waiouru on 25 May and spent a very pleasant afternoon and evening in the WOs and Sgts Mess, afterwards repairing to the Oasis Motels. On Gunners Day, the 26th, after rum and coffee at 0615 and breakfast in the NCOs and Mens Mess they were treated to a demonstration of field artillery drill, fire control, communications systems etc. Arrangements had been made to fire 16 rounds from the light gun but were cancelled apparently owing to the cost of the ammunition - \$200 to \$300 per round!

During Jack's absence from Wellington his place at the National Memorial Gunners Day ceremonial was taken by Johnnie Meikle.

NEWS FROM AROUND AND ABOUT (Continued): WO1 Paul O'Connor is now our Burnham/3 Fd Regt Rep, and will be working in close cooperation with Colin Young, our Canterbury/Westland Re.

Ron Bennett, now in the 'Land of Oz' (see change of address), has purchased a house at Berrara, 15 km south of Sussex Inlet which is the inlet for St Georges Basin, the nearest large town being Nowra, the RAN Fleet Air Arm Base. The area has a climate similar to that of North Auckland, long sandy beaches, rock fishing, and a lake full of prawns! Recently he visited the National War Museum at Canberra, a visit he says is a 'must' for any ex-serviceman going to Australia. While in Canberra he attended a Beating the Retreat and 1812 Overture put on by the RMC Duntroon, and has supplied us with a copy of the very interesting and informative programme. Ron extends a cordial welcome to any Old Comrade visiting the South Coast to call, but to ring first. His phone number is: 044-412198.

Ron also supplied us with a brochure on Australia's new Parliament House, a billion dollar project.

Colin Young, our Canterbury/Westland Rep, is still hard at work restoring old ordnance and carriages, his latest being a BL 5.5-in gun. For this he requires a PK lock. Any member knowing the whereabouts of a lock or parts of one please contact Colin or Secretary.

The BL disappearing gun at Taiaroa Head, Dunedin, is now well and truly restored and opened up to the public, thanks to a great extent to Colin Young who made patterns for the foundry which cast the large breech carrier, and machined the finished casting. At great expense an access tunnel has been constructed so the visiting public may approach the emplacement without disturbing the albatross colony (although military activities during World War 2 did not disturb the birds!), while the magazine and tunnel complex has been turned into a display area. For anyone interested in N.Z. military history, and Gunner history in particular, a visit will be most rewarding.

The breech screw of the 6-in gun disappeared during World War 2 after the gun had been test-fired, souvenired by a certain gentleman who shall remain nameless. However, some smart detective work by George Stuart, our Otago Rep, located the screw and enabled the committee arranging the restoration to recover it. Although it was in a damaged condition Colin Young was able to effect repairs.

Vic (Swede) and Marie Svendsen will be touring the South Island during October to December, and hope to meet as many Old Comrades as possible. They will thus not be in Taupo for our reunion.

Paul O'Connor, RSM 3 Field Regiment RNZA, and our 3Fd/Burnham Rep held a Regimental Dinner during July to which he invited several retired Gunners both RF and TF. One of the lucky guests, our Canterbury Rep no less, reported that it was the best he had ever attended.

RETREAT: The modern Retreat originated in the 16th century, when it was called 'Watch Setting,' and is referred to in the 'Rules of Ordynaunces for the Warre' of 1544 as well as by Robert Barret in his 'Theorike and Practice of Moderne Warres' of 1598, where he says 'The Drumme Major of the Regiment had to advertise (by beat of drum) those required for the Watch.'

The first work describes the ceremony thus: 'Half an hour before the Gates are to be shut, which is generally at the setting

of the sun, the Drummers of the Post Guards are to go upon the Ramparts and beat a Retreat to give notice to those without that the Gates are to be shut. As soon as the Drummers have finished the Retreat which they should do in less than a quarter of an hour, the Officers must order the Barriers and Gates to be shut.' So besides warning the guards for duty Retreat also warned those outside the perimeter of fortress etc to retire to safety within for the night.

On the battlefield Retreat signalled the end of the soldiers' day, as fighting usually concluded at sunset. Troops would assemble, the roll would be called, and those who had fallen would be suitably honoured by their comrades who had survived.

SALUTING: ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT: Probably the raising of the open hand was a demonstration of that mutual trust and respect exercised by the nobility in the days of chivalry. In token of these sentiments knights on meeting one another placed themselves in an attitude of defencelessness by uncovering their heads or raising their visors. But headdresses, whether iron casque, shako, bearskin, or cloth helmet, have not always been easy to remove quickly, and so the preliminary movement of raising the hand to the head became accepted as the earnest intention of completing the whole movement.

Three hundred years ago when Britain's first standing army was formed, saluting was by removal of the headdress, and according to John Locke who witnessed a review of the Gardes du Corps in Paris in 1678, a similar custom prevailed in the French Army also, for he recorded that 'The King passed at the head of the line as they stood drawn up, the Officers at the head of their companies and regiments in armour, with pikes in their hands, saluting him with their pikes, then with their hats. He very courteously put off his hat to them; so he did when taking his stand they marched before him.'

At some time during the first part of the 18th century, however, the Coldstream Guards departed from this practice, for a Regimental Order of 1745 reads: 'The men ordered not to pull off their hats when they pass an Officer, or speak to them, but only to clap up their hands to their hats, and bow as they pass by.'

This may have started a practice or confirmed an existing one which spread to other regiments. In fact Dean Swift (1667-1745) had written: 'His beaver is cocked; pray, Madam, mark that,

No Captain of Horse ever takes off his hat.'

By the beginning of the 19th century saluting with the hand, palm to the front, was well-established.

SALUTING BY FIRING: Have you ever observed that fired salutes, from the three volleys fired over a soldier's grave up to the Royal Salute of 21 guns, all comprise an odd number of rounds? Why is this so?

The origin of the custom is lost in antiquity. One authority gives the reason that even numbers may have been considered unlucky.

THE MASTER GUNNER: The appointment of Master Gunner is an ancient one. In the past monarchs from time to time appointed various masters to specialise in their particular military arts, e.g. Waggonmaster, Trenchmaster etc. All but the Master Gunner have faded away.

He has held his ground for over six centuries, for as soon as Gunners became soldiers Master Gunners were put in charge of them, whether on board ship, in the field, or in coast defence forts. The Master Gunner in the Navy eventually lost the 'Master' part of his title, and became simply 'Gunner.'

In the field the Master Gunner was the executive officer in charge of an artillery train, and as such was responsible for the training of his men and the maintenance of the equipment in his charge. He disappeared with the arrival of commissioned 'artillerists' in the trains.

From the earliest days in forts he was not only answerable for the care and maintenance of ordnance, ammunition and stores, but was also in executive command of the guns and Gunners in action. It was only with the appearance of the commissioned officer in coast artillery that he relinquished the last duty, and became responsible solely that the guns, ammunition and associated stores were properly maintained and accurately accounted for. However, when coast artillery in the British Army was abolished in 1956 (and in New Zealand shortly afterwards), the appointment of Master Gunner lapsed.

In 1963 the Royal Artillery decided to revive the appointment, Master Gunners to be appointed from Sergeant Majors Instructors in Gunnery (SMIGs), and Experimental Sergeant Majors, a decision which gave great satisfaction to the Regiment.

In 1980 the RA abolished the appointment of Assistant Instructor in Gunnery (AIG), and substituted Sergeant Major Instructor of Gunnery, which now carries the rank of Warrant Officer Class 2. When the WO2(SMIG) is promoted Warrant Officer Class 1 he is normally appointed Master Gunner.

Following the example of the RA the RNZA likewise re-instituted the appointment. However, one WO only holds the appointment of Master Gunner, and then only when stationed at the School of Artillery, Waiouru. When he relinquishes that appointment he has to take down his badge, and is no longer entitled to be called 'Master Gunner' - even though he might have qualified on a year-long course overseas.

THE MASTER GUNNER, ST JAMES PARK: Towards the end of the 15th century the increase in the number of guns and Gunners in the King's service called for improvement in the organisation and control then existing.

Wherever Gunners were stationed a Chief or Master Gunner was put in charge of them. It was therefore logical to place a superior Master Gunner in overall charge, to inspect the various stations from time to time, and make sure the Master Gunners were doing their job, i.e. maintaining personnel and equipment in all respects ready for action. To this end Patrick de la Meyte was appointed 'Chief Cannoner' in 1484.

Patrick was the first of a long line of Master Gunners which continued with periodical variations in title down to the end of 1731.

When the Royal Artillery was formed in 1716 the Master-General of the Ordnance recommended the abolition of certain posts in the interests of economy, one of them being the Master Gunner of Great Britain, the title then in use. However, as no superannuation was payable in those days, and as all Gunners signed on for life, the Master Gunner, then Colonel James Pendlebury RA, was permitted to retain the title and remain on the payroll until his death in 1731.

(To be continued)

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PO BOX 33710, TAKAPUNA, AUCKLAND 9

ANNUAL REUNION 11-13 NOV 88 AT TAUPU

PROGRAMME: Friday 11 Nov 88: March In. At 1600 hrs drinks at Taupo RSA, Horomatangi St.

Saturday 12 Nov: 1000 hrs: Annual General Meeting, Taupo Senior Citizens Assn, Story Place (adjacent Library/Museum).

1800 hrs: Pre-dinner drinks at Taupo Senior Citizens Assn lounge.

1900 hrs: Reunion dinner: DRESS: Gentlemen informal, jacket and tie. Lounge suit or appropriate uniform may be worn. Ladies: semi-formal. Medals and decorations to be worn.

WINE: BYO; may be purchased at wholesale rates at SPA WHOLESALE, who will label bottles with buyers' names, place in cooler if requested, and deliver to dining room at 1830 hrs. Bring your own corkscrew; there will be no wine stewards.

Sunday 13 Nov: 1000 hrs: Church Parade in Spa Hotel lounge (the meeting house 'Tiki o te Tamamutu'). Medals to be worn. After Church Parade 'one for the road' in Suite 'A'.

Saturday and Sunday afternoons are free. Ladies to indicate on Registration Form whether or not they desire additional entertainment, e.g. while AGM is in progress. See overleaf for further info.

REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

Please detach and return to reach Secretary at address shown above not later than 31 October 1988.

NAME.....I will/will not be attending reunion.

NB: A negative answer received will be recorded as an apology for non-attendance at the Annual General Meetin.

I will be accompanied by(include first name) who desires/does not desire additional entertainment during reunion.

I require/do not require accommodation at Spa Hotel for nights

..... Rooms only are available. Chalets are all booked.

I enclose cheque for \$..... to cover ... persons for dinner @ \$20 a head.

Please delete sections NOT applicable.

To those attending and requesting accommodation at the Spa Hotel, I will let you know whether you are successful or otherwise - if I have not already done so. The chalets have all been booked by members who took my advice to 'start planning early.'

Best regards,

ACCOMMODATION: a. General: There is no shortage of accommodation in Taupo during November, which is one of the reasons we hold our reunions in that month. It is still the 'off' season which means reduced rates are often available. Tariffs for Acapulco and Lake Establishment have been taken from the 1988 AA Accommodation Directory and may have changed by the time you receive this letter.

b. Spa Hotel: We have booked all available rooms. If you want a room book through me now on Registration Form. Firm tariff, which includes GST, is \$25 bed and breakfast. This price is hard to beat.

c. Acapulco Motel: 4-star, 19 Rifle Range Rd, box 347, Taupo, Phone 87174, we recommend. Tariff \$49-50 to \$60-50 single, \$60-50 to \$88 twin or double, \$13-20 per night each additional person. Prices include GST. Make your own bookings. 10% discount to RSA members. 15 minutes walk to RSA and shopping area.

d. Lake Establishment: Cnr Tongariro and Tuwharetoa Sts, Ph 86165. Tariff \$30-80 to \$44 single, \$49-50 double or twin. Suite \$63-50. Prices include GST. Cobb & Co restaurant, prices reasonable. Located five-minute walk from Senior Citizens Assn where we will be holding the reunion dinner. Make your own bookings.

e. Army Motel Units, Acacia Bay: Make your own bookings through your local Army Office.

*Best regards,
Wally Ruffell*