

NEW ZEALAND PERMANENT FORCE OLD COMRADES ASSN INC

PC BOX 33 710, TAKAPUNA, AUCKLAND 9

NEWSLETTER No 66

June 1990

A Registered Publication

SUBSCRIPTIONS for 1990 are now due. To be financial to 31 Dec 90 you owe us S..... Please send this amount to Secretary at above address as soon as possible.

LAST POST: 1904 W.J. (Bill) Breen, 21 Mar 90, at Rotorua.

1648 L.V. (Lionel) Hankey, 3 Apr 90, at Whangarei.

37430 Lt N.M. (Norm) Gregg, 28 Mar 90, at Christchurch.

R.T. (Bob) Wirihana, 17 Apr 90, at Papakura.

1869 H.J. (Jack) Osmers, 20 Apr 90, at North Shore City.

1649 Capt H.J. (Tim) Lovell JP, 24 Apr 90, at Auckland.

1557 Capt F.F. (Fred) Eastgate, 6 May 90, at Auckland.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS: C.S. Diamond to Waiwhatawhata, RD3, Kaikohe.

R.W. Hayman to RD2, Silverdale.

R.H. Mitchell to 14C Rangatira Ave, Takapuna.

Lt Col T. O'Reilly to 14 Weir Terrace, Waiouru (from 10 Jul 90).

Major R.B. Potts to 4A North Ave, Devonport, Auckland 9.

Major D.H. Rollo MBE to 53A Glen Road, Raumati South.

I.A. Rowntree to 33 Claremont Ave, Paeroa.

M.W. Ruffell to c/o R.L. Hall, 9 Willow Ave, Northcote, Auckland 9.

NEW MEMBERS: 22286255 J. (Jock) Taylor, 6 Oregon St, Papakura (Assoc).

621667 Capt M.F. (Mike) Dakin, 99 John Downs Dr, Browns Bay, NS City.

203965 L.S. (Dinty) Day, 21 Potter Ave, Northcote.

810328 Mrs J. (Joyce) Hankey, 27 Mill Rd, Whangarei (Associate).

T39370 M.W. (Baldy) Maunsell, 8 Resolute Way, Papakura (revived)

GONE NO ADDRESS:

PREVIOUS LOC

Lt Col A.N. King 1 Contessa Dr, Glenfield, Ak 10.

Major J.B. Vryenhoek USMC Staff College, California, USA.

Major J. Wasson 9 Biscay Place, Conifer Grove, Papakura.

REUNIONS: 'J' Force 6th National Reunion will be held at the racecourse, Tauranga, 1-4 March 1991. For further information contact The Secretary, 'J' Force 6th National Reunion, PO Box 4011, Mount Maunganui South.

REGIMENTAL ETC TIES AND BADGES: Tiger Communications Ltd, 312 Neilson St, Onehunga, Auckland 6, Phone 09/645 718, can supply those hard-to-get British Army, Navy, and Airforce ties etc etc, and will assist customers to obtain others.

GUADALCANAL MEMORIAL: The Guadalcanal Solomon Islands War Memorial Foundation is to establish a comprehensive memorial to every unit, both American and British Commonwealth, who fought in the Solomons campaign. The Japanese already have a large and beautiful memorial at Mt Austen on Guadacanal.

Among the advisers to the Foundation are Air Vice Marshal

I.G. Morrison CB CBE RNZAF (Retd), and the Dominion President, NZRSA.

Further information will be published in the next issue of the RSA 'Review.'

Meanwhile, in supporting the Foundation the New Zealand Army Association will be approaching Government for funds, but will be in a stronger position if they can show significant support from those directly involved, e.g. 3rd Division. The President, Col Jim Brown, therefore requests contributions from any of our members who were so involved.

Cheques should be sent to: Air Vice Marshal I.G. Morrison CB CBE, Guadalcanal Solomon Islands War Memorial Foundation, Box 2513, Wellington.

COMMITTEE MEETING: The next meeting of our Executive Committee will be held at 1000 hrs Saturday 18 August 90 in the main lounge of the Birkenhead RSA, Recreation Drive, Birkenhead (off Birkenhead Ave). All members are welcome to attend.

UNIFORMS OF THE ROYAL ARTILLERY 1716-1966 by P.H. Smitherman with foreword by General Sir Robert Mansergh GCB KBE MC, a past Master Gunner. A copy of this beautiful volume was left on my doorstep with a note, "Wally, hope this will be of use or interest to you or one of your cohorts." As the note was unsigned may I take this opportunity of thanking the donor on behalf of the Association, assuming he is one of our members. I should still like to thank him personally. Sec.

7 A Tank Regt REUNION: Jim Gilberd, our Hawke Bay/Taupo Rep reports that he attended the reunion over 3-5 April 90 at Tauranga, the 50th anniversary of the regiment's embarkation for the Middle East in 1940. A total of 375 members and ladies sat down to dinner. Jack Spring proposed the toast 'The Regiment' and Jim Gilberd replied. At the general meeting the 7 A Tk Association made Jim Patron, thus taking over from Brig J.M. Mitchell who had died the year before. He observes it is rather unusual for a former RSM to be elected Patron, and office usually reserved for senior officers.

6 Fd Regt REUNION: Held at Ellerslie Race course 25-27 May 90, the reunion was deemed an outstanding success by all who attended it. Some 400 members and ladies dined on the Saturday night, attended the church parade at 16 Field Regiment, Papakura, on the Sunday, and lunched in Holloway Hall. After lunch 16 Field laid on a demo of equipment etc.

NZPFOCA SOCIAL 23 May 90: This function, held at the Birkenhead RSA, was highly successful, some 35 of our members attending with ladies. In addition 55 Officers, WOs, NCOs and Gunners from 16 Field Regt RNZA attended, and all without exception enjoyed themselves.

161 BTY SOCIAL GUNNERS DAY 1990: Major Mathew Beattie, BC 161, kindly invited members of our Association to attend this function, held at the 'SeldomInn' 161 Bty, on Saturday evening 26 May, but unfortunately, owing to shortage of notice plus commitments to other functions, notably 6 Fd Regt's reunion, few were able to attend. We understand an enjoyable evening eventuated, and our thanks go to Major Beattie for his invitation.

NZPFOCA ANNUAL REUNION, TAUPU, 9-11 NOVEMBER 90: Full particulars will be published in the September newsletter. Make sure you keep this week-end free. Our Guests of Honour this year will be Captain Jim Gilberd and his good lady Dot.

NEWS FROM AROUND AND ABOUT: Spencer Morrison, our Southland Rep reports from Invercargill that he recently visited Australia with the local Highland Pipe Band for the National Championships in that country. Results, he says, were mixed, with the trip marred by bad weather.

We extend congratulations in advance to Charlie and Dorothy Wotherspoon who will have been married 50 years in October. Charlie is not going to let the family 'do' interfere with his trip to Taupo in November!

Thanks are due to George Sutherland, our Taranaki Rep, for the interesting article on the Armed Constabulary in Opunake which he extracted from the North Taranaki Weekender of 27 May 90. It will be added to our already large collection of newspaper cuttings dealing with the history of the Permanent Force in New Zealand over the last century. George reports that he has an arthritic knee, high blood pressure plus diabetes, otherwise he is OK. Obviously your sense of humour is still in good working order, George, which is the main consideration!

While in Europe recently Dan and Dorothy Foley went on an eight-day trip down the Danube, followed by a coach trip through Turkey and a visit to Switzerland.

Pete Dixon, who has been retired 18 months, has so much to do he wonders how he found time to work. He is not the only one!

Hobby Hobson, 6 Pooles Rd, Te Aroha, is fighting a battle against bone cancer, in the course of which he has been obliged to let the surgeons make some drastic changes to his anatomy in order to prolong his life. Yet in his letter to us he finds time to congratulate the Association on the quality of its newsletters. We wish him success in his fight. Cancer CAN be beaten, Hobby.

Lt Col Tom O'Reilly assumed the appointment of Chief of Staff, ATG, Waiouru on 10 Jul 90.

Les Kitney is still very active in North Shore competitions which leave him little time for other activities.

Oliver MacDonald turns 90 in October. His health is fair except that trouble with his sense of balance handicaps him to some extent. However, he can still drive his car. His address is 9A Stoke St, Sumner, Christchurch, and he would appreciate a phone call from any Old Comrade passing through.

Joff Adams and his good lady have both recently suffered spells in hospital but hope to see us at our next Taupo reunion.

All members of the Association extend congratulations to Henry Macown, past-Sergeant Major of the Army, on his being awarded the MBE in the recent Birthday Honours.

Bob Rudge from Thames writes a long letter reminiscing about early schooldays when classes were held in the old drill hall adjoining the Field Cadre stables at Narrow Neck RNZA Station pending the erection of nearby Vauxhall School. With other primers he used to watch the soldiers grooming the horses in the morning while in class. Fifteen years later he was himself grooming horses in the same stables. That was in 1935.

Russell de la Cour has had to have screws inserted into his left femur to strengthen it. From your report of the operation's success you no doubt will have returned your crutches to store long ago, Russ.

MORE CHANGES OF ADDRESS:

C.S. Diamond to Waiwhatawhata, RD3, Kaikohe.

BOOT AND SADDLE

Continued from Newsletter 65

By Jim Gilberd.

MILITIA AND VOLUNTEERS:

During the period 1845-90 there were a number of volunteer units, being mainly Cavalry, Infantry and Artillery.

The Militia Act of 25 March 1845 gave official approval to train and arm the European population for the protection of Her Majesty's subjects living in the colony.

This was a home-based force which limited service to within 25 miles of the nearest Police post. Among the many clauses of the Act it was obligatory for all able-bodied men between the ages of 18-60 to hold themselves in readiness for 28 days' service each year.

Militia units were raised (mainly in the North Island) at Auckland and Wellington (1845), Taranaki (1855), Bay of Islands, Napier, Wanganui and Rangitikei (1860).

The Government later approved the formation of a mobile force under the Act. These were volunteers and known as 'Special Militia and Military Settlers.' Men were encouraged to join the force with the promises of land grants after hostilities were over. These volunteers were mainly former British Regulars now resident in the Colony. They were known locally as 'Fencibles.'

Land grants promised were:

Field Captains	400 acres	Captains	300 acres
Surgeons	250 acres	Subalterns	200 acres
Sergeants	80 acres	Corporals	60 acres
	Privates		50 acres

This was confiscated Maori land.

With the formation of the Armed Constabulary, all Militia men were released from service by 1872. Another Act called Volunteer Act 1866 gave some authority to the large number of volunteer units in being at this time. Mounted units were in large numbers ranging in size from a troop (18 men) to a squadron of about 125. At this time volunteer artillery units were based at Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin and later at Napier, Nelson, Timaru and Invercargill. During this period the cavalryman provided his own mount, saddles and other items of horse furniture. Uniforms and arms came from Government sources.

In the case of the artillery batteries, horses and harness were hired from livery stables and contractors as required. History records that horse-Gunners received a pretty rough 'deal' regarding the horses and harness provided by the 'horse-traders.' Harness was always a problem as it was designed for 'shaft' draught as used in horse-drawn coaches and carts at that time.

Many years were to elapse before the Defence Department purchased military harness from the United Kingdom. About this time the Army acquired its own horses.

It is recorded in the booklet 'Canterbury Gunners' that 'E' Bty volunteers were in Camp at Scarborough. Live firing was to be carried out. The hired horses had never seen an artillery piece before let alone heard the weapons fired. The battery paraded its four guns and moved off to the range area. The order 'Trot' was given, followed by a 'Gallop', then followed 'Halt action front' and the Gunners unlimbered and brought their 'little pets' into action, the Drivers taking their teams 20 yards to the rear of the gun positions. The fire orders were given, then the order 'Fire.' It was a Salvo! ! !

All hell broke loose at the horse-lines - horses with Drivers were scattered in all directions!

BOER WAR:

The Boer War began on 12 October 1899 when General Jambet led his Transvaal men into Natal at Laings Nek. The campaign extended over three years. Correspondents of the day said if it had not been for the presence of mounted troops from the Colonies, the war may never have been won.

NEW ZEALAND'S INVOLVEMENT:

Soon after hostilities broke out there was a rush of volunteers wishing to serve in South Africa. The Imperial Government was eager to accept mounted men and particularly horses, from this country. The Defence Department was asked to come up with a scheme, bearing in mind the Secretary of State's minutes based on information from South Africa. The scheme proposed was:

- a. Troops to be organised into units of about 125 men.
- b. Units may consist of Cavalry or Infantry.
- c. All troops to be armed with .303 rifles or carbines.
- d. Cavalry to provide their own horses, saddles, etc. (After the 2nd Contingent the War Office equipped subsequent drafts).
- e. Not more than one Captain plus three subalterns should accompany each unit. Where more than one unit was despatched by the Colony the whole force to be commanded by a Major.

However, there was a debate in the House of Representatives regarding New Zealand's commitment to the War. Some members suggesting the best assistance we could offer the Mother Country would be horses, saddles, bridles and general stores - adding there were many willing volunteers already in South Africa but they lacked horses, arms and other equipment. Mr Seddon overruled these suggestions and Parliament approved the scheme put forward by the Defence Authorities. Accordingly plans were made for the assembly, equipping and the training of mounted rifle contingents. In all New Zealand despatched 6,575 men, 8,075 horses, plus a four-gun Hotchkiss horse-drawn battery. Major Robin (later G.O.C.) commanded the New Zealanders in South Africa.

MEN AND HORSES:

A 'Times' correspondent rated the New Zealanders as the finest mounted soldiers in the War. They earned praise for the care of their animals, and the casualty rates through sickness and other causes were far lower than other participants in this struggle. One report

puts the British animal casualty rate for the three years they were in Africa as high as 350,000 horses and mules. The Boers were reported to have lost over 400,000 animals. The men from New Zealand were 'rough and ready' characters who adapted well to the veldt conditions. They were better equipped for the type of operations; more like their enemy the Boer. Unlike their counterparts in the British Mounted Regiments, who had a heavy saddle, a carbine and a sabre or lance, plus extra equipment based on operations in Europe. It was said that to hear a British Cavalry Regiment on the move was like a 'tin can circus' - so much noise. This was to the Boers' advantage. However, the RHA Batteries who supported the Colonials were adaptable and worked well with our people.

OPERATIONS:

The New Zealanders were brigaded with other forces throughout the War and were not employed operationally as a national entity. Their role was wide and varied and they were involved in most battles. Of the more unusual tasks carried out by our men was the collection and driving of large numbers of horses, mules, oxen, sheep and goats captured from the Boers. The Colonials excelled in these tasks. Most of them being shepherds or stockmen back home - only difference, they were in uniform, armed and in a theatre of War.

For those readers who have visited QEII Army Memorial Museum at Waiouru the mounted rifleman in the Boer War display and his mount are typical of both man and horse that went overseas.

'SNIPPETS':

A few items taken from Major Robin's reports are interesting:

'Statun Camp, 1 December 1899. While here I have been kept busy drawing equipment. Fifty-seven mules, sixteen oxen, buck (supply) waggon, water-carts and exercising in their use.'

'A 'recce' in force left here yesterday. The horses are fast improving after the long sea journey. The 6th Dragoon Guards and 12th Lancers are very taken with our mounts, as was General French when he inspected us.'

'We are exercising on the veldt - the heat is very great and the soldier ration (British Army) puzzles the New Zealander, but every day he discovers how to make it 'go further.'

'The contingents have been kept busy engaging the Boers in skirmishes; some of our horses have somewhat fallen away (in condition).'

'Two New Zealand Companies with eight guns from the RHA moved on the Boers at Taaisboek. At about 6 a.m. the guns opened fire on Jas fontein farm. During the shelling it was necessary for No 2 Coy to protect the right and rear of the guns by occupying a line of kopjes.'

'Arundel, 23 December 1899 - a point has arisen about our slouch hats - I will probably requisition for helmets. Several cases have been reported where Colonial troops with slouch hats have been fired upon by our own troops, thinking they were Boers.'

WORLD WAR I (The Great War):

Nearly 10,000 horses from New Zealand went overseas during this conflict. The main body as it became known consisted of 8,247 Officers and Men and 3,315 horses. This was the largest single body of men and animals to have left the Dominion. During the seven-week voyage the horses stood in their stalls all the way, except for coming ashore for a few days at Albany, Western Australia. The

Troopers found that frequent rubbing and hosing with salt water helped prevent their legs from swelling. Shoes were removed for the voyage. When the animals came ashore at Alexandria they were in good condition. Sixty-five died on the voyage to Egypt.

Some remounts were despatched from New Zealand early in the War. However, the British War Office established a large remount pool on Salisbury Plain, drawing its animals from UK, Canada, South America, South Africa and the USA. Some three million (horses and mules) passed through this pool during the time it operated. Especially fitted out horse-transport vessels operated out of the Port of Bristol and moved them across the channel to France.

GALLIPOLI:

The Gunners and the A.S.C. were the only NZ units to land horses on the peninsula, the remainder were left at the base in Egypt. Conditions on the beaches were bad and difficulties were experienced in getting guns and horses ashore. Our Infantry were desperate for supporting fire from our guns. The Royal Navy were shelling the area, but most of their fire was ineffective owing to the flat trajectories of their guns. It was later on 26 April 1915 before a section of 4.5 howitzers and two Indian Pack Batteries were brought ashore.

Water, forage, ammunition, rations, plus other supplies were brought in by barges. This system of supply continued for the duration of the troops' stay in this terrible place. Following the withdrawal, troops, guns, and horses returned to base back in Egypt.

At base the Force was re-organised into an Infantry Division and a Mounted Rifle Brigade.

The Division moved to France and arrived at Marseilles in April 1916. Only men and animals went to France, the Division re-equipping at the overseas base.

The privations suffered by horses on the Western Front - particularly during winter - were terrible. Overwork, lack of shelter, food shortages and illness took its toll. Some animals became so weak they just fell and drowned in the mud and shell holes. Gun teams performed prodigious tasks in bringing the guns in and out of action. Bringing up ammunition was another arduous duty for Drivers and their horses.

With the defeat of Germany the NZ Division crossed the Rhine River at a place called Deutz. Here life was much more pleasant for all concerned. Barracks, stables and other amenities were available.

New Year 1919 saw the start of demobilisation and creation of an occupation force. When the time came for New Zealand Forces to be relieved of their occupational duties, plans were made for bringing the men home.

Not so for their 'long-faced' friends. Horses were divided into three classes. Certain mares were selected for breeding purposes, others were marked for retention by the British Army and the final group were sold either to be butchered for food or used for general purposes in Germany.

SUEZ - PALESTINE:

The Auckland, Wellington and Canterbury mounted rifle regiments comprised the New Zealand Mounted Rifle Brigade of 147 Officers and 2,900 NCOs and Men. Together with two Australian Light Horse Brigades they became the Anzac Mounted Division. Their artillery came from RHA's 13-pr guns.

The Division also had Camel Transport Coys as part of their organisation.

The Fourth Mounted Rifle Regiment, the Otago's, went with the Division as divisional troops.

The horses were soon to encounter the rigours of desert warfare - heat, flies, thirst and camel ticks, plus choking sandstorms. The average trooper and his gear weighed in excess of 200 lbs, some heavier. Most desert marches were made at night, not only to escape the heat but a new threat, the aeroplane. The constant worry was water supplies for large numbers of animals. Portable pumps and canvas troughs were carried by pack camels and used at wells and rivers where they existed. When water was 40 miles behind or a mile in front and behind enemy lines and night was fast approaching, the incentive was to win the battle and get water.

In November 1917 the Mounted Division covered 65 miles in eight days, engaging in many skirmishes with the Turks. The NZ Mounteds horses were without water for 72 hours and the Light Horse for 60 hours. What is regarded as the last cavalry charge took place during the battle of Romani on the Sinai Peninsula. The attack began at 1430 hours, 5 August 1916. The Mounted Division plus a British Yeomanry Brigade advanced at the gallop - riding knee to knee with fixed bayonets and sabres drawn. Their success in this battle as being a turning point in the Turks' advance to capture the Suez Canal and conquer Egypt.

At the end of hostilities the horses were shot except selected animals for use again by the British forces. One horse did return to New Zealand - her name was Bess - she lived to a great age. Lt Col Guy Powles (father of our first Ombudsman) owned Bess.

BETWEEN THE WARS:

From 1919-1939 the Army's fortunes varied. In 1921 Compulsory Military Service was resumed and continued until 1931 when it was suspended for economic reasons. The Army at this time relied on horses for mobility and operations. An establishment of 325 RNZA horses was maintained in permanent stables at Field Artillery stations throughout New Zealand.

RNZA horses were used by other Corps at their annual camps and courses.

Mounted riflemen provided their own mounts. The Veterinary Corps inspected these animals as to fitness for service. When embodied for training the Mounted Riflemen's expenses were met by the Army. This included the provision of saddlery, accoutrements, and arms. Transport for men and horses to and from camp was by rail. Forage and other necessities required by mounted troops were also provided.

Should an Officer or Trooper's horse be killed or injured while training the usual Court of Inquiry was held. Depending on the finding of the Court, compensation was paid.

When RNZA horses were used by other units RNZA personnel travelled with them to ensure their wellbeing.

With most of the 1930 depression over, 1934 saw recruiting for the Regular Force resume.

Intakes of RNZA recruits assembled at Trentham.

Nos 5 and 6 Wings (1934), 7 wing (1935) and 8 Wing (1936) saw the Regiment's strength increase by 200 Gunners.

To be continued.