



Incorporated

NEW ZEALAND PERMANENT FORCE OLD COMRADES ASSOCIATION INC

PO BOX 33 710, TAKAPUNA, AUCKLAND 9

NEWSLETTER No 71

September 1991

A Registered Publication

LAST POST:

1592 E.H. (Eric) Hall, 16 Aug 91, at Wellington.
31754 A.E. (Arnold) Philpot, 4 Sep 91, at Auckland.
1556 J. (Slim) Cumming, 14 Sep 91, at Auckland.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS:

C.M. Cochran to 2/247 Courtenay St, New Plymouth.
S.W. Godfrey to Inlet Rd, Kerikeri.
Major R.O. Meyer to 15A Montgomery Ave, Rothesay Bay, NS City.
Major J. Wasson to 8 Oaktree Ave, Browns Bay, Auckland 10.

NEW MEMBERS:

Mrs H.P. (Helen) Agar, 7 Seaview Rd, Remuera, Auckland 5 (Assoc.)
Q30903 Major J.R. (John) Barrett, Highway 18, Albany.
Mrs G.M. (Gwen) Graham, 1/6 Solway Place, Mt Maunganui (Assoc.)
Mrs E.L. (Eileen) Osmers, 2/7 Tallington Cres, Torbay, Ak 10 (Assoc)
1661 E.J. (Ted) Quinn, 8A Biddle Cresc, Lower Hutt (Revived).
Mrs M.R. (Margaret) Stitt, 6/48A Vauxhall Rd, Devonport, Ak 9 (Assoc)
M206045 A.B. (Tony) Tustin, The Grove, RD1, Picton.
Lady Barbara Webb, Waimate North, RD2, Kaikohe, Bay of Is. (Assoc)

N.Z.P.F.O.C.A. REUNION 8-10 NOV 1991;

This year our reunion dinner and AGM will be held in the Taupo Yacht Club, Lake Terrace, which many of our members attending the 1990 reunion visited and approved. As our caterer operates from the Club, and as the facilities include a bar, arranging the pre-dinner drinks as well as the dinner itself will be far more convenient than in the past. In addition, a less expensive hire fee for the premises has enabled us to maintain the price of the dinner at \$25, i.e. the same as last year. See also reunion programme/registration form accompanying this newsletter.

7 ANTI-TANK REGT ASSN:

A National Reunion will be held at the Otumoetai Trust Hotel, Birreta Rd, Otumoetai, Tauranga, 3-5 March 1992. Secretary: John Lapsley, Box 8158, Cherrywood PO, Tauranga. Cut-off date for registrations is 1 Dec 91. Make own accommodation arrangements. Book early as reunion is being held during festival of Tauranga.

AMENDMENT TO NEWSLETTER 70:

Page 4 para 7: After "New Zealand" insert "Army."
To list of those attending the 22 May social add: Jack and Zita Cook, Dan and Dorothy Foley.
Delete: Vic Svendsen, Arthur and Kitty Simeon.

NEWS FROM AROUND AND ABOUT:

Rusty Vail recently moved to Tauranga and is "having another go at retiring."

We hear that Colin Young, our Canterbury Rep, is moving to Queensland in October.

While recently in Fiji Arthur Kilmore received an invitation to Major General Rabuka's farewell parade during which he reviewed the Fiji Forces prior to relinquishing command and taking over the office of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs. While in Fiji Arthur visited the sites of the three WW2 coast batteries, Flagstaff (2 x BL 6-in), Naomi (2 x BL 4-in), AND Bilo (2 x BL 4-in). The first site is now a Government housing area. The guns of the first two batteries are gone, but the 4-in at Bilo are still in place.

Dad Phillips, 71A Kent St, Picton, sends regards to members of 20 Wing still with us. Unfortunately indifferent health prevents his attending reunions; he has to remain close to the local hospital. However, he would be pleased to see any Old Comrades passing through. We sincerely hope you beat the problem, Dad.

Bruce McIver, 4/47 Woodside Rd, Henderson, has had a rough time, having suffered a broken thigh bone in an accident, but is slowly coming right, and has handed his crutches back.

Ernie Hight, 1267 Devon Rd, 3RD, New Plymouth, recalls while being caught day-dreaming on parade in Trentham in 1934, being forcefully told by George McCulloch, "Put your knitting away, Miss Hight etc etc!"

Three years later, having joined the NZ Police who then trained in Trentham, Ernie was made drill instructor and hut commander in his Police Wing. While drilling a squad one day, Mac, who was riding by on his bicycle, dismounted and ordered Ernie to halt his squad. He then congratulated Ernie on the progress he had made in training his squad.

With Ernie in that Police Wing as hut commanders/drill instructors were Clarry Anniss, Vic Lennon, and ERNIE Harding. Ernie Hight is the sole survivor of the four.

Enid Standen, 5A Clifton Ave, Carterton, writes saying how much she appreciates having been made an Associate Member and thus entitled to receive our newsletters with their news of old friend Enid extends an invitation to any Old Comrade accompanied by his wife to stay with her if visiting the Wairarapa.

Your Secretary and Treasurer both recently spent a week in Waiour assisting the Army Museum to sort and catalogue some of the thousands of photographs they have, many of them uncaptioned. We were rationed and quartered in the Warrant Officers' and Sergeant Mess (at the Museum's expense), and found the time both pleasant and interesting.

Eileen Osmers writes thanking the Association for electing her an Associate Member.

Bob Rudge, 711 Queen St, Thames, writes his usual long and interesting letter reminiscing about old times and old comrades. While in the Thames RSA recently with Bob he showed me a memorial block entitled "New Zealand Permanent Force Old Comrades

Association" which he and his good lady Sylvia paid for and had mounted on the wall of the RSA when the latter were raising funds for rebuilding.

Phil George contributes five more verses to his epic poem "True Pioneers."

The tiger does not change his stripes
Nor defeated foes forget
When strength regained they strike again
Let us not this forget.

When David slew Goliath
With a sling-shot long ago
Was he the first exponent
Of projectiles not so slow?

Or when the wily Normans
Aimed their arrows at the sky
When one of these descending
Struck King Harold in the eye.

Were these the first faint glimmers
Of inventions yet to come
The mortars, howitzers, and minenwerfers
High angle low charge firing guns?

When shells are thrown almost straight up
These will fall almost straight down
To winkle out deep dug-in foes
This makes the foemen frown.
(Do something more then frown).

Phil notes that in his study of artillery equipment over the years he has seen little written on the 25-pr traversing platform sometimes called the "sand platform." Probably this is because the platform is not a new idea special to the 25-pr. As I stated in the Story of the 25-pr, its traversing platform is a copy of that fitted to a 105-mm gun produced in 1922 by Vickers, who no doubt got the idea from the wooden "beach platform designed for the QF 18-pr first introduced in 1904 - and made a steel version of it. The idea of a traversing platform may be traced even further back to coast and siege equipments of more than a century ago.

All those lady members whom I have not personally mentioned in this newsletter have written expressing their appreciation for having been elected to Associate status.

John Monk, 5 Opotoro Rd, Raglan, reports that he keeps himself busy as Secretary of the local RSA and delegate to Hamilton (the parent body), as well as Treasurer for the Dunkirk Veterans. In commenting favourably on Jim Gilbert's articles on the horse Gunners John, who is ex-RA, states although Jim says the rank of Driver was abolished in 1925, in 1937, when in Woolwich this unit still had Drivers IC AND Drivers RA in order to cope with both MT AND HORSES.

ROYAL ARTILLERY HERITAGE APPEAL:

As the present museums housing RA collections of guns and other artefacts are too small for expansion, the Regiment is planning new museum complex at Larkhill.

Not only will the new museum concentrate collections held now at different locations but it will provide additional facilities such as library, cinema, lecture hall, restaurant, shop, children's playground, an events arena as well as car park and picnic area. It will be a self-supporting establishment.

The cost will be in the vicinity of 15 million pounds. Past and present members of the Regiment have already contributed generously, and it is hoped members of this Association will do likewise.

The Master Gunner, St James Park, General Sir Martin Farndale KCB who is to be our Guest of Honour at our coming reunion may have something further to say on the project.

For more information write to: The Gunner Heritage Appeal, Royal Artillery Barracks, Woolwich, London SE18 4BH - or contact Secretary, N.Z.P.F.O.C.A.

DISPLAY OF ARTILLERY EQUIPMENT 9 NOV 91:

The Chief Instructor, School of Artillery, Waiouru, Major Allan Goodwin RNZA, assisted by Staff and Young Officers, has kindly consented to mount a display of field artillery equipment on the vacant ground adjacent to the Yacht Club from 1300 to 1500 hrs Saturday 9 Nov 91. The display will include a 105-mm 11. gun plus associated fire control etc equipment. For those members who have not yet seen how modern field artillery functions, now is your chance!

AUCKLAND & BARBARA'S DAY SOCIAL:

Will be held in the Birkenhead RSA ON Wednesday 18 December 1991 from 1100 hrs. A comprehensive luncheon is available at \$7 all items. A special invitation is extended to all ranks in Field Regiment RNZA. Our widows, whether they are Associate members or not, are cordially invited. Any non-Aucklanders who may be in the area on 22 May are, of course, also welcome to attend. If you intend to be there please inform Alf Smith, our AUCKLAND Rep, on 410-4564, or Secretary on 445-4567 not later than Monday morning 16 Dec 91 so we can keep the caterer happy.

GUNNERS AND HORSES

Continued from Newsletter No 70 By Jim Gilbert

The South Island stables at Central Battery, Dunedin, had at one time horses names commencing with the letter "B", hence we have Baby, Barney, Barron, Barrack, Beauty, Betty, Baldy, and Bayonet. Like all stables the horses' names were above each stall.

It was important when matching teams up that they were of similar

size and temperament, in other words they liked one another. Each team horse was trained for the "near" and "off" position in the team. Colours and markings were important when "matching" teams for ceremonial parades or the musical drive.

For state and military funerals black horses were preferred.

All horses were given a name and number. The unit and number were "fire-branded" on hooves as was the Government mark NZ↑D.

Horse registers were kept at all stables and here were recorded:

From whom purchased and date of purchase
Unit and number
Name and sex
Colour, markings, height and age.

The Army never bred any of its own horses as far as I was able to ascertain in my research. However, there was the odd case of a mare "dropping a foal." I can recall at Trentham Camp in 1933, when to the stableman's surprise, a new-born foal was found in the horse lines - it had been "dropped" during the night.

GUNS AND CARRIAGES:

This is not meant to be a treatise on guns and carriages, only to the extent of how it relates to teams and drills associated with "hooking in" and "unhooking". From about 1900 onwards a horse-drawn sub-section consisted of the gun and limber, ammunition wagons, 7 gun-numbers, 6 drivers and 13 horses. The gun sergeant (No 1) was mounted on his horse, gun numbers (2 and 3) rode on the gun limber, (4, 5, 6, and 7) on the ammunition wagon. In the days of the 15-pr gun, gunners used to ride on seats astride the axle of the gun and on the ammunition wagons. Numbers 2 and 3 are responsible for "hooking in" and "unhooking" the gun. Numbers 4 and 5 carried this task on ammunition wagons.

SHAFT AND POLE DRAUGHT:

The term draught in horseman's language means pulling power to move a gun or carriage. To achieve this, poles or shafts are fixed to limbers with shaft draught, i.e. two poles, the horses are teamed between the shafts. Whereas with pole draught (single wooden pole), the horses are placed on either side of the pole. Hence we coin the term "near" and "off" side. This pole with its hardened steel "pole stop" and metal fittings, worked with the pole-bar (attached to wheelers' breast collar) and assists with "breeching," i.e. stopping the limber.

Foreign armies in Europe adopted pole draught prior to Waterloo, but the conservative British continued to use shaft draught until 1895, as did New Zealand.

Draught or traction for horse and field artillery is calculated on horses moving at a speed of 6 miles per hour over ground having a slope of $6\frac{1}{2}$ degrees.

Under circumstances of war the maximum load which each horse is required to draw is 800-1000 lbs.

FARRIERS AND SHOEING:

The Army was strict on the shoeing of its horses. There was a saying "a good farrier fits the shoe s to the foot, not the foot to the shoes" - and this was true. Allsorts of injuries and foot ailments occurred through bad fitting of shoes. The Army employed and trained its own farriers until 1935 when civilians took over the task on a contract basis. Four RNZA farriers I can recall in my time in the service were "Bunny" Abbot, "Scotty" Irvine, Bill Dalton and Oliver McDonald.

Some Gunners were given a short course on what was called "cold shoeing". This enabled them to "tack" on a ca st shoe in an emergency, until the farrier replaced it by the "hot" METHOD.

The service horse shoe came in varying sizes and weights. The average shoe weighed $1\frac{1}{4}$ pounds. From about 1928 onwards the service shoe was phased out in favour of a lighter fullered concave type fitted with studs in the heel of the shoe. This helped to prevent horses slipping on sealed roads that were becoming more common.

HARNESS AND SADDLERY:

When the United Kingdom Gunners acquired their own horses, they adapted the civilian harness to suit their own needs. Over a period of time modifications were made to what was still unsatisfactory harness.

The French Horse Artilley carried out exhaustive trials to improve the type of harness in use. In these trials the effectiveness of the bricole, or breast collar, was tested under all conditions of service and involved five batteries pulling 12, 16 and 24-pr guns with eight-horse teams. These trials extended over many days, distance travelled varying between 25-80 km. Following a few days' rest the same teams repeated the same tests this time using the existing neck collar. The Officers in charge of the trials were directed to make comparisons between the old collar and the bricole as follows:

- Facility of draught
- Galling of horses
- Wear and tear to horses
- Facility of adjusting harness and harnessing and unharnessing
- Maintenance and repair.

The trials came out in favour of the new type of harness, so in 1858 the bricole or breast collar replaced the cumbersome neck collar. Some minor alterations were made to strengthening the breeching for wheel horses.

The main advantages of the new harness: it was lighter, fitted better and did not cause collar galls (sores). Other advantages were rapidity in harnessing and unharnessing and its elegance in appearance. Earlier the British had made some changes to their harness (1853) but this only consisted of changing the colour from black to brown and doing away with the "blinkers" on the head collar.

Again the conservative British were reluctant to change the neck collar until 1904.

To be continued.