



Incorporated

NEW ZEALAND PERMANENT FORCE OLD COMRADES ASSOCIATION INC

PO BOX 33 710. TAKAPUNA. AUCKLAND 1309

NEWSLETTER No 88

December 1995

A Registered Publican

SEASONS GREETINGS: Our Patron, President, and Executive extend to all members the compliments of the season and best wishes for 1996.

LAST POST:

1865 M.S. (Dad) Phillips MSM, 11 September, at Picton.
31074 Major D.F. (Darcy) Pollard, 17 December 95, in Queensland.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS:

H.G. Bigg-Wither to c/o RDC, Te Kao 0550.
B.R. Edmonds to Island PO Box 3, Cardwell 4816, Australia.
Mrs C.R. Hall to Flat 24, Whitehaven Court, 146 Kolmar Rd, Papatoetoe.
R.A. Harris will be absent from his home address from 7 Dec 95 and from 5 Jan 96 to 21 Feb 96 will be at his daughter's, Mrs J. Reid, Awaroa River Road, Onerahi, Whangarei.
C.J. McIsaac to 5/86 Carruth Rd, Papatoetoe.
Major L.J. Pye to 16B Wither Rd, Blenheim.
Mrs E. Sewell to 5 College Rd, Northcote, Auckland 9.

GONE NO ADDRESS

LAST KNOWN LOC.

E.L. MacLintock	20 Skye Rd, Invercargill
J.A. Breen	35 Orion St, Papakura.
R. Conrad	126 Colchester Drive, Papakura.
SSgt R. Kimi	School of Artillery, Waiouru.

Any member knowing present locations of above please inform Secretary.

NEW MEMBERS:

G211777 D.T. (Donald) Donaldson, PO Box 107, Palmerston North.
R.G. (Bob) Blankley MBE, 38 Holyoake Place, Chatswood,
Birkenhead, Auckland 10 (rejoined)

NEW ZEALAND SERVICE MEDAL 1946-49;

The medal is available to New Zealanders who served with the British commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan between 23 Mar 46 and 31 Mar 49. Application should be made to: Staff Officer (Medals), HQ New Zealand Defence Force, Private Bag, Wellington, and should include Number, unit, surname, forenames, and address. Miniatures are available. The medal is free but miniatures cost \$17, which includes GST and postage.

In the case of applications from the next-of-kin of deceased personnel, details of the relationship should be supplied. The order of relationship is surviving spouse, eldest surviving child, surviving parent, eldest surviving grandchild, eldest surviving brother or sister.

THE VIETNAM SCRAPBOOK - 'The second ANZAC Adventure.'

ISBN: 0-9583484-0-5. Author: Our member Mike Subritzky.

Publisher: Three Feathers Publishing. Cost: \$50 plus \$5 NZ Courierpost.

Note: This is an Official 150th Anniversary project for the NZ Army. The Vietnam Scrapbook is a most historic New Zealand Publication. It has been written to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the New Zealand Army and to acknowledge the 30th Anniversary of the first Artillery round fired by New Zealanders in the Vietnam War.

This publication is a limited edition and has been made to Vietnam Veterans and their families with the remaining copies being made available to libraries and universities.

The Vietnam Scrapbook contains the following historic information:

1. The complete death list of all New Zealanders killed in action.
2. The complete wounded list of New Zealand battle casualties, listing dates, incidents, wounds, outcome etc.
3. The complete (British) New Zealand Honours and Awards list of decorations awarded to New Zealanders in the Vietnam campaign.
4. The complete (South Vietnamese) list of orders and Decorations awarded to New Zealanders during the Vietnam War. This also includes decorations awarded to civilian Red Cross and Nursing Staff.
5. The complete (American) list of decorations awarded to New Zealanders by the American Government during the Vietnam War.
6. The complete nominal roll of all New Zealand service personnel who served in the New Zealand military units posted to active service in the Republic of South Vietnam.
7. The New Zealand Army Calendar during the period 1945-85, which gives a 20 year overlap either side of the Vietnam War.
8. A brief history of the New Zealand Army units that took part in the Vietnam War.
9. A brief history of the New Zealand (civilian) Surgical Team at Quinhon hospital.
10. Over 100 pages of text.
11. Over 200 pages of personal accounts.
12. More than 400 previously unpublished black and white photographs of New Zealanders in action in the Vietnam War.

The Vietnam Scrapbook is the first New Zealand account ever published of this most unpopular war. The book is A4 in size and is hard-covered.

Copies may be obtained by writing to Mike Subritzky, 29 Clyde St, Renwick, Marlborough. They may also be obtained from J.D. (Jeff) Waters 14A Dittmer Place, Papakura, Phone 09/296 2457.

The book is excellent value and I thoroughly recommend it.- Hon. Sec.

HISTORY OF THE R.N.Z.A:

Lieutenant Colonel M.D. (Matt) Beattie RNZA, CO 16 Field Regiment RNZA, writes: "On the history front, having received some advice from General Ron Hassett, General Sir Leonard Thornton and Brigadier Blackie Burns, I have decided to do a number of things:

First, commission a researcher and writer to assemble and produce a comprehensive book on the RNZA, from NZA days last century through to the present. Naturally, documents and books already assembled and published on various campaigns and wars exist, but there is nothing that draws them all together, nothing that tells the Gunners' story in peace as well as war. For your information, the researcher will be based at 16 Fd Regt in Waiouru and will utilise the various libraries and book collections around the country. Should NZPFOCA members wish to donate material or be available for interviewing in 1996, they should write to the 'Gunner Historian,' c/o HQ 16th Field Regiment RNZA, Waiouru 545

Second, the RNZA is to commission three paintings:

Joyce Hankey, 27 Mill Rd, Whangarei, was asked to enter the draw for the ten to go to London for the VJ Parade but felt unable to accept. She is kept fully occupied maintaining the lovely gardens on her very picturesque property.

Captain S.L (Shay) Bassett, Adjutant, 16 Field Regiment, would appreciate information on the wearing of lanyards by RNZA or earlier artillery organisations. Replies to 16 Field Regiment RNZA, Waiouru Camp, Private Bag 1702, Waiouru.

Herb Milne, 1/64 Bentley Ave, Glenfield, Auckland 10, is no longer able to drive, and has had to put his near-new car on sale. Auckland members please note.

Colonel Tom O'Reilly, back in late October from Angola, is now ACGS (Op Army General Staff, Private Bag, Wellington.

Brian Edmonds, Hinchinbrook Island, PO Box 3, Cardwell 4816, Australia, has moved from Tasmania back to the warmth of Queensland. After five years of rain and snow he says his bones needed to thaw out in warm conditions. He has just taken over as General Manager of the Island Resort, at the address above. Brian sends best wishes to all Old Comrad

Did you know Bob Harris is a poet? He has provided us with copies of a number of his poems with permission to reproduce. Watch this space!

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1995: Apologies for non-attendance were received from: RE ATKINS, TJ ARNOTT, A BOYD, AG BLACKWELL, HG BIGG-WITHER, N BENNETTS, SH BRYANT, J BURNS, IRIS BOYTER, LJ BRADY, GW BLANDFORD, Mollie CRICHTON, GM CONNOR, CJC CROOKES, DP DUMBLETON, HG FANTHAM, NV FORBES, F GIBBISON, RDP HASSETT, DR HUGHES, WG HOPKINS, RA HARRIS, HB HONNOR, Joyce HANKEY, EG HIGHT, RG HICKSON, AJ HOLLAND, RHF HOLLOWAY, J O'B HORSFORD, R JAQUES, HL JONES, Kath KITNEY, AN KING, VN MEYLE, JW MONK, EC MORGAN, H MILNE, R NEWTH, RM NUTSFORD, T O'REILLY, LJ PYE, RKG PORTER, AM PETRIE, Sylvia RUDGE, AL ROWSELL, TP SHIRLEY, LJ SKINNER, AS SIMEON, T SWIFT, CWN STANBRIDGE, JF SPRING, June SKILTON, Enid STANDEN, MRG SUBRITZKY, JT TRANSOM, LB TOLSON, AB TUSTIN, GA WEAVER, D WESTON, HW WRIGHT, SD WRIGHT,

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: All serving Officers were re-elected.

SUBSCRIPTION: To remain at \$5. Lady Associates \$2-50.

REUNION DINNER: Unfortunately, our Guest of Honour, Lieutenant Colonel Matt Beattie, was unable to attend owing to the exigencies of the service. The following were present: Harry ANDERSON, Charlie ANNIS, Doug ADAMS, Eric and Patti AUTRIDGE, Shay BASSETT, Bill and Jasmine BEVERIDGE, Barry and Anne CALDER, Matt and Rosalie CRAWLEY, Tom CHAPMAN, Joe FALLO, Ian FOSTER, Leroy FORRESTER, Dan and Dorothy FOLEY, Bill and Emma GILES, JIM GILBERD, Barney HARROP, Curly and Heather HELLYER, Joe HANVEY, Terry HUGHES, Ron and 'Mike' HASSETT, Dave JONES, Bob and Betty KERSLAK, Jack KEARNEY, Frank and Denise LUPO, Bill and Tui MCLEAY, Ian and Rene McLean, Neil and Helen McMAHON, George and Patti MILN, Brian MILLYNN, Bill and Estelle MORLAND, Brian and Tilly MEYER, Harold NICHOLSON, Des and Buntie O'CONNOR, Helen PARKES, Stan and Jean PERRETT, Bill and Joyce POWRIE, Jim and Ruby ROSS, DAVE AND Marie ROBERTS, Ian and Iris ROWNTREE, Rupert and Joyce ROBINSON, Wally RUFFELL, Brett RIGDEN, Bill and Betj's STEPHENSON, Sir Leonard and Lady Ruth THORNTON, Jock TAYLOR, Roger and Jean WYLDE, Bert and Shirley DYSON.

CHURCH PARADE SUNDAY 3 Nov 95: Held in the meeting house, Tiki o te Tamamutu, the parade was very well attended. Our Padre, Bill McLeay officiated, ably assisted by his good lady Tui and by Helen McMahon on the piano generously lent to us by Teresa of the Spa Hotel.

ONE FOR THE ROAD: This year we were fortunate in having Suite 'A' available so our farewell 'session' was rather more comfortable than in 1994. The proceeds of the raffle held on the Saturday paid for all drinks with a bit of cash left over for the 'kitty.'

TO MEMBERS WHO COULD NOT ATTEND: We hope to see you next year. We note there are a few who can no longer drive and who gave this reason for not coming to Taupo in 1995. Such members wishing to attend a reunion in future should contact Secretary in September.

REUNION 1996: Will be held over the weekend 1-2-3 November 1996. Mark these dates on your calendar NOW.

AUCKLAND St BARBARAS DAY SOCIAL 14 Dec 95 was well supported by the following: Patti and Robin AUTRIDGE, Guy BLACKWELL, Iris BOYTER, Allan and Elsie BOYD, Bob BLANKLEY, LEO BRADY, Eric and Joyce BICKERTON, Bert DYSON, Dan and Dorothy FOLEY, Barney HARROP, Ted LILE, Dick MITCHELL, Bill and Estelle MORLAND, Reg NUTSFORD, Harold NICHOLSON, DES AND Buntly O'CONNOR, Red POTTS, Don POTTER, Bill and Joyce POWRIE, Jim and Ruby ROSS, Wally RUFFELL, Ian and Iris ROWNTREE, Henry and Thelma SALT, Ethel SEWELL, Allan Taylor, Graeme WILLIAMS, Les and Joan WILSON, Gordon and Nora WEAVER, Yogi YOUNG. There were three raffle prizes including a bottle of liqueur kindly donated by Iris Boyter, our Assistant Secretary - and all were won by the ladies! The Birkenhead RSA is an ideal venue, very well organised, and with a restaurant which provides excellent meals at very reasonable prices. After all, our Graeme Williams is President!

GUNNER HISTORY: "A 5.9 ARRIVES." Terry TRansom offered the following story some time ago but we postponed publication because the old copier would not make a reasonable copy of the accompanying photo. He says, "Perhaps I could lead up to the story by a small para about our three-month sojourn in Syria, where we had gone from what we thought were silly amphibious manoeuvres in the Canal Zone.

30 Battery were left behind still in Aleppo, while the rest of the Div had gone down to the Baalbek area. We did some manoeuvres, dug gunpits and things in support of our Bn just on the Turkish border. We were later recalled to rejoin the Regiment for further manoeuvres in the Syrian desert towards Damascus. Halfway through it we dashed back to our village of Jdeide a few miles from Baalbek, followed by a rapid packing-up, and away we went - all truck signs covered up - berets turned inside-out so the black diamond couldn't be seen, security etc. On our way through Egypt there were cries of, "Oh Kiwi, you're back! Security?"

We had left Baalbek on 16 Jun 42 to get to Sidi Barrani - 5 days at 300m per day - 200m per day is normally long and 300m obviously longer. Back to Mersa Matruh for some days, where somebody realised that was a trap so we headed back into the desert.

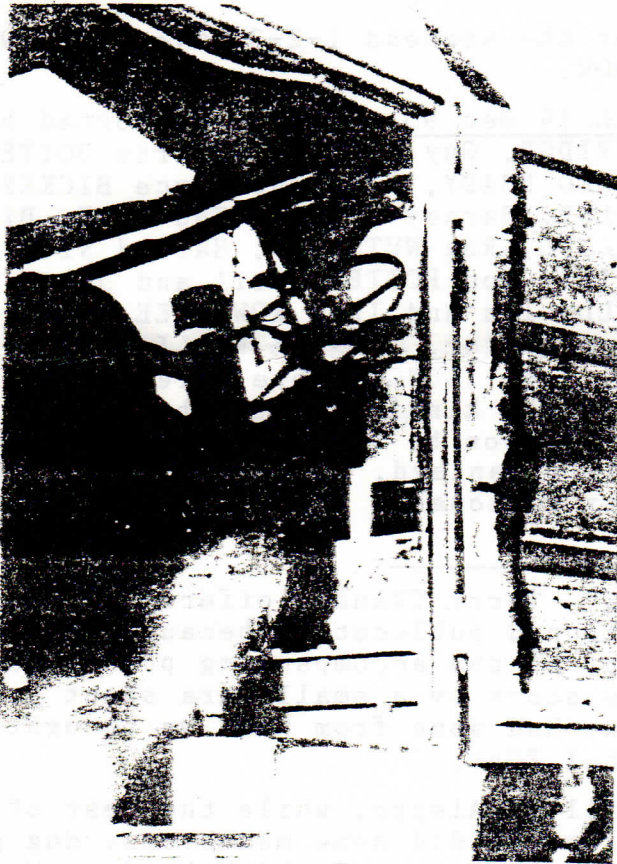
The next day followed one of NZ Div's classic battles adequately reported elsewhere, the confused and piecemeal retreat right back to the Alamein defence line, we were down on the Southern Sector at the Quattara Depression called the 'Kaponga Box.' This line had been prepared a year before. Did they know then?

Then followed a lot of confused manoeuvres and a lot of shooting culminating in the battle of Ruweisat Ridge on 15 July.

After this a semi-static period ensued, desultory shooting and quiet times, heat! flies! and the scorching Khamseen wind, the cool Mediterranean wind in off the sea after one mile across the burning sand became the breath from an oven. But at night, after it had dropped after sunset, in the early hours on piquet you needed your greatcoat. Even the Afrika Korps knew this as near a deserted blown-up 88-mm were discarded Luftwaffe greatcoats; yes, all Jerry AA artillery were Luftwaffe blokes.

During this time at the wagon lines a mile or two back some blokes were

looking at one of the old quads when two from one door and one from the other, feet scrabbling in the air in true slapstick fashion, leapt out, the bloke with his knees all bandaged up with desert sores making the best time of all! Having covered the hundred yards in record time they all turned and looked - there's the old quad still there! A tiptoe gingerly approach followed to reveal a dud 5.9 sitting quietly in the dashboard! Some character later took a snap of it.



Copy of the photo showing the spent dud 5.9 (150-mm) shell where it came to rest in the body of the quad (gun tractor).

Notes: Desert sores: the slightest scratch or abrasion would soon develop into a nasty old sore; everyone had them, one theory being that the desert dust contained aeons-old infections. Another was that it was a type of scurvy as we not had fresh tucker for months.

Duds: A great number of his larger calibres were duds, apparently made at Skoda Werk, an assembler leaving the detonator out of the fuze. Rumour was they later caught the poor Czech, and the firing squad stopped that.

COMMITTEE MEETING: The next meeting will be held in the main lounge, Birkenhead RSA at 1000 hrs Saturday 10 February 1996. Non-committee members are welcome to attend.

THE SMOOTH BORE ERA 1550-1860;

PROPELLANT CHARGE: (Continued from Newsletter No 86).))

Corned powder, considered upon its introduction to be 30% more powerful than serpentine, was said to have been first produced by the French in 1429. It was first used only in small arms, and does not appear to have been used in ordnance until much later, c. 1560 in England, by which time guns were strong enough to stand it.

Still using 'rule of thumb' Gunners continued to make charge weight the same as shot weight - with some very rude shocks when a number of the older guns blew up! Charges of corned powder were therefore reduced to two thirds those of serpentine, and Table 2 shows further reductions to about half, especially with the heavier pieces.

As experiments with proportions of ingredients and improvements in manufacture proceeded it was found charges could be still further reduced to produce the desired effect. Thus at the end of the smooth bore era they were down to a third the shot weight.

CARTRIDGES:

For some two centuries the propellant charge of gunpowder was loaded

by means of a ladle designed for the gun in use, but the correct filling of which was left entirely to the judgment of the loader. Therefore the chances of consistent shooting can easily be imagined.

Eventually Gunners realised the problem could be overcome by weighing the charges and enclosing them in bags of some combustible material. Cartridges of linen or paper were being used in England in 1560, and of canvas in 1563. By 1800 flannel began to be employed, followed a little later by serge. The search for a material which would be completely consumed on firing is why so many different materials were tried. Not only did residue from unburnt cartridge bags tend to clog up both bore and vent, but it often remained smouldering after the gun had fired, thus creating a dangerous situation not always corrected by sponging the bore - as not a few one-armed Gunners in those days could testify.

Flannel and serge were the most effective materials but the problem was not entirely solved until the adoption of silk for blank in 1868, and in 1875 for live. Shalloon, a type of coarse silk, was adopted later.

LENGTH AND WEIGHT OF GUNS:

With the heavy charges of slow-burning serpentine powder first used guns had to be long to ensure the propellant charge was all burnt before the shot left the bore. Even then variations in loading conditions and in the quality of the powder caused much of it to be wasted.

But long guns were not only difficult to load, they were also heavy. At the start of the era field and siege artillery were coming into their own with a demand for mobility, for guns which could be easily handled, and which required a minimum number of men and horses to move them. As a result many experiments were carried out; we find for example that a 5.5-inch culverin of 28 calibres length in Table 1 by 1646 had been shortened to 22 calibres.

A typical experiment carried out in the early 1700s involved shortening a gun by sawing off a calibre's length at a time while progressively reducing the propellant charge, testing the result by firing the gun at a bank of earth, and measuring the distance penetrated by the shot. Thus we find in 1760 the successor to the 5.5-inch culverin, the 5.824-in 24-pr to be 19 calibres in length and achieving a satisfactory penetration with eight pounds of corned powder.

But knowledge gained from tests took many years to be put into effect because pieces of ordnance, especially in the Colonies, were expected to last anything up to a century. In New Zealand we had SBML 24-prs made in 1813-14 on coast defence stations up to at least 1893!

Note that the design length of a SBML gun was the distance from the rear of the base ring to the face of the muzzle, not the overall length. See Fig. 54.

WINDAGE:

Windage is generally taken to be the difference between the diameters of bore and projectile. Some windage was necessary in SBML guns to avoid dangerous shot start pressures and to enable loading to be easily carried out against accumulation of fouling from poor powder, but excessive windage caused inaccuracy as well as loss of MV. The spherical projectile bounced its way along the bore, the final bounce at the muzzle determining its direction and angle of departure, both of which varied with each round!

Once again, for want of any guide, windage was at first arbitrarily set at a quarter inch (6.35 mm) for all natures, an amount still in vogue in the 17th century. Gunners who realised the amount was excessive tried to have it reduced, and quoted the superior performance of French guns in which windage was 20% less. However, they were opposed by authorities who ruled that windage must exceed the thickness of the loaders' ladles in order that guns might be unloaded. When Gunners pointed out that on

the rare occasion a gun was found loaded at the end of a practice it might instead be cleared by firing the authorities were outraged. How dare such waste be perpetrated merely for the sake of accuracy!

Another excuse for not reducing windage was the liberal tolerances allowed in manufacture not only of bore diameter but also of shot diameter, e.g. if the bore ended up at the lower figure and the shot at the higher, the powers-that-be argued that windage might be reduced to a dangerous level.

John Muller, in his Treatise of Artillery, 1757, recommended windage be no more than one twenty-fourth the shot diameter, but no one took any notice of him.

As the years rolled by common sense eventually prevailed until by 1828 windage had been reduced to one thirtieth the shot diameter, or less in some cases. Records indicate that while no great increase in range resulted, a significant improvement in accuracy took place.

TRUNNIONS:

When trunnions were first invented c. 1450 they were placed with their axis at right angles to the axis of the bore, the logical place for the one would have thought. Then someone noted that when a gun fired it tended to rock up and down as in those days it had no elevating gear to hold it in place, or possibly breech preponderance was insufficient. Some mathematical genius thereupon calculated that if the axis of the trunnions was placed at right angles to the bottom of the bore, forces generated by the gun firing would hold the breech down. How right he was.

Not only were breeches well and truly held down, for the next 300 years Gunners were plagued by cracked or broken trails on field pieces or bed on garrison or naval guns. Furthermore, the same forces acting on the wedge-shaped quoin used for applying elevation or depression often caused it to be violently ejected to the rear, to the discomfort of any hapless Gunner who happened to be in its way!

The same genius, to bolster his case, also claimed that trunnions with their axis aligned with the bottom of the bore formed a stronger union with the piece, a claim refuted by John Muller in the same treatise already mentioned. Muller's recommendation that trunnions be returned to their original position was ignored, one of the reasons which led him to remark, "Our veneration for old customs is so great that whoever attempts to make any change is looked upon with contempt, let his reason be ever so plain and good..." Not until the middle of the 19th century was the Board of Ordnance finally convinced that the best place for trunnions was where the gunmakers of 1450 put them!

ELEVATING GEAR:

the elevating screw was invented in 1578, but not until 1760 was it adopted to any extent. Even then the Navy turned it down; they said it was too slow, and persisted with the quoin or wedge until the 19th century.

To be fair, manufacture was difficult because the screw-cutting lathe had not been invented, and was not to appear for another 200 years.

Screws were usually designed to elevate the gun, say one degree, with a single turn, and were a great success in field artillery. Like the Navy Garrison Gunners retained the quoin until quite late in the 19th century.

To be continued.