

NEW ZEALAND PERMANENT FORCE OLD COMRADES ASSN INC

September 1986

NEWSLETTER No 51

A registered publication

LAST POST: 1788 J. (Jack) Colclough, 5 Aug 86, at Sydney.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS: D.F. Barkle to Tangowahine Valley Rd, RD2, Dargaville.

Capt J.E. Fitzgerald to 32 Chapman St, Invercargill.

Capt E.R. Hancock to 12 Denise Cres, Hornby, Christchurch.

Major J.S. Heard to c/o HQ LF Comd, Private Bag, Takapuna.

P. Hickey to c/o D. Bowman, 110 Manapouri St, Maia, Dunedin.

M.J. Hellyer to Puketutu Island (Box 13 106, Onehunga).

I.M. Meikle to 5/609 Fergusson Drive, Upper Hutt.

Lt Col R.J.S. Munro to 42 Sefton St, Wadestown, Wellington.

W.N. McLeod to Unit 1, 10 Ralgar Rd, Henderson, Auckland 8.

Capt R. Newth to A4/23 Rangitane St, Manupua, Wellington 3.

Major D. Rollo MBE to 11 Golf Rd, Paraparaumu.

RESIGNATION: Raai'd D.F. Pollard, SAF Retired; received with regret.

STRUCK OFF STRENGTH FOR FAILURE TO PAY DUES: Ashworth SA; The W; Jones WN.

NEW MEMBERS: 35146 L.G. (Les) Byers, 1018 Bledisloe St, Hastings.

32080 Major L.J. (Les) Pye, 16 Cambrian St, Churton Pk, Johnsonville.

31273 L.H. (Laurie) Clark, Freeling-Holt House, 9A Mawson Ave,

Torbay, Auckland 10 (Associate Member).

1922 L.H. (Laurie) Humphries, 76 Onerahi Rd, Whangarei.

GONE NO ADDRESS:

LAST KNOWN ADDRESS:

Lt Col C.C. Stewart OBE

144 Broderick St, Johnsonville.

Capt T.C. Hynes

11 Tawa St, Hamilton.

Lt P.E. Schweder

14A Tuivale Rd, Cockle Bay, Howick.

Major T.G. Roche

HQ Sup Comd, Linton Camp.

AMENDMENT TO NEWSLETTER No 50: Last paragraph of Chapter IX: Delete 1976, substitute 1972.

FROM AROUND AND ABOUT: The Executive wish to thank all those who have written expressing appreciation of the Newsletters, and also those who promptly paid their subscriptions when billed.

Vic Loader writes from Dunedin that he can no longer travel, has not been away from Dunedin for the last five years, and would love a phone call or visit from any member passing through, especially a member of 14 Wing, RNZA. Phone 34406 Dunedin.

Johnny Meikle has had to give up his big garden and orchard and move into a town house again on Doctors' orders, but hopes to get to Taupo for the reunion.

Bert Dyson, who recently attended a reunion of CMT Trainees organised by the Army Assn at New Plymouth reports attendances as follows: for the 'get-together' 200-300; for the cabaret evening 600; for the church parade approx 300. That after a lapse of 30 years or more so many of these 'boys' (not a few of whom are now grey or bald), came together to recall old times in khaki is truly remarkable. There is a lesson here.

Further to the story of the petard and the Petardier, Harry Dudfield reminds us that '.... this forerunner of the limpet mine was well-known to Shakespeare, who in 1604 wrote his immortal 'Hamlet' including the lines:



'For 'tis the sport, to have the engineer  
Hoist with his own petard; and it shall go hard,  
But I will delve one yard below their mines,  
And blow them to the moon.'

Congratulations to Jack Baigent on his being recently presented with a life-membership badge and certificate for outstanding service to the RSA.

Curly and Heather Hellyer are now living on Puketutu Island, where Curly is employed by Sir Henry Kelliher as his gardener.

John Horsford reports that life on the farm is tough. He nearly sent us two old ewes in lieu of subscription!

Frank Rennie has just had published a book 'Regular Soldier' (A life in the NZ Army). We look forward to reading it.

Alex (Farouk) McDonald still having problems with his 'ticker' but he and his good lady are still able to enjoy the usual three-monthly winter vacation in Fiji.

Colin Young, our Canterbury Rep, who is a restorer of old ordnance, collector, model-builder etc of some note, recently put on a display including morning tea at his home. Some 50 members of the local Gunners Association attended, and all enjoyed themselves.

Colin is now organising regular meetings of NZPFOCA Members on the second Tuesday of the month at the Christchurch RSA. The following attended the last: Sandy Bissett, Ginna Hunter, Sel Bryant, Joff Adams, Jack Bingham, G. Forrester, Colin Young. Jim McMorran. He will also be organising a reunion later in the year. Get in touch with him; his phone number is: 898 006 Chch.

Hon Sec visited Lionel and Joyce Hankey at Whangarei recently, and tried to contact others in the area but had trouble with the phone. Lionel and Joyce still have the best garden in the city, but Hank has to take things easy owing to 'ticker' trouble. Joyce recently won a brand-new Toyota Corolla car, for which congratulations from all of us are in order.

Jim Hill has just had an operation for varicose veins - in his good leg, not the wooden one!

Phil Monk reports that his good lady, Olive, is bravely trying to overcome the effects of a massive stroke. We all sincerely hope she is successful.

Lofty Bigg-Wither from away up in the winterless north has sent us some interesting photographs of training scenes in Trentham and Waiouru, plus two very interesting books, 'How to Make Nuclear Weapons Obsolete' by Robert Jastrow, and 'The War Atlas' by Michael Kidron and Dan Smith. Many thanks, Lofty; they will make excellent additions to our library.

Lionel Hankey also has sent us 'The Road past Mandalay' by John Masters (British Army), an interesting personal account of the war in Burma 1945-45. Thank you, Lionel.

The last-named book is similar in content to 'Beyond the Chindwin' by the late Sir Bernard Fergusson, a copy of which we also have. Any member wishing to borrow these books may do so by arrangement with Secretary. A full list will be published in the December Newsletter.

Pat Shepherd, who lives at Howick, sends regards to all his contemporaries.



TATTOO: No doubt you have seen this word in Routine Orders more times than you care to remember. While realising it had nothing to do with body adornment, have you ever wondered how the term originated, and how it came to be part of Army routine?

Authorities are not unanimous on how and when the word originated, but the following explanation is generally accepted: during the 1689-97 campaign in the low countries it was the custom to cease active operations in the late autumn, at which time the opposing armies went into winter quarters in the towns and villages near the front. In the evenings the majority of the troops adjourned to local hostleries, and to get them back to their billets it was necessary to order the publicans to stop selling liquor. Therefore, between 9-30 and 10-00 pm, they were warned by a Drummer beating a 'call' through the area. On hearing the drum the publicans would remark, 'Doe den tap toe,' which translated literally from the Dutch of those days meant 'Put the taps to,' i.e. 'turn them off.'

For many years the words 'tap toe' were used to denote the call, but variations in spelling eventually led to the word 'tattoo' being adopted.

As 'tattoo' occurred between 2130 and 2200 hrs, by 1884 this period came to be marked by the trumpet or bugle calls 'First Post' at 2130, and 'Last Post' at 2200. 'Lights Out' followed at 2215.

As 'Last Post' signals the end of the soldier's day and instructs him to prepare for sleep, so the same call sounded at his graveside heralds his final and eternal rest.

Instead of 'Last Post' our American colleagues, who share with us a common heritage, sound 'Taps.'

## THE NEW ZEALAND PERMANENT FORCE OLD COMRADES ASSN

### A SHORT HISTORY

By W.L. Ruffell

#### CHAPTER X

#### REUNIONS

Annual reunions have been held every year since the Association's formation, in both Auckland and Wellington branches until World War II, and subsequently by the national body.

For many years these functions took the form of 'smoke concerts' or 'stag parties,' i.e. they were organised for men only, and always held in the evening. Members provided their own entertainment with songs, anecdotes, humorous items etc.

No less than 149 members attended the first, held in 1934 at Auckland, some having travelled from as far afield as Taranaki, the Waikato, Bay of Plenty, and Wellington. Among those who gave items were Tom Power, virtual founder of the Association, and W. Delaney who was a Trumpeter at Orakau in 1864!

Toasts honoured that night included the Armed Constabulary Force and Police and Prisons Departments. In proposing the toast to the AC the President, Major General Sir George Richardson, spoke of the many fine qualities possessed by its Officers, NCOs and Constables from whom came the foundation members of the New Zealand Permanent Force. Ex-Superintendent C. Hendry and Mr A. Julian both replied on



behalf of the Armed Constabulary while Commissioner W.G. Wohlmann (a Vice-President of the Association), and Superintendent Dickison replied on behalf of the Police and Prisons Departments respectively.

During the 19th and early 20th centuries direct transfers from the Permanent Force to the Police and Prisons were quite common. Hence the Association numbered many serving or retired Policemen or Prison Officers among its members, including some who attained high office in their respective services, and who also served the Association with distinction. However, such transfers were actively discouraged by the military authorities, and eventually stopped. To-day our membership includes a mere handful of serving or retired Policemen.

The cost of attending a reunion prior to World War II is quite illuminating. Members attending the 1939 national reunion in Wellington each paid three shillings (30c). Of this amount 1/3 (12c) was spent on supper, and the remainder on liquor, supplies of which were augmented by donations solicited by the 'Cadgers' Committee' (see Chapter V). The small outlay by individuals enabled even the poorest to enjoy a convivial evening.

Prices steadily increased during the war, and by 1946 the cost had risen to 7/6 (75c). This was still a very reasonable figure, but certain aspects began to annoy the younger generation, numbers of whom were now joining the Association.

At the first post-war reunion in Wellington attended by the writer in 1947, the Association hierarchy and sundry non-paying guests (most of whom were senior Officers), sat at the 'top' table drinking whisky, while lesser folk - who had all paid the prescribed entrance fee - were given beer. Older members seemed to accept this thoughtless discrimination, but the younger thought it totally unbecoming of an institution claiming to be an association of comrades. Some have never attended another reunion.

Bitterness crept in in other directions also. Not all the speeches eulogised the Royal Regiment. On one occasion a member stated he had served for 15 years before being promoted Bombardier, but after transferring to the NZ Permanent Staff only a fraction of that time before being commissioned. When he called the RNZA a 'dead-loss' outfit (among other things), a number of the ancients there present walked out, but none of the moderns. The latter, most of whom had recently returned from active service to sub-standard conditions at Fort Dorset - and who had just had ten years 'knocked off' their retiring age - found it difficult to disagree.

Another factor which did little to encourage younger members to attend reunions was the exclusion of the ladies from the Association's activities - except to prepare supper for committee meetings. Of the younger members not already married many were contemplating marriage, and 'stag' parties, while still popular with them, were frowned upon to some extent by their partners - with the inevitable result.

A social held in Auckland in 1969 to which the ladies were invited was very successful. Possibly the Executive took the hint, for at the presentation of the NZAC Plaque at Taupo in 1970, and at a further function there in 1971 both members and wives were invited to attend.

However, change came slowly. In 1972, the year the national reunion venue was switched from Wellington to Taupo, the ladies were invited to accompany their partners, but were not invited to the



Saturday night dinner, the principal function of the week-end. Twenty-seven members attended, but only 13 ladies.

The following year saw the ladies fully integrated into the proceedings (except for the Annual General Meeting during which other entertainment was arranged for them). Thirty-nine members and 26 ladies attended, after which the Executive 'got the message.'

In 1974 occurred a slight drop in attendance, attributed to the cost involved in travelling to Taupo annually, as well as the difficulty in some cases in obtaining leave. Certain members of the Executive were thereby prompted to recommend reunions be held every second year, but fortunately advocates of the annual event won the day, leaving the choice 'to attend or not attend' to the individual. Theirs was the correct decision, for although some attend in alternate years, every year one sees new faces, and overall the attendance has slowly increased. In 1985 it numbered 58 members and 45 ladies.

The reasons for selecting Taupo as the reunion venue in 1972 were as follows: firstly, attendance at Wellington reunions had been falling off, secondly Taupo is in the middle of the North Island where the great majority of our members live, and thirdly Taupo and the Spa Hotel in particular have an important place in our history through their early association with the New Zealand Armed Constabulary.

Our selecting of Taupo is not to say we have our South Island comrades, but as everyone knows it is impossible to satisfy every individual in a membership which stretches from North Cape to the Bluff. For those who cannot make the trip north, our Canterbury/Westland/Nelson Rep is ably organising reunions in Christchurch with assistance from Headquarters.

Annual reunions are now planned to cover a week-end; the main items are a 'get-together' at the Taupo RSA late Friday afternoon, the AGM at 1000 hrs Saturday morning, dinner at 1900 Saturday night, and church parade 1000 Sunday morning. Thus there is ample time for sight-seeing, rag-chewing etc.

Saturday's proceedings are held in the Taupo Senior Citizens Association premises, a fine modern building in which 200 can comfortably sit down to dinner.

The church parade, which concludes the formal portion of the reunion, is held in the lounge of the Spa Hotel, an old Maori meeting house itself of great historical interest. This building, which is protected by Act of Parliament, will be described in a later chapter.

At earlier reunions the church parade was held at the Opepe Military Cemetery, where in 1869 a Bay of Plenty Cavalry escort was surprised by a party of Te Kooti's warriors, an action wrongly described by historians as a 'massacre.' The site was at first considered appropriate for a service of remembrance because some AC men had been buried there after the so-called massacre. However, our present Patron recommended that we move to the Spa in deference to the feelings of our Maori members. To those interested in New Zealand's early history Opepe is well worth a visit. It lies on the Taupo-Napier highway about 18 km from Taupo, and is well sign-posted.

There is one more important 'point to note:' at reunions to-day those who drink whisky pay for whisky, those who drink beer pay for beer. At the dinner there is still a 'top' table - but the rule is BYO.



If you are one of those who has yet to attend a reunion at Taupo do so now. You will be assured of a most interesting and entertaining week-end - and you will see old comrades you have not seen for years. Many of the same members attend year after year and still find the experience enjoyable. Hang the cost; you can't take it with you!

To be continued.

LANCE-BOMBARDIER: After the rank of Bombardier replaced that of Corporal in the Artillery in 1920 there still remained the 'lance-striper' to be given a title. Because he was equal in status to a Lance-Corporal in other arms of the service, he was called 'Lance-Bombardier.'

Why were these ranks prefixed by the word 'lance?' The origin of the rank 'Lance-Corporal' appears to go back over 300 years when mounted men-at-arms in the Army came from the monied classes of society. According to Sir James Turner in his work Pallas Armata (published in 1653), a Lance-Corporal was originally called a 'Lance Spezzato,' from the Italian word 'spezzato' meaning 'broken.' He was a trooper who having broken his lance and lost his horse in action, was entertained by a Captain of Foot until he could re-arm himself and obtain a remount.

From being a Captain's companion he was in the course of time downgraded to Corporal's assistant.

THE 'SCREW GUN': The gun made 'famous' by Kipling's poem 'The Screw Guns' was the RML (rifled muzzle-loading) 2.5-in (63.5 mm) jointed mountain gun which fired a 7-lb (3.17 kg) shell. For easy portability the piece was made in two parts which screwed together, hence the name.

It was adopted by the Royal Artillery in 1879, and continued in service throughout the South African War. It was not adopted by the New Zealand Forces. The gun performed satisfactorily according to 19th century standards, but there was nothing remarkable about it.

Kipling may have made the gun 'famous' to readers of his poem, but it was far from popular with the unfortunate Gunners who manned it in South Africa. Although cordite had been introduced in 1891 cartridges for the 'screw gun' were still filled with gunpowder, which produced clouds of white smoke making concealment from view impossible. Since open sights were the only means of laying provided, the layer had to be able to see his target, so cover from fire was also virtually impossible to achieve. Thus Boer riflemen made excellent practice on gun positions.

So while some find Kipling's poem inspiring others find it nauseating.

LATE CHANGES OF ADDRESS: Tawhiwhi Brown to 12 Manuka Rd, Blackpool, Waiheke Island, Hauraki Gulf.  
R.M. Urquhart to 30 Rata St, Waikeanae.  
Major J. Wasson to 9 Biscay Place, Connifer Grove, Papakura. Major Wasson has returned from NZ Force SEA and is posted to Papakura Camp as Commandant.

GONE NO ADDRESS: WO1 H.J. Maccorn, previously OCS, Portsea.



NEW ZEALAND PERMANENT FORCE OLD COMRADES ASSN INCPO BOX 33710, TAKAPUNA, AUCKLAND 9ANNUAL REUNION 14-16 NOV 86 at TAUPUPROGRAMME: Friday 14 Nov 86: March in; 1630 hrs drinks at Taupo RSA, Horomatangi St.

Saturday: 1000 hrs: Annual General Meeting at Taupo Senior Citizens Assn, Storey Place, adjacent Library/Museum.

1830 hrs: Pre-dinner drinks at Taupo Senior Citizens Assn.

1900 hrs: Reunion dinner: DRESS: Gentlemen uniform as appropriate, or lounge suit. Ladies semi-formal. Medals and decorations to be worn; with lounge suit miniatures or full-sized permissible.WINE: BYO; may be purchased at wholesale rates from Spa Wholesale, who will label bottles with buyers' names, place in cooler if required, and deliver to dining room at 1830 hrs, SO bring corkscrew - or get a bottle with screw top. Wine Stewards cost an extra \$1 a head.Sunday: 1000 hrs: Church Parade in Spa Hotel Lounge; medals to be worn. After Church Parade 'one for the road' in Suite 'B'.Saturday and Sunday afternoons are free. See overleaf for further information.REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

Please detach and return to reach Secretary at address shown above no later than 31 October 86.

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

I will be accompanied by . . . . . (include first name)

I require/do not require accom. at the Spa Hotel from .....to.....

Enclosed is cheque for \$ ..... to cover . . . . . for dinner.

Please delete sections NOT applicable.

To those attending and requesting accommodation at the Spa Hotel, I will let you know if you are successful or otherwise. Any questions? My phone number is 453 567 Auckland. Looking forward to seeing you.

Best regards,

*Wally Russell*



ACCOMMODATION: a. General: There is plenty of accommodation in Taupo during November, which is one of the reasons we hold the reunion during that month. Also, reduced rates are often available.

b. Spa Hotel: We have booked all available accommodation, which owing to alterations does not include rooms 1 to 7. Competition will therefore be keen. If you want a room at the Spa reply NOW! Tar iff will be \$22-50 a head bed and breakfast plus 10% GST.

c. Acapulco Motel: (4-star ), 19 Rifle Range Rd, Box 347, Taupo, Phone 87174, we recommend. Make your own bookings; 10% discount to RSA members. Tariff \$35-40 single, \$46-55 twin or double. Add GST.

d. Lake Establishment: Cnr Tongariro and Tuwharetoa Sts, Phone 86 165. Tariff \$25-38 single, \$45 double or twin. Add GST. Cobb & Co meals. Five minute walk from Senior Citizens Assn - where we have dinner.

e. Army Motel units: Instructions for booking were issued in last Newsletter.

WHAT ITS GOING TO COST YOU: The dinner will cost you \$17 a head, which includes GST. Please forward cheque for dinner to Secretary as requested overleaf. Do not send any money for accommodation, but settle with establishment concerned. The 'one for the road' after the Church Parade is FREE!. Don't miss it.

REMINDER: Make accommodation bookings through Secretary FOR SPA HOTEL ONLY. For all other establishments deal direct.

#### REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

Please detach and return to reach Secretary at address shown above no later than 31 October 86.

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

I will be accompanied by . . . . . (include first name)

I require/do not require accom. at the Spa Hotel from . . . . . to . . . . .

Enclosed is cheque for \$ . . . . . to cover . . . . . for dinner.

Please delete sections NOT applicable.

To those attending and requesting accommodation at the Spa Hotel, I

will let you know if you are successful or otherwise. Any questions?

My phone number is 452 567 Auckland. Looking forward to seeing you.

Best regards,

*Murray Lippell*