

1942.

NEW ZEALAND.

**MILITARY FORCES OF NEW ZEALAND.**

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING.

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.***REPORT.**

The Hon. the Minister of Defence.

Wellington, 21st July, 1942.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the following report on the New Zealand Military Forces for the period 1st June, 1941, to 31st May, 1942.

**GENERAL REMARKS.**

Prior to the entry of Japan into the war, on the 7th December, 1941, the Army activities in New Zealand were principally directed to providing reinforcements for our forces overseas and maintaining the efficiency of our home forces at as high a level as possible in readiness for any deterioration in the international situation.

With the entry of Japan into the war the Pacific became a theatre of war, and the New Zealand Army had to be prepared to meet enemy action. New Zealand's claims for equipment were accordingly advanced to a high order of priority, and the quantities of equipment required were vastly increased.

The whole defence situation in New Zealand was rapidly reviewed, and immediate steps were taken to mobilize the whole of the Territorial Force and to strengthen our garrisons in the Pacific Islands.

The raising of additional units and expansion of others were also undertaken, and this process is still proceeding.

The undesirability of disclosing—possibly to the enemy—details of the equipment situation led to the obvious deficiencies in the equipment of the Home Guard being accepted by the public as an indication of the state of the Army as a whole. This was far from being the case, but during the first few months after mobilization the equipment available had of necessity to be issued to the mobilized forces, and little indication could be given at that stage as to what issues would be made to the Home Guard. Latterly however, the equipment situation has improved beyond expectations, with a consequent improvement so far as the Home Guard is concerned.

The Home Guard was instituted as a civil organization, but is now an integral and important part of the Army. Its requirements in equipment for such very large numbers were quite beyond the capacity of the country to provide, but the arrival of equipment from abroad and a considerable increase in local production are now leading to appreciable results.

For reasons of security this report has been compiled on broad lines, details of equipment and names of places and Commanders, which might be of help to an enemy, having been omitted.

**MOBILIZATION AND REORGANIZATION OF THE TERRITORIAL FORCES.**

Early in 1942 the Territorial Force was mobilized and is now on a complete war footing.

Units of the National Military Reserve have been incorporated into the Territorial Force and mobilized.

## EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND STAFF COLLEGE.

In order to overcome a deficiency in trained staff officers a Staff College was established in October, 1941. An officer was made available from India to establish this College, and assumed the appointment of Commandant. Two courses had been completed by the end of the year.

## ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE OF AUSTRALIA.

There are at present twenty-six New Zealand cadets attending the Royal Military College of Australia.

## TRAINING IN NEW ZEALAND: ARMoured FIGHTING VEHICLES SCHOOL.

An Armoured Fighting Vehicles School was formed with an officer of the Royal Tank Corps from the Middle East as Commandant. The instructors consist of officers and non-commissioned officers who have had actual experience of the operations of armoured fighting vehicles in modern war.

## ARMY SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION.

The Army School of Instruction has continued to be of the greatest value in training non-commissioned officers for commissioned rank and in the specialist training of technical units. Instructors required for the Home Guard were given a month's intensive course of training when the Home Guard was transferred to the control of the Army.

## DISTRICT SCHOOLS.

District Schools of Instruction have been fully employed undertaking courses for personnel of Territorial units. In addition, these schools undertook the instruction of non-commissioned officers for commissions in the Territorial Force at a stage when the capacity of the Army School in this respect was not sufficient for the number of new officers required. Courses for officers and N.C.O.s of the Home Guard cover many subjects. Between four thousand five hundred and five thousand members of the Home Guard passed through district schools during the year.

## PERSONNEL RETURNED FROM NEW ZEALAND EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.

The necessity for the presence of instructors with recent active-service experience has been met by the return of some three hundred members from the New Zealand Expeditionary Force. These officers and N.C.O.s have in the main been placed in staff appointments or posted as instructors in our various schools and training establishments; some, however, have been given command of formations and units in the Territorial Force. Their recent experience of modern war will undoubtedly have a marked effect on the readiness for war of the Territorial Force.

## TRAINING OF NEW ZEALAND EXPEDITIONARY FORCE PERSONNEL.

Drafts of reinforcements for the New Zealand Expeditionary Force have been trained and despatched during the year in sufficient numbers to ensure that an adequate reserve of man-power is available to the New Zealand Forces overseas.

## TRAINING OF MOBILIZED FORCES.

A concentration early in the year of Territorial units for manœuvres laid a sound basis for more intensive and prolonged training on mobilization.

An intensive course of one month's recruit training in which bare essentials only were taught has been tried with gratifying results. This period of one month is the absolute minimum necessary to render a civilian useful in the ranks.

## TRAINING IN THE HOME GUARD.

With the availability of equipment and qualified instructors provided by the Army, training in the Home Guard has made great strides during the period since 1st August last. Every facility to the capacity available after meeting the demands of the Territorial Force has been provided at schools of instruction for training of Home Guard personnel. The Home Guard is now regarded as a most valuable part of the Army in New Zealand, and both War Office and New Zealand training manuals, pamphlets, and other publications are issued to the Home Guard on the same scale as to Territorial Force units. With the rapidly improved position as regards equipment and instruction, I feel justified in saying that the Home Guard is now an organization which will render an excellent account of itself should the war extend to these shores.

## TRAINING OF CADETS.

With the maintenance of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force overseas and the mobilization, training, and equipment of forces for home defence as the main preoccupation of the Army it is natural that the attention given to the training of Cadets has of necessity been curtailed to a large extent. At the same time the efforts of the officers concerned, who are in the main masters at secondary schools, have given gratifying results. At most schools five days' continuous training in the form of barracks was carried out in the early part of the calendar year.

### SCHOOL OF ARTILLERY.

Courses of instruction in artillery subjects were formerly undertaken by the Army School. With the very considerable expansion in artillery of all natures it was no longer possible to carry out this instruction as a wing of this school. In consequence a school of artillery has been opened with three wings—field, anti-aircraft, and coast artillery.

### ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY.

Until recently New Zealand was very deficient in anti-aircraft artillery, and in consequence there are no officers available thoroughly conversant with this type of artillery. Arrangements have therefore been made for the loan from the British Army of officers and N.C.O.s not only to command, but to give instruction in this important type of artillery.

### PERSONNEL.

Arrangements are proceeding to make considerable use of Home Guard personnel and women for many of the duties connected with manning of guns and anti-aircraft artillery. This procedure, which applies, of course, only to static artillery, is in line with what is being done in the United Kingdom.

### MAPPING AND SURVEY.

A long-term programme of mapping had been embarked upon before the outbreak of war, but it was obvious with the increasing threat to New Zealand that this programme was not adequate. With the comparatively limited resources available, the Lands and Survey Department has done everything possible to accelerate the production of maps, and the position is steadily improving.

### MEDICAL.

The health of the troops during the year has been good. Epidemic diseases, though rather heavy in some camps, have been mild in severity. The main epidemics have been influenza and mumps.

The daily incidence of admission to hospital for the whole Dominion has been 2.68 per 1,000, which, taking into account that men are admitted to hospital for ailments which in civil life would be treated in the home, can be considered as most satisfactory.

A Sick and Wounded Section established under the Adjutant-General controls sick and wounded personnel who leave their units, whether in New Zealand or overseas. Besides controlling these personnel in their progress through hospitals, this Section arranges their Medical Boards and final disposal according to their ultimate grading.

### DENTAL.

The New Zealand Dental Corps undertakes the dental treatment of all members of the armed forces. An idea of the work of this section can be formed from the following summary of the work done for service personnel during the past year: Fillings, 179,524; extractions, 67,705; other treatments, 17,244; full dentures, 5,579; partial dentures, 3,011; dentures remodelled or repaired, 10,183.

### EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN.

During the year women were enlisted in the Army for service in New Zealand and overseas. They were recruited from the New Zealand Women's War Service Auxiliary, and divided into three divisions:—

- (a) New Zealand W.W.S.A. (Overseas Hospital Division):
- (b) New Zealand W.W.S.A. (Overseas Welfare Division):
- (c) New Zealand W.W.S.A. (Army Home Service Division).

The Overseas Hospital Division consists of a Nursing Section and a Clerical Section. The Nursing Section is comprised of V.A.s selected from members of either the New Zealand Red Cross Society or the Order of St. John who have completed at least sixty hours hospital experience. The Clerical Section is comprised of qualified shorthand-typists with general office experience.

The Overseas Welfare Division is comprised of women for welfare work, and includes canteen and clerical workers. They are used primarily for the New Zealand Forces Club.

The Army Home Service Division is comprised of women employed as clerks, cooks, waitresses, kitchen hands, and in duties similar to those performed by both the overseas divisions. The number of women employed in this division is restricted owing to lack of accommodation and other amenities in camps, &c. As these difficulties are overcome the number will increase.

### ARMS: AMMUNITION AND EQUIPMENT.

*Small-arms Ammunition.*—The supply of .303 small-arms ammunition is in a satisfactory position.

*Camp Equipment.*—Mobilization and a very considerable expansion have necessitated very heavy demands for all classes of camp equipment. A great deal has been and is being supplied from local sources, but of necessity many items have had to be ordered overseas. The position is fast improving.

*Equipment: General.*—No effort has been spared to obtain our requirements from the United Kingdom, United States of America, Australia, Canada, and other parts of the Empire, and the deliveries from those sources of supply have been very substantial.

*Ordnance Workshops.*—The Ordnance Workshops are responsible for the initial handling of all coast defence guns, field artillery and A.A. guns, and the highly technical equipment which goes with them, and for their regular maintenance and overhaul.

All gun equipments and other technical equipment have to be carefully inspected and adjusted before issue to units, and this work requires skilled tradesmen and artificers. In addition, the necessary overhauls of existing equipments have been heavy and frequent owing to the increased use of them.

*Armourers.*—A new Armourers' Workshop has been completed and handed over by the contractor.

*Uniforms and Clothing.*—During the year the change-over from service-dress to battle-dress for the Territorial Force has been effected. This change-over released a considerable quantity of service-dress clothing, which, after dry cleaning and repair, was issued to the Home Guard.

Big demands are now being made upon the productive capacity of the country to meet the requirements of the expanding forces and our overseas commitments. By the utilization of a woollen cloth in addition to the worsted cloth now in use the weekly production of battle-dress will be expanded by 50 per cent. The woollen-cloth battle-dress will not be sent overseas, but will be used for troops mobilized for Home Defence and for the Home Guard.

#### RATIONS AND SUPPLIES.

The A.S.C. services have been increased to meet the greater needs of mobilization. They will be able to meet the full supply requirements of the Army.

A very valuable addition has been provided by the formation of a number of transport companies for use on Lines of Communication. These L. of C. M.T. companies have depended on voluntary services in respect to both personnel and vehicles, the personnel being enlisted in the Home Guard.

Reserve rations have been assembled to meet warfare conditions. During the year a change-over was made in New Zealand from a maximum-cost basis to a fixed scale of rations. The New Zealand ration scale compares more than favourably with those of Great Britain and sister Dominions.

#### CANTEENS.

Canteen services have been provided in both New Zealand and overseas under arrangements with the Canteen Board. To meet the needs of mobilization some units have been running their own canteens, and in some cases the canteens have been run by or with the assistance of institutions.

A definite plan of canteen and institutional services has been co-ordinated as and between the Canteen Board, Patriotic Fund Board, and the various institutions concerned. The happiest co-operation has been given the Army by the Canteen Board, the National Patriotic Fund Board, and the various institutions in this work.

The Canteen Board has allocated to the Army £30,750 as representing Army's portion of the net profits for distribution to troops. This distribution has been carried out and has materially helped in augmenting the regimental funds of units, as well as giving assistance to those troops who embarked for Mid-East.

Wet canteens are open in certain camps in New Zealand. These are run by the Canteen Board in conjunction with the Army. The conduct of the men is closely watched. Each man pays for his own drinks, and no free drinks are given. The serving staff is mostly comprised of returned soldiers who are ineligible for active service. Modern equipment has been fitted, together with an efficient accounting system. The wet canteen services thus provided are beneficial and definitely filling a need, and the incidence of drunkenness in camps where wet canteens are installed is markedly low when compared with that in camps where wet canteens have not so far been installed.

#### PETROL.

The necessary reserves of petrol, oil, and lubricants have been arranged for and placed at strategical points throughout the country. A programme of camouflage is in hand.

Arrangements have also been effected for a complete system of war supplies, and in this connection thanks are due to the co-operation given by the oil companies. These companies have also given valuable assistance in respect to the designing of special filling plant to meet the requirements of war.

#### HORSES.

Mounted Rifle regiments were mechanized early in the current year and are now A.F.V. regiments. A number of Independent M.R. squadrons still exists, the horses being provided by the members of the units.

#### MOVEMENT OF TROOPS: SHIPPING AND RAILWAYS.

The overseas movement of all Navy, Army, and Air Force personnel is arranged and co-ordinated by Army.

During the year under review there has been considerable movement of Army personnel both within New Zealand and overseas. The mobilization of the home forces and the granting of extended privileges in the form of leave and furlough have greatly increased the numbers of troops travelling within the Dominion. Overseas movements have also been considerable.

The very close liaison which exists between Army and the Railways Department has resulted in all rail movements having been carried out with smoothness and precision.

## MECHANICAL TRANSPORT.

During the past year the work and responsibilities of the Mechanical Transport branch have been increased enormously, consequent upon the very large additions to the M.T. fleet of vehicles.

Orders for the whole of Army's requirements of vehicles were placed overseas late in 1941, but when mobilization was ordered it became necessary to provide immediately vehicles from local sources. Consequently impressment was again resorted to.

New vehicles in stock with distributors were also taken over.

During the year a considerable number of armoured carriers and armoured cars have been produced in New Zealand. Many of these have now been distributed to units and are operating satisfactorily. Minor faults have been observed and have been overcome. Instruction in the operation and maintenance of these vehicles is proceeding, and satisfactory performance is being experienced.

A large number of tanks has been received during the year, together with a proportion of spare parts and equipment, and this has necessitated the setting-up of special store accommodation for the handling of tank equipment.

Army maintenance organizations have been mobilized and equipped as far as possible with tools and equipment for the purpose of maintaining vehicles.

Arrangements have been made with the New Zealand Retail Motor Trade Association to carry out the heavy repair work required on Army vehicles, thus freeing Army repair organizations to cope with lighter jobs and ensure that the maximum number of vehicles are in a roadworthy condition at all times. This arrangement has been found to work satisfactorily to the mutual benefit of the members of the association and the Army Department, and has obviated the necessity of establishing large Army workshops for major repair work, together with the expense of providing these. Heavy work is undertaken in the four main workshops only if other work is up-to-date, but as a general rule this heavy work, including major overhauls, is undertaken by commercial garages.

Originally many vehicles of older types which had already run extremely large mileages were passed over to Army Department from other Government Departments. Some of these vehicles have now reached the end of their useful life and it has been found necessary to set up a Board of Survey in order to determine their disposal. The serviceable parts have been recovered from such vehicles as have been condemned, and these have been taken into use for replacement on other vehicles and for instructional purposes at Schools of Instruction.

A system of traffic control in districts has been instituted, and this has eliminated much unnecessary running of heavy vehicles and results in a considerable saving of petrol. The mobilizing of Provost Companies has enabled this system to work effectively.

As evidence of the efficiency of the Army method of operating vehicles it is pleasing to report that, notwithstanding the increase in the number of vehicles being operated, the number of accidents is rather less in proportion than that previously experienced.

## BUILDINGS, WORKS, AND CAMPS.

(a) *Coast Defences.*—A heavy programme was forecast last year, and this has proved to be even more extensive than was then envisaged.

(b) *Brigade Group Camps.*—Consequent upon the recent extensive mobilization of troops it has been necessary practically to double existing accommodation, and several new camps are now under construction.

(c) *Territorial Camps, &c.*—As distinct from the major camps there are many smaller establishments accommodated on racecourses, showgrounds, public reserves, and private properties. Thanks are due to the various clubs, local bodies, &c., for the ready way in which they have co-operated in making their facilities available at short notice, resulting frequently in complete dislocation of their own activities.

(d) *Ranges.*—With the co-operation of rifle clubs throughout the Dominion, a large number of ranges has been taken over by Army and improvements and extensions carried out where necessary. Several new rifle ranges are in the course of construction.

(e) *Magazines.*—The great increase in the stocks of ammunition and explosives now held or coming to hand has called for a very extensive programme of new buildings.

(f) *Portable Huts.*—The great expansion in the mobilized forces during the year, coupled with a growing scarcity of tentage on the one hand and an increasing difficulty in securing adequate labour and materials for permanent construction on the other, made it necessary to explore other avenues for alternative means of housing troops. A light type of hut so designed that it could be fabricated in factories under mass-production methods and erected by inexperienced labour was finally decided upon. Two types of huts are in production—one accommodating four men and the other two.

They thus satisfy the need for conserving many important lines of building material and at the same time provide a rapid and efficient means of accommodating the large numbers of troops now being called up.

(g) *Defence Construction Council.*—In order to correlate the needs of the three fighting services and to ensure that the best possible use was made of available material and man-power resources, a Council of Defence Construction was appointed at the latter end of the period under review, with a Commissioner of Defence Construction as its executive head. Although the Council has not been in operation for very long the results are already apparent in the speeding-up of many works that were previously lagging for want of adequate labour or through difficulties in obtaining certain materials.

## PAY ACCOUNTS AND BASE RECORDS.

The Pay Accounts and Base Records branch of Army has during the period under review—the year ended 31st March, 1942—continued to carry out its main responsibilities of controlling, accounting for, and preparing estimates of expenditure for the mobilized forces and maintaining the system of personal records for all the members of those forces. The staff now numbers 432, including 280 women.

Casualties reported to date are as follows :—

	Officers.	Other Ranks.	Total.
Killed in action .. .. .	75	1,051	1,126
Died of wounds .. .. .	17	275	292
Died as the result of accident or sickness .. .. .	16	328	344
Died while prisoners of war .. .. .	3	65	68
Missing .. .. .	9	618	627
Prisoners of war .. .. .	304	5,495	5,799
Wounded .. .. .	256	3,815	4,071

## CONCLUSION.

I wish to pay a tribute to the numerous organizations, Government Departments, and private citizens who have so greatly assisted the Army in the great tasks which confronted it, especially after the entry of Japan into the war. The magnitude of those tasks and the elements of the defence problems of New Zealand are gradually becoming known to the general public, and the Army now feels that it has the interest and practical support of the whole nation in its work. This is a valuable encouragement to all ranks.

I also wish to refer to the splendid manner in which the men of the forces have adapted themselves to the strange and often arduous conditions of Army life. Their keenness and application in their training are also worthy of special note. Women are being employed in various capacities to an increasing degree, and the work of those now with the Army makes it evident that they will perform their duties with most complete efficiency wherever they are employed. The Home Guard units of the Army have shown an admirable spirit in preparing themselves for war, and with the additional equipment now in their possession they are capable of playing an important part in the defence of the country.

Lastly, I wish to thank the officers and the N.C.O.s of the forces for the zeal they have displayed in training their men for war, and my staff at Army and other Headquarters for the results which they have obtained by their ability, hard work, and extremely long hours.

E. PUTTICK, Lieutenant-General,  
Commanding New Zealand Military Forces.

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