

1943
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

Wellington, 20th August, 1943.

The Hon. MINISTER OF DEFENCE.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the following report on the New Zealand Military Forces for the period 1st June, 1942, to 31st May, 1943.

GENERAL REMARKS

The latter portion of the year has been marked by a continual decrease in the threat of Japanese action against New Zealand. Advantage has been taken of this gradual improvement to make corresponding reductions in the Home Defence Army, pursuant to the appreciations provided from time to time by the Chiefs of Staff. It should be emphasized that the administrative work involved in carrying out these reorganizations is enormous. In all reorganizations of the home-defence forces care has been taken to ensure that the ability to remobilize has been retained.

The Army policy is to employ the minimum number of men on home defence and on the various services carried out for overseas forces so as to make available the maximum number for overseas and for industry. This policy has already resulted in the release of large numbers from the home-defence Army, and a steady reduction will continue for some time to come.

Vast quantities of war equipment of all kinds have arrived in New Zealand from overseas during the year, and local production has increased enormously. The greatly increased equipment requirements of the Territorial Force when fully mobilized have almost all been satisfied, while Home Guard requirements have been substantially met. The care and maintenance of the mass of equipment now to hand presents a major problem.

During the year the United States have taken over from New Zealand the responsibility for the defence of Fiji, although certain New Zealand units and New Zealand personnel remain. Our considerable forces in Fiji were thereupon returned to New Zealand, expanded and reorganized, and later despatched, complete with equipment, to a forward area in the Pacific.

New Zealand, at the request of the United States authorities, has assumed responsibility for the defence of certain Pacific islands, and has despatched garrisons, complete with equipment, to these islands.

Substantial reinforcements have been raised and trained and despatched to 2nd (N.Z.) Division in Middle East.

REORGANIZATION OF THE ARMY IN NEW ZEALAND

In January, 1943, it was decided to make further substantial reductions in the mobilized home-defence Army.

A subsequent reorganization provided for a reduction of mobilized strength to bare essentials, together with the provision of a non-mobilized Territorial Army on a compulsory basis, the personnel being selected, in co-operation with the National Service Department, to ensure the least disturbance of industry when men are called up for annual training or in the event of an emergency again requiring mobilization.

NEW ZEALAND STAFF COLLEGE

During the year 300 students passed out of the six courses which were held at the New Zealand Staff College. Special emphasis has been laid on the requirements of the Pacific theatre.

ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE OF AUSTRALIA

Nine New Zealand cadets graduated at the Royal Military College, Australia, during the year. There are at present 18 New Zealand cadets attending the College.