

MOVEMENTS OF TROOPS : SHIPPING AND RAILWAYS

Troop movements in New Zealand during the year have been unprecedented. Motor transport has been used for this purpose only where other forms of transport were not available. On a number of occasions it has been found necessary to reserve a steamer ferry for service personnel exclusively, and a total of 2,115 special trains, carrying approximately 1,250,000 men, have been engaged.

The New Zealand Railways and shipping companies have shown a very high degree of co-operation with the Army authorities, and it is largely due to this spirit of helpfulness that troop movements have at all times been carried out with smoothness and expedition.

Movements of troops overseas have been considerable. Close liaison with the United States Forces has facilitated movements of New Zealand personnel by sea in the Pacific, as well as the movements of United States troops within New Zealand.

HOSPITAL SHIPS

During the year His Majesty's New Zealand Hospital Ship No. 1, "Maunganui," has made four return voyages to Mid East, and repatriated over 1,200 sick and wounded personnel.

The hospital ship "Oranje" has made two visits to New Zealand during the year, repatriating approximately 300 sick and wounded personnel.

The Australian hospital ship "Wanganella" also made one voyage to New Zealand with 150 personnel.

MECHANICAL TRANSPORT

The total holdings of mechanical transport vehicles of all descriptions have increased by over 100 per cent. Deliveries from overseas have removed the necessity for local impressments, and older vehicles formerly impressed have been rendered surplus. The Government Vehicle Disposal Board is responsible for the ultimate disposal of these vehicles, and also those new vehicles received from overseas which are now beyond the requirements of the re-organized Army. Certain unfulfilled orders overseas have, in view of the reorganization, been cancelled.

Considerable numbers of tanks of varying makes, tank-transporters, carriers, and other armoured vehicles have arrived in New Zealand.

Vehicles and spare parts have been provided for Pacific formations, and the mechanical transport branch has also met the requisitions for transport vehicles from Royal New Zealand Navy and Royal New Zealand Air Force and certain local requirements of United States Forces.

The accounting and recording work covering the requisitioning, receiving, distribution, and control of vehicles has been given much attention.

BUILDINGS AND WORKS

General. Although the volume of constructional work in New Zealand is now declining, there has been an increase in the activities of the Forts and Works Branch by reason of the provision of accommodation and services for New Zealand troops in the Pacific.

Coast Defences. An extensive coast defence programme has progressed satisfactorily.

Harbour Defences.—Modern anti-motor torpedo-boat equipment has arrived in New Zealand, and the construction of emplacements and ancillary works is well in hand.

Anti-aircraft Defences.—The necessary constructional work for the installation of both heavy and light anti-aircraft batteries, including accommodation and services for personnel, has been nearly completed.

Brigade Group Camps. The construction of numerous camps for Brigade Groups on a dispersal basis was undertaken. Accommodation for tens of thousands of troops was provided in these localities in a minimum of time. Some of these camps are now being vacated, and action is being taken to release to the Royal New Zealand Air Force and to other Departments all accommodation or service materials no longer required. Salvage units are being formed to attend to all materials surplus to these immediate requirements.

Other Works.—Other major works undertaken include the construction of extensive additional camp accommodation at Burnham, extensions to Trentham and Waiouru Camps, magazines, rifle-ranges, drill-halls, three convalescent depots, ordnance stores and workshops, over five thousand portable huts, an internment camp, a prisoner-of-war camp, three field hospitals, and a considerable amount of extra accommodation throughout New Zealand for Women's Auxiliary Army Corps personnel.

Pacific Islands.—An extensive programme has been prepared to cover the supply of buildings for base camps, base depots, hospitals, garrison accommodation, &c., for New Zealand troops in the Pacific.

Field Defensive Works.—A very large amount of emergency work in improving the natural defences of the country—such as anti-tank ditches, road-blocks, wire entanglements, and tactical roads—was undertaken. A large number of bridges throughout New Zealand have been strengthened to allow convoys and equipment to manoeuvre in accordance with the defensive plan for the Dominion.

United States Forces.—The arrival of strong United States Forces caused very heavy demands on Army in the erection of camps.

Maintenance.—Continuous maintenance is carried out at all major establishments under an agreement with the Public Works Department, and at all minor establishments as occasions demand.

ENGINEER STORES

An Engineer Stores organization has been set up, making use of the Public Works Department stores system. It supplies Army requirements in plant, tools, equipment, and materials both in New Zealand and the Pacific.