

I also had a lengthy interview with Major-General Barrowclough and explained to him the proposed method of obtaining the votes of the Division. The General approved of the system and did not anticipate any difficulties in the matter. As the Division was practising amphibious exercises during the move it was considered inadvisable to place any electoral supplies on board the ships owing to the possibility of loss during transit and the difficulty of replacement. It was therefore agreed that as the move was to be completed by the 15th September, 1943, when all the Division would be located on Guadalcanal, the necessary supplies, manifestos, and lists of nominated candidates be available there on that date. If this course were adopted voting could then take place over a period of days, enabling the preliminary results to be forwarded to New Zealand in ample time to be available on election night. This arrangement was, therefore, subject to any change in operational tasks.

Having completed the formal introductions I then proceeded on the 12th August, 1943, to headquarters, 8th Brigade, where I spent the night and discussed with the Commander (Brigadier Rowe) the question of voting his brigade and in general outlining the plans approved of by Major-General Barrowclough.

On the 13th August, 1943, I continued my journey to headquarters, 2 N.Z.E.F.I.P., at Bourail, and found that Major Malcolm had already reported there the same day.

A conference had been arranged for Thursday by the Officer in Charge Administration, at which Liaison Officers from the Division and base troops were appointed to assist us. As from that date all matters appertaining to the election as affecting these formations were handled through these officers.

Finality was reached as to our staff, accommodation, and transport during the period we would be in New Caledonia.

(2) *Onward Movement within the Pacific*—(a) *Espiritu Santo*: On the 14th August, 1943, we left New Caledonia to visit all islands as set out in our itinerary, and on the same day we reached Espiritu Santo, reporting to headquarters, No. 1 Island Group, R.N.Z.A.F., and remained there overnight.

We found that tentative arrangements had been made to conduct the poll, and Flight Lieutenants J. B. Smillie and G. Taylor, both of whom had previous experience in electoral work, were appointed Polling Officers for the Air Force personnel there. We also conferred with Paymaster Lieutenant-Commander H. Twigg, R.N.Z.V.R., and appointed him Polling Officer for the Navy. We had previously met this officer in New Zealand, and he was well aware of our proposals. This later conference enabled the position to be finalized. His appointment as an Advanced Base Paymaster enabled us to be kept well informed of any Navy movement throughout the whole of the forward area.

(b) *Guadalcanal*: This was the area that was to figure largely in our field of activity for the election. We made our first visit to this island on the 15th August, 1943, and reported to the R.N.Z.A.F. Station Commander. We had ascertained that a portion of the Fiji Defence Forces was operating forward of this island, but until now we could not get definite information as to where this unit was based. This unit contained New Zealand commissioned and non-commissioned officers. We called on the British Resident Commissioner (Colonel Trench), and through the good offices of his staff we were fortunate in being able to contact the unit the same day. They had not seen any New Zealand personnel for many months, only one other New Zealand officer having previously visited them. Part of this unit had returned to Guadalcanal for a rest, the remainder operating well forward. The time at our disposal was limited, and, being anxious to adhere to our original itinerary, we were unable to meet many New-Zealanders in this unit. We arranged for Lieutenant Holmes, the Advanced Base Camp Quartermaster, to act as a Polling Officer for these troops, and supplies were later handed over to him for distribution. The unit has special significance on account of its outstanding work against the enemy, and its actions have won favourable recognition from the American Command.

We remained overnight at the R.N.Z.A.F. station, and this island was later to become an advanced centre from which the voting of the Division was to play an important part.

(c) *Espiritu Santo*: Leaving Guadalcanal, we returned to Espiritu Santo on 16th August, 1943, and were billeted at the Naval Air Transportation Service (NATS), Transit Camp (American), for the night. We visited the No. 1 Island Group, R.N.Z.A.F., to make certain that our previous arrangements for the Poll did not require any further action meantime.

(d) *Fiji*: We departed from Espiritu Santo on 19th August and arrived at Fiji that day, reporting at H.Q., Fiji Defence Forces, where we were accommodated and immediately arranged for a conference of representatives Navy, Army, and Air Force to discuss the arrangements, and the following officers attended—

*Navy*—Lieutenant Tovey; Lieutenant-Commander Barracks.

*Army*—Lieutenant Chapman Cohen.

*Air Force*—Flying Officer Quill.

*Civilian* (Communications) Mr. Hampton.

Fiji is an important strategic point and, owing to the large number of troops based in the area, the importance of assuring a complete coverage for all New Zealand personnel was stressed. Everybody was quite confident that there were no insuperable difficulties to overcome.

(e) *Tonga*: Leaving Fiji on the 18th August, we passed on to Tonga and reported to H.Q., "T" Force, where we found that supplies had not yet reached the island. The ship carrying these was on its way, and it was considered that the supplies would reach the area within a few days. Details of the procedure for the election were made known to the staff, and Major Gillies and Lieutenant J. T. Hill were appointed Polling Officers. These officers were instructed to ensure that facilities be given to coast-watching personnel on adjacent islands to record their votes. While at Tonga I called up the British Agent and Consul, Colonel Trevor Johnson, who was indisposed at the time and regretted that he was unable to receive me. We did, however, have a telephone conversation, and I was disappointed at being unable to meet him in person.

(f) *Fiji*: Continuing our journey from Tonga, we called at Upollo, Samoa, with the object of contacting the Officer Commanding Samoa Defence Forces, who had been signalled our proposed visit. Unfortunately, owing to delay in transmission, he was not there on our arrival, and all efforts to contact him from this point of call were unsuccessful. We passed on to Fiji again, being billeted by the Commander Fiji Defence Forces. On this second visit to Fiji we were able to clarify a few points raised by the Polling Officers. It had been ascertained that in the time at our disposal it was impossible