

The necessity for the strictest secrecy regarding movements of ships was not overlooked, and we were informed that the above mentioned were the only ships which required our attention. Ships of a foreign register were used for the conveyance of our troops to the forward area.

(3) *Establishing Headquarters.*—Our next task was to establish our headquarters, and we decided that despite the movement of the Division from New Caledonia, we should remain with Headquarters, 2 N.Z.E.F.I.P., where we could be kept informed of the activities of this formation and have access to good signal communications. We were satisfied that all our Commanders were desirous of co-operating to the fullest extent in making our mission a success.

Consequently we went to Bourail on the 22nd August, 1943, being accommodated at the Base Reception Depot. No buildings were available to us, and we were required to use two tents each approximately 12 ft. by 12 ft. as our offices, and these were used as our headquarters. Transport, telephone, office furniture, and necessary clerks were placed at our disposal.

(4) *Supplies and Organizing for the Poll.*—Supplies had been despatched to the various islands prior to our departure from New Zealand; excepting those for New Caledonia, all had reached their respective destinations. Prompt inquiries had been instituted by us when we first reached New Caledonia, and on our return we were pleased to see that the delivery of the supplies had been expedited and that they were now available. We then commenced the work of breaking bulk and providing onward delivery to forward area. The war in the Pacific was reaching a stage where it appeared likely that our troops might be forward of Guadalcanal during the election period, and be in action. The supplies reached Guadalcanal before the end of August, 1943.

We then made a survey of New Caledonia to provide for our base and static troops, and transport and staff to deal with these units was duly arranged. The troops were dispersed over a wide area extending from Noumea to Hepoui, a distance of approximately 180 miles. Complete coverage for all troops on the island was provided for by the establishment of fixed polling-booths, and itineraries for mobile polling-booths were drawn up to cater for isolated detachments. Attention given to these details resulted in a very full poll for this Island.

LIST OF NOMINATIONS AND MANIFESTOS

4. It soon became obvious to us that all matters other than operational were of secondary importance and in an area with a base comparable to that at Noumea there was a grave risk of the nominations and manifestos not reaching their destination at the appropriate time. It was therefore decided that Major Malcolm return to New Zealand and personally supervise the distribution of these. On return overseas he was to proceed to the forward area with this information, superintending all polling arrangements there. This was done. The major portion of our Forces was at this period well forward awaiting action. Comment has been made through the press and other channels regarding the availability of election information to our Forces. It will be remembered that in my memorandum of the 25th August, 1943, it was pointed out that any information of this nature should reach the members of the Forces at the first available opportunity. The manifestos were handed over by the printer on 11th September. Major Malcolm returned to New Caledonia on 12th September, 1943, with all the material that was available to him at that date. Delivery was made to waiting transport, which carried the manifestos to units on the island the same day. It was planned to distribute the manifestos on the basis of one per man, but on account of short supply this was impracticable. A distribution was then made on the basis of one to every three men. A supply of manifestos and list of nominated candidates was taken by Major Malcolm to the forward area on the 14th September, 1943, and was handed over by him to units on Guadalcanal on the 15th September, 1943, for distribution on the above basis. Copies for other islands were duly handed over by that Officer to the Air Force authorities at Whenuapai for despatch by the first available air service. Delay would ensue at this terminal, dependent on plane service, but, as will be observed from the above, it is considered that the delivery could not have been done with greater promptitude. It can, however, be definitely stated that the list of candidates was given every prominence in all places where troops assembled and was posted up in all polling-booths.

Your cable forwarding information regarding the licensing issue, which it was intended should be published as an advertisement in the *Kiwi* newspaper, arrived too late for insertion in that newspaper. The cable was received by the French authorities in Noumea and was not handed to me until the 17th September, 1943. Voting had by that date commenced in some units. I conferred with H.Q., 2 N.Z.E.F.I.P., and representatives of the *Kiwi* newspaper to ascertain whether it could be practicable to comply with your instructions and ensure a large proportion of the members of the Forces becoming acquainted with the subject-matter of the advertisement. I was informed that if this information was printed forthwith, owing to the wide dispersal of our Forces, it would be impossible to have copies of the *Kiwi* newspaper available in units in sufficient time to permit the voters to consider the subject-matter before voting. Under the circumstances, publication of this information was withheld, as advised in my signal of 17th September, 1943.

COMMUNICATIONS

5. The subject of communications should at this juncture be mentioned as it is difficult for persons in New Zealand to visualize the position overseas. Army control the following W/T terminals in New Zealand—

Norfolk Island, Tonga, New Caledonia

and Air control—

Espiritu Santo and Fiji:

There is no lateral communication between the islands, consequently some delay in the passing of messages between the islands arises. We were reliably informed that the American Command had placed some restrictions on the use of W/T excepting for purely military matters. As it appeared that the transmission of results of the election might cause some embarrassment to our Forces, that heavy traffic in W/T might be useful information to the enemy, and the element of human error in transmission, it was decided that a simple code be prepared and special message forms adopted for the election results. The preparation of this system of forwarding results was carefully considered by Army Signals