

1945
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, 16th July, 1945.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the following report on the New Zealand Military Forces for the period 1st June, 1944, to 31st May, 1945.

GENERAL REMARKS

The outstanding event of the year covered by this report was the complete Allied victory in Europe, which brought to a close the lengthy participation in active operations in that theatre of the 2nd New Zealand Division. Despite some threat to the security of its own land, the Division, by continuing to operate against the main and most threatening enemy, gave a fine example of the solidarity of the British Empire and Commonwealth.

In my last report I referred to the fact that any risk of serious attack on New Zealand had been finally removed by the progress of the Allied Forces in the Pacific and by the obvious threat to Japan of the redeployment against her of overwhelming forces from the European theatre. During the year under review the Allied progress in the Pacific has been even more marked and significant than before, while the movement of forces from the European to the Eastern theatre has already begun. The trend of events and the potentialities of the present situation have confirmed beyond any doubt the wisdom of the Allied strategy of concentrating first against the most dangerous enemy, Germany.

Since the reduction in 1942 of the Japanese threat, the Army in New Zealand has been drastically reduced. This has been a continuing process, and the Army can justly claim that reductions in its home-defence Forces have been exceeded proportionately neither in numbers nor in speed by any other country.

The policy of making surplus Army equipment and ammunition available to overseas theatres of war has been continued, and the estimated total value of items disposed of abroad has been advanced during the year from £12,000,000 to approximately £25,000,000. Equipment, &c., from the New Zealand Army has reached the battlefields of France and Germany, Italy, and Burma, and it is of interest to notice that approximately 800,000 rounds of 25-pounder gun ammunition were forwarded to the three theatres during the year.

The equipment, &c., still remaining in New Zealand is of enormous bulk and value, and its future storage, maintenance, and security present a very serious problem.

Pending decision on the future of the 2nd New Zealand Division, the role of the Army in New Zealand remains substantially the same as was described in my last report.

ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE OF AUSTRALIA

Nine New Zealand Cadets graduated at the Royal Military College of Australia during the year. There are at present eighteen New Zealand Cadets attending the College.

ARMY SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION

The Army School of Instruction has during the past year maintained a high standard of training efficiency.

Altogether 4,655 students, mostly for subsequent service with 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force, were given instruction in various subjects for periods ranging from two weeks to eleven months. Included in this total are 452 soldiers trained as Army tradesmen to meet 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force requirements in the following categories: motor mechanics, auto electricians, fitters, driver mechanics, equipment-repairers, blacksmiths, welders, turners, wireless mechanics, electricians, instrument mechanics, motor-cycle mechanics.