

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.

TRAINING OF NEW ZEALAND EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

Training of drafts for overseas has been carried out to the fullest extent possible having due regard to the time available. Full details of training carried out in New Zealand are supplied to Commanders overseas in order that the training necessary before troops are required to go into action may be completed at overseas bases.

SECONDARY SCHOOL CADETS

The enthusiasm shown in the training of Cadets of secondary schools has been most gratifying. There are now over 20,000 Cadets undergoing training, and a most marked improvement in efficiency is noted. During the year 113 officers and 1,259 non-commissioned officers attended courses of instruction, and the value of the instruction received is reflected in the efficiency of the training carried out at schools.

REPLACEMENT OF NEW ZEALAND EXPEDITIONARY FORCE PERSONNEL

The system of replacing men with the longest overseas service to their credit, in substitution for the previous furlough scheme, was instituted early in the training year. Under this system 9,350 men have returned to New Zealand from the 2nd Division for absorption into civil life, and 8,738 have been despatched to replace them. Further large drafts are due to return at an early date.

Of 17,134 all ranks withdrawn from active service in the Pacific, 11,931 were released to civil life and 4,401 have either proceeded to join the 2nd Division or are in camp available for further overseas service.

REDUCTION OF FORCES

Since 31st May, 1944, the strength of the Forces in New Zealand and overseas has been reduced by 20,834, nearly all of whom have already, or will in the near future, have returned to civil employment. This figure includes those made available from the Forces in the Pacific, but does not take into account released prisoners of war.

COAST DEFENCES

The scale of coast defences required in accordance with the changing strategic situation has been kept closely under review, and during the year the number of personnel employed on these duties has been progressively reduced by more than 55 per cent.

SIGNALS

Signal services have likewise been curtailed as Army activities generally have been reduced. A very considerable reduction of personnel employed on signal duties has been made. Further reductions in the near future will be possible.

MAPPING AND SURVEY

Further progress has been made by the Lands and Survey Department with military mapping. An additional 57 sheets have been published, thus completing 167 out of approximately 300 in the standard series of maps.

HARVESTING

The Army was again required to assist in harvesting crops and in other seasonal work, such as fruit and onion picking and digging potatoes.

Owing to the great reduction in the numbers of available men on home service, difficulties were encountered in providing the personnel required. The position was met by utilizing men of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force reinforcements, by calling up twenty-year-olds, and assistance from the Royal New Zealand Air Force. For varying periods 4,995 men (including 651 R.N.Z.A.F.) were employed on this duty. This entailed the establishment of twenty-five small camps in the North and forty-nine in the South Island.

Flood Damage, &c. Assistance both in personnel and transport was afforded Government Departments and local bodies in repairing flood damage in the South Island. During the flooding many civilians were assisted to safety by Army personnel.

ARMY EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

During the year the educational services were maintained among New Zealand personnel in the Pacific, Egypt, Central Mediterranean, and United Kingdom (ex prisoners of war) as well as in New Zealand. Increasing numbers of students enrolled for study courses in trade, agricultural, and commercial subjects, and a high proportion of those who sat for University and professional examinations secured passes.

The Library Service issued approximately 1,000,000 books to personnel in New Zealand alone, and to provide an information service on social, political, and international affairs, fortnightly issues of Current Affairs Bulletins, &c., were continued. Arts and crafts, music, operatic and choral activities were further developed.

Effective liaison with the Rehabilitation Department has been maintained in respect of all troops overseas and those on returning troopships and hospital ships.

MEDICAL SERVICES

The health of the troops in New Zealand during the year was very good. Apart from a few sporadic cases of measles, mumps, &c., there have been no outbreaks of epidemic disease. The total deaths from all causes during the year were 51, of which 43 were the result of sickness and 8 the result of accidents or other causes.

During the year 421 cases of malaria were reported, almost entirely among personnel who had been serving in the Pacific theatre of war. With the number of cases reporting each month showing a progressive decrease—from 94 in July, 1944, to 7 in March, 1945—it is anticipated that very few cases of malaria will be encountered from now on.

As at 31st May, 237 medical officers were serving in the Army, of whom 196 were overseas. There were 284 Nursing Sisters and 244 W.A.A.C. Voluntary Aids overseas at the same time.

Medical units and establishments in New Zealand have been reduced in number in line with the reduction in the Forces generally.

The Army Optician Service has 14 Optician Units in operation—11 in New Zealand, 2 in the Pacific, and 1 in the Middle East. The Army serves the Royal New Zealand Navy and Royal New Zealand Air Force, and during the year has carried out 9,553 full visual examinations and prescribed for 6,168 pairs of service-pattern spectacles. Since the inception of the service in August, 1942, approximately 30,000 full visual examinations have been made, and 18,500 pairs of service-pattern spectacles prescribed.

DENTAL

The New Zealand Dental Corps serves the Royal New Zealand Navy and the Royal New Zealand Air Force as well as the Army, co-ordinating the work of all Dental Sections. It has contributed materially to the general standard of dental fitness and health of members of the Forces, and this will undoubtedly have a beneficial effect on the post-war dental health of the community.

The following summary shows the dental treatments rendered to Navy, Army, and Air Force personnel in New Zealand and overseas for the year (corresponding figures for the previous twelve months being given in parentheses):—

<i>Surgical Operations</i>			<i>Artificial Dentures</i>		
Fillings	..	251,951 (283,653).	Full dentures	..	7,782 (10,895).
Teeth extracted	..	44,555 (61,583).	Partial dentures	..	4,049 (5,940).
Prophylactic treatments		38,839 (43,419).	Dentures remodelled	..	12,460 (14,854).
			Dentures repaired	..	18,877 (19,597).

Where practicable, all personnel, whether from overseas, returned prisoners of war, or on home service, are certified dentally fit before discharge to civil life.

The further disbandment of Army units and the withdrawal of the 3rd Division from the Pacific have led to corresponding reductions in the New Zealand Dental Corps establishments, thus enabling a redistribution to be made of dental personnel with the Forces, and the return of several long-service and medically unfit personnel to civil life.

WOMEN'S ARMY AUXILIARY CORPS

During the year the strength of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps in New Zealand decreased by 1,003, and now stands at 1,766. Embarkations for overseas were 348, and 354 returned to this country. The present strength of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps overseas is 439.

REPATRIATION OF WIVES, DEPENDANTS, AND FIANCEES

Under the provisions made by the Government for granting free passages and defraying reasonable incidental travelling-expenses, many wives, dependants, and fiancées of New Zealand servicemen have already been brought to the Dominion, and others are ready to embark at overseas ports when the requisite shipping accommodation becomes available. In addition, other servicemen and their dependants who have established that they were permanently domiciled in another part of the British Empire before enlistment have been granted free passages and expenses to enable them to proceed to their places of intended residence.

HONOURS AND AWARDS

Up to 31st May, 1945, His Majesty the King had approved the undermentioned honours and awards to members of the New Zealand Expeditionary Forces for gallant and distinguished service in the field:

Victoria Cross	..	..	5	A.R.R.C.	..	..	16
K.C.B.	..	..	1	M.C.	..	..	214
K.B.E.	..	..	1	Bar to M.C.	..	..	41
C.B.	..	..	6	D.C.M.	..	..	95
C.B.E.	..	..	25	Bar to D.C.M.	..	..	1
D.S.O.	..	..	87	M.M.	..	..	488
Bar to D.S.O.	..	..	15	Bar to M.M.	..	..	4
O.B.E.	..	..	63	George Medal	..	..	1
M.B.E.	..	..	106	B.E.M.	..	..	59
R.R.C.	..	..	8	Mentioned in Despatches	..	..	1,488

During the year the following awards were made to members of the Military Forces serving in New Zealand :—

C.B.	..	..	..	1	M.B.E.	..	..	..	9
C.B.E.	..	..	..	1	A.R.R.C.	..	..	..	2
O.B.E.	..	..	..	4	B.E.M.	..	..	..	7

Foreign Awards.—Foreign decorations have been awarded to members of the New Zealand Military Forces by Allied Nations as follows :—

U.S.A.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	24
Greece	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	48
U.S.S.R.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1

ESTABLISHMENTS

Operational and domestic establishments are constantly under review to ensure that the minimum number of men and women are employed in the Army consistent with an efficient organization. Army inspecting officers are constantly examining all establishments to ensure that the maximum effort is being made to conserve man-power.

SOCIAL WORKERS

It is still necessary to maintain a service for troops in camps and hospitals, but as camps are vacated the number of social workers is reduced accordingly. Those employed on social work are kept at a minimum, and the various organizations are co-operating with the Army in conducting an efficient service.

PRISONERS OF WAR AND INTERNEES

Japanese prisoners of war, comprising 9 officers and 796 other ranks, are held in the Prisoner-of-war Camp at Featherston.

The civilian internment camp was moved from Pahiatua to Somes Island during September, 1944, and 53 internees are now detained.

POLISH REFUGEE CAMP

A camp at Pahiatua made available by the Government for the Polish refugee children has been staffed largely by the Army, which also provides the supplies and transport required in connection with the camp.

NEW ZEALAND PRISONERS OF WAR

With the impending defeat of Germany complete arrangements were made for the reception, handling, and entertainment of approximately 6,400 New Zealand prisoners of war who were due to be returned from the Continent. Suitable buildings—hotels and other similar accommodation—were taken over and staffed by officers and other ranks from the 2nd Division and, to a limited extent, from New Zealand.

STORES AND EQUIPMENT

With the progressive disbandment of units, Ordnance Corps and mechanical transport establishments have been able to give greater attention to the concentration, classification, and maintenance of stores, a complete stocktaking and a progressive clearance of surplus holdings of arms, equipment, and ammunition.

Surplus Stores. A large quantity of clothing not suitable for reissue to troops, but with a sales value, has accumulated at ordnance depots. This is under offer to UNRRA and the Netherlands East Indies Government through the War Assets Realization Board.

Miscellaneous items, which included barbed wire, blankets, and medical supplies, to the value of £160,114 17s. 8d., were disposed of to other Government Departments and to the general public.

Mechanical Transport.—The number of vehicles of all types on charge to the Army in New Zealand as at 31st March, 1944, was 22,190, and by 31st March, 1945, this figure had been reduced to 10,931. This large number of vehicles was disposed of as follows :—

(a) Through Ministry of Supply and War Assets Realization Board	..	8,146
(b) Transferred to British and Allied services overseas	..	2,553
(c) Transferred to other services and Departments in New Zealand	..	560

An average of 715 vehicles per week has been completely overhauled or repaired in Army workshops. These include all 3rd Division vehicles returned to this country, a number of which, completely reconditioned, has already been transferred for overseas use. The workshops are also carrying out repairs for Royal New Zealand Navy, Royal New Zealand Air Force, and the United States Joint Purchasing Board, and, in addition, 500 United States Marine Corps vehicles from forward areas have been reconditioned.

The Army is now rapidly approaching the last of its holdings of commercial type trucks, all of which are being made available for disposal.

Petrol.—Army petrol reserves have again been drawn upon for military requirements, the consumption in New Zealand amounting to 1,508,000 gallons.

Ammunition.—The production of small-arms ammunition has been reduced to a minimum, and, as anticipated in last year's report, the War Office has taken over many of our surplus holdings of gun ammunition.

It has been necessary to pass through the Ammunition Repair Depot many thousands of rounds of gun ammunition to ensure that it is fit for immediate use on arrival in any theatre of war. For example, this year 801,096 25-pounder shells and 826,000 25-pounder cartridges have been inspected prior to shipment overseas.

Uniforms and Clothing.—The movement of clothing, both receipt and issue, has again been considerable. 1,255,947 garments were received from manufacturers, 1,521,377 were shipped overseas, and 449,567 were dry-cleaned and repaired.

Storage.—Additional storage facilities supplied at ordnance sub-depots at Ngaruawahia and Burnham have allowed commercial storage space rented at Auckland, Hamilton, Dunedin, and Christchurch to be vacated. During the year 245,000 square feet of space, involving twenty-seven buildings throughout the country, has been released.

The problem of the storage of bulk equipment for which suitable space does not exist remains acute. It is considered that buildings erected for any of the Armed Services or for our Allies should not be disposed of until their storage possibilities have been most fully investigated. Deterioration is inevitable in much of this equipment if suitable covered storage is not available. As an illustration of the values involved, the Army is at present holding stores (on account of the War Office alone) to the value of £2,987,000, and this represents a very small proportion of the total holdings.

Ordnance Workshops.—Work has been heavy in all branches. Coastal armaments have been regularly serviced, and periodical inspections of armaments on a care and maintenance basis have been carried out. Static anti-aircraft equipments have been dismantled, mobile anti-aircraft equipments (with their predictors and generators) have been overhauled and repaired for despatch overseas, and radar workshops have serviced the equipments deployed, and maintained those on a care and maintenance basis.

The equipment at workshops is in a satisfactory condition and all machinery is in good order.

DEFENCE SERVICES PROVISION OFFICE

Although a marked decrease in overseas forecasts and demands has occurred, there has been a very substantial increase in the volume of stores handled and exported from New Zealand production. In addition, quantities of Army and Royal New Zealand Air Force surplus stores have been exported by this branch. During the year 946,159 packages of a total weight of 47,556 tons have been shipped for overseas theatres of war.

ARMY INSPECTION DEPARTMENT

All warlike stores and certain other items manufactured in New Zealand for the use of the British and Allied Forces overseas are, as a necessary condition of acceptance, subject to inspection by the Army Inspection Department. This inspection is continuous throughout the process of manufacture and covers the wide range of ammunition, weapons, instruments, equipment, and tools produced. During the year 9,543 inspection notes have been issued in connection with orders placed with manufacturers.

RATIONS AND SUPPLIES

The daily rations issued to troops in New Zealand amounted to 4,380,000, the average cost being 1s. 8d. per ration. In addition, 292,465 rations were issued to Japanese prisoners of war.

The value of supplies shipped overseas amounted to £66,806, and regular shipments of goods valued at £185,282 2s. 7d. for sale in the New Zealand Forces clubs have been made on behalf of the National Patriotic Fund Board.

Imports have been restricted to essential items not produced in the country, such as tea, dried fruits, rice, &c., at a cost of £15,523.

MOVEMENT OF TROOPS: SHIPPING, RAILWAY, AND AIR

Embarkations and Disembarkations.—Approximately 9,000 Army personnel embarked for overseas during the year and approximately 26,000 men disembarked.

Movement within New Zealand.—In addition to the use of normal trains, troop movements on the New Zealand railways involved the use of 680 special trains, including those supplied for United States troops. Approximately 4,047,000 man-moves were made. Inter-Island sea passages numbering over 62,000 were arranged.

Air Transport.—The Royal Air Force Transport Command from the United States of America to Australia was inaugurated in November, 1944, Army Headquarters being the co-ordinating authority for the carriage of personnel and freight. There have been forty east-bound flights, carrying 141 passengers and 1,947 lb. of freight, and fifty-seven west-bound flights carrying 137 passengers and 1,333 lb. of freight.

BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The problem of the maintenance of existing Army establishments is still a matter requiring constant attention. The cost of this work was £325,570, involving 214 establishments.

The disposal of surplus camps was accelerated during the year, and of the 284 camps existing, 156, accommodating approximately 56,000 personnel, have been declared surplus and handed over to War Assets Realization Board for disposal, and 15 providing accommodation for approximately 1,514 have been transferred to other services or to Government Departments.

CANTEENS

The service provided by the Canteen Board continues to give every satisfaction. During the year canteen profits amounting to £18,500 were distributed to Army units and to drafts proceeding overseas.

PAY, ACCOUNTS, AND BASE RECORDS

Casualties.—The following table shows the casualties reported to 31st May, 1945 :—

	Theatre of War.			Total.
	Middle East.	United Kingdom.	Pacific.	
Killed in action	4,033	2	95	4,130
Died of wounds, &c.	1,791	1	41	1,833
Deaths due to accident	268	10	43	321
Died of sickness	242	8	32	282
Prisoners of war	8,181	..	7	8,188
Missing	340	..	2	342
Wounded	17,683	3	231	17,917
Total	32,538	24	451	33,013

Finance.—The gross expenditure charged to War Expenses Account—Army—during the financial year ended 31st March, 1945, was £60,783,804, while credits in reduction totalled £9,814,627 and miscellaneous receipts £6,001, leaving a net expenditure of £50,963,176.

In addition, £3,163,642 was realized from the sale of surplus Army assets.

The expenditure and receipts brought to account by Army during the past six years to the 31st March, 1945, are as follows :—

Gross expenditure	£	292,821,399
Credits .. ..	..	23,095,876
Net expenditure	£	<u>269,725,523</u>

Maintenance and Equipment of 2nd Division, 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force.—During the year ended 31st March, 1945, £(N.Z.)5,635,755 was paid to the War Office in terms of the existing financial agreement with the British Government for the equipment and maintenance of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force in the European theatre of war. Previous expenditure on equipment and maintenance of the division was £(N.Z.)25,836,491, making a total to date of £(N.Z.)31,472,246. This does not include pay of troops or miscellaneous services outside the scope of the agreement.

Charges for British Transports.—In 1944–45 an amount of £(N.Z.)1,250,000 was paid to the British Ministry of War Transport for transport of 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force personnel on British transports. The total paid for this service to the 31st March, 1945, is £(N.Z.)4,574,672.

War Stores and Equipment supplied to New Zealand from the United Kingdom.—Amounts totalling £(N.Z.)9,280,594 were paid to the British Government during 1944–45, and the total expenditure to date on bulk payments is £(N.Z.)25,437,628.

Lend-lease.—Up to the 31st March, 1945, War Expenses Account—Army recorded lend-lease transactions valued at £(N.Z.)24,941,450 and supplied reciprocal aid (reverse lend-lease) valued at £(N.Z.)3,238,222.

CONCLUSION

The co-operation of all ranks of the Army and civil staff in carrying out the various tasks—pleasant and unpleasant—allotted to them has continued on the same very high level as hitherto, and has given me the greatest personal satisfaction.

The very favourable development of the war situation, the obvious preparations for peace in the community, and various trends and activities have had an unsettling effect on many of the men and women in the Army, and I wish here to reaffirm the great importance of the work they are doing and to request that, despite any discouragements or irritations, they maintain the same high morale and standard of duty as they have always displayed.

I wish again to express the appreciation of the Army of the co-operation and assistance rendered by the sister Services, Government Departments, and numerous civil organizations, and my own personal appreciation of the efficiency, hard work, and devotion to duty displayed throughout the year by all ranks at Army and other Headquarters.

16th July, 1945.

E. PUTTICK, Lieutenant-General,
Commanding N.Z. Military Forces.

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