

1931.  
NEW ZEALAND.

# DEFENCE FORCES OF NEW ZEALAND.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING NEW ZEALAND  
MILITARY FORCES.

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.*

## REPORT.

The Hon. the Minister of Defence.  
SIR,—

Wellington, 30th June, 1931.

I have the honour to submit the following report on the New Zealand Military Forces for the period 1st June, 1930, to 31st May, 1931:—

### 1. N.Z. PERMANENT FORCES.

#### (a) COMMANDS AND STAFF.

Major-General R. Young, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., N.Z.S.C., retired on the 31st March, 1931. I succeeded to the command of the New Zealand Military Forces on the 1st April, 1931, retaining the appointment of Chief of the General Staff.

Colonel F. Symon, C.M.G., D.S.O., R.N.Z.A., was appointed Officer Commanding the Central Command, and retains the appointment of Director of Artillery at General Headquarters.

Colonel J. E. Duigan, D.S.O., N.Z.S.C., was appointed Officer Commanding the Northern Command.

Lieutenant-Colonel I. T. Standish, C.M.G., D.S.O., R.N.Z.A., was appointed Adjutant and Quartermaster-General at General Headquarters.

Lieutenant-Colonel S. C. P. Nicholls, D.S.O., N.Z.S.C., was appointed Officer Commanding the Southern Command.

#### (b) OFFICER SECONDED.

Captain K. L. Stewart, M.B.E., N.Z.S.C., was seconded for service with the Ceylon Defence Force for a period of one year, with provision for an extension.

#### (c) MILITARY EDUCATION.

Lieutenant-Colonel N. W. B. Thoms, D.S.O., M.C., N.Z.S.C., completed his course at the Imperial Defence College, but was retired under the provisions of the Finance Act (No. 2) of 1930 immediately afterwards.

Captain K. L. Stewart, M.B.E., N.Z.S.C., graduated at the Staff College, Camberley, in December, 1929, and, after a course of instruction in England, returned to New Zealand on the 17th September, 1930.

Captain L. G. Goss, N.Z.S.C., graduated at the Staff College, Camberley, in December, 1930. On completion of his attachment to the Regular Army at Home he is due to return to New Zealand in August next.

2nd Lieutenants R. C. Queree, F. L. H. Davis, and B. Wicksteed, of the N.Z. Staff Corps, after graduating at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, and undergoing a period of training at Home, returned to the Dominion during the year.

#### (d) CADETS.

No Cadets were sent during the year to the British Service Colleges for ultimate commissions in the N.Z. Permanent Forces.

## (e) RETIREMENTS OF STAFF.

It became possible under the provisions of section 39 of the Finance Act, 1930 (No. 2), to retire a number of the staff of the Department, both military and civil, as from the 31st March, 1931. The Act referred to authorized the retirement on superannuation of any member of the Permanent Force or the Permanent Staff under the Defence Act, 1909, or of the clerical staff of the Defence Department whose age or length of service was such that if five years had been added thereto they would have been enabled as of right or with the consent of the Minister of Defence to have given notice to retire voluntarily.

A total of seventy-six officers and other ranks was accordingly retired on superannuation as from the 31st March, 1931, under the authority of the section of the Act referred to. The suspension of military training and a reorganization of the work of the Department allowed also of the termination of the services of a number of others who were not entitled to a superannuation allowance. Sixty-seven members of the staff came under this category.

The following table summarizes the reductions effected as described above, together with those effected during the year prior to the passing of the Finance Act, 1930 (No. 2):—

Unit.	Officers.	Other Ranks, including Temporary Military Personnel.	Civil Employees.	Total.
N.Z. Staff Corps .. .. .	8	..	..	8
N.Z. Permanent Staff .. .. .	..	21	..	21
Royal N.Z. Artillery .. .. .	2	34	..	36
N.Z. Permanent Army Service Corps .. .. .	..	6	..	6
N.Z. Army Medical Corps .. .. .	1	..	..	1
N.Z. Army Ordnance Corps .. .. .	6	38	..	44
N.Z. Army Pay Corps .. .. .	2	4	..	6
General Duty Section .. .. .	..	14	..	14
Civil staff .. .. .	..	..	33	33
Totals .. .. .	19	117	33	169

## (f) ORDNANCE AND PAY SERVICES.

The personnel of the N.Z. Army Ordnance Corps (except officers and artificers) and the N.Z. Army Pay Corps, to a total of seventy-four, were transferred to the civil staff.

## (g) EARTHQUAKE RELIEF.

On account of the disastrous earthquake at Napier and Hastings on the 3rd February last, the Defence Department was called upon at short notice to supply tents, blankets, bedding, cooking and eating utensils, for use in the stricken areas. The total value of the stores issued from the Ordnance Stores at Trentham was £35,000.

The Ordnance staff did particularly good work in despatching these stores and equipment.

All members of the military staff in the earthquake area were detailed for relief work, as well as personnel from other centres, and on the 6th March, 1931, there were twelve officers and forty-six other ranks employed in connection with the relief camps.

All ranks so engaged are deserving of great credit for the manner in which they carried out their duties under trying conditions.

## 2. CIVIL UNDER-SECRETARY.

Under section 34 of the Finance Act, 1930 (No. 2), provision was made to appoint an officer of the Public Service, under the Public Service Act, 1912, to be Under-Secretary of Defence. In pursuance of this authority Mr. H. Turner, Assistant Public Trustee, was appointed to the position. Mr. Turner assumed the duties of Under-Secretary as from the 10th November, 1930.

## 3. AIR SERVICES.

## (a) N.Z. PERMANENT AIR FORCE.

The strength of the N.Z. Permanent Air Force is now ten officers and forty-five other ranks, which represents a slight increase over that of the previous year.

Owing to pressure of economy, the liaison office at the Air Ministry was closed down in February, and Squadron-Leader T. M. Wilkes, M.C., who had been carrying out valuable work as liaison officer, was recalled.

Squadron-Leader J. L. Findlay, M.C., after completion of training in England, returned to the Dominion in November, and resumed command of Wigram Aerodrome, Christchurch.

Although no Army co-operation work took place during the year, two instructive exercises were carried out with the Navy in December and March. Between the 2nd and 5th December the Fairey III F seaplane from Hobsonville Air Base co-operated with H.M.S. "Dunedin" during annual practice in the Hauraki Gulf. The seaplane rendered valuable assistance in the spotting of torpedoes and observation of fire, and also provided the drogue for anti-aircraft practices. In March a Moth seaplane was used for the spotting of torpedoes and observation of fire during exercises with H.M.S. "Diomedé."

The aerial survey of some 300 square miles in the Maniototo district (South Island) is nearing completion. Delays occasioned in finishing this survey have been due partly to lack of suitable equipment and partly to climatological difficulties.

During the disastrous earthquake in the Hawke's Bay District in February all the available pilots and machines of the Permanent Air Force were employed in relief measures, a brief account of which is given under subhead (c).

#### (b) N.Z. AIR FORCE (TERRITORIAL).

Since August the N.Z. Air Force (Territorial) has been organized as a wing, consisting of four squadrons, of which two are Army co-operation squadrons and two are bomber squadrons. To each of these units an officer of the N.Z. Permanent Air Force has been appointed as Adjutant. This organization, although somewhat premature in view of the limited equipment available, facilitates both administration and training, and develops *esprit de corps* within the units.

The strength of the N.Z. Air Force is sixty-six officers, including six Aero Club trained pilots who have been recently granted commissions.

The scheme whereby young Aero Club pilots are granted commissions in the Air Force by selection and examination is most promising, and from this source the bulk of the pilot officers for the Air Force will be drawn in the future.

Owing to the necessity for further economy, the usual refresher courses were restricted to two short courses for junior officers, held at Wigram Aerodrome in March and April. These courses were attended by twenty-six officers, who carried out 270 hours' flying in addition to ground training.

In order to maintain flying efficiency during the year, squadrons have carried out cross-country formation flights using Air Force machines supplemented by Government Moth aeroplanes from the Aero Clubs. The total flying-time for these flights was 210 hours.

#### (c) HAWKE'S BAY EARTHQUAKE.

During the earthquake period in the Hawke's Bay District valuable services were performed by Air Force and civilian pilots engaged in relief operations. Between the 4th and 15th February twenty-two light aeroplanes flew approximately 45,000 miles, carrying mails, urgent stores, and passengers to and from the devastated area. On the 4th February a complete chlorinating plant was sent from Auckland to Hastings by air. Between the 6th and 15th February a mail and urgent stores service was operating from Hastings to Wellington and Auckland, two 'planes flying daily from each centre. On this service approximately 200 mail-bags and parcels of telegrams and quantities of medical stores, in addition to passengers, were carried.

#### (d) AIRCRAFT AND EQUIPMENT.

The total number of aircraft on charge at Wigram Aerodrome is sixteen machines, which comprise :—

- (i) *Service types*.—Three Gloster Grebe single-seater Fighters and five Bristol Fighters, the latter being Army co-operation machines.
- (ii) *Training Types*.—Four Hawker Tomtits and three D.H. Moths.
- (iii) *Passenger Machine*.—One D.H. 50 four-seater.

Both the Grebes and the Bristol Fighters are obsolescent. There is now only one squadron of the latter in the British Empire, and this squadron is being re-equipped this year. The four Avro 504K machines, being of no further use for training purposes, were sold by public tender in May.

At Hobsonville the serviceable aircraft consist of one Fairey III F (with seaplane and land undercarriage), one Saunders Roe "Cutty Sark" flying-boat, and three D.H. Moths (including one seaplane). In October a Fairey III F seaplane was extensively damaged while undergoing speed trials over water. This machine has been returned to the makers for reconditioning or exchange.

#### (e) N.Z. AIR FORCE AERODROMES.

All work, with the exception of a few minor contracts, ceased at the Hobsonville Seaplane Base at the end of August. The base is complete, with the exception of a few minor buildings, such as wireless and photographic rooms and single men's quarters; and the hangar blocks workshops and stores buildings still require interior fittings.

At Wigram Aerodrome, Christchurch, a hangar and up-to-date workshops are required.

#### (f) CIVIL AVIATION.

##### (1) Commercial Aviation.

During the past year practically no progress has been made in the development of commercial air activities. Of the two major companies formed in 1929, the National Airways (N.Z.), Ltd., has not committed itself to any active operations, and the Dominion Air Lines, Ltd., which obtained a four-passenger "Windhover" flying-boat last December, has since been forced into liquidation. Eight minor companies are engaged in intermittent air-taxi work, using light 2-3-seater 'planes. The Gisborne Airways, Ltd., has been operating for the past three months a daily service with light 'planes between Gisborne and Hastings.

The present position as regards civil aviation is illustrated by the following statistics showing registrations of aircraft, &c., and licenses valid on the 31st May :—

Pilots " A " license .. .. .	152
Pilots " B " commercial license .. .. .	27
Aerodromes .. .. .	17
Aircraft .. .. .	59
Ground engineers .. .. .	38

A considerable portion of the time of certain personnel of the N.Z. Permanent Air Force is devoted to the administration of the Aviation Regulations, and in certain phases of this work increases in personnel will soon be essential. This particularly applies to the work involved in periodical inspections of civil aircraft.

#### (2) Aero Club Movement.

A total of nine clubs have received assistance under the Government scheme of subsidizing light aero clubs. These clubs, operating thirty aeroplanes (of which sixteen are on loan from the Government), have trained *ab initio* 190 pilots for their " A " licenses.

The clubs have received £3,080 on account of subsidies for trained " A " license pilots.

### 4. TERRITORIAL FORCE.

#### (a) COMMANDS.

A number of changes in the command of brigades and units were effected. To those officers who relinquished their commands on expiry of their four years' service in these important appointments I wish to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation of the good work performed by them in the training of the Territorial Force, especially during the difficulties of the year.

#### (b) STRENGTH.

The strength of the Territorial Force is shown in Appendix I.

#### (c) GENERAL.

Reference was made in my predecessor's report for the year ending 31st May, 1930, to the cancellation of camps for the remainder of the 1930-31 training-year. A drastic reduction was also made in the Defence estimates for 1930-31, rendering it necessary to adopt a substantial change of policy in order to bring expenditure within the allotted limit. This was effected, as far as the Territorial Force was concerned, by discharging the bulk of the personnel, retaining in each unit only sufficient officers and N.C.O.s to form a framework (or " cadre ") on which expansion could be made when possible. It was fully recognized that the cadre system could only serve as a temporary measure, since it does not provide a satisfactory means of training either officers or N.C.O.s, and interest is difficult to maintain under such conditions. Care was taken, however, to maintain intact the Divisional and Mounted Rifles Brigade organization on which the Territorial Force is based.

In spite of the severe handicaps imposed by the cadre system and by the atmosphere of uncertainty surrounding the future of military affairs, the officers and N.C.O.s remaining with units continued to train in a most praiseworthy way. Great credit is due to them for their entirely voluntary efforts in very difficult circumstances, and there can be no doubt that the fine spirit displayed by them will be of incalculable value to the Territorial Force in the future.

In accordance with Government policy, the Territorial Force has been reorganized on a voluntary basis. The new scheme came into force on the 1st June, 1931. It provides for the continuance of the Territorial Force, recruits being obtained by voluntary enlistment, with a strength of some 10,000, as compared with some 16,000 under the system of compulsory service. This reduction in personnel has been brought about by adopting smaller peace establishments for certain units (*e.g.*, Infantry and Mounted Rifles), but care has been taken to ensure a proper allotment of officers, N.C.O.s, and men within units to enable progressive training to be satisfactorily carried out and to provide for a rapid expansion to a war footing if necessary. The Divisional organization has been adhered to; it is very convenient for administration in peace, and will form the basis of our actual requirements in war.

### 5. CADETS.

Simultaneously with the reduction of the Territorial Force units to cadre strengths, as mentioned in paragraph 4 (c) of this report, a sweeping change was made in the policy of training Cadets. All Cadets, other than those belonging to secondary-school units, were discharged, and Cadet training ceased except at secondary schools. The units at these schools were continued on a voluntary basis, and I am pleased to report that there is a general desire on the part of the school authorities to encourage the training of their Cadet corps. The Department is assisting in every way possible, by the provision of instructors and equipment, to make the training useful and interesting. The Secondary School Cadet corps form a valuable recruiting-pool for the Territorial Force, particularly as regards officers and N.C.O.s, and it is intended to encourage the formation of specialist sections at the schools wherever possible, to afford training in artillery, engineer, signal, machine-gun, and other work.

Several secondary schools have held " barracks " during the year, at which continuous training has been carried out.

## 6. NEW ZEALAND ARMY RIFLE ASSOCIATION.

Owing to financial considerations it was not possible for the New Zealand Army Rifle Association to hold its annual meeting during the training year 1930-31. In previous annual reports the value of these meetings has been fully emphasized, and it is essential that they be resumed when funds are available. They are a valuable test of the standard of weapon training attained by units, and experience has shown that the competition involved is a great stimulus to this important branch of instruction.

## 7. RIFLE CLUBS.

The membership of Rifle Clubs increased during the year by 397. Seven clubs were disbanded and six new ones formed. The number and membership of clubs are shown in Appendix I.

Service rifles are now issued on loan to reservists of the Territorial Force on their joining a Defence Rifle Club.

The supply of free ammunition to Rifle Clubs was also increased, in order to encourage Territorials to join clubs during the period when training was partially suspended and so maintain their efficiency.

The National Rifle Association held its annual meeting at Trentham in March last.

## 8. DEFENCE WORKS, MOBILIZATION DEPOTS, AND TRAINING-CAMPS, ETC.

### (a) OFFICE PREMISES AND DRILL-HALLS.

The General Headquarters Staff of the Defence Department has for many years been housed in quarters situated on Mount Cook, Wellington.

During 1930 the National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum Act was passed, which vested in a Board of Trustees, as a site for the National Art Gallery, the Dominion Museum, the War Memorial Carillon, and Hall of Memories, an area of 9 acres 1 rood 30 perches, being part of the Mount Cook Reserve, occupied by the Defence Department.

It consequently became necessary to vacate the buildings on this site, and the General Headquarters Staff has now been accommodated in a two-story building at the corner of Buckle and Taranaki Streets.

The Ordnance Workshops, also formerly located at Mount Cook, have been moved to Trentham Camp.

The drill-hall at Gisborne, destroyed by fire, is not being rebuilt at present.

I am pleased to report that the drill-halls at Napier and Hastings were not damaged by the recent earthquake, and were able to be used for relief purposes.

Command Headquarters at Auckland and Christchurch, previously accommodated in rented buildings, have now been transferred to drill-halls in the respective cities.

The offices occupied by Central Command Headquarters at Palmerston North were destroyed by fire, and are not being rebuilt. The Headquarters has been transferred to Wellington, and is located at Buckle Street.

Other buildings have been maintained in good order.

### (b) MOBILIZATION DEPOTS AND TRAINING-CAMPS.

*Waikato Camp.*—The maintenance of the buildings, previously undertaken by the Public Works Department, is being carried out by this Department.

Further areas have been leased for grazing purposes, and the clearing of the property of noxious weeds and the general improvement of the land is being continued to the best advantage.

*Trentham Camp.*—Owing to the reorganization, the maintenance of the buildings, &c., in this area, formerly undertaken by the Public Works Department, is now being carried out by the Ordnance Workshop personnel.

*Burnham Camp.*—The maintenance of the buildings and the clearing of noxious weeds from the property is being carried out to the best advantage.

### (c) RIFLE RANGES.

Rifle ranges have been maintained in good order.

## 9. FINANCE.

The total amount voted by Parliament for the year 1930-31, less credits-in-aid, was £332,200, which was to be reduced by economies to be effected during the year, £57,200, to the sum of £275,000. The actual net expenditure for the year amounted to £277,799, being £2,799 in excess of the net sum voted.

The net expenditure on military and civil aviation for the year was £48,749, as compared with £55,102 expended during the previous year; while for other Defence purposes the respective amounts were £229,050 and £389,726.

Appendix II shows in tabular form the expenditure on Defence over the last five years.

The authority for £5,000 per annum for the provision of gun-ammunition for practice and reserve, mentioned in the last annual report, has not been utilized during the year. Orders already placed in the United Kingdom for some of this ammunition have been cancelled.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

W. L. H. SINCLAIR-BURGESS, Major-General,  
Commanding N.Z. Military Forces.

## APPENDICES.

## APPENDIX I.—TABLES SHOWING STRENGTH OF THE N.Z. MILITARY FORCES AS AT 31ST MARCH, 1931.

## (a) N.Z. PERMANENT FORCES.

Unit.	Officers.	Other Ranks.	Total.
N.Z. Staff Corps .. .. .	60	..	60
N.Z. Permanent Staff .. .. .	..	116	116
Royal N.Z. Artillery .. .. .	14	72	86
N.Z. Permanent Air Force .. .. .	10	45	55
N.Z. Permanent Army Service Corps .. .. .	..	6	6
N.Z. Army Medical Corps .. .. .	..	1	1
N.Z. Army Ordnance Corps .. .. .	2	19	21
General Duty Section .. .. .	..	4	4
Totals .. .. .	86	263	349

## (b) N.Z. TERRITORIAL FORCE.

Arm of the Service.	Officers.	Warrant Officers and Non-commissioned Officers.	Total.
Mounted Rifles .. .. .	201	745	946
Artillery .. .. .	115	454	569
Engineers .. .. .	32	89	121
Signals .. .. .	24	75	99
Infantry .. .. .	359	1,091	1,450
Air Force .. .. .	68	..	68
Army Service Corps .. .. .	21	70	91
Medical Corps .. .. .	129	160	289
Veterinary Corps .. .. .	22	..	22
Totals .. .. .	971	2,684	3,655

## (c) SECONDARY-SCHOOL CADETS.

Command.	Officers.	Other Ranks.	Total.
Northern .. .. .	85	4,243	4,328
Central .. .. .	112	5,164	5,276
Southern .. .. .	127	6,243	6,370
Totals .. .. .	324	15,650	15,974

## (d) DEFENCE RIFLE CLUBS.

Command.	Number of Clubs.	Membership.
Northern .. .. .	20	763
Central .. .. .	53	1,823
Southern .. .. .	64	2,117
Totals .. .. .	137	4,703

## APPENDIX II.—NET EXPENDITURE DURING LAST FIVE YEARS.

Year.					Military Forces.	Aviation.	Total.
<i>Defence Vote.</i>							
					£	£	£
1926-27	..	..	..	..	466,556	26,717	493,273
1927-28	..	..	..	..	453,580	28,179	481,759
1928-29	..	..	..	..	425,813	38,782	464,595
1929-30	..	..	..	..	401,645	53,183	454,828
1930-31	..	..	..	..	229,050	48,749	277,799
<i>Public Works Fund.—Vote, Contingent Defence.</i>							
1926-27	..	..	..	..	33,115	899	34,014
1927-28	..	..	..	..	39,706	280	39,986
1928-29	..	..	..	..	23,029	44,623	67,652
1929-30	..	..	..	..	7,896	38,870	46,766
1930-31	..	..	..	..	363	13,449	13,812

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