

1932.

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.

Wellington, 30th July, 1932.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the following report on the New Zealand Military Forces for the period 1st June, 1931, to 31st May, 1932 :—

I. N.Z. PERMANENT FORCES.

(a) COMMANDS AND STAFF.

Colonel J. H. Whyte, D.S.O., D.C.M., N.Z.S.C., who relinquished command of the Central Command on the 22nd December, 1930, retired on the 30th June, 1931.

Colonel F. Symon, C.M.G., D.S.O., R.N.Z.A., Director of Artillery and O.C. Central Command, was appointed A.D.C. to the King as from the 22nd July, 1931.

Wing-Commander S. Grant-Dalton, D.S.O., A.F.C., R.A.F. (Retd.), relinquished the appointment of Director of Air Services on the 30th September, 1931, and returned to England.

Squadron-Leader T. M. Wilkes, M.C., N.Z.P.A.F., was appointed Director of Air Services on the 1st October, 1931.

Major W. G. Stevens, R.N.Z.A., was appointed General Staff Officer (Intelligence and Staff Duties) at G.H.Q., in addition to his appointment of O.C. G.H.Q. Training Depot, Trentham Camp, dated the 23rd November, 1931.

Hon. Colonel H. H. Sterling relinquished the appointment of Director of Railways, and the appointment has been taken up by Hon. Colonel P. G. Roussell (General Manager, N.Z. Railways).

(b) MILITARY EDUCATION.

Captain L. G. Goss, N.Z.S.C., after completing his attachments to the British Regular Army in England, returned to New Zealand on the 23rd August, 1931, and took up the appointment of A.A. and Q.M.G., Central Command.

There are now no officers of the N.Z. Permanent Forces undergoing instruction abroad, nor are there any Cadets at the British Service Colleges whose fees are being paid by the New Zealand Government.

New Zealand has had no representative at the Imperial Defence College since 1930, and for financial reasons we have been unable to nominate an officer to attend in 1933.

I would emphasize the valuable and special training which is carried out at the Imperial Defence College. If the College is to fully carry out its functions, it is essential that all the overseas dominions should continue their representation, and it is therefore hoped that it will be possible in 1934 for New Zealand to resume its nominations.

(c) OFFICERS SECONDED.

The period of secondment of Captain K. L. Stewart, M.B.E., N.Z.S.C., with the Ceylon Defence Forces has been extended until the 13th January, 1934.

Lieutenant G. H. Heal, N.Z.S.C., returned from Samoa on the 2nd August, 1931, and ceased to be seconded for service with the Department of External Affairs.

(d) RESIGNATIONS.

Lieutenant E. G. Moncrief, M.C., N.Z.S.C., resigned on the 30th April, 1932. Two warrant officers of the N.Z. Permanent Staff also resigned during the year.

(e) CADETSHIPS, ETC., IN BRITISH REGULAR FORCES.

During the year the opportunities open to New Zealand to *(a)* join the British Service Colleges, and *(b)* take up commissions or apprenticeships in the Royal Air Force, have been more keenly sought than hitherto.

(f) VACANCIES IN N.Z. PERMANENT FORCE.

The vacancies in establishments brought about by retirements and resignations on and since the 31st March, 1931, have not been filled, and therefore it will be necessary in the near future to enlist recruits for the N.Z. Permanent Staff in order to make good these deficiencies.

(g) TRAINING.

There have now been no courses of instruction or special training for the personnel of the Permanent Forces for over two years. It is of vital importance that all ranks of the Permanent Forces should be kept up to date, and it is hoped that in the forthcoming year the annual courses held previously will be resumed.

2. AIR SERVICES.

(a) N.Z. PERMANENT AIR FORCE.

The strength of the New Zealand Permanent Air Force remained unaltered during the year under review.

Although both the personnel and aircraft have remained practically unaltered, the amount of maintenance work caused by the inevitable deterioration of equipment has increased so extensively that some increase in the number of aircraftmen employed in the technical trades is a matter of urgency.

During the year under review a limited amount of co-operation with both the Navy and the Army was carried out. As regards naval co-operation, five distinct series of exercises have been carried out with H.M.S. "Diomedé" by one Fairey III F seaplane working from the Hobsonville Air Base. These exercises, which have been of considerable value to both Services, have included searching, height-finding, sleeve-target practices, observation of fall of shot, and camera-gun practices. With the Army, air observation was provided for the annual shoots of the 18th Medium Battery N.Z.A. at Rotorua, and the 10th Field and 16th Light Batteries at Matarua, Otago.

The essential nature of this type of work and the mutual benefits conferred demand that every effort should be made to increase co-operation between the Services.

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

As mentioned in my previous report, the officers of the N.Z. Air Force (Territorial) were organized into four squadrons in August, 1930, and since that date two annual courses have been carried out.

The future value of these formations as Air Force units depends solely upon the provision of an adequate nucleus of permanent personnel and equipment. As yet there is no formed unit on a permanent basis in the N.Z. Air Force, and without such a foundation any attempts to develop the Territorial Air Force on lines comparable with similar units in other parts of the Empire cannot be efficiently undertaken.

The series of squadron courses held between January and March last were attended by fifty-eight officers, who carried out an aggregate of over 500 hours' flying on the training machines and the Bristol Fighters. The time, both in the air and on the ground, was devoted to elementary instruction in reconnaissance duties, artillery observation, navigation, air gunnery, bombing, and formation flying.

The progress made was satisfactory, and the keenness displayed by pilots attending the courses was exemplary. There was no injury to personnel although three D.H. Moth aircraft and one Hawker Tomtit were damaged. In view of the lack of continuity in flying training, this cannot be considered abnormal. It is worthy of mention that a proportion of officers do maintain their flying during the year at their own expense with the various aero clubs.

(c) AIRCRAFT AND EQUIPMENT.

The number of aircraft on charge at the two Air Force stations is as follows:—

Hobsonville: One Fairey III F seaplane, one Cutty Sark flying-boat, and three D.H. Moth aircraft.

Wigram: Five Bristol Fighters, three Grebe S.S. Fighters, four Hawker Tomtit, and three D.H. Moth training machines, and one Puss Moth for photographic and communication purposes.

The Fairey III F seaplane is the only Service type still in use in other parts of the British Empire. The utility of this machine will be considerably reduced during the coming year owing to the necessity for air-frame and engine overhauls. If naval co-operation is to continue on the same scale an additional Fairey III F is essential.

Of the other Service machines, the Bristol Fighters and Grebes are now six years old, and their maintenance is becoming increasingly difficult both in respect of personnel and supply of spares. A large proportion of the Air Force vote, assuming that it remains unaltered for the ensuing year, will be expended in the supply of spares for the maintenance of these obsolete types.

In August a D.H. Puss Moth was purchased from a private owner in New Zealand for the sum of £1,000. The machine has been adapted for aerial photography, for which purpose it is more economical than the Service types.

The D.H. 50 four-passenger machine has been offered for sale by public tender.

The lack of technical accessories has militated both against the training of the Permanent and Territorial Air Force in essential military duties, and also against the utilization of the Air Force in certain public services, such as survey, &c. It is hoped to make provision for such equipment in the near future.

(d) N.Z. AIR FORCE AERODROMES.

Although the Seaplane Base at Hobsonville was completed (except for certain minor buildings) two years ago, no machine equipment essential for the maintenance of aircraft and engines has yet been installed. It is hoped to make provision for this urgent need in the present year's estimates.

At Wigram Aerodrome the construction of a dope-shop is also an urgent necessity.

Both aerodromes have been maintained in good order and minor improvements effected.

In December, 1931, a parcel of land comprising 81 acres, formerly occupied by the Canterbury Park Trotting Club, which adjoins the Wigram Aerodrome, was handed over to the Government by Sir Henry Wigram. This magnificent gift forms an invaluable addition to the present aerodrome, and arrangements are in hand to bring this area into immediate use.

(e) CIVIL AVIATION.

(1) *Commercial Aviation.*

Commercial aviation during the past year has been at a standstill. Nevertheless, there has been an appreciable increase in the number of pilots qualified for licenses, both in the private and commercial categories, as well as a steady improvement in the condition of existing aerodromes. This progress has been almost entirely due to the activities of the existing aero clubs, although, in several instances, local bodies have given valuable assistance in the development of existing sites. On the west coast of the South Island, although the terrain is generally unfavourable, local bodies are making every endeavour to obtain suitable sites.

Civil aviation statistics as at the 31st May were as follows:—

Pilot's "A" license	..	..	..	..	..	218
Pilot's "B" license	..	..	..	..	..	38
Aerodromes	..	..	..	..	..	21
Aircraft	..	..	..	..	..	64
Ground engineers	..	..	..	..	..	41

Air Navigation Regulations prepared under the authority of the Air Navigation Act, 1931, will be ready for issue in the course of the next few months, and will fill a long-felt want.

(2) *Aero Club Movement.*

Although it has not been possible to give the same measure of assistance during the past year to aero clubs, the movement has fully maintained its impetus. The number of pilots trained *ab initio* by these clubs last year reached the record figure of 116. The sum of £1,795 was paid to the clubs in the form of subsidies for "A" license pilots. No additional aircraft or material were loaned to aero clubs during the year.

(f) CONTROL OF AIR NAVIGATION.

During the year it became necessary to obtain further legislative authority to enable the Governor-General in Council to issue regulations for the proper control of air navigation in New Zealand. This was done by the passing of the Air Navigation Act, 1931, which is an adaptation, without material alteration, of the Air Navigation Act, 1920 (Imperial).

The new statute permits of local flying being regulated in accordance with the terms of the Convention relating to Aerial Navigation that was signed at Paris on the 13th day of October, 1919, and to which the New Zealand Government is a party.

The Air Navigation Act, 1931, repealed the Aviation Act, 1918.

3. TERRITORIAL FORCE.

(a) COMMANDS.

There have been the usual number of changes in command of brigades and units during the year. I wish to extend to those officers who vacated appointments my sincere thanks for the services they have so freely rendered.

(b) STRENGTH.

The strength of the Territorial Force is shown in Appendix I as at various dates throughout the year. It will be noted that there is a steady increase in numbers.

It has been found, on the whole, that country units are recruiting better than city units, and an endeavour will be made in the forthcoming year to raise the strengths of the latter.

On the whole, I am well pleased with the response in this, the first year of voluntary enlistment.

(c) OFFICERS.

The reduced establishment of the Territorial Force effected last year left practically all units with surplus officers, who have since been placed on the Regimental Supernumerary List or transferred to the Reserve of Officers.

(d) TRAINING.

In view of the very difficult economic and industrial conditions, the amount of training prescribed as obligatory was very small, that prior to collective field training in camp amounting only to some fifteen hours. Moreover, under the existing conditions it was not found possible to hold the usual six-day camps, and, owing to the limitations of finance, a shorter period of field training in bivouacs was substituted, without pay.

As this was the initial year under the new system of voluntary enlistment, recruits were accepted by all units throughout the year. This naturally has a detrimental effect upon training, as it is difficult to obtain progressive instruction when new men are constantly joining. This should improve in future years.

I am very pleased to report that practically every unit in the Dominion carried out, prior to bivouac, far more than the minimum training prescribed. Many units held week-end camps at their own expense.

The general training throughout has reflected great credit on all ranks.

I visited the bivouacs of practically all units, and was pleased to note the excellent type of soldier that voluntary recruiting has produced after the short while it has been in operation.

The percentage of attendance at the annual bivouac was, however, not quite as high as I would have liked—partly through lack of pay and partly through reluctance to apply to employers for leave. I have referred to this latter point elsewhere. The spirit of those attending, however, was excellent.

In the case of the Mounted Rifle Regiments, there were instances of men riding as far as fifty miles and more to attend their bivouacs. These units are, in fact, all very scattered, but their keenness is high in proportion and their *esprit de corps* fully equal to any of the other arms.

Speaking generally, the horses brought into bivouac were of an excellent type, some regiments in particular being very well mounted, and in the event of mobilization it is evident that only a comparatively small proportion of the troop-horses would have to be rejected as unsuitable for active service.

All batteries of Light, Field, and Medium Artillery carried out their annual live-shell practices as in previous years. The personnel of the 13th Coast Battery (Auckland) were taken to Wellington, and carried out their bivouac and shell practice seawards, in conjunction with the 15th Coast Battery, at Fort Dorset, Wellington.

Engineer Field Companies, in every case, did some constructional work—mainly bridging—during their bivouacs, and in one case a bridge of a permanent nature was built leading to the property of a farmer, who supplied the material.

Signal Depots are always very efficient, as the men are drawn from the personnel of the Post and Telegraph Department. All ranks of the N.Z. Corps of Signals have shown great keenness, but it will shortly be necessary to provide newer equipment for this arm. The divisional wireless equipment, originally issued to our Signal units, is now obsolete and entirely unserviceable. Nearly all of the wireless equipment at present in use, for instance, has been made by the men themselves.

The Infantry arm forms, naturally, the backbone of our Divisional Territorial system. All battalions held useful bivouacs, in one or two instances two units being in bivouac together.

During this early period of the scheme we have not attempted any advanced field training, but small tactical exercises were undertaken.

The spirit of country battalions is very high, and they are approaching full strength. City battalions are equally keen, but, generally speaking, their numbers are still low. This is partly accounted for by the fact that the four large cities have very many units to recruit, in addition to their Infantry regiments; also the four city battalions are on a higher establishment than those in the country.

By devoting a somewhat larger proportion of effort to automatic weapon training than is usual, it is hoped to maintain and develop interest in this arm, which occasionally suffers, compared with the more technical branches of the Service.

The Army Service Corps has recruited exceptionally well. All companies did practical work in their bivouacs—one company carrying out a five-days route march with horse transport, practising supply problems *en route*.

The Field Ambulances are not yet very strong in numbers, but every member is well up in his work and very keen.

To sum up: the spirit is good and the work is carried out with great keenness. Four days bivouac, however, is quite insufficient to produce any great results, and therefore in the coming year I consider it essential that all units should go into camp for the full six days, and receive pay for this period of field training.

In concluding the foregoing brief report on the Territorial Force, I should like to place on record my grateful thanks to those racing clubs, public bodies, and private property owners who have, as usual, helped us so much during the year by placing their property at our disposal. Without this generosity, in many cases it would not have been possible to hold bivouacs, owing to the expense involved.

Similarly, I would express my appreciation of the patriotism and citizenship of employers who facilitated the attendance of their employees at the annual bivouacs during this very difficult year.

(e) TERRITORIAL FORCE ASSOCIATIONS.

During the year a large number of Territorial Force Associations have either been actually formed or have continued their activities.

I cannot stress too strongly the importance of this association of the community in general with the Territorial Force, not only in assisting in various concrete matters, such as provision of sporting material, but in keeping the existence and welfare of the Forces before the eyes of the public; as is the case with the Territorial Associations in England, these public bodies can do so much to foster the general welfare, prestige, and recruiting of our citizen army.

My sincere thanks are extended to all members of the N.Z. Territorial Force Associations who have given their time and effort so willingly.

One matter, in particular, in which associations can help is the arranging with employers to grant leave to men to attend camps. In the past year there were many cases where men were loth to apply for leave, and some cases where employers were reluctant to grant it; actually this factor was in part responsible for the percentage of attendance at camps not being so high as was desirable.

I fully realize the difficulties with which employers are faced; but, on the other hand, their co-operation is essential, and it is in acting as a link between employers and the officers of the Department that the Territorial Force Associations can sometimes help so greatly.

4. CADETS.**(a) GENERAL.**

Cadets are now confined to corps from secondary schools, practically all colleges and high schools maintaining battalions or companies. The standard is higher than ever before. This is due in part to the increase in the number of Cadet specialist sections—Artillery, Engineers, Vickers Gun, and Medical Corps. Besides making the work more interesting, these sections will, in time, serve as a valuable recruiting-ground for the Territorial Force.

Several Cadet units carried out barrack training at no expense to the Department. I am grateful to the staffs of all secondary schools for the willing way in which they have co-operated with my officers, both in running barracks and in the general work throughout the year.

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

The Earl Roberts Imperial Cadet Trophy competition (an Empire competition) for 1931 was won by the Mount Albert Grammar School Cadets with a score of 306. As the next team in order of merit secured only 290 points, this indicates an outstanding performance on the part of the winners against Cadets in all parts of the Empire.

(b) REGIMENTAL CADET DETACHMENTS.

With the object of ensuring continuity in training in the case of Cadets who leave school before reaching the age of eighteen years, and who wish to join the Territorial Force, a regimental Cadet detachment for each Territorial unit has been authorized, the strength of which is not to exceed 20 per cent. of the parent unit.

5. N.Z. ARMY RIFLE ASSOCIATION.

Owing to financial considerations, it was again not possible to hold the annual meeting of the Army Rifle Association.

6. RIFLE CLUBS.

Since my last report the membership of Rifle Clubs has increased by 200, and there are five more clubs. Owing to the increasing strength of the Territorial Force, it was found necessary to withdraw the free loan of rifles to reservists of the Territorial Force who are members of Rifle Clubs, and to cease the special free issue of 300 rounds of ammunition to such members on their joining clubs, but as a special concession these members were permitted to purchase rifles on time-payment. All new members still receive a free issue of 200 rounds on joining, 250 rounds when they fire the necessary classification course, and a further fifty rounds on qualifying as marksmen.

There has been some objection to the quality of the ammunition supplied to Rifle Clubs, but in the interests of economy it was not practicable to supply new ammunition and leave on the Department's hands the older make.

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

7. DEFENCE WORKS, MOBILIZATION DEPOTS, TRAINING-CAMPS, RIFLE RANGES, AND OFFICE PREMISES.

Generally, these are in fair condition. Only urgent repairs have been carried out during the year. This means that the normal maintenance work is accumulating. Rifle ranges have all been inspected in accordance with the new regulations regarding safety precautions, and I regret to report that it has been necessary, in the interests of public safety, to close down several ranges.

8. FINANCE.

The departmental vote for 1931-32 was reduced to a net amount of £215,000. By the exercise of the strictest economy, and owing to certain commitments not materializing and to credits-in-aid realizing a larger sum than was estimated, the net expenditure for the year amounted to only £182,974, representing an expenditure of £181,192 on land defence and £28,280 on military and civil aviation, less credits-in-aid realized (£26,498).

In previous years it was customary to make provision in the Public Works vote under the heading of "Contingent Defence" for the estimated capital expenditure required for new buildings and additions to existing assets, and for any other work of a developmental nature contemplated; but during the year under review this item was excised from the Public Works vote, and in future any expenditure of the nature indicated will need to be provided for in the Defence Department's vote.

In Appendix II will be found in tabular form the expenditure on Defence over the last five years.

It has to be pointed out that the demands of economy during the year have prevented attention being given to many essential repairs and replacements of military armament, equipment, stores, buildings, and material generally, and that many of these matters will require to be taken in hand in the near future if the Department is not to be faced at some future date with a cumulative heavy expenditure to make good these deficiencies and to place the material again in serviceable condition.

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.

(a) N.Z. PERMANENT FORCES AS AT 31ST MAY, 1932.

Unit.	Officers.	Other Ranks.	Total.
N.Z. Staff Corps	59	..	59
N.Z. Permanent Staff .. .. .	..	110	110
Royal N.Z. Artillery	14	68	82
N.Z. Permanent Air Force	9	45	54
N.Z. Permanent Army Service Corps .. .. .	..	6	6
N.Z. Army Medical Corps .. .. .	..	1	1
N.Z. Army Ordnance Corps	2	18	20
General Duty Section .. .. .	..	4	4
Totals	84	252	336

(b) N.Z. TERRITORIAL FORCE AS AT 31ST MAY, 1932.

Arm or Service.	Officers.	Warrant Officers and Non-commissioned Officers.	Men.	Total.
Mounted Rifles	147	292	1,125	1,564
Artillery	100	331	1,030	1,461
Engineers	19	35	161	215
Signals	17	26	140	183
Infantry	208	426	2,271	2,905
Army Service Corps	17	72	198	287
Medical Corps	106	39	156	301
Veterinary Corps	22	..	..	22
Totals	636	1,221	5,081	6,938

NOTE.—In addition to the above, there are 392 officers on the Regimental Supernumerary Lists, 539 bandmen, and 89 prospective recruits for the Territorial Force in regimental cadet detachments.

(c) TERRITORIAL FORCE.

Command.	Strength for Quarter ended							
	31st August, 1931.		30th November, 1931.		29th February, 1932.		31st May, 1932.	
	Officers.	Other Ranks.	Officers.	Other Ranks.	Officers.	Other Ranks.	Officers.	Other Ranks.
Northern	207	1,431	207	1,757	205	1,833	211	1,984
Central	178	1,603	198	1,820	199	1,875	202	1,989
Southern	221	1,829	227	2,086	221	2,198	223	2,329
Totals	606	4,863	632	5,663	625	5,906	636	6,302

NOTE.—In addition to the above there are 392 officers on the Regimental Supernumerary List.

(d) CADETS AS AT 31ST MAY, 1932.

Command.						Officers.	Other Ranks.	Total.
Northern	..	..	..	..	..	105	4,570	4,675
Central	..	..	..	..	..	103	5,089	5,192
Southern	..	..	..	..	..	125	6,991	7,116
Totals	..	..	..	..	..	333	16,650	16,983

(e) DEFENCE RIFLE CLUBS AS AT 31ST MAY, 1932.

Command.						Number of Clubs.	Membership.
Northern	..	..	..	..	..	21	779
Central	..	..	..	..	..	53	1,877
Southern	..	..	..	..	..	68	2,304
Totals	..	..	..	..	..	142	4,960

APPENDIX II.—NET EXPENDITURE DURING LAST FIVE YEARS.

Year.						Military Forces.	Aviation	Total.
<i>Defence Vote.</i>								
						£	£	£
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
1931-32	..	..	..	..	..	156,311	26,663	182,974
<i>Public Works Fund.—Vote, Contingent Defence.</i>								
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
1931-32	Nil	Nil	Nil

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