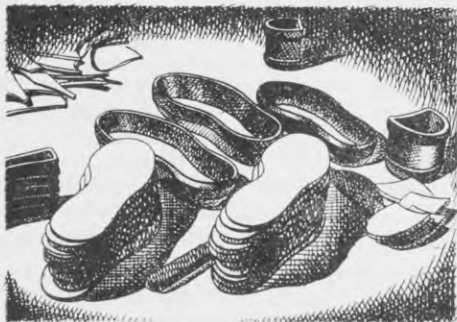


are "Well Made, New Zealand." Sheet steel for toe and heel plates is imported, but cut in Taranaki, and, though the cotton from which laces are made in Auckland must be imported, the leather thong that laces up the Army boot is as much a New Zealand product as the upper and sole leather.

Not only is the boot New Zealand made, but our production has been able to meet the demands of all the Services. This has required an amazing expansion and modification of the footwear industry. Ten or twelve factories produced industrial boots before the war. To-day thirty to thirty-five are making footwear of all types for the Services, and at their peak period were turning out 20,000 pairs a week. Even Mount Eden prisoners were producing Army boots at the rate of fifty pairs a week and making a good job of them. A trade school was established in Auckland (the centre of a third of our production) to train operators. The Services and the manufacturers were constantly in conference modifying old specifications and suggesting new ones.

Now the factories are making black boots for the rank and file, tan boots for officers, flying-boots (sheep-skin lined) for the Air Force, dress shoes for the Navy on leave, boots for the Women's Land Army, shoes for W.A.A.F.S., W.A.A.C.S., and W.R.E.N.S., sandals for the tropics, deck shoes for troop-ships, cooks' boots for Navy galleys, and field boots for the Marines. These are but



Pattern knives, operated by a heavy press, cut out the soles. The odd pieces of leather, cut out by a similar process, provide the heel lifts.

a few of the varieties produced. In truth New Zealand's footwear production is effectively showing that our army marches on its feet.

The battle-scarred boots on the title page saw action in Greece and Crete. They were an odd assortment. This is the story of the new, shiny, creaky boots that replaced them and many another battered boot whose job had also been "Well Done, New Zealand."

The tanned hides come from the tanneries as half-skins each of about 20 square feet. The upper leather is from the same type of hide as the sole, but is more pliable because of different and more intensive treatment in the tannery. First to the clicking department, where the uppers are cut out with a sharp knife run round the edge of a steel-bordered pattern. This is skilled work, for not only must the cutter be able to use each hide to the utmost advantage, but he must also be able to pick flaws in the leather. Five years is the apprenticeship period, and even then many more years' experience are required to make the expert.

Three and three-quarter square feet of leather go into the uppers of each pair of boots, so that each half-hide produces about 6½ pairs. There are six patterns to each upper.

The men cut out twenty-four assorted pairs at a time, ranging from size 5 to size 10, and these are differentiated with colour markings.

In another department large presses are cutting out the sole and heel leathers from heavier hides. The outer sole is usually from the back hide of an ox, called a "bend." The shoulder and belly hides provide the inner and inner runner soles.

The bends are cut to different lengths by a guillotine and are graded as to quality and the size sole they will produce. Then a heavy pattern knife of varying size and shaped like a sole is placed over the leather. Down comes a heavy press, cutting out the sole. The odd pieces of leather, cut out by a similar process, provide the heel lifts.

To return to the uppers. Each of the six patterns is fed through a skiving-machine, which shaves off the edges so