

^{The} RANGIORA GUNNER

ORGAN: ARTILLERY TRAINING DEPOT

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EDITORIAL

This issue of "THE RANGIORA GUNNER" (our third) will also be our Christmas Number. We have endeavoured to leaven our pages with a certain amount of seasonal matter and light reading generally.

As our regular appearance depends upon paper supplies it is possible that future publication will be irregular, but nevertheless we continue to hope to pop up more or less regularly as circumstances permit. We extend a further invitation for original contributions such as short stories (humorous or otherwise), topical articles and notes, verse, etc. Cartoons from artist readers are especially welcome. All matter for publication should be left with the Y.M.C.A. Secretary.

The following excerpt from a recent issue of "CONTACT", the magazine of the R.N.Z.A.F. is not out of place here:-

"A sense of humour is basically a sense of proportion. Because proportion is allied to perspective, it is vital that we preserve our sense of humour at all times. A Briton (or a New Zealander) without a sense of humour is not a true Briton (or New Zealander at all."

And so we trust the keynote of "THE RANGIORA GUNNER" is a sense of humour, gleaned from our surroundings, contacts, fellowship, and work from day to day. . .

We ask you to make "THE GUNNER" a bright record of our past and future, and we will steadily gather momentum and assurance in our venture.

We take this opportunity to wish the Compliments of the Season to all Officers and N.C.O.'s; the boys" themselves; Les. of the Y.M.C.A.; the ladies who preside at the buffet night after night, and our contributors (may their tribe increase).

Our next number will probably appear late in January, 1943, circumstances permitting.

WELCOME CLUB, King Street Monday, Tuesday, Wedn. Thurs. Games, Supper

Y. M. C. A. NOTES

The Defence Service Engineers (and, of course, the Camp "Boys" who lent a ready hand) have made a splendid job of the new Hut. With the considerable numbers now in Camp the new building has proved bearly large enough to accommodate the entire Camp at once. They usually overflow into the old ganteen and sundry other corners far from the "madding crowd" to quote Thomas Hardy.

The ladies who so kindly feed the "hungry lions" each night went into rhapsodies over the new kitchen with its diverse gadgets for this and that. We understand that the colour scheme for the said kitchen is to be cream and red. "Nothing like a spot of colour!" said a Gunner, after he had painted the town red. He now looks exceedingly yellow after his debunkle. But we are wandering from the subject.

The Labour Representation Committee have kindly donated a number of books and magazines to the Camp Library. Probably by the time these notes appear the large numbers of books at present stored will be classified and arranged on the shelves to be built for them in a suitable corner of the Y.M.C.A.

Les's "cubby-hole" has been the scene of much activity lately. In addition to being the editorial sanctum of the "Gunner", it has also been the scene of much high-pressure work in the realms of play-writing (or rather sketch-writing) for the forthcoming stage presentation by the "boys" at the Rangiora Town Hall early in December. It is to be a wow of a show, but more details are given elsewhere in this number.

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SECRECY INSTRUCTIONS

(Stop Press)

A new version of "Keep It Dark" letters:-

"Dear Mother, - I have arrived somewhere somehow. Sometime soon I'm leaving for somewhere else. Keep this well under your hat. - Your loving son, ANGUS."

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Sergeant: Any of you men got a dirty uniform?

Gunner Jones: (hoping for a new uniform) Yes, Sergeant, look at me.

Sergeant: You'll do. Report tomorrow morning at 6.30 for coal shovelling.

A young recruit had just returned to camp after a few day's leave and on meeting his mate, he said to him: "Hey, Blue, did you hear that the Sergeant fell in the ditch last night and broke his leg?"

"Sh-h-h-h, not so loud," answered Blue. "That's to morrow night."

NOTES BY THE WAY

(by "DODO")

Gunner W.S. became so homesick the other evening standing on the porch at the Y.M. Hut that he burst forth (entirely unheralded) into the strain of "Last Night on the Back Porch." His manly voice floated into the tranquil night as he gazed in a dreary fashion at a yellow moon and star-gazed - literally. The poor fellow, apparently moon-struck, tripped on the porch step and bit the hard earth in large mouthfuls. This will serve to explain the recent pot-holes close to the Hut. In commemoration of the event our Camp poet threw a fit and wrote the following tribute which sees the light of publication for the first and the last time:-

"In ecstasy he sang upon the porch
 In dulcet tones and sweet
 The large bright moon was yellow
 He tripped, and frightfully cursed
 his feet;
 His language vile was I fear
 Just too terrible to hear,
 About his head whirled purple stars
 Did his face collide with Mars?

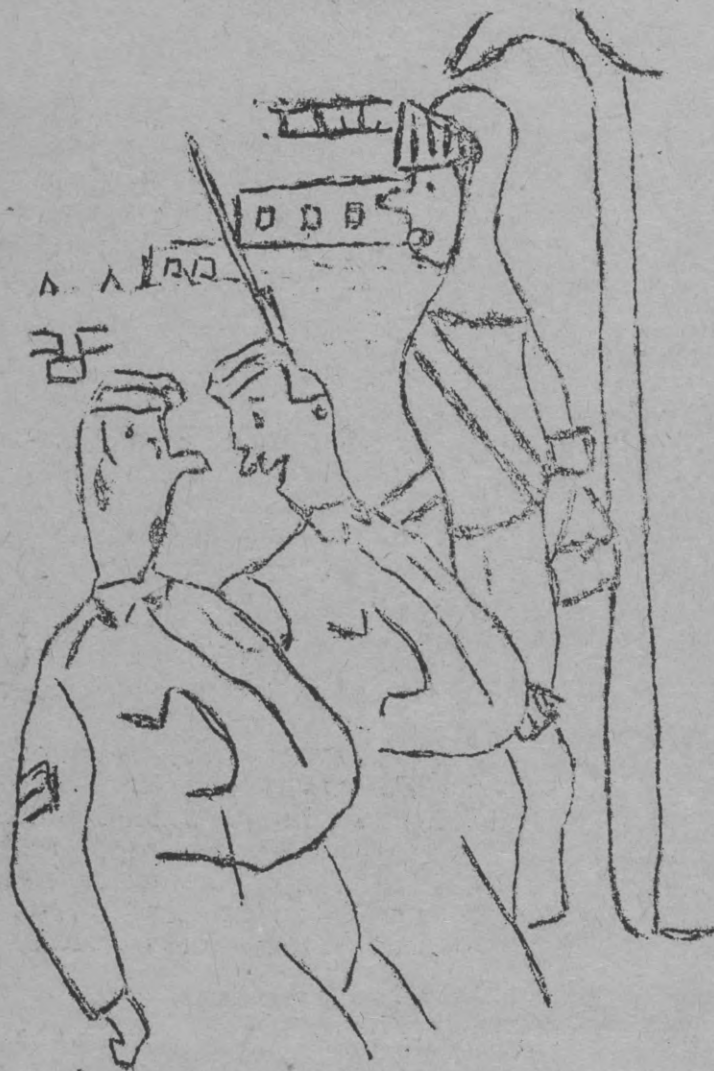
It is quite an adventure availing oneself of the up-to-date shower facilities in the Camp, see any day. Most of the time seems to be spent in ducking round the corner to the elusive controls in a state of semi-nudity. By the time you get back to the said bath-house the water is either hot enough to skin you alive or else a feeble trickle of luke-warm or completely cold water. And doesn't the wind howl bleakly round the bathhouse corner. We'll say!

A certain Sergeant-Major is delighted to hear that the walls of the new telephone booth are guaranteed sound proof.

We understand that the Camp Canteen is issuing an up-to-the-minute Price List of their extensive stocks. Blacking tins will be provided free if the "boys" supply the blacking. (Advt.) The popular manager, Fred, feels that a branch store will be necessary shortly on the summit of Mount Grey with a further branch at Amberley Beach. Customers are requested to attend a Bargain Sale of surplus stocks, details to be advertised later. An added attraction will be a mannequin parade of W.A.A.F's. Roll up for a treat.

After a recent dance the arrivals back to Camp in the small hours certainly advertised the fact. Conversation from hut to hut, the thud of boots vibrating through the still night air, voices raised in song, and varied arguments about nothing constituted a real bedlam near the grandstand. A few cats later joined in the general din, and a peaceful night was had by all! (possibly).

SEND A COPY OF "THE RANGIORA GUNNER" TO FRIENDS AND RELATIONS ! ! ! !



"There's Simmons coming the old soldier again"

Our special reporter accompanied the 20th, 21st. & 24th. Batteries on Manoeuvres commencing Monday, November 16th. The weather proved decidedly perverse for the 20th, who were caught by the wet weather. The others were far more fortunate. Live shooting was indulged in, but according to critics it left much to be desired in the way of accuracy. Those that caught the fine weather returned sunburnt, mosquito-bitten and of course, hungry, as usual.

A E S O P ' S F A B L E

MODERN VERSION

(Contributed)

One hot summer's day a handsome elephant (such an intelligent-looking fellow with a strong resemblance to Clark Gable or John Barrymore) was strolling in a leisuredly fashion through the jungle, fanning himself with a fig-leaf (no, we are not referring to that stature in the Auckland Domain.)

The elephant was thinking deeply, twitching his huge ungainly ears, and absent-mindedly walking in circles. He was preoccupied with family affairs, and he had only recently been drafted into the Elephant Battalion. He was a Gunner. He was just now on local leave, and he reassured himself as he felt with his trunk his leave pass written on a palm-leaf, carefully tucked in his left ear.

Suddenly he remembered that he had forgotten to fold up his blankets, and during the night had eaten the straw in his palliase. (He suffered from night starvation). He also recollected with dire forebodings that he had lifted the roof off his hut because of the heat, and had omitted to replace it. Also, that his kit bag was full of dead rattlesnakes and several extra blankets from the quartermaster's Store.

Unexpectedly he gave a sudden yelp of surprise and fear as the earth beneath him began to crumble away. Had he stumbled into an elephant trap? Too late to save himself he plunged headlong into the cavity, and his language was vile. At length his unrehearsed descent ceased and he gathered his wits together and glared about him. He noticed with a sinking feeling the huge opening above him through which he had fallen with the speed of the leave train from Rangiora to Christchurch.

A squeaky voice behind him said, "Hallo!"

He turned his large bulk with difficulty, and in a ray of sunlight from above he saw a little mouse wearing the uniform of the Air Force, and a smile as large as himself.

"Fallen in?" said the mouse pleasantly.

The elephant gave a snort of disgust. "What do YOU think? Do you imagine that I'm building myself an air-raid shelter?"

"Not at all," said the mouse. "Don't be so bad-tempered, Jumbo."

"Don't call me Jumbo. It makes me feel small."

"Small," giggled the mouse, "small, I like that."

"Well, you needn't rub it in. Tell me how I am to get out of this confounded hole, will you?"

"I'll go and get help," said the mouse; "I have my plane here." And he moved aside to show it to the surprised elephant.

With a spritely leap he leaped into the cockpit, and Z-Z-Z-z-z-z-z went the engine, buzzing louder and louder. . .

The elephant opened his eyes with a start. Had he been dreaming? A large blue-bottle was buzzing round his trunk and he was reclining in a sunny glade. . .

Has this tale a moral? . . . Well, perhaps.

HARMONICA BAND CONCERT

On Thursday evening, October 22nd. Skipper's Harmonica Band of 3YA. gave an enjoyable concert in the Camp Mess Hall. The concert party was rather belated in arriving due to taking the wrong direction to the Camp. The Band's energetic conductor was Mr. Oakes, and the concert commenced the programme with a stirring rendering of "The Great Little Army" March, the rest of the bracket including "Destiny Waltz," "White Cliffs of Dover," and "Nellie Kelly", all of which were greeted voraciously by the "boys."

A novelty item was a Musical Saw (played by Mr. Bradley) which in conjunction with the Band played "Drink to Me Only" and "Silent Night" with astonishing clearness and sweetness of tone.

A most enjoyable entertainment was concluded by a bracket of popular numbers by the Harmonica Band. These included "Booms-a-Daisy" and "Maori Farewell."

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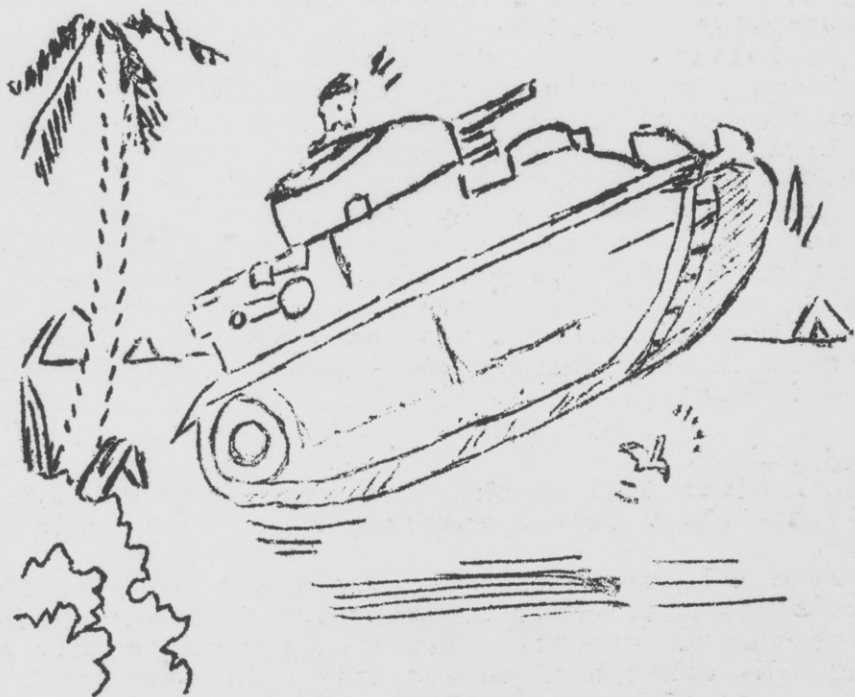
24th. BATTERY NOTES

Our fifth columnists tell us that a new test for N.C.O.'s is for them to be able to bellow orders intelligibly with a mouth full of boiled sweets.

We can tolerate a leetle noise when leave men are returning to Camp, but there's a limit. However, the noise from an adjoining hut was too much for someone recently, and he leapt forth full of determination and Y.M. cakes bent on restoring the calm of the night. Alas! He did not meet with a sympathetic response. He was told that his parentage was obscure, and invictive was hurled at him, poor chap.



"You've got it all wrong, pal. Us Commandos don't come to stay."



"Whoops, drat that banana skin!"



Total effort!

CHRISTMAS IN CAMP

A FANTASTIC FANTASY

The Camp presented a truly festive and seasonal appearance. Mistletoe hung profusely over the officers' quarters, and the banquet in the Mess Hall would have done justice to a diplomat dining at Warners. Turkey, fresh from Mt. Thomas (with a few feathers still on); sparkling wines from the deep vaults of the Railway Station air-raid shelter; gleaming tablecloths with their glittering array of silver (probably from Woolworths); an orchestra in a discreet corner playing the plaintive strains of the "Blue Danube."

Stoek waiters hovered at ones elbow with the foot-long menu in French (with English translations) at the beck and call of the diners, who could be heard drinking tobacco soup down at the Guard House. The Guards, by the way, were occupied in taking pot-shots at rows of empty beer bottles tastefully arranged by the Sergeant of the Guard for their amusement. . .

The Mess Hall was quaintly decorated with silver tinsel, streamers and coloured balloons, while a huge banner at the entrance bore the inscription: MERRY CHRISTMAS - MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL - From the O.C.

As each diner staggered from the Mess Hall, he was presented with a little present from one of the Sergeants dressed as Father Xmas, who parked in a little alcove near the door, had fortified himself with two bottles of White Horse and some American cigars which stank to the high heavens. . .

A special Race Meeting was held after Christmas Dinner on the Race-course for the enjoyment of the "boys." Punting was fast and furious. The horses of the day included: Sergeant-Major; Fine Fettle; Spuds; Les's Favourite; Sally and Glass Eye. All showed fine form, although one or two were scratched before they started; others landed in various pot-holes, and one took to the open country in the direction of Mt. Grey.

Yes, Christmas in Camp was a "red-letter day" for all concerned, although only a few dimly remember it. G-O-O-D NIGHT, everyone, HAPPY NEW YEAR. . .

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A young munitions worker was lavish with his cash. "You kids of today got too much money," his uncle told him. "Do you know what I was getting when I married your aunt?"

"No," was the reply, "and I bet you didn't either, uncle."

Leave CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE GUNNER at the Y.M.C.A. Cartoons, Humour.

ARMY ON THE AIR

Early in December the Camp Non-Stop Revue Company (fresh from its stupendous London season at the Theatre Royal) will present their successful show, "Army on the Air", under the experienced stage-managership of Mr. Haigh (manager of the Regent Theatre). This fine entertainment has been organised by the following members of Rangiora Camp: Bombadier C.L. Beatson, and Gunners D.C. Campbell and J.R. Gaut, and features a series of original plays from the versatile pen of Bombadier Beatson.

Solo items and a men's ballet are also included in the entertaining programme, and the whole will provide two and a half hours non-stop variety. No effort is being spared to provide a first-class show. It will be 100% an Army presentation, all members of the Camp, including the officers, are co-operating to make it something to live in the minds of all those fortunate enough to gain admittance. The tickets are priced at 2/- (stalls); 2/6 (dress-circle.)

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L.R.C. CONCERT PARTY

The North Canterbury Labour Representation Committee presented a varied and delightful Concert in the Mess Hall on Tuesday, 17th. November. This was the concert party's 101st. concert for 1942. During the year the Committee has spent nearly £100 in paying for transport of the party to camps. For the last two months all transport has been provided by the Military Authorities, whose arrangements are excellent and a splendid example of co-operation. The following took part in the programme: Mesdames Meecham and Epps; Messrs. Hobbs, Kitson and Costly (orchestra), Misses Anita Osborne, Nola Moir, Val Bowden, Joan Weir, Beverley O'Neill, Shirley Stringer, Alistair Waddell, Mr. and Mrs. Woolcott and Mrs. Jones (singers), the Martin sisters and Misses Iris Woolcott, Colleen Moore, Pauline Paul and the Franklin brothers (dancers), Mrs. Meecham, Miss J. Weir, and Mr. O'Neill (accompanists). Jean Olliver gave a monologue, and Misses Madge Philpott and Hylda Cain gave novelty items. Mr. E. E. Jones led the community singing and the master of ceremonies was Mr. G.W. Dell.

A I R F O R C E D A N C E

"The Dance of Dances"

WEDNESDAY, 25th. November, 8 to 12. R.S.A. HALL

(In Aid of Patriotic Funds)

Ladies: 2/-.

Gents: 2/-.

Men in Uniform: 1/6.

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