



22nd Battalion Association
AUCKLAND BRANCH

Editors: Ron Jones
Keith McBrearty

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Secretary: C.W. Randerson
P.O. Box 13-058
Onehunga Auckland

SEPTEMBER MEMORIES. from Ron Jones

This is the month which saw the war begin in 1939 and the Government decide that something had to be done about it, so the 22nd Battalion was formed. Other units also were formed but were they really necessary?

1940 saw the battalion chipping chalk on the South England coast and being told frightful stories of the German Army being about to invade and the Battle of Britain going on above our heads and no thought given to the distraction of our brave boys, as they battled it out on football fields. We were in real danger at times as planes crashed in nearby paddocks and orchards. Even our sleep was disturbed as night bombers dared to unload in the vicinity of the sleeping battalion. We survived the ordeal of these days and after some light hearted adventures in the Battle of the Atlantic, Greece and Crete found us in September 1941.

At the Kaponga Bax real danger threatened. We attacked in every sort of formation, with weapons of pick and shovel, some of the hardest rock on this earth. Shocking were the wounds with blistered hands and desert sores, in fact it was almost impossible to play Rugby. The efforts of those days will always remain a mystery as to the success, or otherwise of our efforts and privations as the fortifications we built were never used.

SEPTEMBER MEMORIES/Contd...

More time went by and suddenly it was September 1942. Another box and in this one we were really at war. This was the Alamein Box and here General Montgomery had control. He may have lost some friends when the 22nd, facing the rear of the box, was informed that the enemy was endeavouring to break through into the open desert behind and if attacked we were to hold on to the end - no surrender was the order and that is not a nice thing to be told, but we held as the enemy never got through to attack us. Then came the training for the Battle of Alamein. More time slipped by and the battalion having lost a few, won a few, including a new role as a motorised unit.

September 1943. Some lucky fellows had gone home on furlough and the battalion was fully motorised, had achieved fame in the sports world, that is the Div., and was champing at the bit after many months of training.

September 1944. Italy and progress was being made in the war. Many casualties and grand soldiering had taken the battalion through Cassino and Florence. Italy was a campaign of attack and attack. The war was tough, but victory was being engineered. Also much in the way of battalion unofficial history was being made, the sort of stuff that keeps reunions going.

September 1945. Victory achieved and the fighting was over. A reorganised battalion went to Japan. The clearing up and the bet down! So it is now a succession of Septembers to be remembered and slowly forgotten, but not forgotten while we are able to gather and remember and talk and exaggerate and enjoy the old comradeship.

WELFARE FUND DONATION.

A handsome donation has been received from a member who desires to remain anonymous. His wishes will be respected because his wish has always been an order which could incur 28 days if ignored. The committee is most grateful for an inspired by this donation.

LADIES NIGHT - 10TH AUGUST, 1968.

On the evening of Saturday, 10th August, just on 90 people gathered in the new Ranfurly Room of Auckland's Station Hotel for our annual Dine and Dance. It was a very good night and your hard-working Committee appreciated the comments made by many members who not only enjoyed themselves but wanted the Committee to know that their efforts were not taken for granted. The Committee felt well rewarded by the good attendance, which included two comparatively new members of the Branch - LOFTY CLEMENS and CLAUDE PERRY, both of Auckland. BERT ADDISON was up from Otorahanga as usual; so was JACK HAWLEY from Te Kaiti way. A Branch function without Bert and Jack would not seem right at all. Other regular attenders from far parts of the Branch district were PETER BUTLER (Whangarei) and BOB SUMMERS (Huntly). We were also very pleased to welcome JOHN FINLAY of Edgecumbe and BILL GREIG of Rotorua. It was good to see RON MORGAN too. Ron has not enjoyed the best of health this past year or two.

No matter how carefully you plan a social function, it is impossible to avoid all the pitfalls and all the little things that can go wrong. There never was a social evening that went off without a hitch of some kind. Branch President RON JONES went rushing out into the cold night air at one stage to look for the dance band but we finally discovered them in an adjoining room, waiting patiently for someone to tell them when to come in. It was the night of the Rugby Test against France and the resulting pressure on the Hotel staff caused them to start whipping the food out to the kitchen before some of the guests had been able to get all they wanted. A further problem was that 16 people turned up without letting us know in advance, some of them arriving just as the meal was about to be served. The Secretary has something to say about this recurring problem in another part of this Circular but it doesn't take much thought to realise how difficult it is to cater for people who arrive unannounced and unexpected. These minor headaches apart, the show went off very well.

INTELLIGENCE SECTION

THOMAS P. GRACE was the prop and stay of this Branch back in the early days and we lost a mighty fine Secretary when the Bank that employed him decided to move him on to bigger responsibilities. That was more than eight years ago but we miss him still. Our loss was Wellington's gain and then it was the turn of Manawatu Branch to have the benefit of his enthusiasm and infinite capacity for hard work. Tom is still in Palmerston North but now lives in grateful retirement. He still works hard, as witness this extract from a recent letter:- "Life with the Graces is entertaining and exciting. My footwork has sharpened up considerably since I retired. One has to be mighty nimble to sidestep all the jobs one's wife can think up. Despite my good intentions, I have the worst garden in the street but it takes a mighty long time to 'run in' a new set of golf clubs - the way I am going it might take years".

DENNY REIDY, another Association stalwart and another good member of the Manawatu Branch had the misfortune to lose his wife a month or two ago. Like her husband, ENID REIDY was a very popular person and the well-packed Church included many well-known Two-twas. REG. SPICER was a pall-bearer and some of the others who came to pay their last respects were:- LES ANDREW, TREVOR WALLACE, MICK CRAWFORD, JACK WILSON, ROGER ANDREW, IAN BURNETT, BOB JUDE and RUSTY CARSON. We extend our sincere sympathy to Denny and his family.

ALLAN MCGREGOR, who joined the Branch Committee after moving to Auckland from Taranaki, has been on the sick list for quite some time. After a two-year period of indifferent health, he suffered a severe heart attack a few weeks ago and is confined to bed for 3 months, this to be followed by a year's convalescence. Says Allan:- "The doctor said it was unbelievable for any person to survive such a terrific attack and paid me a nice tribute by saying I was a very tough man, possessed of mighty stamina and wonderful physical condition. In retrospect I thought: This could be the result of hard conditioning created by "Old February" with his 100 miles route march in England and many similar ones that followed". All the best, Allan, for a speedy recovery but we would not recommend another 100 mile march for a little while yet.

LESLIE WILTON ANDREW, V.C., at one time variously known as "Old February", "The Colonel", "28 Days" and by other less printable soubriquets, is not quite the man he was physically. The years must tell their tale sooner or later and the long and hard campaigning in two World Wars must have its effect but he retains all his enthusiasm for "the Battalion" and for all who served in it. We hear from him regularly and always he has kind words to say about the Branch Circulars and our Welfare work. He writes:- "I would like to say 'great work' and congratulate you on the high standard you maintain with your Branch Newsletter. Also, may I humbly congratulate your Branch on its benevolent work, especially the Crete children part. Keep up the good work. Sorry we did not see more from Auckland down at Christchurch but you were well represented. Erl was in great form. The chaps put on a good weekend in every way and everyone enjoyed themselves. Kindest regards to all the blokes. Yours sincerely, Les Andrew."

ROLL OF HONOUR.

6908. GEORGE M. DILLON died at Auckland on 21st September. An original member of the Battalion (E. Company), George was a prisoner of War and his is very likely another case of a man whose death has been hastened by the results of his War service. George had been a member of this Branch for many years and seldom missed a Branch Reunion or other function. The Branch was represented at the funeral and RON JONES is calling on Mrs. Dillon to express our sympathy and to see if there is any way in which we can be of help.

THE CRETE KIDS.

The regular letters and reports we get from Crete show that the help we give to four young Crete children is still much needed and very greatly appreciated. One or two of them will soon reach the age where they will be self-supporting but that time is not yet. In the meantime, the need is, if anything, greater, thanks to the depreciated value of New Zealand money. Last year, the Save the Children Fund asked sponsors if they were prepared to raise their annual contributions per child from \$30 to \$40, in order to bring the value of New Zealand contributions up to the level of those from other countries. As the Crete fund was then holding reasonably well, we agreed to do this. Then, not long after, came the devaluation of our currency to parity with Australian currency. The effect of this was that our contributions at the new level were reduced overnight back to the previous level. This year, the S.C.F. has asked sponsors whether they are prepared either to make a further voluntary increase or to make supplementary donations when possible. We have accepted the second alternative but it depends on you whether we can make this good. More donations is the answer. Small or large, they all help the cause.

Most members of the 22nd have, on some occasion, been guilty of bending the elbow more often than is wise. Their wives show a remarkable lack of sympathy on these occasions and the following article from an Australian Services magazine aptly deals with this situation.

Many thanks to Bark Cox.

Ode to a Husband with a Hangover

*Good morning, my bright international mate,
My outstanding genius in problems of State.
I trust all is clear in that wonderful mind
Which last night re-modelled the whole of mankind.
Your handling of Russia, the Ruhr, Palestine,
And China and Greece; it was masterly . . . fine!
You're sure to be named as "Man of the Year"—
Here's four or five aspirins . . . swallow them, dear!
Awake, my fine songster. It's well on towards noon.
All morning I've waited, just hoping you'd croon
A measure from "Chloe" or "Deep Rolling Sea"
Which last night you sang until half after three!
You awakened the neighbours, you tripped on the mat.
And one of your props was your hostess' hat.
I'm quite sure she'll want you again for tonight—
The "Life of the Party" . . . whenever you're tight!
Arise, my Sweet Prince, but be careful, don't skid,
Arise and consider the things that you did!
The uprooted garden, the splintered garage;
It sounded just like an old-fashioned barrage.
Go see your hostess . . . and carry a cheque;
I think if you just sign it "Pain in the Neck"
The bank will OK it . . . it had to be you,
The clown who went berserk "twixt the dawn and the dew!"
So drink up the seltzer, you chattering drone,
It's said to be good for a splintering dome.
I wish I was Sandow; how far would I throw you.
For the next thirty days please pretend I don't know you.
My Juvenile Jackass, my dim-witted duffer,
You say you feel awful? Well damn-it-all . . . SUFFER!*

—(From "Present Arms", Melbourne.)

"THE COLONEL LENDS A HAND"

from Bark Cox

The Battalion on manoeuvres - a night move and the trucks ran into patches of soft sand. "All hands out and push" - the Colonel puts his shoulder to the wheel - well, to the deck of a portee anyway. "Heave." "She's moving." "Another shove." The tyres grip, the engine takes the load, and the sweating troops straighten up. As Colonel Campbell's head comes level with the deck of the portee, he stares, blinks, swallows hard, and !!! ???

There cosily tucked up in their blankets while the Colonel, Officers, and O.R.'s push their portee through the sand, lay the gun crew, sound asleep.

On parade the next day, when the Colonel outlined the events of the evening before, an attentive listener may have gained the impression that the Anti-Tank people did not perhaps rate quite as high as other troops as far as Lt. Col Campbell was concerned.

Among other things he touched briefly on the subject of one gun crew who did deign to push their own truck, but turned out clad in pyjamas. No one was game to tell the Colonel what would have softened his feelings towards that crew, at least. In anticipation of events and as a protection against cold they had with commendable foresight donned issue overalls. Maybe in the dark overalls do look like pyjamas, but even Tom Campbell should have known that among O.R.'s, pyjamas in the desert, had they existed would have been used as dust covers for rifles.

THE LATE GEORGE DILLON.

It is very likely that George's death was a result of his experiences while a prisoner of war and during the period of his escape from the P.O.W. Camp. Mrs Dillon is most anxious to contact anyone that was with George during this period and would greatly appreciate word from any person that can help in proving ill health during his period of captivity.

Please write c/o the Secretary.

YER CANT WIN.

(A SECRETARY'S LOT IS NOT A HAPPY ONE.)

Would anyone like to have a go at the most thankless job there is? It's one that falls to my lot every time we run a social function and it is necessary for some poor sucker to stick his neck out by telling the Caterer how many heads or bodies we need food for. I have been doing this particular job for probably far too many years and for other organisations as well as the 22nd and it gets more and more frustrating. The trouble is caused by the astounding reluctance of the New Zealand male to commit himself in advance. He and his wife would not descend on their friends about dinner time and expect a slap-up meal to be put before them but they roll up at a dinner-dance or other function where a meal is provided without bothering to let the organisers know they are coming. Sometimes they ring you at the last moment but by then it is too late to change the numbers that you have given to the Caterer. In this city of Auckland, where food prices, Rents and staff Wages are astronomical, it costs good money to feed people at a social function. The Caterer is usually a reasonable fellow but he insists on knowing at least the minimum number in advance and you can hardly blame him. Also, he expects to be paid for the minimum number, whether they all show up or not, and he expects to be paid for any extras as well. Most people accept this as fair enough and are most punctilious about replying to invitations but, in every organisation that I have had anything to do with, there is a hard core of folks who just don't seem to get the message.

After you have done this job a few dozen times, you get crafty and deliberately underestimate the numbers to allow for those who have said that they are coming but have not paid the entrance fee and could change their minds. You know that most Caterers can cope with about 5% above your estimate without strain and with a few more at a pinch. But if you are more than 10% out in your guessing, then you can be in trouble. That's what happened at our Ladies Night on 10th August. The extra people that turned up raised our numbers to 15% above our prior estimate. As a result, a few people did not get as much to eat as they had a right to expect. Who gets the blame? The organisers of course, or else the Secretary who did not display second sight. I plead not guilty. This time, I had not even reduced the numbers to be on the safe side. I worked on the replies actually received nearly a week after the date by which we had asked our members to send in their replies, with a few extra added for good measure.

This is the way it went. The Hotel wanted a rough estimate by the Monday before the function and a firm number by the Wednesday. The replies trickled in slowly the way they usually do. The number had reached 40 by the Friday, when all replies should have been in, and 49 by Monday, when we had to supply the approximate estimate. We were up to 55 by Tuesday and 57 by Wednesday, the final deadline for the Hotel. We had to ask them for a reprieve until Thursday. Three more starters by that day's mail and an hour on the telephone produced another 15 probable starters. That brought us up to 75 and that was the number we gave the Hotel. In the end, four of the 75 did not make it but no fewer than 16 people arrived without prior notice. We had a last-minute phone call about one party but it was too late then to do anything about it. How do you cater for people who do this sort of thing? The unkindest cut of all was when one of the 16 latecomers, who had arrived when the meal was ready to be served, complained about (among other things) the shortage of food! Like the man said:- YER CANT WIN. But we keep on trying.

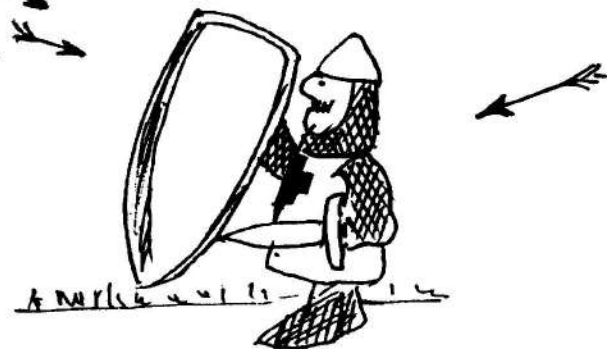
NATO H.Q.



"YOU HAVE JUST STARTED TOTAL WAR, SMITHERS"



"NOW WHICH LUCKY CHAP
GOT THE SHEEP'S EYEBALL?"



"EXCELLENT!! YOU'RE READY TO
TRY WITH A PARACHUTE NOW"