

"Vral et Fort"

22nd Battalion Association AUCKLAND BRANCH

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22ND BATTALION NEWS

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SPEAK UP

From earliest infancy we are exhorted to speak up:- "Say 'Dad' - 'Mum'
School days:- 'Speak up - don't mumble'. Courting days:- 'What did you say -
dear?' Marriage days:- 'Why did you say you would be late?'

Some are successful - Speaking up - 'Colonels and Screaming Skulls'
are two to come to mind - but by and large the majority fall down in Speaking up
in our most important field - Welfare. Tell me - WHENEVER THERE IS SOMEONE IN NEED
or better still - HAVE A FEW WORDS WITH THEM AS WELL AS TELLING US.

I am Speaking Up now to wish you all a Merry Xmas and a very Happy New Year.

Gordon Couchman

HAL GREIG - A TRIBUTE

One of the saddest happenings in the history of the Auckland Branch of the Association was Hal Greig's death last month at the age of 57. Not much more than eighteen months earlier, he was in robust good health and looked to have many years of active life ahead of him. Then, a small growth on his foot turned out to be malignant and was removed by surgery. It seemed that the doctors had caught it in time but, some months later, when he went into Middlemore for further surgery, the writing was on the wall. Many men and women have died prematurely in the same way but you don't realise what a terrible scourge cancer is until it hits someone you know well. Those of us who were in close touch with him could only admire the tremendous courage with which he refused to accept the medical verdict and fought the disease right to the last.

Hal was a fine athlete in his younger days and will be best remembered for his prowess as a Rugby footballer. He played fullback for Victoria University in the Wellington senior competition when barely out of his teens. In that period, he also repped for Wellington and later played with distinction in Army Rugby. After the War, he settled in Auckland, was a foundation member of this Branch and served on the Committee from 1962 till the date of his death. He was in charge of Accommodation for the National Reunion last June, made a personal inspection of every Motel within a two-mile radius of Alexandra Park and made all the original bookings at Hotels and Motels, a great effort by a man who was already far from well. A teacher at Auckland Grammar School for 30 years, he continued at his job until the final few weeks of his life.

BRANCH REUNION - SATURDAY, 19TH MARCH

BRANCH REUNION - 19TH MARCH, 1977

All members of Auckland Branch are asked to note this date on their calendars now. You are also asked to note that the 1977 Branch Reunion will be (for the first time) a mixed function. There are several reasons for this decision:-

(1) Reduced attendances at the Branch Reunions held in 1975 and 1976 showed that there is no longer any tremendous enthusiasm in the Association for men-only functions. As a result of this, it is no longer economic for Catering firms to provide a meal for a very small gathering at a reasonable price.

(2) On the other hand, our Ladies' Nights continue to be well supported and the vast majority of the men who were at Alexandra Park in June brought their ladies along. They are as enthusiastic as their menfolk (if not more so) and let's face it:- unless the ladies are fully involved, the future of Association functions is far from bright.

VENUE

College Rifles Park, Haast Street, Remuera - Saturday, 19th March, 1977

(Full details later)

SCOTCH PATERSON ON TOUR

Scotch and his wife Pat left these shores in April on an extended retirement leave journey to the U.K. and Europe. Scotch has yet to send us an account of his travels but he did send a report a few months ago to another organisation of which he is a member and we are sure he will not mind us quoting a few extracts.

'We have been away now over three months - a very short time and a very long time - a remarkable experience with so many scenes, sensations, experiences and impressions crowded together that it will take a little sorting out when we get home if we can attempt to rationalise it at all.

At close range, I think the most striking impression would be the remarkable friendliness and innate courtesy and considerateness which we have experienced and seen amongst the ordinary people wherever we have been. I don't mean just to us but to each other - particularly marked in Austria and Italy. Austria and Italy in a different way, each had a highly developed consideration for each other which at times was quite moving. I rather think that such a wide-spread trait would be related to the degree of suffering endured by the people as a whole. I had, because of losing a tooth, to go to the dental clinic of the Vienna main hospital. It was a revelation to see the doctors there greeting their patients with a genuinely friendly courtesy which would be difficult to associate with the self importance which is unfortunately so often found with our N.Z. equivalents - perhaps not equivalents so much as the type you know - the socially conscious medico often found in N.Z. and I suppose in other parts of the world, too.

We have enjoyed our wandering through Belguim, Holland, Germany, Switzerland and Austria - then through Cortina to Venice, Milan, Lakes Como, Maggiore, etc. and so to Rimini and down the Adriatic coast to Taranto - up through Sorrento, Naples, Rome, Avezzano, Florence, Pisa, etc. and so on to France - Nice, Toulon, Marseille, Avignon and the Loire Valley to Cannes and the Atlantic coast - up through the Allied landing areas of June 1944 - St Nqaire, St Malo, Omaha and Utah Beaches, Bayeux where we are now with its memorial to the one million British

Scotch Paterson on Tour (Continued)

dead of 1914-18 and the British again of 1944 who to quote the local pamphlets "Les Anglais sont venus liberer la Patrie de leurs vainqueurs de 1066". The French and Italians have not forgotten the happenings of the 1939-45 war and one is constantly running into memorials etc - some of which are exceedingly tragic.

We visited some of our old battle areas in Italy and were glad to find that a New Zealander there still receives a special warmth of response from the local people. Travelling in a motorvan is certainly the way to get around from so many aspects."

L.W. ANDREW, V.C. BURSARY

Each Branch of the Association contributes to the Bursary Fund that was established a few years ago in memory of the Battalion's first C.O., the late Les Andrew, V.C. Every second year, a Bursary to the value of \$200 is awarded to a secondary-school pupil and the name of the award-winner is announced at the National Reunion. In 1974, the Branch delegates decided that all future awards would go to pupils of Horowhenua College, Levin, a most appropriate decision in view of Les. Andrew's long association with Levin.

This year's award went to SHELLEY ROBIN BEST, a 7th Former and Head Girl in 1976, with an outstanding record in scholastics, sport and cultural activities. Since June, we have heard (from NOEL WHITEHOUSE of Levin) that Shelley Best has achieved distinction in another field as well. As a member of the Levin Young Farmers Club, she was selected from eleven candidates (eight boys and three girls) as the North Island delegate to a World Conference on agricultural education that was held in Kansas City last month by the Future Farmers of America. Shelley is obviously a girl of many talents and a very worthy winner of the L.W. Andrew Bursary.

ROLL OF HONOUR

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| ALBERT A. D'POSTINE, Katikati | 7th July, 1976 |
| HARRY E.M. (HAL) GREIG, Auckland | 29th November, 1976 |
| OWEN R. LEWIS, Auckland | 22nd October, 1976 |

LAST OF THE CRETE KIDS

We have been advised by the Save the Children Fund that IOANNIS KALITZAKIS no longer needs the support that Auckland Branch has given him for the past six years and the sponsorship has therefore been cancelled. It was decided at a Branch meeting some time ago that we would not accept further sponsorships when this one came to an end. A further sponsorship would mean committing the Branch for some years ahead and the general feeling is that we should now concentrate our Welfare efforts closer to home. There is the thought, too, that a boy or girl now in need of sponsorship would probably be the child of parents who were born after the Battle of Crete.

So ends a project in which we have been involved for about 14 years and a very rewarding project it has been - we have sponsored six children in all from ~~the part of Crete where the Battalion fought in 1941.~~ It has given us a great deal of satisfaction and we thank, once again, all those who have contributed so generously to the fund and say a special thank you to BARRY HOULAHAN for his great efforts with the Crete Box at Branch and National functions.

HOLLINGBOURNE REVISITED

Those who were in the Battalion in the period 1940 to 1941 will remember LOWRY (SNOW) LEEKS, who was one of the original Platoon Commanders (9 Platoon, A Company). Snow left the Battalion just before the Libya 1941 show, being one of a number of officers selected for a tank course. He has been living in Australia for some years. Recently, Snow revisited an old Battalion stamping ground and wrote about it to PHIL MONK of Wellington:-

"I have just returned from a trip to U.K., where I took the opportunity of visiting Hollingbourne and All Saints Church.

The New Zealand flag was still hanging there but the small plaque (4" x 8") had the glass badly cracked and I have arranged for its replacement, leaving a sum of money to cover the cost and any further replacements necessary.

Unfortunately, the new Vicar was on exchange in the U.S. and I didn't see his replacement but met some of the Church people who had long memories. In the local pub, they still talk about the "shooting of the swan". I was informed the Battalion plaque was the centre piece of floral decoration in a recent Rose show and had received wide acclaim as the best display.

I am not happy over the plaque as I consider it quite inadequately records our stay there and the history of the Battalion's deeds and our sad losses.

In musing over this, I came to the conclusion perhaps the Officer's Mess could undertake to do something about it and I would be quite happy to head a contribution list to meet the cost of say, a kauri or rimu plaque with the Battalion insignia and adequate wording paying tribute to those who gave their lives.

From enquiries I made, N.Z. House and the B.B.C. would be quite interested in recording any dedication service if the suggestion reaches finality. I attach suggested wording."

SNOW LEEKS



22 BN

The New Zealand flag and this plaque mark the appreciation of all members of 22 Battalion, 2nd N.Z. Expeditionary Force for hospitality and friendship received from parishioners and people of Hollingbourne whilst the Battalion was billeted here during the Battle of Britain.

In later battles fought in Greece, Crete, Western Desert, Cyrenaica and Italy, many of those who trod these leafy lanes paid the supreme sacrifice, but their lives were enriched by their happy sojourn in this lovely corner of England.

"Vrai et Fort"

Wellington Branch considers that Snow's suggestion will appeal to many of the 'originals' who trod those leafy lanes and that rather than restricting contributions to the members of the original Officers' Mess, all members of the Battalion who were at Hollingbourne should have the opportunity of subscribing to the cost of a new memorial plaque in All Saints Church. The Auckland Committee is in full agreement and commends this project to Branch members. Fifty small donations

Hollingbourne Revisited (Continued)

would be better than two or three bigger ones. Donations, small or large, may be sent C/- P.O. Box 13-058, Onehunga or direct to Wellington Branch, P.O. Box 12-292, Wellington North.

INTELLIGENCE SECTION

BILL McLACHLAN gets around. About a year ago, he went A.W.O.L. from the National Reunion Committee and we did not hear from him again until June, when he sent us a cable from Melbourne with good wishes for the success of the Reunion. Last month, he wrote from Levin and gave us an account of his recent movements:- to Australia first, then to Westport, where he "got tied up with the horse". Back to Sydney for Easter "and to clear my Income Tax"; "finished up on a ship for another five months and I still have not made a decision whether I have retired or not as I have been paid till 17th January (good Leave) but expect I'll settle somewhere some day". Present address:- 3 Quinns Road, Levin.

JACK FORD turned 70 a few weeks back but there's no stopping a hardy old campaigner like Jack. Members of Wairarapa Branch and their wives turned on a celebration dinner for Jack and Muriel at the Wairarapa Services Club and Jack arrived in a tee shirt with this inscription on the back:- "I AM 70 - BUT I'M STILL GOOD". That's telling 'em Jack.

Everyone knows BERTIE PARNELL of Tauranga but not everyone is aware that Bertie has a special claim to fame as the father of a principal ballerina with the New Zealand Ballet. His daughter is YVONNE PARNELL, who is married to one of the N.Z. Ballet's few male stars, a former qualified plumber named PETER EDWARDS.

KEITH ELLIOTT, better known these days as the Revd. Keith Elliott, V.C., is planning to make a marathon walk from Cape Reinga to Bluff to raise funds for a new Church and Youth Centre at Makara - Karori West. Keith recently visited Wanganui to enlist the support of Wanganui Branch. The Wanganui Newsletter reports that the long walk will begin on 1st March and that we will be hearing more about it through the News Media. Keith plans to follow State Highway One but will make one diversion to follow the Parapara Road to Wanganui (familiar territory to him). Wanganui also reports that JACK HARGREAVES will be accompanying Keith, "following of course at a discreet distance under more comfortable circumstances". Surely Wanganui you will also be providing a piper or two to give Keith some moral support on a route march of that length!

NATIONAL REUNION ADDRESS - ERL PLEASANTS

When I was ordered to give this address I felt it was the greatest honour I have ever received but at the same time I also felt that it was doubtful whether it was an honour I should have received. Whether it was just the luck of the draw or because I was older than most - JOHN RUSSELL always referred to me as "the Grey Headed old Bastard" - it happened that, although I never wished to leave the Battalion, a lot of my service was away from it in minor staff appointments where I hope I was of some use but where I was more comfortable and certainly safer than in campaigning with the Battalion. But if I never proved myself a good soldier to my satisfaction I did have the privilege of serving for long periods with men who certainly were good soldiers. Many of them are amongst you I am glad to say but the names of some I knew very well are on the Crosses we have just saluted and I

National Reunion Address - Erl Pleasants (Continued)

would like to remind you of just a few of them.

The first man in the Battalion killed by enemy action was CORPORAL BROWN, who was killed by a bomb at Waterloo Station in October 1940 whilst on leave in London. I knew him but not particularly well. The first man killed in Greece in battle was Sergt. TOM LOGIE, with whom I served in the same company until we arrived in England. He was a conscientious and reliable soldier and a good N.C.O. In Crete I refer to three men I knew well. E.J. McARA the 3 inch Mortar man. Quiet and reserved, he had a ready wit on paper. Some of you may remember the rather irreverent Colonel's Credo in the Blitz Tourist the magazine published on the Duchess of Bedford which began "I believe in the Colonel Almighty". He wrote other very witty things. ROD FELL from Nelson - another quiet and reserved man but a good soldier. GEORGE SLADE a rather stoutish good fellow - we called him "Georgie Porgy" - who died of wounds as a prisoner of war.

LIBYA - 1941

In 1941 in the Libyan campaign we spent some time at Musaid on the Frontier and the Battalion wasn't very happy. B Company had been captured at Sidi Azziz although it came back after the fall of Bardia. It was cold, rations were short because of Rommel's raid into Egypt and we were hungry. Some miles away the Germans were in Hell-Fire Pass and just as we were having the evening meal they shelled us with a very heavy gun. A lot of the shells which were as big as coal scuttles were duds and I don't think they caused us any damage but these large objects jumping and skipping about at meal times didn't help our appetites for such food as we had.

We were getting our water from a well about half way between our lines and Hell-Fire Pass in daylight but it was discovered that the Germans were getting the water also from the same source at night and an expedition was mounted under HADDON DONALD by way of an ambush. It was very successful, we captured prisoners and material and our only casualty was Sgt. MacKENZIE of the Carriers who was killed. He was very popular in the Battalion and somehow his death added to the gloom. At Minqua Quaim, Sgt. RON HOCKING of A Company was killed in the break-out. A fine soldier reliable and keen.

In the final and critical phase of Alamein, BILL HART was killed. He had left the Battalion to become 2nd in Command of the Maori Battalion which took part in that last attack. I think he was one of the wisest and most understanding men I have ever known and had he lived he was obviously intended for higher command. In Italy we lost FRED OLDHAM, who is described in the Battalion History as one of the best loved and popular officers in the Battalion. Very shortly after his death HEWITT NANCARROW was also killed and he was also very well liked and a great loss.

WHAT WERE WE FIGHTING FOR?

What did these men and hundreds of thousands of other men die for? What were we fighting for? Obviously of course in the first place to get rid of Hitler and his evil crew and that we helped to achieve but, although I don't think we consciously thought about it, there were much wider objectives. I think we were fighting for the way of life in which we had been brought up, for what Thomas Jefferson incorporated in the American Constitution as "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness", for the British Empire upon which the sun never set and all that it stood for. And somehow in some way I cannot define there was involved the supremacy of the white races which had lasted off and on for

National Reunion Address - Erl Pleasants (Continued)

2000 years and which we never thought about. We just accepted that as a fact of life. Hitler was disposed of but if I am right about the other objectives we were not very successful.

Britain went to war with Germany to secure the freedom of Poland. Poland has ever since the War been under the domination of Russia, which in fact controls as much of Europe as Hitler did at the zenith of his power and Russia seems to have strategic plans to dominate much of the world, even the Pacific Ocean. According to yesterday morning's paper, Russia is going to provide us with a service across the Tasman. The British Empire has gone for ever. I am a third generation New Zealander but when I was a boy we always referred to Britain as Home with a capital H. Now I am an alien in that country and New Zealand is more isolated than it has ever been. The supremacy of the white races is gone or going. The Arabs have all the oil and the money, Japan is one of the leading commercial nations and so on.

Even the peace we hoped for after the War is by no means universal. People are slaughtering each other in Lebanon, Ireland and Africa, often in the name of religion. Curiously enough, the Battalion visited the places I have mentioned. The Middle East we knew well, we called twice at Cape Town and even spent a few days in January 1940 in Belfast Loch waiting for a convoy.

On the Home front also things have changed. Religion and morals do not seem to have the same force that we were brought up to, violence even murder seems to be common and honesty seems to be scarcely recognised. It is a gloomy picture but I am not suggesting that all these things are due to the War. Many of them were coming anyway but the War quickened them. In my young day the Boy Scout Motto "Fear God and Honour the King" had some value but that is no longer so. I am old of course but I find these changes difficult to take and saddening.

There is, however, a brighter side. The War produced in us a feeling of comradeship and I feel sure that that feeling and the qualities of loyalty to each other and the traditions we established in our war service will affect not only ourselves but our relatives and many of the younger generation for years to come. I think too that the War brought about a deeper interest among all people in those who may not be as fortunate as ourselves. We are, I think, much more "our brother's keeper" than in days gone by. In fact, being old and conservative, I sometimes think we overdo it a bit and are in some ways endangering the individual spirit of independence.

And there is a wider aspect, 2000 years ago Christ gave the message that after the love of God our next duty should be to love our neighbour as ourselves. Despite some of the horrible things that have been done and are still being done in the name of religion, that message has spread all over the world and has even influenced other religions as well as Christianity. It is taking a long time to produce a real effect and I think we should remember that our lives are only a moment in time and the effect of what we and our dead comrades fought for can only have an effect in a small way and over a long time. It may seem a contradiction in terms but I believe that what we really fought for, whether we knew it or not, was for the principle to love our neighbours as ourselves.

Finally I will quote a verse from the poem by A.H. Clough "Say not the struggle nought availeth", quoted by Winston Churchill during the dark days of the War:-

National Reunion Address - Erl Pleasants (Continued)

"For while the tired waves vainly breaking, seem here no painful inch to gain; Far back through creeks and inlets making, Comes silent, flooding in, the main."

NEW LIFE MEMBER

The key pin of any organisation is its Secretary. Good Presidents or Chairmen and a good Committee are important but, lacking a good and efficient Secretary, in my experience no organisation prospers.

The Auckland Branch of the Association, despite the natural decline in membership due to the passage of years, has prospered and had the vigour to organise successfully what I think everyone who attended found to be one of the best National Reunions ever held. How did it manage that? I think the answer can be found in the Secretary Cedric Randerson.

The first Secretary of the Branch was Tom Grace and its good start owed much to him. Unfortunately, just as the organisation of the 1960 Reunion was underway, Tom was transferred to Palmerston North. Soon after, Cedric became the Branch Secretary and has continued to hold that position uncomplainingly up to date and it is hoped he will continue to hold it for a long time in the future. As such, he has undoubtedly held the Branch together over the years with now the triumph of its second National Reunion.

The other day I met Thaddey McCarthy in Auckland who was at lunch with friends. He asked me about the Reunion and we discussed the Association. He mentioned that he thought it was the strongest of the Unit Associations. There are many reasons for this but one I believe is the fact that the Auckland Branch has over the years by its enthusiasm and active part in the Association helped in quite a degree to guide its fortunes and I think that comes back again to the good work of Cedric. At the last Branch Reunion, Cedric was honoured by election as a Life Member of the Branch by the unanimous vote of all members present. No honour was ever more richly deserved.

When he is not engaged on the Branch in Association Affairs, Cedric is a successful Chartered Accountant. With such men in its ranks, it is not surprising that the 22nd Battalion had a fine reputation.

Gordon Couchman

NATIONAL REUNION - WELLINGTON, 1978

Wellington Branch was quickly off the mark with its first National Circular the other week. With GRAHAM DAWSON and AUS. RIDDELL in charge and many other good men to back them up, 1978 should indeed be a 'BUMPER REUNION'. We hear that the Lower Hutt venue will make it possible to run 1978 along rather similar lines to the Alexandra Park Reunion. ~~We advise our Branch members to join Wellington's~~ T.F.S. scheme without delay. We have a supply of the T.F.S. books in Auckland or Wellington will send you one on request.
