

"Vrai et Fort"

22nd Battalion Association

AUCKLAND BRANCH

Telephone 664-792

Secretary :

C. W. Randerson

(Registered at Post Office as a Magazine)

22ND BATTALION NEWS

P.O. Box 13-058,
Onehunga,
Auckland, 6.

DECEMBER, 1987

CHRISTMAS EDITION

This issue of the Auckland Branch Circular is our usual Christmas edition and is being sent only to those living in our Branch area, though copies will be sent to the other Branches, two of which have asked for supplies in bulk for distribution to their Branch members. The Editor joins with Branch and National President GEORGE MATTHEWS in wishing you and yours all the best for Christmas and the coming year.

NATIONAL REUNION - FEBRUARY 26/28, 1988

You have been given full information about the National Reunion that our Branch is hosting at Alexandra Park Raceway, Greenlane Road, Epsom during the last weekend in February. Your Branch Committee, acting as the National Reunion Committee, has worked long and hard to make this Reunion an enjoyable and memorable event. Now we look to our members in all parts of the Branch area to give their full support by:- registering for the Reunion and by specifically volunteering to help the Committee with the various tasks that will need to be done (and done well) during the Reunion weekend. In our National Circular dated October, 1987, we asked for firm registrations to be sent to the National Secretary by 31/12/87. The response to date has been very encouraging, though we suspect that quite a few of our Branch members are leaving things as late as possible and have yet to confirm that they will be there. Others, perhaps, have yet to make a firm decision. If this applies to you, whatever the reason, we ask you to make a special effort to be at your Reunion in February if you can possibly make it. We need your support.

Members in our Branch area who have already registered and/or are T.F.S. contributors total 57, together with spouses or partners in most cases. We feel that at least another 30 members of Auckland Branch should be coming. Of the 57 members who have already signified that they will be coming to the party, 30 live in the Auckland urban area; 7 in Waikato/Thames Valley; 10 in Tauranga/Bay of Plenty; 3 in North Auckland; 4 in the Taupo area; 3 in the King Country. These are the numbers we want to see build up considerably in the next few weeks and we know, for example, that there are quite a few others living in Tauranga and its general vicinity who have little excuse for not coming.

Volunteer workers:- We are going to need a lot of volunteers to man (or person) the Reception Centre, which will be open from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Friday, 26th February and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, 27th February. If you are able to assist us by volunteering for this duty, please let Cedric Randerson know (as soon as possible) at what time or times you will be available.

ROLL OF HONOUR

456585

DONALD THEODORE HORN

Whakatane - 27/11/86

THE KIWI SOLDIER IN WORLD WAR 1.

(Extracts from the Official History of the N.Z. Rifle
Brigade - 1914-1918)

Brocton Camp was situated on a somewhat bleak and dreary upland surrounded by a charming countryside dotted with quaint old-time villages. Some four miles away was the historic country-town of Stafford, whose people proved to be eminently kindly and hospitable. The camp itself was thoroughly equipped for all branches of general and specialist training, the open spaces afforded ample scope for extended-order work, while the climatic conditions, combined with the nature of the soil, gave a realistic touch to the frequent rehearsals in trench routine and attack and defence.

On the administrative side the conduct of the camp was equally efficient. The work of the quartermaster and his staff, already established at a high standard, was raised still further until it became a fine art. At Brocton Camp waste was unknown. Crumbs and stale bread were baked in the huge ovens and sold to Birmingham manufacturers of calves' food; bones, fat, marrow, cracklings, meat-residue, swill and even paper, were disposed of for good money in the best markets. In this connection the following statement taken from the general record will be of interest. It covers a period of four months in the middle of 1918, and shows the monetary value of the by-products sold, as well as the daily cost of food per man.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|--------------|-----|----|-------------|-------|----|----|--------|----|----|-------|----|---------|----------|
| per man. | Cost of food | | | By-products | | | | | | | | | Average | |
| | per man | Fat | | | Swill | | | Others | | | Total | | | daily |
| Month | per day | £ | s. | d. | £ | s. | d. | £ | s. | d. | £ | s. | d. | strength |
| May | 1/7½ | 45 | 9 | 0 | 15 | 6 | 6 | 33 | 19 | 10 | 94 | 15 | 4 | 1,438 |
| June | 1/8 3/4 | 33 | 1 | 6 | 11 | 7 | 0 | 29 | 11 | 8 | 74 | 0 | 2 | 1,460 |
| July | 1/6 | 77 | 1 | 10 | 13 | 14 | 6 | 34 | 3 | 7 | 124 | 19 | 11 | 2,020 |
| August | 1/3½ | 35 | 0 | 0 | 18 | 13 | 0 | 78 | 7 | 7 | 132 | 0 | 7 | 2,484 |

Economies of this kind, as well as the steadily-rising returns from the "wet" and "dry" canteens, made it possible to extend the provision made for the comfort and general welfare of the men. The food-ration, supplemented in various ways, was well-prepared by expert cooks in model kitchens, and the dining-halls were provided with central stoves serving not only to warm the room, but, by means of a camp invention in the form of an ingenious rack built round the flue, to heat the dinner-plates as well. Excellent recreation halls, well-furnished billiard parlours, and comfortable reading rooms were provided, and a cinematograph entertainment was given nightly.

The Brigade moved on March 20th, 1916 from Ferry Post to Moascar Camp, where it remained until it left for France early in the following month. During the stay at these camps, training was continued with unabated energy. Company, battalion and brigade parades, route marches and staff rides, night operations and trench-digging, specialist training and transport work, each had its place, till at last all ranks, the newer arrivals as well as the "old hands", felt that they were fit for an emergency. Yet, with all our labours, there was time and opportunity

THE KIWI SOLDIER IN WORLD WAR 1 (CONT/D)

for much pleasure. The hot season was not far advanced, and the general surroundings had a special interest. There was a liberal allowance of leave to Cairo. Ismailia and its beautiful plantations and gardens, Lake Timsah and the Suez Canal with their naval and mercantile shipping, even the open desert itself with its scattered remains of bygone civilizations, all had a charm that was irresistible. Bathing parades to the lake or the Canal were a special joy, and often practically the whole personnel of the Brigade would be in the water at one time; and, though reminders of the great world-strife were never absent, there was a refreshing restfulness in a quiet evening stroll to the Canal after a crowded day of toil on the sands of the desert.

Then, too, we had, what so seldom occurred in after-days, the whole of the Division assembled in one place. There was consequently an opportunity for our fellows to mix with the stalwarts from Gallipoli and hear from them at first hand what it meant to be in close contact with the enemy under conditions which would probably prevail in that theatre of war whither we were destined soon to go. We saw much of the other Anzacs also, and in this connection a spontaneous display of goodwill is worthy of note. A brigade of Australians marching across the desert from Tel-el-Kebir was overtaken by a heat-wave, with the result that the men were suffering march casualties to an appalling extent. Word of their plight reached the camp of the New Zealanders near by, and at a hint, rather than an order, every available water-cart, every spare dixie, and every water-bottle within reach was taken out by our men, who streamed over the sands hastening to bring relief to their neighbours in distress.

The time for the departure of the Division was now near at hand, and the final preparations were pushed to completion with all speed. Para-typhoid inoculation had been carried out twice towards the end of March. Kits were reduced by sending away all private belongings, forage caps were finally handed in, * and on April 1st the new charger-loading, short M.L.E. rifles were drawn in exchange for the old M.L.E. long rifles that had hitherto been in use.

We had been inspected by General Godley and seen at training by H.R.H. the Princes of Wales, and now, on April 3rd, the whole Division paraded before General Sir A.J. Murray, commanding the Forces in Egypt. To us this was a very imposing parade, the first occasion on which we had seen ceremonial work on such a scale; but we left the ground at the conclusion of the march past with the consciousness that our hard training had not been in vain so far as it affected our physique, smartness, steadiness, and general appearance. With due thoughtfulness the quicker step of the Rifle Brigade had been provided for, the band accommodated its time accordingly, and, notwithstanding the drawback of loose sand, the several battalions in close column of platoons swung by at the trail in fine form.

On the same evening orders were received for moving out and embarking for France. The Advance Party of the Brigade under Capt. Purdy entrained for Port Said on the evening of the 5th April, and embarked there on the "Franconia".

* The Birth of the "Lemon Squeezer" Hat - 1916.

DOG-FIGHTS OVER FRANCE

The distastefulness of these tasks, in many respects more dangerous and less welcome than the exciting activities of front-line garrison duty or even of an actual advance, was only slightly tempered by the fine weather that prevailed; and not even the urgency of the work in hand could prevent an occasional pause to watch the issue of manoeuvres at this time so frequent in the air above. On the 9th, Richtofen's squadron of eighteen aeroplanes, conspicuous by their brilliant colouring, cruised slowly up and down over our new front line at a comparatively low altitude. Immediately above the village of Messines, and flying parallel to the Germans, was a squadron of five British open-fusilage machines. The opposing formations, so unequally matched in strength, for some time maintained a respectful distance from each other, exchanging occasional bursts of machine-gun fire at long range. Presently, to the dismay of the interested spectators, a British machine suddenly swerved and crashed to earth. Almost immediately, and as if from nowhere, there appeared another British aeroplane, but this was of a vastly different type from the ponderous fighters majestically patrolling the airy spaces above the line. A light, fast machine, twisting and manoeuvring dexterously, it looked quite out of place in its present company. After a few moments, spent, as it seemed, in taking stock of the position, the British scout wheeled aloft in a fast spiral, and, turning abruptly, plunged down like a meteor, alone, into the midst of the famous German squadron which was the pride of the Fatherland, and which our enemy fondly believed to be the dread of all Allied airman. Now followed a scene of the most thrilling interest. Wheeling, twisting, turning, diving, the British machine darted hither and thither amongst the enemy 'planes, its machine-gun crackling incessantly. The Germans retaliated in kind, but finding, as it would appear, that they were firing into one another, the squadron, which had hitherto been keeping magnificent formation, broke up in disorder. From the disorganized group five machines drew off, and, mounting swiftly heavenwards, took order one above another. Then in succession they swooped down upon the lone British machine, which was still maintaining the state of confusion amongst the remaining thirteen. Each of the five endeavoured to "get on the tail" of the Britisher, but no sooner did that object appear to be within reach of achievement than the position was reversed by the prompt and skilful handling of the British aeroplane. Our men, who, in the face of this all-absorbing contest, had temporarily given up all thoughts of digging, heartily applauded each successful manoeuvre on the part of the plucky pilot, and raised a derisive cheer as, thoroughly discomfited, the German squadron withdrew. They saw with satisfaction the gallant scout, now doubtless short of ammunition, turn slowly homeward, and watched with renewed interest two of the Germans, apparently emboldened by this retreat and sensing a possible defenceless victim, break back and give chase. The pursuers, however, had little heart in their work, for when the British scout turned they suddenly and finally gave up the contest. Perhaps the Germans had begun to suspect, what was indeed the case, that the pilot of the British machine was the redoubtable McCudden, whose unequalled reputation for skill and daring was well known on both sides of the Allied front.

R.S.M. LIVESSEY, D.C.M.

While we were in this sector there passed from the Brigade a very notable figure, in the person of Regimental Sergeant-Major Charles Livesey, D.C.M. of the 1st Battalion, who, on account of ill-health, but much against his own wish, was detached for depot duty in England early in February.

Born in 1853, he enlisted in the Scots Guards at the age of twenty, and up to the time of his departure from France had fought in no fewer than eight campaigns. His first active service was in the Egyptian campaign of 1882, and he was with his regiment in the famous battle of Tel-el-Kebir. In the Soudan campaign, three years later, he fought at Suakin and again at Hasheen, in the latter battle gaining the Distinguished Conduct Medal. He had the honour of being invested with this decoration by Queen Victoria in 1886, and the same year saw his promotion to Warrant Officer, 1st Class. He completed his service in the Regulars in the year 1893, and, joining the British South African Police, he was again on active service through the Matabele War of 1896, and the Mashona Rebellion operations of the following year. In the same force he fought through the whole of the Boer War of 1899-1902; and four years later, while serving in Royston's Horse, he took part in the operations that resulted in the quelling of the Zulu Rebellion.

At the outbreak of the Great War he was in New Zealand. He offered his services, was accepted, and left with the Main Body as a member of the 1st Otago Battalion. Returning to this country on troopship duty, he obtained a transfer to the New Zealand Rifle Brigade, which was just about to leave on active service. Here he received the appointment of Regimental Sergeant-Major of the 1st Battalion in the place of R.S.M. W. Catto, who had been attached to us hitherto, but was now required for further instructional duty in the training-camps.

Because of his knowledge of interior economy, drill, and active service conditions, derived from long years of experience, R.S.M. Livesey proved to be an acquisition of great value to the 1st Battalion. He was a strict disciplinarian, but by no means a martinet, and the influence of his example was felt throughout the whole of the unit. Notwithstanding his comparatively advanced age, for he was sixty-two when he joined the battalion, he "footed it" and carried his pack with the best of us; and at the close of each of the long treks over the desert at Mersa Matruh and the wearying marches on the pavé roads of France and Belgium, one knew that he would never fail to accomplish the performance of the many duties that fell to the lot of the sergeant-major long after most of the personnel were at rest. Though the usual severity of the worst part of the winter of 1916-17 had left its mark, he still considered that he could weather the remainder of the season, but he was not permitted to continue to face the ordeal. After a brief stay in England, he was invalided to New Zealand on April 6, 1917.

At the close of the war Sergeant-Major Livesey was entitled to wear the following decorations and medals: The Distinguished Conduct Medal; the Egyptian Medal and Khedive's Star; the Soudan Bar on the Egyptian ribbon; the Matabele-Mashonaland Medal; the Queen's and the King's South African Medals; the Zulu Rebellion Medal; the 1914-15 Star, the General Service Medal, and the Victory Medal.

THE FREYBERG PROGRAMME

Anyone who did not watch the T.V. presentation of the life and career of Lord Freyberg must belong to a very small minority. I have heard many favourable comments on the programme, not only from ex-members of 2nd N.Z. Division but from much younger people, to whom he had been little more than a famous name. Naturally enough, we remember him as General Freyberg or just as "Tiny", a nickname that demonstrated the respect and genuine affection with which he was regarded by the men who served under him. We admired him for his personal courage and coolness under fire and for the outstanding qualities of leadership that he showed on so many occasions and in circumstances and battle conditions that differed so widely. But, more than anything else, we learned to appreciate his concern for the men of the Division and his refusal to throw them into action regardless of the casualty lists.

When he took over command of 2nd N.Z. Div. after spending so many years in England and in the British Army, it must have been a major task for him to adjust and adapt to the very different ways of the N.Z. soldier and it is a tribute in itself that he made this adjustment so quickly and so thoroughly.

Lady Barbara Freyberg liked to refer to her husband as "my General" and, while we would not have wanted to use similar terms, we did regard him as our General and as the right man in the right job.

The "Freyberg VC" documentary was extremely well put together and presented by Lt. General Sir Leonard Thornton, who must have spent a colossal amount of time on research, in travelling to various places that were used as back-drops and in obtaining the comments of so many of the men who served with or under Freyberg. The liberal use of war-time film footage helped considerably to give the documentary movement and authenticity. Among the people who provided the incidental commentaries were a number of Freyberg's staff officers, including former All Black and Wellington Rugby rep. JACK GRIFFITHS. It was also good to see representatives of 22 Battalion on the screen:- HADDON DONALD and SCOTCH PATERSON. For obvious reasons, the documentary was also an abbreviated history of 2nd N.Z. Division. It was all there:- Greece, Crete, the desert battles and the long haul from southern Italy to Trieste. I thought that the controversial bits (mainly Crete and Cassino) were presented fairly and objectively, bearing in mind that some of the comments that members of the Division would have liked to make were liable to be, and probably were, censored. There were some guarded references to the part played in the Italian campaign (up to the fall of Rome) by a certain General of an allied country and we were left to fill in the details from our own recollections of how the campaign was handled and frequently bungled.

The documentary certainly fulfilled its principal objective of giving a comprehensive picture of Freyberg's quite extraordinary career:- how he began his adult life with little to distinguish him from his contemporaries but his prowess as a swimmer; how he served in two World wars, rose to high rank and was many times decorated and many times wounded; how he became Governor General of New Zealand and finished up with the title of Baron and with an appointment at Windsor Castle that was in keeping with his other distinctions. It was a success story if ever there was one and a fitting tribute to Lord Freyberg's secure niche in the Hall of Fame.

Cedric Randerson

JOTTINGS

Like most people, the editor of this Circular has his favourite quotations. Here are some of them; any relationship to the history of 22 Battalion and its members is purely accidental and coincidental:-

From Pope John:- "Men are like wine:- some turn to vinegar; others improve with age."

From the late REX FAIRBURN, the New Zealand poet, after a stopover (some years ago) at Mercer Railway Station:- "The squalid tea of Mercer is not strained."

From Brigitte Bardot:- "It's sad to grow old but it's nice to ripen".

From Jeremy Coney, in "The Playing Mantis":- "Cricket is a gentle, humble, almost spiritual thing which can arouse and entertain but (can also) inspire attitudes of courtesy and camaraderie - - - ". "It's a pity some of that gentility and grace has been eroded by the modern day game. I'm not suggesting that we cling to the past but if things are good then they are worth keeping. NOTHING IS PERMANENT EXCEPT CHANGE, so we must hold fast to those beliefs that we feel are important. While cricket is shaped by the people who play, it outlasts them and will endure".

NEWS FROM MEMBERS

MAX LUSTY, for whom we had no fixed address for several years, has written to say that:- "I have got myself re-married and our home is on Paerata Ridge". Postal address:- P.O. Box 409, Opotiki. Max regrets that he cannot attend the National Reunion due to other commitments that clash with it.

TONY WHITLOCK of Melbourne is our first overseas registration for February 26/28. He is looking forward to seeing many old friends from Battalion days and hopes to fit in some fishing while he is here.

PADRE THORPE (D.D.T.) attended the Masterton Reunion but doubts if he will be able to make it to the Auckland one. His wife is very ill. They have moved from Hanmer Springs to 79 Point Road, Stoke, where they are with their family. D.D.T. sends greetings to everyone he got to know when he was Battalion Padre in Egypt and the early desert period.

JIM WISHNOWSKY AND Loma have registered for the National Reunion but are keeping their fingers crossed that Jim's health will be good enough for them to make the trip from Nelson. Jim was in hospital with an internal complication and the stress brought on a heart attack. We are sure they will be with us if they possibly can and we wish Jim all the best for his recovery.

OTHERS on the sick list include:- GEORGE SAINSBURY, Hamilton, who is hospitalised and far from well; GRAY TENNENT, who is receiving regular hospital treatment but plans to be at the National Reunion; VI MATTHEWS, wife of National President George, who has had a heart attack of the 'mediocre' type - half-way between mild and serious.

NEWS FROM MEMBERS (CONT/D)

DOUG FROGGATT, Tauranga, who supplied the extracts from the N.Z. Rifle Brigade History printed in this issue, keeps us in touch with what is happening in the Bay of Plenty/Waikato area. He reports also that his new Honda Accord was partly demolished recently when an Alfa-Romeo (may we say that it was driven by a woman) came through a "give-way" sign. Fortunately, it was the left hand side of Doug's car that was taken out by the impact.

NATIONAL REUNION COMMITTEE

National President:- George Matthews; National Secretary:- Cedric Randerson
Committee:- Jim Allen; Eric Benfield; Grant Borrie; Brian Galvin; Stan Johnson;
Ron Jones; Keith McBrearty; Scotty McMillan; Dudley Shirley-Thomson; Henry McRae;
Massey Wood; Doug. Froggatt.

NATIONAL REUNION REGISTRATIONS

We repeat the request we made in the National Circular dated October, 1987. We want EVERYONE who intends to be there or hopes to be there to fill in and return the Registration form reprinted below by 31st December. This includes you, even if you have a good credit in T.F.S. and/or you have sent us a previous notice of intention. We asked for paid registrations because this is the only way we can obtain accurate numbers for the caterers. And we will accept cancellations and make refunds as late in the piece as we can.

REGISTRATION FORM

22nd Battalion Association,
P.O. Box 13-058, Auckland, 6.

NATIONAL REUNION - FEBRUARY 26/28, 1988

I/We wish to register for the Reunion at Alexander Park:-

Full Registration:- Single - \$55 ☐ ; Double - \$100 ☐

Sunday only Registration:- Single - \$46 ☐ ; Double - \$82 ☐

(TICK ONE BOX)

Optional Saturday evening dinner - \$19.80:- YES/NO

(NOT AN OFFICIAL FUNCTION)

(CROSS OUT ONE)

- (1) I enclose a cheque for \$ _____ in payment for the above.
(2) Please deduct the amount of \$ _____ from my T.F.S. credit.
(CROSS OUT (1) OR (2))

NAME (Block letters) _____

ADDRESS (Block letters) _____

Phone No:- _____

(PLEASE SEND BY 31/12/87)