

"Vrai et Fort"

22nd Battalion Association

AUCKLAND BRANCH

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Secretary :

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22ND BATTALION NEWS

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

OCTOBER, 1988

DEFERRED, NOT FORGOTTEN

During the past fortnight or so, two members of Auckland Branch, 22nd Battalion Association have contacted the editor of this publication to enquire, very politely, if their names were still on the mailing list, as it was quite some months since they last received an issue. My reply was an apologetic one for the fact is that, though I fully intended to send out a post National Reunion issue somewhere about the middle of this year, the pressure of commitments to the clients of my Accountancy practice and the necessity of coping with a regular flood of confusing Tax legislation compelled me to defer until now the not inconsiderable work of compiling a newsletter and getting it printed and into the mail. The two years of preparation for the Alexandra Park National Reunion last February and the running of the Reunion itself left all members of the Reunion Committee somewhat drained of energy and in need of a rest. As Branch and National Secretary, I carried a fair bit of the work-load and had to put off doing a lot of things till more time was available. Then, in March, I took a much-needed and long overdue holiday break and have been more than a little busy ever since. So, although I do not really need to apologise, I do express my regrets for the long gap since the last newsletter went out.

The National Reunion also caused the Branch Committee to cancel the Branch function normally held in March. We did not really think that our members would be very enthusiastic about turning out for a Branch function so soon after the big show in February. We plan to hold an informal Branch social function on the last Sunday in November - more about that later.

ALEXANDRA PARK IN RETROSPECT

The National Reunion held at Alexandra Park Raceway from February 26th to 28th was, the Reunion Committee felt, a very successful and enjoyable one. It is difficult for those involved in the staging and running of a National Reunion to gauge just how well or otherwise it went and not everything went completely according to plan. The Accommodation agency we employed messed people about to quite an extent and some of those who booked accommodation through the agency were less than satisfied with the location of the Motels allotted to them. The Reunion Committee intervened shortly before the Reunion to change some unsatisfactory bookings but, in spite of all we could do, a few people were accommodated further away from our venue than needed to be. There were some other problems too but we dealt with these as they arose and the vast majority of those who attended seemed well satisfied with our efforts. After the Reunion, we received one complaint that related to the catering but we were gratified by the large number of congratulatory remarks and expressions of thanks. The consensus was that the quality of the catering, the helpfulness of the caterers and the work done by the Reunion Committee were greatly appreciated by those

ALEXANDRA PARK IN RETROSPECT (CONT/D)

at the receiving end. Alexandra Park was again an excellent Reunion venue, with everything taking place at the venue, which provided very suitable and comfortable facilities for the major functions and for the informal get-togethers that were a feature of the Reunion.

The two addresses given - at the Memorial Service and at the Sunday luncheon - seemed to be very much appreciated and one could have heard the proverbial pin drop while DOUG. FROGGATT was speaking at the luncheon. There were many requests that these addresses be published in the Newsletter and we are responding by publishing them in this issue.

The Reunion Committee extends its grateful thanks to all those members of the Branch who volunteered for service at the Reunion and spent long hours on duty at the Reception Centre and in doing many other jobs. We hope that you also found time to enjoy yourselves.

CEDRIC RANDERSON'S ADDRESS AT
MEMORIAL SERVICE - 28/2/88

While thinking about what I would say this morning, I jotted down a long list of possible topics, including such contentious issues as the Peace Movement, Nuclear protest, protest marches in general and our country's defence policies and alliances. I could speak at length on these themes but you will be pleased to hear that I'm not going to do that, though I will touch briefly on the current Peace Movement. It seems to differ from the Pacifist Movement of the 1930s only in that it is rather more politically or ideologically oriented. Bearing in mind that "Peace" means a great deal more than the absence of War, I am certain that we all long for and pray for the day when all international disputes can be settled without recourse to armed force or the threat of armed force, just as we long for the day when physical violence within our society can largely be eliminated (excluding of course the disciplined and self-controlled violence of most Rugby matches). It is when people debate the means to be used to attain lasting World peace that opinions differ sharply.

Our prime reason for holding this service is to commemorate those who died during World War 2, especially the men whose names are on the crosses on the other side of this building. I think, too, that this is a time when we should spare more than a passing thought for those whose post-war lives were adversely affected and, in many cases, shortened by what happened to them during the war - because of severe wounds, sickness or other experiences with the Division or as prisoners of war. It is also, I believe, a time when we should re-examine and identify our reasons and motives for attending national and local Reunions. Returned men are regularly accused of being militaristic types who revelled in military pomp and the carnage of the battlefield - which is, in the vast majority of cases, a total misapprehension. The critics forget that there IS such a thing as ESPRIT DE CORPS - call it team spirit if you will. It has to be a powerful force that brings us together, ageing and decrepit though we may be, more than 40 years on.

We do not get together, as claimed by some critics (usually very young ones), to re-live past glories but to remember our dead, to maintain the enduring friendships formed under the stress of War, to talk nostalgically about the good times we had together (and some of the bad) and to regale each other with

stories, sometimes exaggerated or apochryphal, about the lighter side of army life in wartime. Only last week, a friend of mine who did not serve in the Division (he was in Fleet Air Arm) was telling me a story he had heard from a relative who WAS with 2 N.Z.DIV. It was about a wounded Kiwi soldier who found himself in an Italian Hospital staffed by Nuns. One of them came into the room where he was lying in bed and said to him in broken English, with a strong Italian accent, something like this:- "Good morning you old b----; how the -- (word censored) --- hell are you today?" He was staggered to hear such language from an angelic-looking person but he learned later that day that another Kiwi in the hospital had been teaching her to speak English!

On a more serious note, what were our motives for spending some of the most precious years of our lives in the army and in a front-line Battalion, many thousands of miles away from home? The easy answer is that we had little option but many of us WERE able to make a deliberate choice, even to the extent of expressing a preference for Infantry service. For some, the call to arms was a call to adventure; others needed to keep a step ahead of the police or their creditors but the great majority of those of us who were of military age when war broke out joined up because we felt that it was our duty to serve, because almost everyone we knew was signing on, because (deep down) we knew that our country and the freedoms we enjoyed were worth fighting for and that those freedoms were threatened by Hitler's Germany. Some might call this Jingoism but it was really plain, old-fashioned patriotism, with a good dash of self-interest thrown in. The Battalion had a handful of professional soldiers (and some very competent amateurs) but, by and large, we were never that far from being just civilians in uniform and the glamour (if any) of military service wore off long before the end of hostilities. I speak for myself and, I know, for a great many others when I say that there were many other things I would rather have been doing during those years.

Some time ago, I had a brief debate with a nephew of mine about the Protest marches that took place during a certain Rugby tour of N.Z. He had taken part in some of the marches but stopped doing that when some of the protesters began to do battle with the police. He said to me:- "My generation has to do something to help the oppressed people of South Africa, just as your generation went to the help of the Jews in Germany." That was another misapprehension and I did my best to correct it. I told him that the plight of the Jews was appalling enough but that we had known nothing about BELSEN, AUSCHWITZ and the other horror camps and that, even if we had known, this would not have been a valid reason for joining up and going to the War. In those days, however much we deplored what was happening in another country, we did not consider that we had either right or reason to interfere in the internal affairs of that country.

Coming back to the men whose deaths we commemorate today, it would be easy to get carried away to the extent of building up each one of them to heroic status but we know that most of them were ordinary (using that word in no disparaging sense) and unremarkable young men who performed no conspicuous feats of gallantry and received no medals for special valor. Whether or not they were outstandingly brave, they displayed courage of a high order merely by overcoming their natural fears while doing the jobs they were given to do. The men who served beside you may or may not have been heroes but they did what was required of them, often beyond the call of duty, and you knew that you could rely on their loyal support and their determination to play their part, whatever the cost to life or limb. Apart from that, each of those who died was a personality in his own

CEDRIC RANDERSON'S ADDRESS (CONT/D)

right and each was denied the chance of realising his full potential in life. Many of them would have made their mark in the post-war world; who knows, there could easily have been another David Lange or another Robert Muldoon among them? Did I hear someone say: "Heaven forbid"?

In World War I, a young British officer named RUPERT BROOKE became almost a national hero in England before he died at the age of 28. In actual fact, Brooke didn't get the chance to win renown in battle; he became ill on a troopship en route to Gallipoli; was put ashore on one of the Greek islands and died there. But he wrote some memorable poems and expressed the tragedy of War more movingly than anyone else. I will conclude by repeating this verse from his poem "The Dead":-

"Blow out, you bugles, over the rich Dead!
There's none of these so lonely and poor of old,
But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.
These laid the world away; poured out the red
Sweet wine of youth; gave up the years to be
Of work and joy, and that unhopd serene
That men call age; and those who would have been
Their sons; they gave their immortality."

ROLL OF HONOUR

31005	L.H. ABBOTT	Auckland	23/12/87
447513	A.L. BATT	Masterton	14/12/87
30426	J.R. BRODIE	Auckland	11/6/88
31274	P.F. BUTLER	Whangarei	1/9/88
76705	A.W. BRUCE	Gisborne	14/10/88
664621	B. CHADWICK	Rotorua	30/11/87
46091	L.R. CASTLES	Thames	12/12/87
6803	A.F. CRAWFORD	Auckland	29/6/88
28339	A.A. FRANKLIN	Auckland	12/3/88
44394	F.J. FUSSELL	Waitara	9/7/88
5176	R.F. GARMONSWAY	Tauranga	21/3/88
30090	T.M. HOOD	Auckland	11/4/88
6204	A.L. LANGLEY	New Plymouth	15/1/88
	C.J. McNEIL	Auckland	28/1/88
6228	H.I. MITCHINSON	Thames	15/1/88
617177	M.A. O'LEARY	Kaitaia	29/2/88
622071	T.C. PEARSON	Rotorua	15/10/87
30141	G.S. SAINSBURY	Hamilton	8/4/88
437792	W.A. SINCLAIR	Whakatane	24/10/87
30175	K.G. TENNENT	Ohaupo	28/1/88

The above list is a long but by no means an exhaustive one, containing mainly the names of men living in the Auckland Branch area. Sad to see the passing of such well-known Battalion identities as Peter Butler, Ron Garmonsway, George Sainsbury and Gray Tennent. The last three had been in poor health for a long time. Gray Tennent had been looking forward to attending the February National Reunion, as had Lew Langley of New Plymouth.

DOUG FROGGATT'S TOAST TO THE BATTALION

ALEXANDRA PARK - SUNDAY, 28/2/88

I would commence by drawing your attention to the date of this reunion and wonder whether it was by accident or by design, that the Auckland Section selected this month and this day.

For it is February - and that word is significant to every member of 22. Furthermore, it is the 28th day of February, and "28 days" too, is of significance. And whether by accident or design, it is certainly a happy choice of month and day.

February!!

What memories that word conjures up. Firstly, there was "Old February" himself. "The Father of the Regiment". Lt. Col. L.W. ANDREW, V.C. Then there was his famous - or was it infamous "28 Days":- hence his fond and honoured nickname.

But I am sure you would know too, that it was during the month of February (3/2/42 in fact) that the Battalion paraded for Colonel Andrew for the last time. For on that day he took his farewell on relinquishing command of the 22nd. So February has a very real place in the records of this Battalion. But it does not stop there, for here is a singular fact.

Take up sometime your copy of the Official history of the 22nd Battalion and turn to the rear pages. There you will find listed, the names of 282 members of the Battalion who were either Killed in Action or died of Wounds received in action. The dates of their deaths are also shown. They were killed, or they died, in the various areas where 22 gave battle. They were killed or they died in every month of the year EXCEPT - Yes! - except the month of February. Not a single member of the 22nd Battalion was either Killed in Action or died of his wounds during the month of February throughout the entire war years. Believe it!

But time has moved on. "40 years on" goes that grand old Schoolboy song but those of us gathered here today have long passed that milestone. For it is now 48 years since the Battalion was born. And how the times! how the scenes! and how the bodies too have changed. No doubt like I, you have seen on Television in recent times, extracts from wartime Newsreels, especially during the "Freyberg" programmes. Young men - boys almost - full of vigour and marching tall and upright. Hair cut short back and sides. Carrying old fashioned rifles. Riding in quaint egg-shell thin, tracked vehicles. Driving cars or trucks that today would be much sought after by vintage collectors. Were these young lads the members of the 22nd Battalion and was that antique weaponry their equipment of war? But of course this was all in the "before" age
Before: Television; Frozen Foods; Photocopiers and ball-point pens
Before: Space flight; credit cards; panty-hose and electric blankets
Before: House-husbands; computers and before our streets and roads were cluttered with Japanese cars.

It was back when we thought of 'pot' as something to cook in.

- of "grass" as something to be mowed or fed to livestock

- of being "gay" as being happy and bright!

When you think of it, Oh! How quaint we were. Why - we even got married first and then lived together.

DOUG FROGGATT'S TOAST TO THE BATTALION
(CONT/D)

But it is now 1988 and the scenes have changed. TODAY - be hailed in the street by some white-haired elderly man leaning on a walking stick.

- See some stiff jointed old fellow trying, with difficulty to get himself out of a car while the young driver leaps out calling "Wait Grandad! I'll come and help you!"

- See some sedate old gentleman dutifully pushing a trolley around the Supermarket behind a neat, matronly lady. Get up close and hear his conversation.

"Yes Dear!" "No Dear!" "Certainly Dear!" The chances are that you are seeing today's members of the 22nd Battalion. Time - and the gentle hand of woman has done that which the German & Italian armies could never do. And although our bodies have changed, I would suggest our ideals have not. RESPECT!

- Respect for home and for country.

- Respect for others and for the property of others.

- Respect for ourselves.

And I would further suggest that there is room for all of these, still, in today's society.

Recently, when in Hamilton, I called to see an old member of the Battalion, and one known to many of you here today. George Sainsbury. George is very, very ill. And as I sat at his bedside talking with him, he said "I will not make the Auckland Reunion, but please give my regards to all my friends who are there and tell them that although I cannot be with them in body, I will be with them in spirit." And I pass that message on.

Later I thought over what George had said and I wondered just what is it that causes a man so very ill, to have as one of the great regrets of that illness, that it prevents him from attending this gathering. And I wondered too, just what is it that causes us, after 48 years, to still come back each two years to these gatherings.

- We come from all over New Zealand and from Overseas.

- We come at considerable financial cost to many.

- We come at some strain now, upon our ageing bodies.

But we come!!

Do we gather, to talk war? - Certainly not. Is it that we come to meet old comrades and to re-laugh many laughs of long years ago? Yes! I believe, in part, that it is. But it's more: much more, than that. Well then, just what is it?

My friends from Taranaki here today will well know that great Maori Pah just north of New Plymouth and high up on the South bank of the Waitara river. PUKERANGIORA. The very name sends shivers down the spine. Steeped in the histories of siege, of heroism, of terrible massacres and great slaughter. Go there any day and walk through the pines that now surround that magnificent site. Where even on the windiest day all seems still within. Where even the birds seem not to dare to sing. Stand on that great scarp that drops sheer to the river, hundreds of feet below. Look down and across the flat lands of the Waitara and north towards the old war trails that lead to the Waikato. - And you cannot but sense it - There is a "presence" - a "something" there. It is the Spirit of that wonderful place.

And here today, at the memorial service - Did you sense a "presence"? For me it was that moment after the service, when we quietly marched off. And it is here, in this room right now.

DOUG FROGGATT'S TOAST TO THE BATTALION
(CONT'D)

One cannot see it! One cannot reach out and touch it! I know that I certainly cannot adequately describe it. But it is here. It is real. It is positive. It is the Spirit of a wonderful Battalion. The Spirit of 22. THAT'S what draws us together each second year. The SPIRIT of the 22nd Battalion.

"Tell them that although I cannot be with them in body, I will be with them in Spirit."

In a moment I will ask you to join me in honouring a toast. And when we stand to do that let us remember that we are not standing alone. Standing with us will be those other members of 22.

Those who are represented by the rows of white wooden crosses outside this building. Those too, who over the long years since, have answered the call of the "Great Commanding Officer" and have been dismissed, from their last parade. And as we raise our glasses to the toast, so too will theirs be raised in spirit, - and in silent salutation.

Members of the 22nd Battalion - Ladies & Gentlemen - please be upstanding! With humbleness but with great pride I now offer a toast - A toast that is Second to None: I give you

THE 22ND BATTALION

AUCKLAND BRANCH NEWS

J.G. (SCOTTY) McMILLAN, a long serving member of the Branch Committee, ended his lengthy sojourn at Manurewa and moved himself and his family to Rotorua prior to the Alexandra Park National Reunion but came back to Auckland for the Reunion and did good work there as a member of the Reunion Committee. We will miss him but hope to see him in Auckland from time to time. Scotty's address is 6 Darroch Street, Rotorua.

CES NEWBY may not be a member of the Branch for very much longer. Ces. and his wife are planning to move to Western Australia to be closer to members of their family.

BRANCH SOCIAL FUNCTION:- This will be held at the usual venue, Grey Lynn Returned Services Club, Francis Street, Grey Lynn on Sunday, 27th November from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. We will have a Smorgasbord meal costing \$10.00 per head. The proceedings are expected to be quite informal and we are hoping for a good turnout. Please fill in and return the reply slip at the end of this Newsletter, either to say that you will be there or to send in your current subscription if you can't make it.

1990 NATIONAL REUNION

The Battalion's 50th anniversary will be celebrated at the National Reunion to be held in Wellington from:-

MAY 18 to MAY 20, 1990

The venue will be the C.I.T. (Central Institute of Technology), Heretaunga, better known to most of us as what used to be the Trentham Military Camp. Wellington's

1990 NATIONAL REUNION (CONT/D)

first National Reunion Circular was issued last month. It was a call for T.F.S. contributions and the completion of Reunion registration forms (registration fee - \$10 per head). On the registration form, you are asked to say whether or not you wish to book the accommodation available at the C.I.T. venue itself. The cost of this accommodation (including meals) is estimated at not more than \$65 per person per day. If you wish to book accommodation elsewhere (Motels near the venue are listed in the circular), that will be your own responsibility. If you have not received a copy of the Wellington Branch circular, drop a line to:-

22 Battalion Association,
P.O. Box 14-386,
Kilbirnie, Wellington

L.W. ANDREW, V.C. BURSARY

This year's L.W. Andrew V.C. Bursary award was presented at Levin on 18th July. The award went to JULIE McCORKINDALE, a Form 7 student at Horowhenua College with an outstanding academic record. Arrangements for the presentation were made by NITA MENHENNET, Manawatu Branch and DOUG FROGGATT was the guest speaker at the function. Other representatives of Auckland Branch included our Branch President, GEORGE MATTHEWS.

Periodically, there have been discussions at meetings of Branch delegates as to the appropriateness of each award going to the same school but it would be difficult to do anything else and the choice of Horowhenua College recognises the close association with the Levin area of the Andrew family. Earlier this year, Mrs. MARTIN SULLIVAN offered us her late husband's copy of the Battalion history and this has now been donated to the Horowhenua College library.

22 Battalion Assn.,
Box 13-058, AUCKLAND, 6

November, 1988

Branch Social Function - 27th November

I enclose the sum of \$ _____, being:-

(1) Entrance for _____ people at the Branch function at \$10 per head.

- \$ _____

(2) My subscription for the current year (\$5)

- \$ _____

Total \$ _____

NAME (Block letters):- _____

ADDRESS:- _____

(Please return as soon as possible)