

## 22nd Battalion Association

### AUCKLAND BRANCH

Telephone 523 1310

Secretary :

C. W. Randerson

### BRANCH NEWSLETTER

PO Box 26 314

Epsom

Auckland 3

**MARCH, 1997**

### BRANCH SOCIAL GATHERING - SUNDAY, 23RD MARCH, 1997

Yes, it's that time again when we hold our Annual Branch get-together and, this year's function is being held a couple of weeks or so earlier than it has been in the last two or three years, namely on the Sunday before Easter. These gatherings continue to be most enjoyable and very popular. Last year, close on 50 of us gathered at the Grey Lynn RSC and we are expecting to have a similar attendance this year. We always have people from out of Auckland at this do, usually from the Bay of Plenty, North Auckland and the Waikato and, sometimes, visitors from even further afield. Granted that none of us are getting any younger but, while we're still reasonably mobile, it's well worth making a special point of being there.

The proceedings will, as usual, be informal and almost entirely social in character but we are required by our Rules to hold a short Branch AGM and, this year, the financial affairs of the Branch need to be looked at (please see Treasurer's report on the back page). And, as always, we do need to hear from you whether or not you are able to come. **PLEASE** use the Reply Slip to send your pre-payment by mail - this gives us the numbers the caterer must have and saves the Treasurer much hard work at the door. If you can't make it, please use the Reply Slip to send us your sub payment for the 1997/98 financial year and any further donation to our funds that you may feel able to make.

#### VENUE:

Grey Lynn Returned Services Club  
1 Francis Street, Grey Lynn

#### TIMES

Assemble at: 11 a.m. (promptly)

Luncheon: To start between Noon & 1 pm

Close down: 3 pm

VISITORS: Your friends and relatives are most welcome.

THE COST: \$12.50 per head (plus subscription and/or Donation).

BAR: Drinks will be available throughout & Wine for lunch will also be on sale.

CATERING NUMBERS: We must supply catering numbers in advance. **PLEASE FILL IN THE REPLY SLIP NOW** and send it with your remittance in time to reach the Treasurer by Wednesday, 19/3/97.

### ROLL OF HONOUR

412424	TWE (ERIC) BARKER-BENFIELD	MANILA	3/12/96
		(Philippines)	
6239	KH (KEN) McLEOD	Auckland	15/11/96
6752	RJ (RON) MORGAN	Auckland	30/11/96
41169	EA (MICK) SHEEHAN	Whakatane	30/11/96
74662	MEB (MASSEY) WOOD	Auckland	12/1/97

## **ROLL OF HONOUR (CONTINUED)**

"Last Post" lists issued by the Keeper of the National Roll, JOHN BOWKER of Wellington, show that no fewer than 84 former members of 22 Battalion died during the 1996 calendar year. This total included 26 from our Branch area (North Cape to Lake Taupo) and these statistics emphasise what we all know, that the survivors of those who served in 22 during W.W.2 are now in their seventies and eighties. Your Branch Committee extends its deep sympathy to the widows and families of all former members of the Battalion who have died since the last issue of this Newsletter. Of those whose names are listed above, four of the five have records of long service on the Branch Committee to their credit:- 6 years for Ken McLEOD, 10 for Ron Morgan, 17 for Eric Benfield and 33 years for Massey Wood, who will be given a special obituary notice in this issue. It will be noticed that Eric Benfield was overseas at the time of his death; his wife Patti died about 3 years ago.

Editor

### **22 BATTALION L W ANDREW, V.C. BURSARY - 1996 AWARD**

National Treasurer J A (AUS) RIDDELL sent us a report on the presentation of the Bursary award for 1996 to ROBERT ADIN, Head boy at Horowhenua College, who had shown the integrity, diligence, leadership and community spirit that made him a worthy recipient. Robert will attend Otago University this year. The presentation was made on October 23 (the anniversary of EL ALAMEIN) and was attended by 15 members of the Manawatu and Wellington Branches of the Association. The presentation was made by COLIN THOMSON of Havelock North who spoke on behalf of our Association.

Also in attendance at the College that day was Mr OWEN LOCKE, the Guardian Trust Officer who now administers the Bursary Trust.

Aus Riddell pointed out in his report that this was the last time that the Battalion would be directly involved in the arranging of Bursary Award presentations and that it was therefore appropriate that Owen Locke was there and had the opportunity of meeting several members of the Association.

Editor

### **CONGRATULATIONS, SIR TERRY**

**TP (TERRY) McLEAN** was one of the three knights named in the recent New Year honours list, his award being one that met with the instant approval of his former comrades in arms in 22 Battalion as well as that of his many colleagues in the field of journalism. He has been hailed as the doyen of New Zealand sporting journalists and is one of the country's most prolific and influential sports writers. He has written 29 books on NZ Rugby and All Black tours and was a sports writer, sports editor and columnist for the New Zealand Herald between 1946 and 1983. Since then, he has continued to write about sporting matters (and other things) as a free lance. He was awarded the MBE in 1978 and has been a sufficiently prominent and well-known citizen to qualify for listing in "Who's Who".

We gave Terry a write-up in this Newsletter about 7 years ago, including a reprint of the article on the demise of 2 NZ DIV that he wrote in 1946 and sent to the "Times" of London. It was an excellent article and earned him the large sum of four guineas. We said at that time that his distinctive literary style and candidly expressed opinions had in his specialised field, made him a legend in his own lifetime and that he had been described as a "white pointer shark among the minnows of New Zealand Rugby writers".

Cedric Randerson

## **IN BRIEF**

### **MICK KENNY "HANGS UP HIS BOOTS"**

**Wellington Branch** held its AGM and dinner at the Paraparaumu RSA late last year (a well-attended function) and elected a new Branch President (D J (DES) O'SULLIVAN). Des wrote to us a few weeks ago to let us know that Mick Kenny's poor health, and that of his wife Grace (who has had loss of vision) had made it necessary for Mick to "hang up his boots", meaning of course to stand down from the office of President. It will be a hard act to follow, says Des. PETER CUTCHE has taken over the job of Branch Secretary from NORMAN CARTER but Norm remains on the Committee.

### **SCOTCH RESUMES HIS STUDIES**

**E B (SCOTCH) PATERSON** has not allowed his success in completing his B.A. degree at Victoria University to dampen his enthusiasm for study. He tells me that, this year, he will be taking a DIP. HUM. course at Massey University. I understand that the abbreviated title stands for a Diploma in the Humanities. Scotch is also writing a book but I don't know just what the subject is at this stage.

### **MANAWATU BRANCH GOES TRAVELLING**

**Manawatu Branch** must contain the Association's keenest travellers, as the Branch regularly organises group visits to other parts of the country. This year's annual trip is to Tauranga and forty-three members, their wives and partners will be going to the Bay of Plenty on April 7, returning April 11. The Branch is also considering a bus trip to Rotorua next year for the 1998 National Reunion, which is now just over a year away.

### **22 BATTALION LW ANDREW V.C. BURSARY TRUST**

We hear that the Bursary Trust Appeal letter sent out in November, 1996 brought in an excellent response by way of "one-off" donations from members, widows and others to the Bursary Trust Capital fund but that the total received by early January was still some distance short of the target of \$10,000 set by the special committee appointed in 1994 to establish a permanent memorial to all those who served in the Battalion. If you are able to make a donation but have not yet done so, please send your remittance to National Treasurer J A (Aus) Riddell, 31 Montgomery Terrace, Palmerston North. Donations are tax-deductible.

Editor

### **MASSEY WOOD HAD STYLE**

When Massey Wood was born (in Christchurch) away back there in July, 1914, his parents decided that he should have three "given" names and he went on to the Register as ELLESMERE EVELYN BAILEY WOOD. It seems highly unlikely that Massey ever thought much of these high-sounding names and I have it on good authority that he much preferred to be known simply as "Bill" Wood. It was later on that he acquired the nick name of "Massey". This was the result of his completion of a herd-tester's course at Massey College in Palmerston North, and eventually he changed his name to Massey by deed poll. Starting work as a Taranaki farmhand at the age of 14, he found more scope for his business flair when he changed his pre-War job to that of an Insurance Agent.

Came the war and Massey held a Territorial Army commission until he relinquished it to serve with 2 NZEF in the M.E. and Italy. At War's end he held the rank of S/Sgt. His unorthodox



### **MASSEY WOOD HAD STYLE (CONTINUED)**

activities in 22 Battalion have been recorded elsewhere at some length but I will comment on them briefly. First up was his success in getting an Egyptian tradesman to manufacture 100 replicas of the German Iron Cross, together with a supply of the correct medal ribbon. American servicemen in Italy were keen to buy war souvenirs and had plenty of money to pay for them. I understand that any member of Massey's platoon who was going on leave took one or two of the Iron Crosses with him to meet his expenses. His business flair was brought into use in many other ways as the Division advanced towards northern Italy but we don't have enough space to record them here. Lastly, in between actions in the Italian campaign were the regular visits that Massey and one of his offiders are said to have made to the NAAFI Supply Depots from which all Units drew the standard rations of foodstuffs and alcoholic refreshments (beer and spirits). The staff at the NAAFI depots issued supplies on the basis of the numerical strength of an Army Unit and any order for supplies had to be on the correct order form. Somehow or other, Massey managed to overcome these small problems and I'm sure that his previous experience as an Insurance Agent would have helped him to make out a convincing case for the issue of supplies to a hush-hush outfit called the "Ruahine Reconnaissance Regiment".

The stories about Massey Wood have been vouched for by men who served with him in Don Company, 22 Battn and have to be accepted as gospel truth. The rest of us can only marvel at the audacity and intestinal fortitude that he showed in all these activities, which would not have been possible had not he shared the fruits of success with his platoon, his company and, to an extent, with the Battalion as a whole, causing him to become regarded as the "quarter-master supreme" and worthy of strong approval rather than carping criticism. My own feeling is that if, at the end of WW2, he owed any kind of debt to society, he repaid it many times over by his community service record in the post-War years. The Rotary Club of Panmure regarded him so highly that he was invested with Rotary's highest award, the Paul Harris Fellowship. And, in our own Association, he gave dedicated service for over 30 years. I recall especially the period of close on 15 years when we were making annual grants to several members of Auckland Branch who were in need of help from our Welfare Fund. These grants were made by way of Christmas parcels and, year after year, it was Massey Wood who went to the Supermarket, chose the contents, made up the parcels and delivered them to the recipients.

He was indeed a colourful and admirable personality. At the funeral service, it was the Panmure Rotary Club's man who summed him up best in these 3 words:- "Massey had style".

Cedric Randerson

### **PRISONER OF WAR DAYS**

Many serving in 22 Battalion after the successes in the desert during 1941-42 must still remember the sudden rush back from the milk and honey days of Syria to the debacle of Minquar Quaim, the body-wearying and mental strain of constantly moving and digging in for some two or three weeks under interminable shell-fire before traipsing in reserve in the attack on Ruweisat Ridge, the sudden digging in during darkness and the coming of dawn to find themselves in an open hollow threatened by German tanks and never a sign of anti-tank guns, artillery or friendly tanks. That ignominious and abject surrender of war. There followed the long hot and thirsty march towards Daba and naval shelling, the trucking under fierce Senussi guards to Tobruk, the brief stop-over at Benghazi and the incarceration of the Palms camp where dysentery, overflowing latrines and louse-infested dust were the order of the day.

Relief came with a move to the main camp at Benghazi in September where the prisoners were split into two groups for shipping to Italy. Those with names beginning with the letters of the alphabet beyond G will recall the trip through the Corinth Canal to Taranto in Southern Italy where delousing, cleansing showers and clean showers brought the realisation that indeed "cleanliness is next to Godliness".

For many there was another parting of the ways but one group went to the new camp at Altamura where conditions were heavenly after the Palms. In October, refreshed mentally and physically, this group will remember the move to the notorious Campo PG 57 at Gruppignano near Udine and the rigours of a Northern Italian winter in the three-tiered bunks hurriedly assembled in the recently built recreation hut. The main solace for all concerned came from good friendships, Red Cross food parcels and letters and clothing parcels from home.

Some few will remember the spring of 1943 bringing a move to the twin working camps in the Venetian Alps above Ampezzo. Those in Camp 103/6 worked on the construction site of a power station to be fed by water through tunnels from higher in the mountains where those in Campo 103/7 worked on road formation and the dam site where the beautiful village of La Maina was doomed to a watery grave. Memories from those camps were of doing as little as possible, growing daily fitter and stronger, the glories of the alpine scenery, and for the Catholics among the prisoners, the Mass on Sundays at the little church in La Maina.

September 1943 brought the capitulation of Italy and the prisoners at 103/6 and 7 joyfully bussed and trained back to Treviso to await orders. Alas the Germans surrounded the Treviso camp and freedom was short-lived as all were entrained and passed through the Brenner Pass and eventually to the huge international camp, 11B, near Nagdeberg, West of Berlin.

On Christmas Day 1943, while entrained to several camps in the vicinity of Brunswick, some few will remember the dinner of sauerkraut with caraway seed and small piece of bread with ersatz butter and a tiny spreading of jam before arriving at Camp 7001 at the Herman Goering Work at Hallendorf where some 60 New Zealanders were encamped with about 20 Australians and a host of British prisoners, later to be joined by the Paratroopers captured at Arnheim in the offence on the Rhine. The writer believes he was the only member of 22 Battalion at Hallendorf and vividly recalls 1944 with several bombings of the camp and the constant sight of Allied aircraft in the 1000 Bomber raids passing overhead. Time was spent almost exclusively clearing bomb damage in the Brunswick and Saltzgitter areas.

When 1945 came our hopes were raised and we worked at a lower rate than ever. In early April we were marched to the West, but unlike the dreadful march from Poland to the East, ours lasted only one day. In the morning, in the husks of a sugar-beet factory, General Paton's advance passed us by, taking the German guards prisoners. We walked a little to the West, were housed in a local hall with American rations and on April 16th were flown to England and taken to Westgate before having leave for the V.E. Day celebrations in London. Day after day more Battalion and other New Zealanders arrived, enjoyed old friendships, had leave in the United Kingdom and were eventually shipped home to a very different New Zealand to the one they had left behind.

#### **A POEM WRITTEN IN EARLY 1945 AT HALLENDORF**

The Year has gone now, No more  
 Can the struggle end in '44,  
 A year of changing fortunes, yet  
 Never a victory did the Germans get  
 Unless a victory we call  
 The sally forth from the Western Wall.  
 Prisoners all we still remain  
 But soon we hope to be free again.  
 Few, though, are those who had not thought  
 This year to see the land they sought  
 But now we're glad to be alive  
 That we might see home in '45.

**J O'ROURKE**

## TP PAYS TRIBUTE TO EEB WOOD

The first time I encountered Ellesmere Evelyn Bailey Wood - that's no joke; those were the names Massey Wood had to bear until, doing studies at Massey College in Palmerston North, he cottoned on to the advantage of a shorter name - was somewhere in the San Eusario-Salarola area on the western end of the Divisional front facing Orsogna.

He was in what passed for a dugout inhabited by Des Orton's Carrier platoon. As a Red Arse, and because I had at last managed to pry loose from an intelligence outfit back home, I, on assignment to 22, had been made the "I" Man, my predecessor having, I think, been wounded.

I first encountered the glare of Des Orton's eyes, almost hidden by a ruddy moustache and then a friendly smile from "Sarge".

In not much time, Massey and I became good mates. We both had lived in Taranaki, we were Old Boys of New Plymouth Boys High and we had both suffered hard times during the Depression.

A little bit later, I scored my first insight into the man who might genuinely be called, out of action, the greatest character 22 Bn ever discovered. He had whispered to me that he had registered with NAAFI as the QMS of the Ruahine Reconnaissance Regiment, or some such.

I said to myself, "Phew" I said more when, days later, and with Christmas on the wing, Massey drove a 3-tonner somewhere close to BHQ. It was chockablock with beer for the boys and hard liquor for the officers - didn't "Ghari George" smile! The Naafi boys had been pleased to help the Ruahines, Massey said. I'll bet.

With the New Year snow, there was little chance of taking Orsogna - although, postwar, a mate from 24, "Snow" Whiting, told me he had twice urged the General to march straight into the town because he had himself twice been there without finding a soul. The General declined - his "I" boys were well informed - and so we all trekked westward until we reached Mignano to wait for Cassino.

I was aware - Massey had told me - that before leaving Cairo he had persuaded a wily wog to manufacture for him 100 Iron Crosses plus the relevant ribbon, 100 metres of.

More interesting, much later, was to hear how Massey had taken over the platoon when Orton copped a severe throat wound on the march in to Cassino up Route 6.

Massey had to look after, in turn, those two battered buildings the Brigade Major of 5 Bde, "Baldy" Blundell, had christened as hotels - "Continental" and "des Roses". They were not sweet-smelling jobs; but I gather Massey was cool, efficient and thoughtful as to the care and good of his men.

It took us a long time to reach Rome - the Operation Order I saw (American) had us under command of Combat Command B, whose tanks we were to follow while sitting, arms, folded, in 3-tonners.

As we all know, this really didn't happen; but about or after Rome, I was told Massey had one million V cigarettes which Eyeties was eagerly buying.

I haven't the space to give a remote idea of the amount of "trading" Ellesmere Evelyn Bailey did; but I can say that, in the words of our CO, Haddon Donald, Massey on the Q side did



## **TP PAYS TRIBUTE TO EEB WOOD (CONTINUED)**

tremendous work for the Battalion. "I was proud to know him", Donald told me. "He turned out to be of great value to the 22nd".

Praise indeed. He was a hard man to please, was "High Velocity".

T P McLEAN

## **YOU'RE A LUCKY FELLOW, KIWI**

**(With acknowledgements to 21 Battalion Assn. Newsletter)**

You're a lucky fellow, Kiwi you've tasted life and fun,  
 Since Jerry stopped his shooting, and threw away his gun.  
 You've travelled in the mountains, you've travelled on the plain;  
 You've made a trip to Austria, and you've travelled back again;  
 You've bathed in Trieste Harbour, you've sunned your golden hide  
 On stones at Sistiana, where yachts and speedboats ride.  
 You've boated on the Arno; you've punted on the Po,  
 You've drifted on the Grand Canal, where kings and lovers go.  
 The sights of Rome's old Forum is known to pip and stripe,  
 And sights on Roman streets today leave little room to gripe.  
 Some revelled in the workings of Raphael and his ilk,  
 In the brush of Tintoretto, and the lights on Titian silk.  
 Some loved the great Bernini, who chiselled paths to fame;  
 Some bent the knee in homage to this and that great name.  
 Some slaked their thirst for knowledge and others slaked their thirst.  
 In Rome and Tuscan Florence, in art and wine immersed.  
 You've seen the Pisa Tower; you've seen how it can lean;  
 You know a lot of Itie words, and know just what they mean.  
 Genoa and Torina have heard the Kiwi tread,  
 And pillows while in Como have held the Kiwi head.  
 You've seen the lovely Dolomites, the land where earth grows tall,  
 Where mountain flowers bloom in peace and avalanches fall.  
 You've passed your judgement on the style of churches and their spires,  
 You've heard the drone of lay and priest, and listened to their choirs.  
 The peasant in the fertile plain has opened up his heart,  
 And treated you with fruit and wine and made it hard to part.  
 You've dabbled in amore and answered to its call;  
 You've seen the signorinas and know them one and all.  
 You know their latent talent for making you forget,  
 The way you won this (censored) war, with blood and tears and sweat.  
 You're a lucky fellow, Kiwi, you've had your chance to roam,  
 But give me ship and give me speed and home sweet home.

Composed by a NZ soldier (Name unknown)

## **ANECDOTE FROM ALDERSHOT**

RAY SALTER of Brind Road, Russell sent us this story some time ago, an amusing incident that took place when the Battalion was stationed in the Aldershot Command in England:-

Our tents and slitties were under the trees surrounding the field and my tent was on one side of the gate and the guard tent on the other. Some Hun bombers slipped in low under the radar and bombed Farnborough 'drome a few miles away and flew back in our direction strafing

**ANECDOTE FROM ALDERSHOT (CONTINUED)**

wildly; one of the guards was out in the sun writing letters on a flimsy card table scrounged from somewhere and as I dove into my slittie I saw this bloke dive under the table and thought "What an exercise in futility". The guy behind him didn't think so, he hauled the fellow out and dived under himself and was duly hauled out and replaced by the original occupant, and until the gunfire receded into the distance they fought tooth and nail to get under that ridiculous table, and then they shamefacedly looked at one another and went their ways. One of the brighter moments of our stay in the UK! The Signal Sergeant was out on a pushbike and had to take to the roadside ditch, would have liked to have seen that, too, but a bloke can't be everywhere at once.

**A (GLOOMY) WORD FROM THE TREASURER**

Having been able to report at this time for quite some years past that our Branch finances were in good shape, it's a bit depressing to have to tell you that our financial statement for the year to 28/2/97 seems certain to show a deficit of some size. The Annual Accounts can't be prepared till after this Newsletter has been printed but the deficiency could be as much as \$200. In the second half of the financial year just ended, there was a dramatic falling away in the subscriptions and donations that the readers of these Newsletters send in voluntarily. Why should this be? Our numbers continue to drop steadily but there was no great change between March and November, 1996. One possible explanation is that, last November, our usual need for Branch funds had to compete with the "one-off" appeal for donations to the Bursary Trust Fund. Your response to the appeal in this issue will show whether last year's drop in income was just a temporary phenomenon or whether it signalled the end of one era and the start of another in which we won't be able to go on publishing these Newsletters in their present format.

22nd Battalion Association  
Box 26-314  
AUCKLAND 3

March 1997

**Branch Social Function - Sunday, 23rd March, 1997**

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

(1) Entrance fee for \_\_\_\_\_ people at \$12.50 per head \$  
AND/OR

(2) My 1997/98 Subscription/Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name & Address (Block Letters):-

Army No: