

22nd Battalion Association

AUCKLAND BRANCH

Telephone 523 1310

Secretary :

C. W. Randerson

BRANCH NEWSLETTER

PO Box 26 314

Epsom

Auckland 3

NOVEMBER, 1997

1998 NATIONAL REUNION - ROTORUA, MARCH 16/18, 1998.

It's now almost two years since one of our Auckland Branch vice-presidents - **Jack (Scotty) McMillan**, Rotorua - got the approval of the Meeting of Branch Delegates held in Wellington in January, 1996 for his proposal to stage the 1998 National Reunion in Rotorua. After that, little time was lost in setting up a small 1998 National Reunion Committee, of which Scotty has been Convenor throughout and two key members are:- **JACK ANDERSON**, President, Rotorua RSA and ex 22 Battalion in Japan and **ROLY ROLSTON** - ex Army and Secretary, Rotorua RSA. Scotty's Committee has, of course, had the full backing of Auckland Branch and the members of our Branch Committee in Auckland and elsewhere have given moral support and (where possible) advice but, at the sharp end, the members of the Rotorua Reunion Committee have had full responsibility for the planning and sheer hard work that must precede any National Reunion.

This could be the last National Reunion of 22nd Battalion Association. Many of the other Unit Associations of W.W.2 have already given up national get-togethers, assembling instead on a Branch or Regional basis. The Branch Delegates who meet in Rotorua next March will have to decide whether or not there will be a "National" in the year 2000 and that decision will almost certainly depend on the bids (if any) made by Branch delegates present.

You should already have received the second (and final) 1998 National Reunion circular but, in case you have mislaid your copy, here are the essential details:-

<u>Monday, March 16:</u>	<u>12 Noon:</u>	Report Centre opens (at RSA)
	<u>3 p.m:</u>	Delegates Meeting
	<u>From 6 p.m:</u>	Informal get-together (Meals & refreshments available)
<u>Tuesday, March 17:</u>	<u>10.30 a.m:</u>	March past (short) and Memorial Service (equally short)
	<u>12.30 p.m:</u>	Formal Luncheon
	<u>Rest of day:</u>	Full use of RSA facilities
<u>Wednesday, March 18:</u>		Sightseeing trips, depending on demand

Rotorua RSA is the venue for all functions. Apart from the official luncheon on the Tuesday, informality will be the keynote, with every opportunity for the nostalgic chats that we much prefer to any kind of formal entertainment. The Reunion cost, excluding (as you would expect) the cost of travel and accommodation, is the very reasonable sum of **\$35 per person**. Of this, **\$20 per person** is **payable in advance** as an **Acceptance fee** and the remaining **\$15 per person** is **payable on arrival** as a **March In fee**. These fees include the cost of morning teas, the Tuesday luncheon and the associated Table Wine and Happy Hour. If you have not already done so, it will be a big help to the Reunion Committee if you will send your **Acceptance form** and the Acceptance Fee of \$20 per person just as soon as you can to:-

Jack McMillan, 8C Seddon Street, Rotorua

Editor

ROLL OF HONOUR

455268	H M (HARRY) BIDLAKE	Masterton	7/6/97
5936	L B (BARNEY) CLAPHAM	Opunake	29/4/97
415246	A W (ALLAN) CROSSMAN	Auckland	16/8/96
45149	H T FLETCHER	Te Puke	12/2/97
35903	D (DAVE) FLUKER	New Plymouth	23/3/97
6820	J A C (JACK) HARGREAVES	Wanganui	12/3/97
5935	J G C (JACK) LEACH	Auckland	12/8/97
415378	D C (DEREK) POWRIE	Tauranga	6/1/97
154865	S J (STUART) ROBERTSON	Hamilton	18/8/97
6907	H P RYAN	Wanganui	5/6/97
40511	R E (RON) WESTERBY	Hamilton	3/7/97

Sadly, the above list is a long one but could easily have been made a good bit longer. We restrict these lists mainly to those who were members of Auckland Branch and lived in our Branch area, which extends from North Cape to the King Country, but we also include widely-known guys from other Branch areas - for example, in the above list, people like Barney Clapham, Dave Fluker & Jack Hargreaves. One of the saddest of the deaths recorded above was that of Derek Powrie, who was killed in a car accident caused by the 17 year old driver of the other vehicle. We understand that Powrie held the rank of Major and that he was a very active 80-year old at the time of his death.

Your Branch Committee extends its deep sympathy to the widows and families of all former members of the Battalion who have passed away in recent months.

Editor

KIWIS IN TRIESTE

Earlier this year, Mrs Isla Clark (widow of the late Tony Clark) of Christchurch sent me a copy of a To Whom It May Concern letter issued by a Senior Lecturer in the Department of History at the University of Otago. The lecturer's name is Dr Roberto Rabel and his letter was accompanied by a list of 20 questions (many of them searching ones) about the NZ role in the liberation of Trieste in 1945. Here is the opening paragraph of Dr Rabel's letter:-

I am a historian at the University of Otago and am beginning to carry out research for a history of New Zealand involvement in the Italian campaign of World War Two. As part of that larger work, I wish to complete earlier research which I carried out some years ago on the New Zealand role in the liberation of Trieste in mid-1945. I am interested in New Zealand involvement on two levels: high-level politics and diplomacy (Fraser and the War Cabinet); the ground-level experience of ordinary soldiers who were there. As part of my second interest, I have already interviewed some soldiers and would be very interested to hear about the recollections of others who found themselves in Trieste in May 1945.

I wrote to Dr Rabel in July, mainly to give him the names and addresses of three members of Auckland Branch who were in Trieste in 1945 and are well qualified to give intelligent and intelligible answers to his questions. In his reply to my letter, Dr Rabel made it clear that he is interested in not only the events in Trieste in 1945 but also the social, cultural and military aspects of New Zealand's involvement in the Italian Campaign as a whole. Central to his project is "the gathering of a representative sample of veterans' recollections of the full range of their wartime experiences in Italy". Further, "the project seeks to record these recollections for posterity so that due recognition may be given to the collective experience of the "World War

KIWIS IN TRIESTE (Continued)

Two" generation who went on to dominate so many aspects of New Zealand national life until recent times".

In the present year, funding limitations have restricted the taping of interviews with participants in the project to Dunedin and elsewhere in the South Island but Dr Rabel hopes that additional funding in 1998 will allow him to extend this step in the project to include the lower half of the North Island. As Dr Rabel's 20 questions are of wide general interest, we are publishing them in full at the end of this report. Of particular interest is Question 12, which asks if the respondent had any sense of being involved in an impending Cold War between East and West. It seems doubtful whether anyone thought in terms of post-War politics in May, 1945.

Dr Rabel can be reached by writing to him at the Department of History, University of Otago, PO Box 56, Dunedin.

Editor

TRIESTE - DR RABEL'S QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Could you give me your name and address?
2. What was your rank when in Trieste, and what battalion or unit were you in?
3. How long were you in the Second New Zealand Division?
4. Do you recall your first impressions as you approached Trieste?
5. Do you feel that you had been engaged in a "race" for Trieste?
6. How did you view the Yugoslav forces in Trieste?
7. How did you view the local population? Did you sympathise with either the Italians or the Yugoslavs?
8. What did you know about the Yugoslav treatment of the local population?
9. How tense do you believe the situation was?
10. Did you think there was a high chance that you might have to fight the Yugoslavs? Would you have been reluctant to fight if ordered to do so?
11. Do you believe the NZ Division should have been withdrawn from Trieste if armed conflict with the Yugoslavs was imminent?
12. Geoffrey Cox has suggested that the Trieste crisis was the first clash of the Cold War. Did you have any sense of being involved in an impending Cold War between East and West, or did you view the Trieste situation in different terms?
13. Do any particular incidents stand out among the memories of Trieste?
14. Did your experience in Trieste have any greater impact on you than your experience in any other part of Italy?
15. How were discipline and morale affected by the Division's stay in Trieste?
16. Can you think of any other members of the Second New Zealand Division whom you believe would be willing to be interviewed?

TRIESTE QUESTIONNAIRE (Continued)

17. Do you have any photographs, diaries or any other records of your period in Trieste which you would be willing to let me view?
18. Are there any restrictions which you would wish to place on my use of the information which you have supplied to me?
19. Do you have any questions for me?
20. Are you willing to be interviewed in person concerning your time in Trieste and/or your more general experiences during the Italian campaign?

NEWS & JOTTINGS

Welcome to New Members

A warm welcome from Branch President GEORGE MATTHEWS and from Branch members in general to three former members of 22 Battalion who joined Auckland Branch about six months ago:-

J A (John) BRYMER	293 Rotokauri Road, RD9, Hamilton.
O B (Owen) MULHANE	42A Glamorgan Drive, Torbay.
J H (Jack) ROWLEY	5/20 Ascot Road, Hamilton.

Not So Well List

Our current list includes MAURICE GANE, who has not been in the best of health for the past year or two, and (Sir) T P McLEAN. Terry and his wife (Carol) have been in and out of hospital several times this year and were, at one stage, in adjoining wards in Auckland Public Hospital.

"Lost Trail" Recovered

The following Lost Trail notice appeared in the October, 1997 issue of "RSA Review":-

JEANNETTE PATENOTTE, the widow of Yvon (Pat) Patenotte who fought with the Free French Navy during World War Two, would like to make contact with Pat's Kiwi mate SNOWY LEEKS whom he met while they were both recuperating in hospital in Alexandria in 1943. The Patenottes last heard from Snowy in 1952.

When we saw this notice, we had no difficulty at all in deciding that "Pat's Kiwi mate" could be none other than LOWRY ("SNOW") LEEKS, one of 22 Battalion's original officers, who has been an Australian resident for quite some years (in Black Rock, Victoria). So we rang the Auckland telephone number given in the "Review" notice, gave Jeanette Patenotte Snow's address and wrote to Snow to tell him about the enquiry.

Snow wrote back to thank us and said that he hopes to make it to the National Reunion in Rotorua next March.

Branch Committee Members

We heard some months ago that the Mark Knights were moving from Bucklands Beach in Auckland to 24 Carisbrook Street, Katikati West. Four members of our Branch Committee are now located in the Bay of Plenty area:- MARK KNIGHT and STU SOUTHALL in Katikati; DOUG

NEWS & JOTTINGS (Continued)

FROGGATT (our Patron) in Tauranga:- **SCOTTY McMILLAN** (Vice-President) in Rotorua. The remaining seven of us still live in the suburbs of Auckland City.

Other Branches

What used to be a lively and active branch of our Association in the **Taranaki district** went into recess a few years back, a matter for general regret, as was the demise of **South Island Branch** about the same time. Sadly, no voluntary organisation can function unless there's a hard core of people willing and able to keep the show going. However, this year the former members of Taranaki Branch have been invited to join the Association's oldest branch - the one in **WANGANUI**. Our congratulations and best wishes for a most heartening response to this initiative to the Wanganui Branch Committee and its Secretary - **LES CLARK**.

THE WAY WE WERE

On any working day, our Courts of Law deal with offences involving dishonesty, ranging from common theft through to such things as false pretences and major corruption. If one spent a day or two listening to the evidence in these cases, it would be easy to gain the impression that our society contained more "bent" citizens than honest ones but that is far from being so, even in these days of falling ethical standards. The vast majority of folk are law-abiding people who pay their way and respect the rights and possessions of others, just as they expect **THEIR** rights to be respected by other citizens. We all know that this wide observance of the Rule of Law is our main protection against anarchy and civil disorder.

Falling from grace

How does this peace-time scenario within New Zealand compare with the general behaviour of the men of 2 NZ Div in the M.E. and Italy during World War 2? That's a good question but I firmly maintain that, despite all the stories that have been told and those that could be told, our overall standard of conduct was not all that different from what it would have been back home. We were a representative cross-section of NZ's male population of military age and the percentage of soldiers who consistently and constantly flouted the law would have been about the same as in civvy street. The rest of us, excluding the small handful of men who never (?) put a foot wrong, obeyed the Army's rules (King's Regs) most of the time, whether in or out of the line, but fell from grace occasionally. The truth is that we "civilians in uniform" quickly realised that overseas service in a line battalion was a totally different ball-game from anything we had previously experienced and that a degree of adaptation was essential if we were to maintain our sanity and our sense of humour.

So it was that the rules of conduct that most of us had firmly adhered to in civilian life were ever so slightly modified to meet the war-time situation. We had travelled across thousands of miles of ocean to fight in what was really a European conflict and we were living in foreign countries, often in fairly primitive conditions, while coping with the knowledge that there could be no guarantee of our survival. Those worst affected by the discomforts of the war were the rank and file infantrymen at the bottom of the Army's pyramid who lacked the privileges to which NCOs and Officers were entitled on an ascending scale; the higher your rank, the higher your pay and the better your conditions of employment, not forgetting that the extra responsibility was a factor that caused many an askari to decline promotion. What were the reasons for the more common breaches of Army rules and regulations? One was the boredom that afflicted the soldier when he was out of the line and the resultant craving for excitement but the predominant reason was that

THE WAY WE WERE (Continued)

the man in the ranks was grossly underpaid, which encouraged him to find ways to supplement his meagre income.

Seventy Cents a day

The main thing about Army pay that I remember clearly is that the Private, Gunner, Trooper or whatever was entitled to a basic cash rate of 7/- (70 cents) per day. That should have entitled him to 49/- (\$4.90) in cash each week but the Army restricted his drawings to about One pound (\$2) a week, someone in authority having decided, correctly, that he was going to need some savings after the war and that \$2.90 a week would therefore be retained to his credit. Remember too that a soldier's "income" included his keep (such as it was) and clothing. Allowing for the value of these benefits at the rates ruling in NZ at the start of the war for full board and for modest clothing, the soldier's pay would still have been well below the basic Wages paid to manual workers in NZ at that time, justifying my statement about soldiers being grossly underpaid. In fact, I would go so far as to say that most of the men who served in 2 NZ Div were paid a good deal less than they could have earned as civilians. Some were fortunate enough to have their Army pay subsidised by their New Zealand employers but most of us had to be content with the promise that our civilian jobs would be kept open for us. In the meantime, we were conscious of the fact that men who had been exempted from military service on medical or other grounds were improving the shining hour at our expense.

Illicit Activities

We did not spend much of our time feeling sorry for ourselves but neither did we feel much guilt about the mildly illicit activities that we became involved in, either directly or by sharing in the fruits of someone else's Malfeasance, remembering that there is such a thing as guilt as an accessory. Nobody who was there needs to be told what these activities were and some of them have been mentioned in previous issues of this Newsletter. In Egypt, there was not a great deal of scope for such activities, as we did not mingle with the local population to any extent. The Worthy Oriental Gentlemen with whom we did have financial dealings were rogues and robbers of the first order and anyone who outsmarted them was a genius!

"Hocking to the Ities"

The situation in Italy was very different, as large numbers of civilians were caught up in the fighting and we had regular dealings with them, especially when the Battalion was in a rest area. My time in Italy was restricted to the southern half of the country but I recall that we regularly exchanged Army rations for fresh food and had very cordial relations with the local people. As the fighting in Italy moved further and further north, there was that flourishing black market that everyone knew about, including top-ranking officers. Black Market trading was a major breach of Army rules and it was probably allowed to go on because it was impossible to stop it. Several years ago, the late "KAI" THOMSON wrote an article for us about the origins of the 22 Battalion Fund and he made the comment that "most of the blokes had plenty of cash as "hocking" to the Ities was commonplace". In the same article, Kai told the full story of the setting up of the Battalion Fund back in NZ and how most of the money came from the sale of the stock of a large sugar factory that 22 Bn captured from the Germans.

There are always exceptions to a rule but the general picture that emerged from W.W.2 was that the men of 2 NZ Division conducted themselves in the main with much credit to their Units and to their country. To verify this, it is only necessary to compare the attitude of the Italians towards the German army and towards our Division. The Tedeschi were, to put it bluntly,

THE WAY WE WERE (Continued)

hated by most of the Italians who had dealings with them, whereas the Kiwi soldiers were honoured as liberators and given a warm welcome in Italian homes. Yes, I know that some Italians were badly treated by some of our fellows and that there were some Kiwi soldiers who drank too much and whose arrogant behaviour matched that of many of their German counterparts but the overall comparison is very much in the Kiwi soldier's favour. The warmth of the reception given by civilians to those who have revisited the battlefields since 1945 has given ample confirmation of the goodwill created during the war years.

Cedric Randerson

ITALY STAR ASSOCIATION

You may or may not know that there is an Italy Star Association in New Zealand. I heard about it for the first time in June of this year, my informant being ISLA CLARK of Christchurch. She told me that a fellow from Auckland had gone down to Christchurch to address a gathering of returned men and others with a special interest in Italy and its people. He told Isla that his Association had been formed in Auckland and that he was keen to establish a South Island branch. If anyone would like further information, I can let them have the Auckland man's name and address.

Editor

DRIVING FOR SGT WOOD

The tributes to EEB (MASSEY) WOOD printed in our March, 1997 issue brought back some still vivid memories for JACK CUMMINS of Christchurch and he wrote to pass them on to us - - -

"Shortly after our arrival in Italy, I, as 16 Platoon Jeep driver, had my first encounter with Massey Wood. I'm not sure if it was JOHNNY McNEIL (K.I.A. at La Romala), my then Platoon commander, who "volunteered" me to do a driving job with Massey. My jeep, I might add, was a barest possible vehicle at that stage:- no windscreen; no hood; no shock-absorbers; no lights; a clapped-out motor. However, suffice to say it went! Anyway, it was a dull, overcast, cold evening with a hint of rain when Massey set out with me to a nearby Ration Point (D.I.D.). We arrived just on darkness and I heard Massey explain to somebody that his unit ("4th Independent Coy of NZ Engineers") had lost its Ration Truck, which had broken down many miles back, and Rations for men and officers were urgently needed. His request was granted and Rations were loaded but there was not enough room for the lot. This meant a return trip for the loaves of bread, which I did in much fear and trepidation, being certain that we would be "run in". After being very thoroughly scrutinised, we got the bread and, to my amazement, I heard Massey ask for a "clearance" to enable him to draw rations from further D.I.Ds. And he got it!

I had several such forays with Massey - to the benefit of my platoon's section boxes and the Company cook-house. I recollect that, at one D.I.D. we went to, the Major (English) in charge was most emphatic that we should not be at his Dump - couldn't understand why we were there - most irregular! After listening to his protests to Massey, I was quite convinced arrest was imminent! Then the Major explained that his Dump was closing and almost empty, so couldn't supply our requirements. BUT, if we didn't mind, he would introduce us at the Polish Army D.I.D. across the road. He did that, sending two of his men to load our Jeep and trailer - great relief on my part! Incidentally, during these expeditions we were strictly rank conscious:- Sgt Wood and Private Cummins, especially when dealing with British units."

22 BATTALION L W ANDREW V.C. BURSARY TRUST

We reported to you last March that the Bursary Trust Appeal letter that was sent out in November, 1996 had brought in a very good response by way of "one-off" donations from members of our Association and from widows of deceased members and others to the Bursary Trust Capital fund but that the total was still some distance short of the target of \$10,000 set by the Special Committee appointed in 1994 to establish a permanent, living memorial to all those who served in the Battalion. However, donations have continued to come in and, by May of this year, the Capital fund had reached a total of \$8,500. At that time, National Treasurer AUS RIDDELL expressed the opinion that the full target figure was still attainable.

A second (and final) appeal went out to everyone on the National Roll with the recent notice of the March, 1998 National Reunion in Rotorua. If you have had good intentions about making a donation to the Bursary Trust Fund but haven't yet got around to it, please send your remittance to 22 Battalion Bursary Trust Fund, c/- J A Riddell, 31 Montgomery Terrace, Palmerston North. Donations are tax-deductible.

Editor

GLOOM DISPELLED

In our last issue, sent out in March, 1997 to the members of Auckland Branch and to the other people on our mailing list, the Treasurer presented a gloomy report that we were then experiencing a dramatic falling away in the flow of voluntary payments (subscriptions and donations) that have kept this Branch in being and the Branch Newsletters coming for quite some years. The shortfall expected at that time was confirmed by the 1996/97 Annual Accounts of our Branch, which showed a deficit for that year (payments exceeding receipts) of close on \$200. But that "gloomy" report brought such a heartening response in the mail that came in over the next month or so that it became clear to me that the crisis was over, at least for the time being. There was much evidence, too, of a strong wish that the compiling, editing, printing and mailing of these Newsletters be continued for as long as we have suitable material to put in them and the capacity (mental, physical and financial) to keep on keeping them coming.

Though the crisis of last February & March is over, the fact that we stopped sending out subscription accounts a decade ago necessitates a request for voluntary subs and/or donations going out with each issue of our Branch Newsletter. Our official sub is still \$5 per annum, though it should be at least twice that much. If you think that a payment is due from you, please use the reply slip below.

Cedric Randerson, Hon Treasurer

Auckland Branch
22nd Battalion Association
Box 26-314
AUCKLAND 1003

November 1997

I enclose the sum of \$ _____, being my current sub and/or Donation.

Name & Address (Block Letters):-

Army No: