

22nd Battalion Association

AUCKLAND BRANCH

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DECEMBER 1999

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Branch President GEORGE MATTHEWS is joined by the editor and the other members of the Auckland Branch Committee in wishing you and yours the compliments of this festive season and all the very best for the year 2000, which will bring the 20th century to a close next December. Also, of course, on New Year's Day, 2000, the world will be celebrating the advent of a new millennium.

Editor

NATIONAL REUNION - FEBRUARY, 2000

Every former member of the 22nd Battalion whose name and address are on the Association's National Roll will have received the Notices issued by Hawkes Bay Branch that gave full details about the National Reunion to be held in Hastings during the weekend of February 26th and 27th, 2000. Just in case you have lost or mislaid your copies of the official notices, we remind you that the time available for enrolling for the Reunion and arranging transport, accommodation, etc is running out. Enrolments and enquiries should be sent to:-

Brian Brooker
220B Wolseley Street
Hastings

This could well be the last 22nd Reunion to be held on a national basis.

AUCKLAND BRANCH REUNION:- To avoid any clash of dates with the Hastings gathering, we have deferred the date for holding our Branch Annual Social Gathering and AGM, usually held in late February or March, **until April, 2000.** Full notice will be given in our next issue but the most likely dates are the Sunday before Easter (16/4/2000) or the Sunday after Easter (30/4/2000).

WAIOURU MEMORIAL WINDOW FUND

In the November 1998 issue of this Newsletter, we gave you a report on the proposal initiated by HADDON DONALD to install at the Waiouru Military Museum a Memorial Window to commemorate 22 Battalion's participation in the 1939/1945 conflict and in J-Force. This proposal was warmly supported by our members and other Unit Associations were not slow in taking up the idea. As we told you last year, both the idea and the design of the 22nd Battalion's window were quickly agreed upon, with the inscription including a list of the countries where the Battalion served (including Japan) and a list of all the major battles from MT OLYMPUS to TRIESTE.

Waiohuru Memorial Window (continued)

The proposal was quickly put into effect and the 22nd Battalion Memorial Window was installed and dedicated at Waiohuru on May 2, 1999, an important anniversary date in the Battalion's history. There was a very good representation of the Association's members and Branches at the ceremony. Haddon had undertaken to meet the full cost of the window, subject to reimbursement as and when funds became available but there was such an enthusiastic response from Association members and Branches that the appeal was over-subscribed by \$2,000. The delegates attending next February's Biennial Meeting in Hastings will be asked to approve a Remit proposing that the surplus be donated to the 22 Battalion L W ANDREW, VC Bursary Trust Fund. We in Auckland feel that this Remit should be and will be strongly supported.

Cedric Randerson

THE OWEN GATMAN STORY

The past year has been very much a time for the establishing of Memorials and Trusts arising from World War 2 and affecting former members of 22 Battalion. One such proposal, in which our Association does not appear to have been involved in any way, was the setting up of a One Million Dollar Trust Fund in memory of Private OWEN R GATMAN, who died of wounds received at SIDI AZEIZ in Libya on 28/11/1941. The setting up of this Trust Fund received TV coverage and was reported in some detail in a recent issue of RSA REVIEW, the article stating that the Trust has been set up under the auspices of the NZ RSA. We understand that Owen Gatman was an original member of 19th Battalion but was transferred to 22 Battalion in time to serve with the 22nd in Greece, Crete and Libya. At SIDI AZEIZ, he was a member of 11 Platoon, B Company when he suffered fatal wounds during the over-running of 5th Brigade HQ by Rommel's panzers.

The unexpected establishment of the Owen Gatman Trust Fund will no doubt be discussed at next February's Meeting of Branch Delegates. The delegates will, I'm sure, commend the setting up of the Trust Fund by Gatman's descendants. Perhaps he typified the "ordinary man" given high praise by the late Lt Col AWF ("BUZZ") O'REILLY on Page 5 of our Battalion History:-

"The backbone of any battalion is no heroic figure but the ordinary man".

Editor

PRE-CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

As we did last year, your Branch Committee held an unofficial luncheon at the Grey Lynn RS Club on Sunday, 28/11/99. The only way in which we could publicise this informal get-together was by means of a ring-around to potential attenders in and out of Auckland. The response was good and there were close on 40 people present, including a few visitors. The meal was a good one too and everyone there seemed to enjoy the gathering. Among the visitors were JIM HENDERSON (Author of 22 Battalion History) and MARTYN THOMSON, nephew of OWEN GATMAN, Deceased. Martyn is a principal sponsor of the Trust based on his Uncle's letters home up to the date when Owen died of wounds during Libya 1941.

We were also pleased to welcome JANIE PHILLIPS, daughter of the late TAFFY PHILLIPS. She was accompanied by PETER WILLIAMS, QC.

Cedric Randerson

ROLL OF HONOUR

| | | | |
|--------|---------------------|------------------|----------|
| 6922 | JCN ADCOCK | New Plymouth | 19/5/99 |
| 378261 | CB ANDERSON | Hamilton | 7/8/99 |
| 30399 | M (MERV) ASHMAN | Tauranga | 9/7/99 |
| 40276 | RI CONNELL | Napier | 30/6/99 |
| 6528 | AE CROMMELIN | Mt Maunganui | 20/10/99 |
| 6823 | W (WILLIAM) FISHER | Coromandel | 23/7/99 |
| 476357 | AS (ARTHUR) FONG | Greymouth | 16/9/99 |
| 35678 | GS GARLAND | Whangarei | 10/4/99 |
| 71124 | DG HAYTER | Tauranga | 22/3/99 |
| 6869 | PWS HOWARD | Masterton | 21/6/99 |
| 7071 | L (LOWRY) LEEKS | Vietnam | 10/4/99 |
| 7000 | SL (SAM) LEWIS | Palmerston North | 11/8/99 |
| 35832 | WD (BILL) McLACHLAN | Levin | 29/7/99 |
| 44021 | JH O'ROURKE | Auckland | 17/9/99 |
| 30643 | CV PARSON | Otaki | 13/4/99 |
| 44879 | EF POULTER | Hastings | 23/4/99 |
| 281470 | CR RUMSEY | Papatoetoe | 28/6/99 |
| 40257 | TM SHARP | Gisborne | 11/5/99 |
| 448952 | P SHEEHAN | Auckland | 29/3/99 |
| 40835 | CH SIMS | Hastings | 3/4/99 |
| 6813 | JC STEWART | Whangarei | 6/3/99 |
| 223366 | BA TRESEDER | Napier | 30/3/99 |

Sadly, another long list of those known to have passed away in recent months and we extend our 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 listed above, easily the best known was MERVYN ASHMAN of Tauranga, who was well-liked and respected in the Battalion as one of its original members, as an RSM and as a key member of the Battalion's Rugby team. Merv was a regular attender at our Branch functions in Auckland for many years.

Another Battalion identity and one of the original officers was LOWRY (SNOW) LEEKS, who has lived in Australia for most of the post War period. Snow died while on holiday in Vietnam with members of his family. A very well-known Battalion personality was ARTHUR FONG of Greymouth. Arthur was an MBE a former Rugby Test referee and a life member of the Rugby Referees Association.

"RUGBY VS ROMMEL"

The late PAUL DONOGHUE was a well-known member of the original Battalion who was very much involved in Rugby football before and during WW2. Paul survived the war only to die of illness back home not many years after the conflict ended. In the post-war period, he wrote the "Rugby Memories" Appendix for our Battalion History and followed this up in 1961 with his own book "Rugby vs Rommel". Some months ago, TIM DONOGHUE (Paul's son) sought the approval of our Wellington Branch for his plan to publish a limited second edition of his father's book. This request was passed on to us by Wellington as follows:-

"The original edition of Rugby Versus Rommel has become a collectors item, selling in second hand shops for anywhere between \$200 - \$600. Tim's intention is that the proceeds of the second edition be invested as a fundraiser for the Marist St Pat's Rugby Club for prize giving purposes. He has requested our permission to associate the name 22nd Battalion with the project to be named "The Paul Donoghue 22nd Battalion Marist St Pat's Trust". This request has been circulated to our various branches in the following terms and has met with unanimous approval. "That 22nd Battalion Association approves the naming rights of the battalion in a reprint of the book "Rugby versus Rommel", originally written by a member of our battalion. Paul Donoghue, as a tribute to his foresight and fostering of team spirit".

FROM THE TREASURER

Former members of 22 Battalion who have not previously received our Branch Newsletters may wonder why we ask for Subs and Donations every time we send one out. It is because we stopped sending our Sub accounts over a decade ago in order to keep down costs and because some of our members are better off than others. Our official sub is still \$5 per annum though it needs to be at least twice that much to meet the costs of processing, printing and mailing the Newsletters in their present format and circulation area.

There was an encouraging response to our last issue but we have still to hear from quite a few people this year. If you think or know that you are one of them, please use the reply slip below. Your donations are gratefully received.

Cedric Randerson, Hon Treasurer

December, 1999

22nd Battalion Association
Box 26-314
AUCKLAND 1003

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

Name & Address (Block Letters):-

Army No: _____