

22nd Battalion Association

AUCKLAND BRANCH

Telephone 523 1310
Secretary :
C. W. Randerson

BRANCH NEWSLETTER

PO Box 26 314
Epsom
Auckland 3

NOVEMBER, 2000

PRE-CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON – NOVEMBER 26

Auckland Branch has for some years now, held a purely social function prior to the Christmas holiday period, publicising these informal gatherings by a ring-around to potential attenders in and near Auckland. However, now that National Reunions are no longer to be held, we are sending out this more formal notification and requesting replies through the mail. Our Association's Branches are now being encouraged to hold Regional gatherings and Auckland Branch extends a warm invitation to members of other Branches to attend our luncheon at Grey Lynn R.S. Club on November 26.

We hope and expect to have a good muster at this informal get-together. The catering at Grey Lynn R.S.C. is good and the price very reasonable for the fare provided. We very much wish to hear from you **whether or not** you are able to be at the luncheon. **Please** use the Reply Slip on the back page to send us your **pre-payment by mail**. The Caterer needs to have an accurate estimate of numbers in advance and pre-payments are a big help to the Treasurer. If you can't come on November 26, **please use the Reply Slip** to send your sub and/or donation if you believe that a payment is now due.

VENUE:

Grey Lynn Returned Services Club
1 Francis Street

Grey Lynn

TIMES:

Assemble at:

11 am (promptly) -

Luncheon:

To start between Noon and
1 pm

Close down:

3 pm

VISITORS: Friends and relatives of members will, as always, be most welcome, and members of other branches will be equally welcome.

THE COST: \$15 per head (plus subscription and/or donation if due)

BAR: Drinks will be on sale throughout

PLEASE FILL IN THE REPLY SLIP NOW and send it with your remittance in time to reach the Treasurer by **Wednesday, 22/11/2000**.

THE LONG AND THE SHORT AND TALL

Anyone who spent even a brief part of 1939/1945 engaged in front-line military service came home with many war-time memories, the good ones as well as the bad. I think that most of us tried very hard at first to shut all those memories out of our minds in order to concentrate on our peace-time lives and occupations but the war-time memories kept on coming back and could not be completely shut out. But, in the main, we did manage to forget the unpleasant things while remembering the pleasant ones.

Our memories of the war years form, of course, only a part of our capacity to be selective in what we remember and what we forget. One of the qualities that distinguishes the human being from other living creatures is a highly-developed faculty of memory, which includes the ability to reason, to interpret and to plan ahead on the basis of acquired knowledge and past experiences. During the early decades of life, the human brain records and stores a quite astonishing quantity of information (obtained from reading and study and from manual and other training) together with memories of events, names, faces, dates and numbers. There is so much to be remembered that it's not surprising that our brains have evolved with what has been called "a built-in forgetfulness, lest they become cluttered with useless information". That is why we are able to remember our pleasant experiences very clearly while forgetting the unpleasant ones.

For those who served in 22 Battalion or other front-line units, the unpleasant or less pleasant memories relate to battlefield stress and strain while we recall with pleasure the times when we went on leave and the enemy and his artillery, tanks and aircraft were far away. The intensity of the battles in which we were involved individually had, of course, a marked effect on the war-time memories that we brought back with us to civilian life.

As we get older, we face the universal problem of memory loss and start to worry in case our partial forgetfulness is a sign of worse to come. But the experts tell us that becoming forgetful is just part of the process of growing old. People much younger than those now in their seventies and older have trouble in remembering names, addresses, faces, telephone numbers, etc. So, we are told that we can overcome our mental haziness by writing down things that we don't want to forget, such as names and addresses, appointments, shopping lists and so on. The best remedy for the age-related tendency to forget is to focus and concentrate on what we know we need to remember.

Musical Memories: Getting back to those memories of World War 2, I discovered just recently that my recollections of the songs of that period that we used to sing or heard sung by skilled entertainers were if anything stronger than ever. I became aware of this when Channel TV One began to give regular airing to what I remember as the "Bless 'em all" song (a different and unprintable word was always substituted for "Bless"). The TV presentation was a garbled version of this song as we used to sing it but the words "The long and the short and the tall" came through loud and clear in the telecast. I'm sure that we Kiwis first met up with "Bless 'em all" during W.W.2 but the words that I can recall made it clear that the song related to the days when much of India was virtually ruled by the British Army and when regular army men didn't think much of their sergeants, corporals and other NCOs. Here are the words of the song that I remember, with a few gaps here and there:-

A troopship was leaving Bombay
Bound for old Blighty's shore
Heavily laden with time-expired men
Going back to the land they adore
They are saying goodbye to them all
The long and the short and the tall
There'll be no promotion this side of the ocean
So cheer up my lads, bless 'em all

The long and the short and the tall (continued)

SONGS AND MORE SONGS

There were, of course, other songs that we sang during our time with 22 Battalion. "MAORI BATTALION MARCH TO VICTORY" was sung with enthusiasm and gusto by Maori and Pakeha alike and helped to enliven many a dull evening in the Mess. And with equal verve we sang that distinctively southern hemisphere song that ended with the words:

"We are the boys from way down under; Sons of the Anzacs are we:

I have no recollection of our fellows singing "LILLI MARLENE", but I did get to hear it sung on the Radio (BBC) and was intrigued to hear that it had become a favourite tune with the German forces as well as with British troops. We did not get many opportunities to listen to the BBC but we derived a lot of enjoyment from the entertainment provided for us by the Kiwi Concert Party, whose presentations always included both grand and light opera and a good deal else besides.

Not everyone would agree that the Skirl of bagpipes can be classified as music but many of us remember with pleasure the playing of our 22 Battalion Pipe Band during the 100 mile route march on the road between Cairo and Alexandria just before we took ship from Egypt to Italy in 1943. I can also remember the sound of the pipes that reached us from the Pipe Band of 51st Highland Division during the opening stages of the Battle of Alamein. We could hear their pipers occasionally above the roar of the battle because the 51st Division was on the right flank of our line of advance. And I'm sure that I can be forgiven when I suggest that the victory of our 22 Battalion team in the final match of the Divisional Rugby Championship was like music in our ears.

Last but not least, the pleasanter memories of World War 2 include listening to the singing of VERA LYNN and the other songstresses who did such a fabulous job in lifting the morale of both the armed forces and the civilian population during the darkest days and nights of the war. The two songs that I remember best from that period were, firstly, the one that contained these lines:-

"We'll meet again, don't know where, don't know when
But I know we'll meet again some sunny day".

Secondly, it has been impossible to forget this song:
"There'll be Blue-birds over the White Cliffs of Dover
Tomorrow, just you wait and see
There'll be love and laughter and Peace ever after
Tomorrow, when the world is free".

"Music has charms" said the poet and he would undoubtedly have said it again with extra emphasis had he been around during Hitler's war.

Cedric Randerson

MEMORIAL BOOK TO OUR WAR DEAD

Several months ago, we received in the mail a copy of an imposing-looking book entitled "The War Dead of 22nd Battalion, 2 N.Z.E.F". This book had been compiled by JOHN BOWKER, the official Keeper of our Association's National Roll. The original of John's "Book of Remembrance" was on display at the National Reunion held in Hastings last February, where it was the "subject of much favourable comment". The book is divided into two sections, Section 1 being a complete listing in alphabetical order of the names and Army numbers, while Section 2 gives Army rank and cause and date of death in each case, the names being divided into groups

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MEMORIAL BOOK TO OUR WAR DEAD

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in accordance with the relevant War Cemetery or War Memorial (36 locations in all).

The book lists 334 names, classified as Killed in Action, Died of Wounds, Died on Active Service, Died as POW and so on. Our copy will be available for inspection at our Luncheon on November 26, 2000, so you will be able to judge for yourselves the amount of time and effort that must have been put into this labour of love by John Bowker. The original book has been handed to the War Museum at Waikouaiti and our copy seems likely to go to Auckland's War Memorial Museum.
(Editor)

NEWS & VIEWS

ON THE SICK LIST: Most of our members in Auckland City and Suburbs seemed to keep reasonably well during this past winter – perhaps not as fit and as agile as we would have liked to be but with nothing so seriously wrong as to be able to complain about. Three 22nd types who have been in hospital are:- TP (TERRY) McLEAN, now back at his own residence but still far from well; EB (SCOTCH) PATERSON, who had to spend some time in hospital after having a fall at his home on Waiheke Island and damaging his good leg, to go with the one that he nearly had amputated during and after the war. His son MIKE actually flew all the way from Scotland to Auckland to visit Scotch in the hospital and, perhaps because of that visit, Scotch is now planning to emigrate to Scotland (the FALKIRK area) early next May, the reason being to save Mike from having all that expense to meet every time his Dad falls over. Needless to say, Scotch will be greatly missed by everyone who knows him well.

The third of our Auckland Branch members who has been in hospital lately is AW (ROBBIE) ROBERTS, who was in Auckland Hospital for a while before being transferred to Waitakere Hospital. We understand from our Welfare Officer, RON JONES, that Robbie has completed his 9th decade on this planet. He lived in North Auckland for many years after the war but moved to Auckland two to three years ago to live with his daughter.

TESTING THE WATERS:- When the delegates from the Association's Branches met at Hastings on Sunday, February 27, 2000, it was formally announced by National President ALF GEORGE that the National Reunion then being held would be the last, as no Branch was prepared to host another "National". In reporting this announcement in the following (April) issue of this Newsletter, I expressed the opinion that, while it seemed highly unlikely that any Branch would wish to go against the general consensus that was apparent at Hastings, there was probably nothing to stop any Branch from seeking permission to hold a further National Reunion. In spite of having said this, I must admit that I was taken completely by surprise when at our Branch AGM on April 30, 2000, Branch Patron DOUG FROGGATT put forward a proposal that application be made for permission to hold a National Reunion in Mt Maunganui in the year 2002. As nobody opposed Doug's motion at our AGM, it went on record as passed unanimously. The sequel to this was that, over the next 3 months, a great deal of correspondence has gone back and forth between Doug and his unofficial National Reunion Committee and the Association's National & Branch Officers. Doug had obtained approval from the Mt Maunganui RSA for a 22nd Reunion to be held there in 2002 but the responses from within our own Association were negative ones. Having fully tested the waters without success, the reaction of Doug and his committee was to say (in a circular letter to all Branches):- "We will now bow out gracefully and accept that the era of National Reunions has passed".

TREASURER'S CORNER

As most of you know, we stopped sending out Sub accounts well over a decade ago in order to keep down our costs and because some of our members are more affluent than others. Our **official** sub is still \$5 per annum, though it needs to be quite a bit more than that to cover the

costs of processing, printing and mailing our newsletters in their present format. We are very grateful to all those who send in regular donations that are well in excess of the basic fee. There was a good response to the request for donations in our last issue but we have still to hear from quite a few people in this Millennium year. If you think or know that you are one of them, please use the Reply Slip in this issue.

Cedric Randerson, Hon Treasurer

"DARK OF THE MOON" REPRINTED

As we have previously reported in these Newsletters, ARCH SCOTT of Auckland became a very close associate of Lance-Corporal DAVID RUSSELL in Northern Italy for some months in 1944 and 1945, when they and other New Zealanders were on the run from the German Army. They had both been taken prisoner in North Africa and had both escaped when Italy capitulated. ARCH SCOTT played the leading role in the establishment of an organisation that was highly successful in arranging the evacuation and repatriation of allied escapees and, in this dangerous work, he had the help of DAVID RUSSELL for a time until the sad day when Russell was recaptured and then executed by the Germans. During the months when they worked closely together, ARCH SCOTT formed such a high opinion of DAVID RUSSELL that, when he wrote and published his book DARK OF THE MOON in 1985, a complete chapter of it was entitled "DAVE RUSSELL".

DARK OF THE MOON has been reprinted this year. The revised edition contains some new material, including an expanded account of DAVID RUSSELL's brave deeds. The whole book is well worth reading and should be available in the book shops. To whet your appetites for more, we quote the following excerpts from the chapter headed DAVE RUSSELL, GC:-

DAVE RUSSELL was taken prisoner in the desert and was in a work camp at the time of the Italian capitulation when along with many others he joined the Bataglione Lepre (Hare Battalion). Early on he must have started moving about rather freely, as I gathered from stories I later heard of him. He must have also had some very narrow escapes.

During the summer of 1944 I received a few notes from Dave but did not meet him until October of that year. His background was a bit of a mystery. He had been living in Napier, but it was only years later that we learnt the full story. His mother died when he was six and he had moved to Australia from his native Scotland in his teens, surviving as a swaggie for 10 years. It was tough going and when the 1931 Napier earthquake created a manpower shortage there, he moved to New Zealand and found a job in that city as a hospital orderly. Following the war, a ward in the Napier hospital was named after him.

Dave had an enormous appetite for adventure, accompanied by an inspiring sense of duty. He enlisted on the first day volunteers were called for. And surviving a bayonet charge in Crete had given him a feeling of invincibility. In prison camp, he wrote to his Napier girlfriend, Nancy Oliver, telling her to go ahead and buy an engagement ring. This misplaced confidence would play a part in his undoing.

He also felt bitter about having been taken prisoner and felt that he would like to do something to make up for it. No doubt he thought of his Kiwi cobbles still in the plains of Veneto, living in little maize-stalk huts out in the fields, sleeping in stables, hiding in haylofts, wandering, wandering around in circles, moving on to safer haunts when the pressure was on, finding those worse and moving back again, always on the alert and ever conscious of the approaching winter.

Dave was well aware of all this and so he had come back to try to give us a break. The very excitement and uncertainty of life on the plains appealed to him as well. He often used to say,
"These will be great experiences to have had".

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"DARK OF THE MOON" (continued)

We got ready to sleep by lying down on the floor. We couldn't even use our cigarette lighters for fear of the light being seen. Then we heard a noise upstairs. We went to investigate and saw that all the top of the building was still smouldering – the explanation for the light Dave had seen. The hayloft above had been set on fire that day by the Republicans. It had previously been a partisan meeting place.

We were just dozing off when suddenly there was a crackle and a crash and we found ourselves on our feet outside the house, running. We were highly skilled at moving from the horizontal to the vertical position and we hadn't learned to do it by numbers. We had had so much practice that it had become like an instinctive reaction.

Shortly after our return I came across a scheme that looked like the chance we had been waiting for. But like every other scheme it had to be thoroughly tested before anyone was committed. We had been caught before, badly once, and very nearly on other occasions. For a couple of weeks Dave Russell wondered what was wrong with me and even told me that he thought I must be getting cold feet when I wouldn't make another trip up into the mountains with him, this time further up towards Udine.

One Sunday he came to see me and I was thrilled to tell him that I thought I was on to something good at last but to keep it under his hat until we had checked up still further, or we might jeopardise the whole scheme.

Dave was determined to have another shot at the mountains but was held up when the stable he was sleeping in caught fire and he lost his good sheep-skin sleeping bag and spare clothes, such as they were. This was the second time he had suffered from fire, his cane but having previously burned down one night when he went to sleep and left the candle burning.

A little thing like a fire couldn't hold Dave up for long so a few days later he came and told me that he and Pete were going up again and asked whether I was coming. I wasn't. I considered it an unnecessary risk and intended to expend all my energy in making my own scheme a success.

A few days later Dave and I met up again. My news shook him as had a few other things which were happening. He told me that the previous night he and the two airmen had crossed a bridge which the Fascists were watching from the top storey of a nearby house, although Dave and the others hadn't known that at the time. He suddenly became animated. "By Hell, Scotty, those bastards are getting bloody personal". He repeated it a few moments later as though it was a premonition. It was the last thing he said before he left, the last thing I ever heard him say.

After the war Dave Russell was posthumously awarded the George Cross, which is given for acts of the great heroism for which purely military honours are not normally granted. He is one of only two New Zealanders to have been so honoured. After remaining in the possession of family members overseas for more than 50 years, his medal found a permanent home in the Army Museum at Waiouru in 1998. His Napier sweetheart Nancy Oliver (now Nancy Wilson) was there to see it handed over.

The saddest irony was that after living for so long as a fugitive Dave should come so close to freedom and then be killed. Only nine days later our plans came to fruition and the first group was evacuated. But his silence to the death, refusing to divulge the names and other details he knew, had made our success possible.

Editor's Note:- These passages complete the excerpts from the revised edition of "DARK OF THE MOON". Our acknowledgements to Author ARCH SCOTT.

ROLL OF HONOUR

443654	RA BEAVEN	Hastings	28/6/2000
235184	JF BELL	Shannon	22/4/2000
31220	DJ (JOE) BOYD	Mt Maunganui	26/5/2000
625555	W BUTLER	Taihape	26/4/2000
626725	JB CURNOW	Takaka	5/4/2000
6212	BV DAVISON	Lower Hutt	13/6/2000
37210	RB GRUMITT	Christchurch	28/6/2000
566366	GJA GUNDERSON	Dannevirke	20/3/2000
653107	F HAILWOOD	Porirua	3/7/2000
44684	C HAYDEN	Lower Hutt	30/3/2000
443868	TD HILL	Hastings	9/7/2000
378446	MHF JACOBS	Paraparaumu	1/9/2000
435081	AB JARMEY	Christchurch	16/3/2000
447399	HC JEFFERIES	Palmerston North	24/7/2000
245749	JD LOCHORE	Palmerston North	12/8/2000
816807	WC McPHAIL	Palmerston North	21/9/2000
440263	GD MILNE	Palmerston North	25/8/2000
443800	HL MORRIS	Titahi Bay	24/2/2000
271878	RA PALAMOUNTAIN	Wanganui	8/7/2000
44319	TB POUND	Wellington	22/5/2000
30416	CH POPE	New Plymouth	27/8/2000
30547	FW REYNOLDS	Titahi Bay	8/9/2000
40199	GR ROSS	Tauranga	26/9/2000
30557	VD SMITH	Levin	14/7/2000
31478	TG WALLACE	Levin	6/3/2000
649999	P (PETER) WILSON	Gisborne	11/2/2000

This list has been compiled mainly from the "Last Post" Advice Sheets issued by the Keeper of the National Roll. As with any such list, there are bound to be errors and omissions. Only 3 of those listed were living in the Auckland Branch area and the only one with whom we were in regular touch was DAVID (JOE) BOYD of Mt Maunganui. Joe was RSM of the Battalion in Italy for some months before being transferred to Brigade HQ.

The President and Committee members of Auckland Branch extend their deep sympathy to the families of all former members of the Battalion who have passed away since the last issue of this Newsletter.

22 BATTALION L.W. ANDREW, V.C. BURSARY

A Newsletter issued by Wellington Branch last month announced that RON COOK, Manawatu Branch Secretary, was handling the arrangements for the presentation of this year's Bursary award at Horowhenua College in Levin on October 20. We feel sure that the Battalion Association would have been well represented by members of the Manawatu and Wellington Branches.

(Editor)

22ND BATTALION ASSOCIATION AUCKLAND BRANCH**BRANCH COMMITTEE – YEAR ENDING 28/2/2001**

<u>PATRON:</u>	DR FROGGATT	28 Freyberg Street, Tauranga
<u>PRESIDENT:</u>	HG MATTHEWS	2 Cron Avenue, Te Atatu South, Auckland 8
<u>VICE-PRESIDENTS:</u>	J ALLEN JG McMILLAN	1 Mayville Avenue, New Lynn 8C Seddon Street, Rotorua
<u>SECRETARY</u>	CW RANDERSON	PO Box 26314, Epsom, Auckland
<u>TREASURER:</u>		
<u>WELFARE OFFICER:</u>	RG JONES	3/10 Mahon Place, Papatoetoe
<u>COMMITTEE:</u>	G HUDSON MI KNIGHT HB McRAE SR (STU) SOUTHALL CHARLES FRASER	3/89 Centreway Road, Orewa 24 Carisbrook Street, Katikati West 34 Gifford Road, Papatoetoe 29 Francis Drive, Katikati 9 Lipscombe Avenue, Papatoetoe

November, 2000

22nd Battalion Association
Box 26-314
AUCKLAND 1003

Branch Social Function - Sunday, November 26, 2000

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

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------|----------|
| (1) | Entrance fee for _____ people at \$15.00 per head | \$ |
| | <u>AND/OR:</u> | |
| (2) | My 2000/2001 Subscription/Donation | \$ _____ |
| | <u>Total</u> | \$ _____ |

Name & Address (Block Letters):- _____

Army No: _____

PROMPT REPLIES PLEASE