

22nd Battalion Association

AUCKLAND BRANCH

Telephone 523 1310

Secretary :

C. W. Randerson

BRANCH NEWSLETTER

PO Box 26 314

Epsom

Auckland 3

MARCH, 2001

BRANCH SOCIAL FUNCTION – SUNDAY, APRIL 22, 2001

Judging by the notices now being published in RSA REVIEW, all 2NZEF Unit Associations, appear to have given up holding **National** Reunions in favour of branch and regional get-togethers, inviting members of other branches to attend. On this basis, Auckland Branch of 22 Battalion Association held a much-enjoyed luncheon last November, when 40 of us assembled at the Grey Lynn RSA's rooms. Visitors included JIM HENDERSON, compiler of the Battalion's Official History, and AROH SCOTT, whose book "Dark of the Moon" recorded his close association in Italy with DAVID RUSSELL, G.C. We were also very pleased to welcome these widows of deceased members:- Betty Gane, Joan Linklater, Myrtle Reynolds, Mary Sullivan and Joyce Williams.

We are looking forward to having an equally enjoyable gathering at our Branch Social Function on April 22, with a good muster of members and guests from Auckland, as well as from north and south of the city. April 22 is the Sunday **after** Easter Sunday. The mandatory AGM should be brief, making the programme as informal as possible. **PLEASE** use the Reply Slip (back page) to send us your **prepayment by mail** —this gives us the numbers the caterer must have and is a big help to the Treasurer, who does **NOT** want to be on full-time door duty. If you **can't** come, **please use the Reply Slip** to send us your sub payment for the 2001/2002 financial year and any further donation you may feel able to make.

VENUE:

Grey Lynn Returned Services Club
1 Francis Street
Grey Lynn

TIMES:

<u>Assemble at:</u>	11 am (promptly)
<u>Luncheon:</u>	To start between noon & 1pm
<u>Close down:</u>	3 pm

VISITORS: Your friends and relations will, as always, be most welcome.

THE COST: \$15 per head (plus Subscription and/or Donation).

BAR: Drinks will be on sale throughout.

PLEASE MAKE A NOTE OF THE DATE NOW and send your remittance and the Reply Slip in time to reach the Treasurer by **Tuesday, April 17, 2001.**

1966 AND ALL THAT

Since the April, 2000 issue of this Newsletter, JA (Austin) Riddell of Palmerston North has continued to act as the Association's Liaison man with the Guardian Trust in dealing with the affairs of the 22nd Battalion LWA Bursary at Horowhenua College but Aus stood down as National Treasurer at the time of the National Reunion (generally accepted as the last of the Nationals) held in Hastings in February, 2000.

While rummaging through two cartons of records bequeathed to him by his predecessor as National Treasurer (the late Denny Reidy), Aus came across a somewhat ancient Newspaper article that had been published in the Manawatu Evening Standard to mark the occasion of the National Reunion staged in Palmerston North by our Manawatu Branch in June, 1966, the headline used by the newspaper being:- 22nd BATTALION HAS A PROUD RECORD. Aus sent the cutting on to me because he feels (and I fully agree) that excerpts and anecdotes from it will be well worth reprinting in the Auckland Branch Newsletter.

The 1966 article took up almost a full page of the Evening Standard and gave an abbreviated yet comprehensive history of our Battalion from when it was formed in Trentham in January, 1940 until it ceased to exist in Japan in 1947. Quite a bit of space was devoted to the Battalion's period in Japan, reminding us and informing other readers of the article that, as well as establishing a fine record for itself on the battlefields, our Battalion showed when it became "J Force" that the men who served in it after the cessation of hostilities could and did make an excellent job of adapting to the role of occupation troops in a defeated enemy country. To quote from the 1966 newspaper article:- "The war had ended with Germany, Italy and Japan defeated and broken. There remained one more long-distance journey for 22nd Battalion, leading it to occupation duties in Japan.

"The British Commonwealth Occupation Force of 40,000 men drawn from Australian, British, Indian and New Zealand troops began arriving in February, 1946. The 22nd Battalion, later known as "J-Force" with headquarters at Chofu, took over the 2000 – square mile province of Yamaguchi containing almost 1,500,000 people at the island's extreme southern tip.

"J-Force duties over the area were many and varied. They consisted mainly of general administration patrols, guard duties, confiscation of arms, supervision of a huge Korean repatriation centre, black market suppression and clean-up of prison conditions.

"The locals regarded the occupying force with watchful eyes. They were interested in all that was done subservient and co-operative. They did resent the occupation, showing this in different ways. The shock of the atom bomb had so paralysed the people, however, that their surrender was indeed unconditional and the unit did not have to use armed force.

"Old soldiers were replaced with volunteers from home. Many of these had been too young to serve in the war and were keen to carry on the traditions and live up to the ideals established by New Zealanders in three previous wars. In this they succeeded admirably. They were a credit to their country.

"This is borne out by Mr Oliver A Gillespie, in his War History volume, The Pacific: "The New Zealander, with few exceptions, made a reliable soldier for occupation duty – a duty which carried with it immense privilege and power among a people to whom obedience was implicit. He rarely departed from an attitude of fairness and decency and controlled with ease a population among which, in the Yamaguchi prefecture, he was outnumbered by 343 to one.

"The men of the 22nd Battalion in J-Force returned home with vivid memories of a teeming, inscrutable, industrious and dynamic people confined to a land much too small for their bursting

"1966 AND ALL THAT" (continued)

energy. The Orient was no longer the Far East; as events have since proved, it had become the Near North of New Zealand.

The 1966 Evening Standard article went on to mention some of the exploits and achievements of individual members of the Battalion. For example, it credited the one and only HICKO BROUGHTON with having coined the word "Whacko", which "caught on like wildfire in England and was adopted by the R.A.F. as its own pet expression". It was in the post-war years that Hicko became a notable character at our biennial National Reunions and it took some time before we realised that he behaved somewhat obnoxiously because that sort of conduct was expected of him.

Another member of 22 Battalion given special mention in the 1966 article was Sgt "SPUD" MURPHY, a veteran of the Spanish Civil War who was given special status by the British Army in England as an expert in the construction and use of the Molotov Cocktail, an anti-tank weapon first used in the Spanish Civil War.

"When the 22nd Battalion reached England in June, 1940, it could not have chosen a better time to arrive from a psychological point of view. "It was shortly after Dunkirk, France had fallen, Italy had joined the Axis powers, Hitler controlled all Europe and England was now the last bastion of defence for freedom. This was England's darkest hour and under such circumstances it was natural to look for some diversion to distract the mind from the horrors of war.

"The New Zealander was looked on as a favoured son who returned to help his family. The people opened their homes to him.

Highly popular with all New Zealanders who served in the UK at any time during WW2 was London leave and the Evening Standard article gave special coverage to one 22nd Battalion member's leave in the capital city.

"From time immemorial soldiers have always been busy inventing new excuses to get extra leave. The one dreamed up by Pte William K—of the 22nd Battalion bears the hallmarks of genius and would be hard to beat in the entire record of military history.

"His surname was most uncommon, so much so that few other people have the same one. Bill was strolling through London's West End on weekend leave when he stopped dead in his tracks. There right in front of him was his name up in lights on a well-known West End theatre. It was the star of the show Gloria K—.

"Bill had a brilliant idea. A few days later Gloria received a letter, which read in part – "Dear Miss K, I saw your name in a theatre advertisement and as it is so uncommon, I thought you might like to meet someone who has the same one also. Quite possibly, although I come from New Zealand, we may be distantly related.

Miss Gloria K—was not only a top actress, she was a top notch sport as well. Bill received his reply in this form: "My Darling Brother Bill, how wonderful of you to come all the way from New Zealand to fight for us. Mother often speaks to me of you, but as I was such a little girl when I last saw you, I can hardly remember what you looked like. I can't wait to see you as we have so much to talk about. Can you possibly get any leave soon? If so would you come to see me --.

"Would he? "Boy, oh boy!" exclaimed Bill. Armed with this, everyone had to get out of his way as he rushed to the company orderly room, where he was granted immediate leave.

"The next stop was London, where for five glorious weekends Pte Bill K—was the honoured guest of Gloria K—and the whole of London's West End.

"1966 AND ALL THAT" (continued) "It could hardly last, of course, and inevitably the secret was a secret no longer. Now came the remarkable part of the story. Pte W K—could not be charged with anything. He had committed no wrong and had always returned to camp on time. "The C.O. enjoyed the joke as much as anyone. In a long life of soldiering dating back to World War I in command of men he thought he had heard every excuse there was to offer, but this one had everything. For originality, enterprise, brilliance and humour, it capped the lot.

COINCIDENCES

Do you remember the World War 2 song "LILLI MARLENE" that became a firm favourite with members of the armed forces on both sides of the Battle of Europe? If your answer is in the affirmative, you may also remember the occasion (in the nineteen-sixties I think) when LILLI MARLENE was sung, at an Auckland Branch social function, in three languages:- English, German and Italian. This happened when a former enemy soldier who became a New Zealand citizen after the war attended that Reunion as our guest. His name was HEINZ PUSCHMANN and he still lives in Auckland. His sponsor for NZ citizenship was none other than EB (Scotch) Paterson. Below are Scotch's recollections of how it all came about. (Editor)

Coincidences are strange phenomena which the Oxford dictionary describes as "notable concurrence of events or circumstances without apparent causal connection". I can quote at least four such phenomena which changed the whole direction of my life.

Thus it was that when Hitler appeared on the scene with his racism and gas chambers, like so many of the New Zealanders of those days, I felt that for Hitler and his converts, like mad dogs with rabies, the only cure was to shoot them. The more I saw of their activities, the more convinced I became that every German shot was one less of an evil force capable of destroying the civilised world.

After the war, I returned to New Zealand. Those of us who were fortunate enough to come home felt an obligation to those who had not to do our best to restore and preserve our special New Zealand way of life. I landed a job to introduce to our embryo manufacturing establishments the first form of automation. Came a time when, by chance, I met a fellow named Heinz Puschman when I was drawing up the control circuit and specifying the equipment to automate new machinery being designed for James Hardie's new factory. For a little more than a week, I worked alongside Heinz, who was drawing the mechanical design of the new machine to be built.

As we wrapped up our instruments on completion of the job, I said to Heinz "Well Heinz, I've enjoyed your company. Thanks, I'll see you next time". He turned to me and said "How did you enjoy Cassino, Scotch?". "What the hell do you know about Cassino? The Dutch were nowhere near there and the Poles were slaughtered on that hill to the right". "I was on the other side. I was in Hitler's elite, the 1st Parachute Regiment". "Whereabouts were you there?". "In the Hotel De Roses". "I was in the rubble just opposite you, about a hundred and fifty yards away. I laid mines one bright moon-light night in front of your place in the hope that you were not looking out the window and also that you'd take a walk. You did neither". He told me how, near the end of the war, he was badly wounded, ending up in a New Zealand hospital where as a POW he lay in a ward full of both NZ and German patients. He was so impressed with the impartiality of the medical treatment, under Doctor Bartrum, that he asked the Doctor if he would sponsor him later to come to New Zealand. Years later, with a B.E., he and his family arrived here.

Three weeks later, the Internal Affairs Department invited me to see them. I was asked if I knew Heinz. "Well, he has applied for naturalisation with his family. What would you say to that?" "Oh no, you're asking the wrong man, I'm much too prejudiced – it wouldn't be fair to him". "We don't want an answer now. Come back in a week and give us an answer then". After a week of mental turmoil I couldn't find anything wrong with the man. So back I went. A few weeks later my wife and I attended a most impressive ceremony and drank their health in City Council sherry.

(Scotch Paterson)

ROLL OF HONOUR

44402	PP BEACHEM	Havelock North	25/12/00
37483	AJ BENNETT	Rangiora	30/7/00
35802	LJ BLACKLEY	Feilding	19/3/00
455394	G CURTIS	Masterton	3/2/00
31633	JP FARRELL	Hastings	30/10/00
14582	I FORSMAN	New Plymouth	21/11/00
31271	JE HAILWOOD	Upper Hutt	27/12/00
829027	DA HITCHENER	Hawera	14/8/00
648232	DEG HUNTER	Whitianga	21/9/00
	MH JONES	Te Kuiti	16/12/00
658447	JO McCONACHIE	Taupo	26/1/01
47916	C McGREGOR	Otaki	19/7/00
451141	J McGREGOR	Te Puke	18/8/00
6830	RO MORGAN	New Plymouth	19/11/00
408131	IL PENNEL	Waihi	31/3/00
45140	L REED	Rotorua	30/11/00
32786	N RETTER	Shannon	12/1/01
409608	AW ROBERTS	Auckland	31/1/01
41404	RB RYDER	Petone	1/2/00
13225	WJR SIMMONS	Christchurch	23/10/00
41173	GA SULTZBERGER	Urenui	21/10/00
451738	DT THOMSON	Waiuku	3/6/00
42438	RJ VILES	Palmerston North	10/1/01
538722	JS WATT	Ranfurly	21/10/00
6991	EN WHALE	Napier	5/12/00

As in past issues of the Auckland Branch Newsletter, this list has been compiled mainly from the "Last Post" advice sheets sent to us every few months by John Bowker, Keeper of the National Roll. As is usually the case, we publish the above list subject to E & OE (errors & omissions excepted). John does a fine job as Roll Keeper but frequently has to send out amended Last Post lists. For the calendar year 2000, John's amended "Last Post" schedule contained 57 names, as compared with the 1999 total of 77 and the 61 names included in the 1998 list. In the past three years, just on 200 names of deceased former members of the Battalion have been "Last Posted" by John Bowker, yet the current National Roll still contains over 700 names, almost as many as the Battalion total when the 22nd was formed in 1940. The explanation for apparent discrepancies is, of course, that many of those included in John's Last Post lists have had no contact with the Battalion Association and have never been listed on the National Roll. No exact figure is available but it is probable that over 3000 men served in 22 Battalion at some stage in its existence.

Of the men listed above who resided in our Branch area, only 3 of them were on our Branch Roll, namely MH JONES of Te Kuiti, AW ROBERTS of Auckland and DT THOMSON of Waiuku.

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

BURSARY REPORT

Since the funding for the 22nd Battalion LW ANDREW VC Bursary Awards to students at Horowhenua College, Levin was placed in the keeping of the Guardian Trust Office, there have been some changes in the frequency and monetary value of the awards. Previously made in every second year, the awards are now made on an annual basis and the sum awarded has been raised from \$500 in alternate years to \$600 per annum, a very substantial increase. An increase to \$750 p.a. was considered but not proceeded with because of the dramatic fall in Interest rates at that time.

In our April, 2000 issue, we welcomed the announcement that AUS RIDDELL of Palmerston North would continue to be the Association's Liaison man with Guardian Trust. Last November, Aus made this report for the year 2000:- "The presentation of this year's Bursary Award went off very smoothly as usual. Our Trustee makes all the arrangements with the College and advises us in plenty of time for Ron Cook to rally the troops. This he did very successfully as usual with 30 on parade, including wives and widows. Bill Lawrence gave the address and presented the \$600 cheque and the Certificates to BEN SOMERTON.

"We – all 30 of us – were entertained by the Principal and some of the staff and some prefects to light refreshments and we had the opportunity of admiring the Bursary Honours Board and the replica of the Memorial Window. "I'm finding it quite difficult arranging a speaker now that the Awards are made annually. I try to get someone who actually served under LW Andrew and they are getting fewer. Also it has to be someone who lives not too far from Levin to avoid travel costs.

"After the presentation and the morning tea we adjourned to the Levin RSA for a natter and an excellent lunch. It is pleasing that our Trustee, Owen Locke of Guardian Trust, comes along to the functions.

"For the record, donations to the Trust Fund total \$15,841.76 which includes profits from National Reunions and \$2,000 from the Levin RSA as well as donations from members. Perhaps we terminated the National Reunions too soon!

(Aus Riddell)

HITLER'S U-BOAT WAR

Some six months or so ago, ANTONY WHITLOCK (better known as Tony Whitlock) sent me the following short item for our Branch Newsletter. Tony has been a resident of Victoria, Australia for some years but has been on our overseas mailing list all that time and has obviously enjoyed receiving our Newsletters.

"One of the pleasures in surviving a war is being able to read about it afterwards. Recently I came across a huge compilation, published in 2000 in two paper back volumes by Cassell and Co (volume 1 alone is more than 800 pages) entitled "Hitler's U-boat War", by Clay Blair, a prolific American writer who served in American submarines in the Pacific in WW2. Unlike so many other books, it deals mostly with the German side. Those of us who went overseas with the original battalion (there are still several dozen of us, I hope) will remember that our convoy changed course in the Indian Ocean in May, 1940, and headed for England via Capetown. Now we know that others were watching us also. Clay Blair's book says, on page 169, that the submarines U-46, 48, 29, 43 and 101 were detailed to form a pack off Cape Finisterre, the northwest tip of Spain. Not entirely accurately, Blair then says the pack "was to intercept an inbound troop convoy that included the giant ocean liners ~~Queen Mary (81,000 tons) and Mauretania (36,000 tons)~~, bringing 25,000 Australian soldiers to the British Isles".

"The pack sank 10 ships during its foray but did not come across the Queen Mary convoy, possibly, Blair suggests, because the pack's earlier sinkings caused the troop convoy to veer well

HITLER'S U-BOAT WAR (continued)

out to sea. Well, we knew that at least five of the ships in the convoy carried New Zealanders but even 60 years ago we were getting used to being lumped in with the Australians. Our ship, the magnificent 42,348 ton Empress of Britain, lasted a bare four months longer after we had disembarked at Greenock. In October 1940 she was set alight by a Luftwaffe bomber and finished off by U-32. She was the largest ship sunk in the war to date – and 22 Battalion never again knew such comfort and luxury in our troopships.

EDITOR'S FOOTNOTE:- The above references to "QUEEN MARY" and "MAURETANIA" reminded me that these same ships were also in the convoy that carried me and a few thousand other New Zealanders (and Australians) to the Middle East in March/April, 1941, with stop-overs and shore leave at Perth and Colombo. Also in our convoy was the then almost brand-new "Queen Elizabeth", which latter ship carried out a highly –impressive speed trial as the convoy moved north through the Indian Ocean. Every ship in our convoy was capable of 24 knots or over and we were told by members of the Mauretania's crew that these big, fast ships relied mainly on their speed to elude the U-Boats. In view of what happened to some of the luxury liners that became troop-carriers, we could perhaps have been indulging in some wishful thinking!

TWO STEPS IN THE WOODS

Our Branch patron, DOUG FROGGATT of Tauranga sent me this "heartwarming little story from an unknown Italian Red Cross Nurse employed in a German Military Hospital in Rome".

In spite of everything, it was May. The park around the Roman convent that had become a German hospital was suddenly in bloom. The air was warm and soft. The scent of the roses mingled with the acrid smell of disinfectant. On the right side of the chapel, behind the wall, were piled the empty coffins. On the other side, under the chestnut trees, were lined those already filled. We nurses knew that there was more than one corpse pressed under each cover. Every morning, at dawn, a truck loaded these coffins without crosses and carried them away. In the back of the alley, where the stables of the convent had been, the soldiers threw the garbage. There I saw, one day, a Roman searching frantically among the piles of refuse, then running away with two crusts of cheese in his hands. Those were the days of the "Fosse Ardeatine", of the battle of Anzio, of the destruction of Monte Cassino.

The German Hospital gave me twenty-four hours off each week. I spent them in a convent of the French nuns where I was educated. In the dormitory where I slept were hidden wives and mothers of Partisans, Jews, and families of deserters. At night when all the lights were turned out there remained only the pale night light. One could hear the voices of the English and American radio broadcasts. Each Saturday I brought wrapped in a cloth sack, all the bread I could save during the week. This way, in the convent, we ate German rations.

The wounded from Anzio and Cassino died quickly. Some were too tired and some too young. They didn't talk, they didn't cry out, they died and at dawn the truck carried them away.

I gave ether in one of the operating rooms, an improvised room without windows, warm, and full of flies. Sometimes the Captain ordered me brusquely to go outside for a breath of fresh air. I walked with heavy heart along the path in the park outside. Rome stretched below. If the wind blew against the hill, you could hear the bells of St Peters. You could hear, too, the air raid sirens and sometimes the guns. There were two guards who, with guns on their shoulders, patrolled the boundaries of the park day and night. Day and night we could hear their footsteps rhythmic and heavy.

This morning an amputation had lasted longer than usual. There had been a haemorrhage, a dangerous one. My eyes burned as I went out in the park. I took the shadiest path towards the woods. There was a hum in the air, or was it in my head? Everything smelled of ether and blood. It seemed suddenly that I too had taken an anaesthetic.

As I walked measured steps followed behind me, always nearer, always nearer. I turned my head. I saw that they belonged to the guards. They caught up to me. I said, "Good day", and they stopped. The older came closer and whispered, "Nurse, come with me". He spoke in German to the other one who answered and walked away.

Two Steps In The Woods (concluded)

He started toward the woods and I followed. He was a man of middle age with a face marked with wrinkles before his time, two clear eyes under swollen lids, two front teeth were missing and when he talked, you could see the dark space. He was not tall, nor well built. Perhaps under his uniform he was slight but his bearing was military and the rifle on his shoulder was menacing.

He spread the branches of the underbrush. The woods were fresh and still damp from the dew of the night. Yellow spots of light gleamed along the purple of the shadows. There the hum was more insistent. We walked without talking. After going a short distance, I thought "Wouldn't it be better if I went back quietly?" "Here we are", he said. "Silence, don't talk. I, who was not talking, stopped breathing. He moved nearer to a chestnut tree and with unexpected delicacy slowly lowered a branch. There was a nightingale's nest.

Feeling the touch of the branch, four little heads sprang up, four beaks opened. "They thought that their mother had returned," explained the soldier. "In a little while she will come if we go away". In fact, you could hear close by the whirl of wings.

We went away. I thanked him. He smiled almost gently and walked toward his companion who waited near the wall.

I remained alone, motionless and thought, "Perhaps the world will not come to an end yet. Perhaps the world will not come to an end at all." I thought too, "Perhaps I should tell this to everyone".

Rome 1944

FROM THE TREASURER

There was an encouraging response to the funding request made in our Newsletter of last November. Our financial situation is still satisfactory and (hopefully) our income for the year to 28/2/2001 will prove to have been sufficient to cover our outgoings. But, we are now in a new financial year and we will be billed shortly for the cost of printing this issue of the Newsletter. In the coming year, we may have to consider cutting costs by means of changes in format, size, etc but, for the moment, we are able to continue as before, leaving it to Branch members and others on our mailing list to contribute according to their means or as the spirit moves them. Our thanks to the many who send in donations well in excess of our "official" and basic sub of \$5 per annum.

Cedric Randerson, Hon Treasurer

March, 2001

22nd Battalion Association
Box 26-314
AUCKLAND 1003

Branch Social Function - Sunday, April 22, 2001

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

- | | | |
|-----|---|----------|
| (1) | Entrance fee for _____ people at \$15.00 per head | \$ _____ |
| | <u>AND/OR:</u> | |
| (2) | My 2001/2002 Subscription/Donation | \$ _____ |
| | <u>Total</u> | \$ _____ |

Name & Address (Block Letters):-

Army No:

PROMPT REPLIES PLEASE