

1943  
NEW ZEALAND

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# MILITARY FORCES OF NEW ZEALAND

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING

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*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency*

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## REPORT

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Wellington, 20th August, 1943.

The Hon. MINISTER OF DEFENCE.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the following report on the New Zealand Military Forces for the period 1st June, 1942, to 31st May, 1943.

### GENERAL REMARKS

The latter portion of the year has been marked by a continual decrease in the threat of Japanese action against New Zealand. Advantage has been taken of this gradual improvement to make corresponding reductions in the Home Defence Army, pursuant to the appreciations provided from time to time by the Chiefs of Staff. It should be emphasized that the administrative work involved in carrying out these reorganizations is enormous. In all reorganizations of the home-defence forces care has been taken to ensure that the ability to remobilize has been retained.

The Army policy is to employ the minimum number of men on home defence and on the various services carried out for overseas forces so as to make available the maximum number for overseas and for industry. This policy has already resulted in the release of large numbers from the home-defence Army, and a steady reduction will continue for some time to come.

Vast quantities of war equipment of all kinds have arrived in New Zealand from overseas during the year, and local production has increased enormously. The greatly increased equipment requirements of the Territorial Force when fully mobilized have almost all been satisfied, while Home Guard requirements have been substantially met. The care and maintenance of the mass of equipment now to hand presents a major problem.

During the year the United States have taken over from New Zealand the responsibility for the defence of Fiji, although certain New Zealand units and New Zealand personnel remain. Our considerable forces in Fiji were thereupon returned to New Zealand, expanded and reorganized, and later despatched, complete with equipment, to a forward area in the Pacific.

New Zealand, at the request of the United States authorities, has assumed responsibility for the defence of certain Pacific islands, and has despatched garrisons, complete with equipment, to these islands.

Substantial reinforcements have been raised and trained and despatched to 2nd (N.Z.) Division in Middle East.

### REORGANIZATION OF THE ARMY IN NEW ZEALAND

In January, 1943, it was decided to make further substantial reductions in the mobilized home-defence Army.

A subsequent reorganization provided for a reduction of mobilized strength to bare essentials, together with the provision of a non-mobilized Territorial Army on a compulsory basis, the personnel being selected, in co-operation with the National Service Department, to ensure the least disturbance of industry when men are called up for annual training or in the event of an emergency again requiring mobilization.

### NEW ZEALAND STAFF COLLEGE

During the year 300 students passed out of the six courses which were held at the New Zealand Staff College. Special emphasis has been laid on the requirements of the Pacific theatre.

### ROYAL MILITARY COLLEGE OF AUSTRALIA

Nine New Zealand cadets graduated at the Royal Military College, Australia, during the year. There are at present 18 New Zealand cadets attending the College.

### NEW ZEALAND TACTICAL SCHOOL

With the home-defence forces mobilized, a Tactical School for the training of Company Commanders and unit seconds in command was urgently necessary. This was established at Wanganui, and some three hundred and fifty officers have completed tactical courses.

### NEW ZEALAND ARMoured FIGHTING VEHICLES SCHOOL

This school has been of the greatest importance in training officers and non-commissioned officers of our armoured units, including personnel sent overseas. Some 6,930 students attended courses during the training year. The experimental wing attached to this School has carried out a large amount of excellent work of value to New Zealand and also to War Office.

### ARMY SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION

The Army School of Instruction has continued to be of great value in training non-commissioned officers for commissioned rank in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, Territorial Force, and the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps, and also in the specialist training of technical personnel. The total number of students passing through the school was 4,747. All the courses of instruction at this School have been attended by personnel from Pacific formations.

### SCHOOL OF ARTILLERY

Students totalling 2,000 have attended courses of instruction at the School of Artillery, including members of the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps who are now employed on operational stations.

### DISTRICT SCHOOLS

District Schools of Instruction have been fully employed during this period in undertaking courses for personnel of the Territorial Units, Home Guard, and Secondary Schools.

### TRAINING OF MOBILIZED FORCES

During the year intensive and progressive training was undertaken by all ranks of the mobilized forces which culminated in Brigade and Divisional manoeuvres. The large movements of personnel into and out of the Army severely hampered efficient training, but the standard obtained reflects credit on Commanders and their staffs. Battle inoculation was carried out by all units, and the Royal New Zealand Air Force supplied air support as required.

### TRAINING OF 2ND NEW ZEALAND EXPEDITIONARY FORCE PERSONNEL

Drafts of reinforcements for the New Zealand Expeditionary Force have been trained and despatched during the year in sufficient numbers to ensure that an adequate reserve of man-power is available to the New Zealand Forces overseas. The forces despatched to the Pacific area received a thorough period of training in New Zealand before departure.

### HOME GUARD

*General.* Late in 1942 the appointments of District and Group Directors ceased to exist, and a number of Zone Commanders were appointed to command all troops, including Home Guard, in their respective zones. An Adjutant-Quartermaster and two warrant officers were appointed to each Home Guard battalion. Independent Mounted Rifle Squadrons have been converted into Home Guard units.

*Training.*—With the issue of new equipment, &c., and ammunition for range practices, and the availability of qualified instructors and courses of instruction, the Home Guard has reached a considerable degree of efficiency.

### MAPPING AND SURVEY

Good progress has been made during the year, and those areas considered most vital to the defence of New Zealand have been mapped with considerable accuracy. The Lands and Survey Department has expedited the mapping programme, and has received assistance in the work from specialized Army personnel.

### ARTILLERY

Great quantities of artillery equipments of all types—field, anti-aircraft, and coast—were received during the year, the flow being sufficient to ensure that requirements of all major items would be met. A noteworthy feature was the large and valuable part played by Women's Auxiliary Army Corps personnel in the manning of certain artillery instruments.

### SIGNALS EXPERIMENTAL ESTABLISHMENT

A Signals Experimental Establishment has been set up in New Zealand. This establishment has designed and tested a general purpose wireless set for which large orders have been received from overseas authorities.

### ARMY EDUCATION AND WELFARE SERVICE

The Army Education and Welfare Service was created and organized towards the end of 1942, and came into full operation in March, 1943.

### NEW ZEALAND WOMEN'S AUXILIARY ARMY CORPS

In October, 1942, the New Zealand Women's Auxiliary Army Corps was constituted part of the New Zealand Defence Forces. The Women's Auxiliary Army Corps is now playing an increasingly important part in the national war effort, and, in addition to those serving in the Middle East and on hospital ships, members of the corps are now serving in various Pacific islands.

### MEDICAL

The health of the troops throughout the year has been good. The chief epidemic diseases were influenza, measles, and mumps. The total deaths during the year were 165, of which 65 were the result of accident.

A plastic surgical unit and an army optician service have been inaugurated and are now performing useful work. Two convalescent depots are functioning in New Zealand.

The following medical units, complete with equipment, have been despatched to the Pacific area: A general hospital, base camp reception hospital, malaria control unit, field hygiene section, two field ambulances, two field surgical units, and a blood-transfusion unit. In addition, reception hospitals, with necessary equipment and personnel, have been provided in areas where New Zealand maintains garrison forces.

### DENTAL

Dental mechanics schools have been established in each of the three military districts. The volume of dental work done for Army personnel during the year ended 31st March, 1943, was over double that done during the previous year.

### PRISONERS OF WAR

New Zealand has undertaken the custody and control of Japanese prisoners of war captured by United States Forces, and a large number of such prisoners of war have been detained in a New Zealand camp constructed for the purpose.

A Prisoners of War Section has been established at Army Headquarters to deal with all questions concerning the treatment of both our own and enemy prisoners of war.

### ARMS: AMMUNITION AND EQUIPMENT

*General.*—Enormous quantities of equipment of all sorts have come to hand. Over 100,000 tons of stores and equipment were received from overseas, in addition to large quantities from local production.

*Small-arms Ammunition.*—Peacetime production in New Zealand of .303 ball ammunition has been increased over twenty times, and the quality is now higher than ever before.

*Gun Ammunition.*—The very large quantity of gun ammunition received from overseas during the year has necessitated a considerable magazine-construction programme, which is as yet uncompleted.

*Uniform and Clothing.*—Production has been well maintained. The issue of clothing and boots to the Home Guard has been completed, and a second suit of battle-dress has been issued to all mobilized Territorial Force personnel. Forces proceeding to the Pacific have been issued with drill uniforms. The introduction of the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps presented unusual problems in the supply of women's clothing, but most of these difficulties have now been overcome. Large quantities of clothing and equipment have been despatched for the maintenance of 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force, Middle East.

*Storage.*—Storage accommodation at all ordnance depots has been quite inadequate to cope with the large quantities of stores, ammunition, and equipment received. The provision of extra buildings has not solved the storage problem (which has been greatly accentuated by the reorganization of the home-defence forces), and very considerable quantities of valuable equipment and stores must remain in the open under tarpaulins.

*Ordnance Workshops.*—All ordnance workshops have been working at high pressure in the assembly and maintenance of equipments on issue to units. It has been necessary to make considerable extensions to these workshops, and additional plant has been installed.

*Inspection Branch.*—Although the inspection of munitions manufactured locally has been given prior consideration, the inspection of small arms, gun ammunition, and explosives, on issue and in store, has been carried out. This work will, however, require more detailed attention in future. Owing to shortage of trained staff, recourse has been had to the borrowing of contractors' employees for inspection work. Munition orders under action amount to 1,293, involving 271 contractors.

*Staff.*—The civilian staff of ordnance depots have almost universally exercised the election given them of being placed on a military basis. This has assisted in achieving a greater stability of staff.

### RATIONS AND SUPPLIES

By close co-operation with the Food Controller, the Army's heavy demands, particularly of rationed and imported foodstuffs, have been satisfactorily met. In addition to feeding New Zealand troops, a considerable amount of rationing of United States troops was carried out. The greatly increased demand for vegetables was met by the encouragement of the development of camp and unit plots both in New Zealand and in the Pacific. One Pacific island garden has an area of 290 acres, with a flourishing pig-farm and poultry-farm attached, while the fish caught in fish-traps at this island averages 6 tons per month.

### PETROL

Reserves of petrol on the scale laid down have been maintained in various installations, and working requirements have been met from the resources of the oil industry.

### CANTEENS

The Canteen Board's business continues to be conducted on commercial lines, which permit of a nominal profit being earned. This profit accrues for the benefit of service personnel, and an amount of £90,892 has been distributed among units.

Women's Auxiliary Army Corps personnel are employed in canteens wherever possible, and have given splendid service.

## MOVEMENTS OF TROOPS : SHIPPING AND RAILWAYS

Troop movements in New Zealand during the year have been unprecedented. Motor transport has been used for this purpose only where other forms of transport were not available. On a number of occasions it has been found necessary to reserve a steamer ferry for service personnel exclusively, and a total of 2,115 special trains, carrying approximately 1,250,000 men, have been engaged.

The New Zealand Railways and shipping companies have shown a very high degree of co-operation with the Army authorities, and it is largely due to this spirit of helpfulness that troop movements have at all times been carried out with smoothness and expedition.

Movements of troops overseas have been considerable. Close liaison with the United States Forces has facilitated movements of New Zealand personnel by sea in the Pacific, as well as the movements of United States troops within New Zealand.

## HOSPITAL SHIPS

During the year His Majesty's New Zealand Hospital Ship No. 1, "Maunganui," has made four return voyages to Mid East, and repatriated over 1,200 sick and wounded personnel.

The hospital ship "Oranje" has made two visits to New Zealand during the year, repatriating approximately 300 sick and wounded personnel.

The Australian hospital ship "Wanganella" also made one voyage to New Zealand with 150 personnel.

## MECHANICAL TRANSPORT

The total holdings of mechanical transport vehicles of all descriptions have increased by over 100 per cent. Deliveries from overseas have removed the necessity for local impressments, and older vehicles formerly impressed have been rendered surplus. The Government Vehicle Disposal Board is responsible for the ultimate disposal of these vehicles, and also those new vehicles received from overseas which are now beyond the requirements of the re-organized Army. Certain unfulfilled orders overseas have, in view of the reorganization, been cancelled.

Considerable numbers of tanks of varying makes, tank-transporters, carriers, and other armoured vehicles have arrived in New Zealand.

Vehicles and spare parts have been provided for Pacific formations, and the mechanical transport branch has also met the requisitions for transport vehicles from Royal New Zealand Navy and Royal New Zealand Air Force and certain local requirements of United States Forces.

The accounting and recording work covering the requisitioning, receiving, distribution, and control of vehicles has been given much attention.

## BUILDINGS AND WORKS

*General.* Although the volume of constructional work in New Zealand is now declining, there has been an increase in the activities of the Forts and Works Branch by reason of the provision of accommodation and services for New Zealand troops in the Pacific.

*Coast Defences.* An extensive coast defence programme has progressed satisfactorily.

*Harbour Defences.*—Modern anti-motor torpedo-boat equipment has arrived in New Zealand, and the construction of emplacements and ancillary works is well in hand.

*Anti-aircraft Defences.*—The necessary constructional work for the installation of both heavy and light anti-aircraft batteries, including accommodation and services for personnel, has been nearly completed.

*Brigade Group Camps.* The construction of numerous camps for Brigade Groups on a dispersal basis was undertaken. Accommodation for tens of thousands of troops was provided in these localities in a minimum of time. Some of these camps are now being vacated, and action is being taken to release to the Royal New Zealand Air Force and to other Departments all accommodation or service materials no longer required. Salvage units are being formed to attend to all materials surplus to these immediate requirements.

*Other Works.*—Other major works undertaken include the construction of extensive additional camp accommodation at Burnham, extensions to Trentham and Waiouru Camps, magazines, rifle-ranges, drill-halls, three convalescent depots, ordnance stores and workshops, over five thousand portable huts, an internment camp, a prisoner-of-war camp, three field hospitals, and a considerable amount of extra accommodation throughout New Zealand for Women's Auxiliary Army Corps personnel.

*Pacific Islands.*—An extensive programme has been prepared to cover the supply of buildings for base camps, base depots, hospitals, garrison accommodation, &c., for New Zealand troops in the Pacific.

*Field Defensive Works.*—A very large amount of emergency work in improving the natural defences of the country—such as anti-tank ditches, road-blocks, wire entanglements, and tactical roads—was undertaken. A large number of bridges throughout New Zealand have been strengthened to allow convoys and equipment to manoeuvre in accordance with the defensive plan for the Dominion.

*United States Forces.*—The arrival of strong United States Forces caused very heavy demands on Army in the erection of camps.

*Maintenance.*—Continuous maintenance is carried out at all major establishments under an agreement with the Public Works Department, and at all minor establishments as occasions demand.

## ENGINEER STORES

An Engineer Stores organization has been set up, making use of the Public Works Department stores system. It supplies Army requirements in plant, tools, equipment, and materials both in New Zealand and the Pacific.

PAY ACCOUNTS AND BASE RECORDS

There has been a large increase in the volume of work in Pay Accounts and Base Records. As at 31st March, 1943, the staff totalled 572, including 433 women.

2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force casualties reported up to 31st March, 1943, were as follows :—

Theatre of War.	Killed in Action.		Died of Wounds.		Accident-ally Killed.		Died Result of Accident.		Died of Sickness.		Prisoner of War.		Missing.		Wounded.		Total.	
	Officers.	Other Ranks.	Officers.	Other Ranks.	Officers.	Other Ranks.	Officers.	Other Ranks.	Officers.	Other Ranks.	Officers.	Other Ranks.	Officers.	Other Ranks.	Officers.	Other Ranks.	Officers.	Other Ranks.
Middle East ..	158	1,958	66	976	..	52	1	71	4	136	412	7,327	14	507	563	8,566	1,218	19,593
United Kingdom ..	..	2	..	1	..	1	..	7	..	8	..	..	..	..	3	..	..	22
Pacific ..	..	..	2	2	1	9	2	3	1	10	..	6	..	8	..	1	6	39
Totals ..	158	1,960	68	979	1	62	3	81	5	154	412	7,333	14	515	563	8,570	1,224	19,654

CONCLUSION

This year has been by far the most difficult in the history of the New Zealand Army. The gigantic activities necessitated, first by mobilization and then by partial demobilization, could never have been so successfully carried out without the generous co-operation of the sister services, various Government Departments, and civilian organizations, and the faithful support of the civil population, to all of whom I desire to pay tribute.

I desire also to place on record the magnificent spirit and devotion to duty which has consistently marked the manifold activities of the men and the women in the ranks of the Army. The sacrifices involved have been many and great. They have, however, been accepted without question.

Finally, I wish to thank the officers and non-commissioned officers of the Army for their loyal and efficient leadership. Since the expiry of the period covered by this report a large number of the officers of the home-defence forces have given a further signal evidence of their worth in voluntarily relinquishing their commissions to proceed overseas. I cannot commend too highly their realism and their patriotism.

To my staff at Army Headquarters and other headquarters I would express my appreciation of their ability and untiring energy in dealing with problems of unique difficulty and complexity.

E. PUTTICK, Lieutenant-General,  
Commanding New Zealand Military Forces.

