

PART II.—MILITARY MOBILIZATION

SECTION I.—STRENGTHS AND CASUALTIES OF THE FORCES

(i) Total Strengths

133. At any given time the total strength of the Armed Forces, excluding the Home Guard and any other part-time auxiliary organizations, is the measure of a country's direct military man-power contribution. New Zealand's direct contribution, commencing with 3,000 (regular staff) in September, 1939, rose to its peak in September, 1942—157,000 (or 170,000 if the 13,000 casualties then recorded are taken into account)—and by March of the current year had declined to 99,000. These figures are inclusive of males and females on New Zealand and overseas strength.

134. Until the end of 1941 mobilization was directed to harnessing the available man-power resources to enable New Zealand to play its part in the war against Germany. The most marked features of the development in total strengths during this period were the physical achievement of organizing practically from scratch the mobilization achieved—*i.e.*, almost 120,000 over the figures at the outbreak of the war, and, as far as Army was concerned, the building-up of a large Territorial Force which, although doing only three months' intensive training, was nevertheless at hand for full-time mobilization as a trained Force whenever required. The objects of mobilization up till the end of 1941 were, then, firstly the recruitment and training of men in each of the three Service arms with a view to their despatch overseas to the theatres of war in which they could be most effective, and secondly the building-up of a reserve Force for home-defence purposes.

135. As explained in Part I of this report, the whole complexion of military policy was changed by the entry of Japan into the war in December, 1941. The emphasis was immediately switched to the strengthening of New Zealand's capacity to defend her own shores, and it was under the stimulus of this emergency that peak mobilization was reached by September of 1942. The mobilization achievement in 1942 must be regarded as a spectacular one. Thereafter, since mobilization was complete except for the further call-up of men held under appeal in industry and maturing fit men, the figures wane for the reasons already mentioned—*viz.*, reduced accretions, and increased deletions as a result of repatriation of casualties and long-service personnel, and releases to industry.

136. A progressive analysis of the total strengths of the Forces is given in Table 2 of the Appendix.

(ii) New Zealand and Overseas Strengths

137. Up to the end of 1942 the majority of the total strength of the Forces was located in New Zealand. During the first two years of war this was due to the fact that personnel in mobilization camps were undergoing training for overseas service, and, during 1942, to the huge mobilization of men for the defence of New Zealand itself. By 1943, however, the large Forces of men serving in New Zealand were progressively reduced as the overseas contribution to each of the three arms, and particularly that of the Army, was extended. By March of 1944 the total overseas strength standing at 72,000, considerably exceeded the total New Zealand strength, which at that time was 54,000. As at the end of March of the current year the total overseas strength, although diminished by 16,000 on the total overseas strength of last year, still considerably exceeded the total New Zealand strength of 43,000.

(iii) Comparative Strengths of the Service Arms

138. In total strength the Army from the outset has easily outstripped the other two Service arms, and the Air Force has also easily outstripped the Navy. Strengths at the outbreak of war were confined to the Regular Force strength of approximately 1,000 for each of the Service arms, but at the point of peak mobilization—September, 1942—the comparative total strengths were: Army, 127,000; Air Force, 24,000; Navy, 6,000. Since that time the total Army strength has progressively receded to its present total of 53,000. The Air Force, on the other hand, continued to expand until in May of 1944 it reached a peak of 42,000. The Air Force strength has declined until now it stands at 36,000. The experience of Navy has been that peak mobilization has only been reached at the present time. Since September, 1942, when the total strength was 6,000, small but progressive additions have been recorded until at the present time the total strength of the Navy is 10,000, of which number 6,000 men are serving overseas.

139. The figures given for each of the Service arms are inclusive of members of the three female auxiliary services—*viz.*, W.A.A.C., W.A.A.F., and W.R.N.S. Strengths of each of the three women's auxiliaries as at 31st March, 1945, are given together with the comparable figures for male strengths, in Table 3 of the Appendix. Table 17 of the Appendix classifies by occupation the present strength of the W.R.N.S. The W.A.A.C. and W.A.A.F. strengths were similarly classified in the 1944 annual report.