

WITH THE RECRUITING VAN

The best recruiting story, and a true one, comes from Wellington. It happened one recent Friday evening, when five men joined the forces.

An army recruiting van, which tours the city and suburbs, was ending a busy day in town and preparing to leave for Petone. Just as the sergeant in charge had decided to close up the van a taxi pulled up at a nearby house and three men got out.

But instead of going inside, they walked over to the van.

"Is this where we join up?" one of them asked.

"It is," said the sergeant in charge.

There and then, the papers were signed.

"Wait a minute, I've got a brother inside," said one of the men.

The brother was soon produced and signed the necessary papers.

This was too much for the taxi-driver.

"Well, I'm in this too," said he, scratching his prematurely bald head, and demanding an enrolment form.

"And the ride won't cost you anything," he told the three men as he got back into his car.

The next best story, vouched for by a former officer of the New Zealand Staff Corps, concerns the man who wanted to enlist, but didn't want to do so until the million mark had been reached at the Centennial Exhibition. He wanted to win that honour and enlist at the same time.

The travelling recruiting van has been an excellent institution, producing a steady flow of recruits who are perhaps not able to get to the recruiting offices when the mood is on them.

I spent a few hours with the sergeant of one of the vans after it left Central District Headquarters. Nothing spectacular happened, for the business is a serious one. Men sauntered up, matter-of-factly in their requests, remarking for



S. P. Andrew, photograph

COLONEL J. HARGEST, D.S.O., M.C., has been appointed to command the 5th Infantry Brigade of the 2nd Echelon. He has represented Invercargill in Parliament since 1931. Colonel Hargest left New Zealand with the Main Body during the last war as a 2nd lieutenant and returned as a lieutenant-colonel.

tacular happened, for the business is a serious one. Men sauntered up, matter-of-factly in their requests, remarking for

the most part that "it seemed the right thing to do."

The sergeant was proud of his morning's work. "We got a beautiful chap to-day," he told me, "a six-footer weighing 14 stone. He joined after the community sing."

Our first stop was outside Army Headquarters. "Is this where I do it, or do I go inside?" asked the first recruit, pointing a grimy finger towards the main entrance.

"No, right here," said the sergeant, whipping out his papers.

A passerby came up to shake the new recruit by the hand. "I was in the last show," he said. "Good luck."

Next came two Australians, who merely asked for the necessary papers and disappeared to fill in the particulars in a nearby car.

"Lots of them are like that," the sergeant told me. "They seem rather shy. Most of the men who came forward the other evening did so when dusk had fallen."

As with the recruiting vans, so in the various depots. There is no spectacular rush of men. They come in ones and twos, drifting in as opportunity offers, men from all calls in life.

Pride of place for filling its quota for the 2nd Echelon goes to the Hawke's Bay District which had more than sufficient men by the closing date. Auckland came next.

New Zealand has been divided into twelve areas for the recruiting campaign, each on a geographical basis and each supplying a required number of men. In this way the resources of one district are not exhausted before the others and the distribution of man-power is kept on an even and fair basis.

But the campaign will not cease when the requirements of the 2nd Echelon have been filled. "Freyberg needs 10,000 men" is the slogan, for the 3rd Echelon has yet to be filled, and after that reinforcements will be necessary.

Since then what travels and adventures that rifle has known. Probably, when the Anzacs left the Peninsula, some roving Turk found the rifle in the scrub. He may have used it later against our own men in Palestine. It may have gone through the byways of Eastern bazaars in exchange for food, for clothes, for money, across the face of Turkey, through the hills of Persia, through the mountains of Turkestan. It would have been valued by every owner; it may have travelled long and dusty roads; tortuous mountain paths. The tents of tribesmen and the rough huts of villagers may have known it. Bullets from its shining barrel may have found their mark in tribal quarrels; or even against British soldiers serving on the North-West Frontier.

No one will ever know the travels of that rifle. Major Free heard of it only a few years ago. Perhaps to-day it is still doing duty — or will see active service again if trouble breaks in Turkestan.

STORY OF A NEW ZEALAND RIFLE

Here is the story of an army rifle — a New Zealand Army rifle. It was issued to a soldier who fought and died in the magnificent tragedy known to history as the Gallipoli Campaign. When last seen, only a few years ago, it was the property of a nomadic tribesman beyond Cashmere, somewhere on the "Golden Road to Samarkand."

Bartered and Exchanged

For over twenty years that rifle has perhaps been bartered and exchanged, passing from man to man and travelling with its various owners over thousands of miles of country. What a story it could tell, were words possible.

Major R. J. Bird, formerly of the Scinde Horse, a cavalry regiment in India, tells the story briefly, as it was told to him by Major Cuthbert Free, now stationed in Fiji.

While on service in the Gilgit country, beyond the famous North-West Frontier of India, Major Free met a fellow-officer who had been on a political mission through the rough country far beyond Samarkand, once the capital of Tamerlane's empire, in Turkestan. "I saw something which would interest you," this officer told Major Free, knowing that he was a New Zealander.

In Tribesman's Possession

And then he told how, while on his travels, he had met a tribesman who possessed a New Zealand Army .303 rifle. On the stock was carved the badge of the 1st. Canterbury Regiment, the regimental number of the owner, and his name. Those facts recalled to Major Free the soldier who had fought with him on Gallipoli and had been killed there in fierce fighting.

Personal

Colonel P. H. Bell, D.S.O., at present in command of the Southern Military District, has been appointed Quarter-master-General at Army Headquarters. He will also become 3rd Military Member of the Army Board.

Lieut.-Colonel E. T. Rowlings, Deputy Adjutant-General, will take over command of the Southern Military District, with the rank of temporary colonel.

Lieut.-Colonel R. A. Row, D.S.O., is to take over command of the Central Military District with the rank of temporary colonel. He will succeed Brigadier E. Puttick, who is detailed for duty with the 2nd New Zealand Division.

Lieut.-Colonel S. D. Mason has been appointed camp commandant, Burnham Military Camp.

Lieut.-Colonel A. B. Williams, D.S.O., who returned from Australia on December 8, has been appointed commander of the Royal New Zealand Artillery, Army Headquarters, Wellington, in succession to Lieut.-Colonel G. B. Parkinson.

Major V. G. Jervis, of Army Headquarters, Wellington, will become Deputy Adjutant-General, with the rank of temporary lieutenant-colonel.

Major H. M. Foster, formerly camp commandant at Burnham, has been appointed General Staff Officer 1, Central Military District, with the rank of temporary lieutenant-colonel.

Major A. Bongard, M.C., at present area staff officer, Dunedin, has been appointed General Staff Officer 1, Southern Military District, with the rank of temporary lieutenant-colonel.

Major C. Shuttleworth, N.Z.S.C., has been appointed to command the Military Training School at Narrow Neck, Auckland.

Major C. E. Weir, of the Royal New Zealand Artillery, has been appointed to command the 7th Anti-Tank Regiment of the 2nd Echelon. He has been adjutant of the 18th Anti-Aircraft Battery and officer commanding anti-aircraft units at Auckland.

Capt. D. M. Robertson has been appointed staff officer, "A" duties, at Army Headquarters, Wellington, with the rank of temporary major.

NEW ZEALAND

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