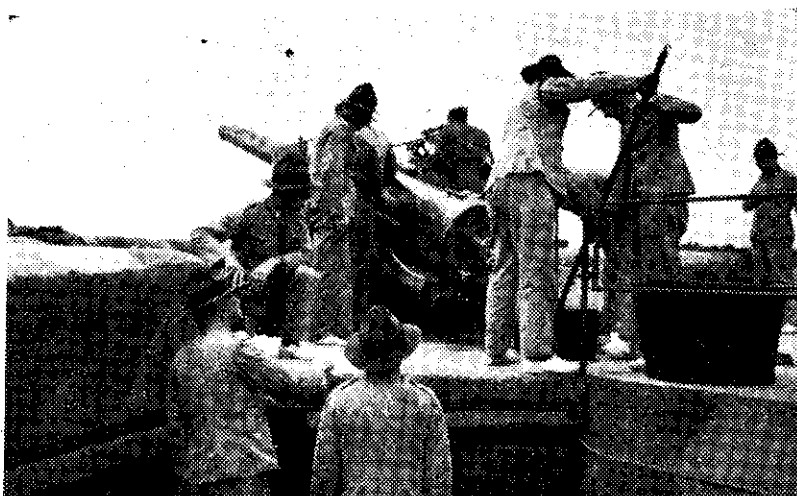


They Watch While We Sleep



From the very beginning of the war, big guns have guarded our coast

THE first civilians called up for military duty in this war were officers and men of artillery units trained in operating the big guns of the coastal batteries. That was two days before New Zealand followed Great Britain into war with Germany, and many of those officers and men are today still on duty at the posts to which they were called from their beds during the early hours of September 1, 1939. Acquaintances who have seen them remain in this country while others go overseas have sometimes wondered why, and personnel of coastal defences have had to put up with much unpleasant criticism. There are, of course, excellent reasons why many key men could not be given the chance, for which all of them have asked time and time again, to go overseas, but the rules of the service and the need for maintaining complete secrecy about these important features of New Zealand's defences have so far sealed their lips. Now it is possible to tell part of the story—enough, it is hoped, to make the public appreciate the splendid job these men are doing.

If it were possible to take the public on a tour of some of the big permanent forts on the New Zealand coast they would quickly understand why it has been necessary to keep so many of the personnel in the Dominion. The fire control instruments associated with a modern battery are among the most intricate machines devised by science. Only experts who have gone through a long and rigorous course of training can be permitted to man them. Because these experts could not easily and quickly be replaced they have had to "stay put." Once war starts a coastal battery must be ready for instant action at any moment of the day or night.

To fit a recruit for the simpler tasks on the guns and fire control instruments requires six months' continuous training, but that represents only the primer stage of the artilleryman's military education. His training goes on as long as he remains with an artillery unit. Promotion to non-commissioned rank is open to all gunners, but stripes are not earned easily in the artillery. A Bombardier (equivalent of Infantry Corporal) must be capable of taking sole charge of a big gun

if necessary. This requires a great deal of specialised knowledge that cannot be gained easily or quickly.

Of course all ranks must take their share of watches. For twenty-four hours a day every day officers, gun crews, and sufficient personnel to man the fire control instruments must be available to spring into action upon the sounding of an alarm. There have been few real alarms as yet, but practice alarms are held at frequent intervals.

There is a saying among artillerymen that the best fort in the world never fired a shot. The reason, of course, was that no enemy would tackle so formidable an adversary. Whether shots will be fired by our coastal batteries no one knows. But everyone who has inspected them knows that if an enemy approaches them he will soon wish he hadn't.

TALKS ABOUT DENMARK

GREAT interest is being taken by New Zealand as well as Danish listeners in the talks given by 2ZB by E. A. Dahl, founder of the Danish Association of New Zealand, and from 1ZB by Mrs. P. Christie, Dominion Secretary. These talks are given on days of importance in Danish history, and next month Mr. Dahl will be heard again. The actual date of Denmark's Constitution Day is June 5, but as that happens this year to be a Saturday, it is most likely that the talks (both from Wellington and Auckland) will be heard on Sunday, June 6.

The Controller of the Commercial Broadcasting Service recently received a letter from L. Gundel, the Hon. Secretary of the Danish Council, London, about the broadcasts relating to Denmark put over by the CBS. "As the position of our country is so very difficult and complicated it is very encouraging to hear about these sympathetic broadcasts, and we can assure you that this understanding attitude on your part is very much appreciated by free Danes everywhere," said Mr. Gundel. "This applies not least to the 5,000 Danish seamen who, together with their ships, enlisted for service in the Allied cause on the very day of Denmark's occupation by the Germans."

THERE was a little Girl
Who had a little Curl
Right in the middle
of her forehead,
When she was good
She was very, very good,
But when she was bad—
*then mother knew there was something wrong
inside, and the way to put that right was with
Califig, the delicious, gentle laxative.*



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