

22nd Battalion Association

AUCKLAND BRANCH

Telephone 523 1310

Secretary :

C. W. Randerson

BRANCH NEWSLETTER

PO Box 26 314

Epsom

Auckland 3

NOVEMBER, 2001

PRE-CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON – SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 25

You will be pleased to hear that Auckland Branch is, as usual, holding the informal gathering that brings us together again when the winter months have passed and the Christmas period is not very far away. Now that **National** Reunions are no longer possible, Branch and Regional gatherings have become increasingly important and Auckland Branch extends a very warm welcome to visitors and to any members of other Branches who are able to join us at our luncheon at the Grey Lynn R.S. Club on Sunday, November 25. Our Branch area covers a large part of the North Island but we always have a good representation there at our Grey Lynn functions from both north and south of the city, as well as from Auckland itself.

We hope and expect to have a good muster at this month's social get-together. At Grey Lynn R.S.C., the catering is always good and the price is very reasonable for the fare provided. We very much wish to hear from you **whether or not** you can be at the luncheon. **Please** use the Reply Slip on the back page to send us your **pre-payment by mail**. The Caterer needs to have an accurate estimate of numbers and pre-payments are a big help to the Treasurer. If you can't come on November 25, **please use the Reply Slip** to send in your sub and/or donation if you believe that a payment is due.

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: Friends and relatives of members will, as always, be most welcome, as will members of other Branches.

THE COST: \$15 per head (plus subscription and/or donation, if due).

BAR: Drinks will be on sale throughout.

PLEASE FILL IN THE REPLY SLIP NOW and send it with your remittance in time to reach the Treasurer by **Monday, 19/11/2001.**

ROLL OF HONOUR

43879	RK ABSOLOM	Foxton Beach	22/5/01
827245	JB BRACEWELL	Pahiatua	5/9/01
43849	NC BREMNER	Upper Hutt	23/7/01
669053	LT BURNS	Tokoroa	1/1/01
	C CAPPER	Mangakino	31/7/01
33816	L R CROOK	Gisborne	6/6/01
44065	NT GREGORY	Napier	13/6/01
476015	J (JACK) HALLEWELL	Lower Hutt	19/1/01
40155	JR HENSON	Rotorua	3/5/01
4777	PR (PETER) HOCKLEY	Mt Maunganui	2/6/01
056721	JD HUGHES	Feilding	22/1/01
660073	JG HUNT	Pahiatua	2/7/01
30591	TF JENKINS	Invercargill	9/6/01
234750	C JONES	Hastings	5/7/01
41396	EHW (MICK) KENNY	Wellington	11/5/01
6720	RM KENDRICK	Masterton	1/5/01
36552	EG (SNOW) LEIGHTON	Helensville	13/9/01
513065	(SIR) TP (THADDEUS) McCARTHY	Wellington	11/4/01
668578	E McCARTNEY	Whangarei	30/1/01
6845	BS MANSON	Napier	27/6/01
459688	IC MORA	Hamilton	19/6/01
41161	BS POWELL	Opunake	24/6/01
31417	LN (LES) RUBY	Levin	11/3/01
81810	GH SALT	Auckland	12/5/01
6818	RT SALTER	Russell	9/5/01
441067	RG STEVENS	Hamilton	16/6/01
6540	N WEATHERLEY	Upper Hutt	15/5/01
35697	CJ (CECIL) WHITE	Rotorua	30/6/01
460812	OEJ WILSON	New Plymouth	25/2/01

The above list has been compiled mainly from the "Last Post" advice sheets circulated to the Association's Branches by JOHN BOWKER, Keeper of the National Roll and, as with all such lists, a certain number of errors and omissions are inevitable. Only 10 of those listed were living in the Auckland Branch area (from North Cape to the King Country) and not all of those were dues-paying members. The President and Committee members of Auckland Branch extend their deep sympathy to the families of all former members of the Battalion who have passed away since the last issue of this Newsletter.

Four of the names on this list call for special mention:- Peter Hockley, Mick Kenny, Sir Thaddeus McCarthy and Eric G Leighton. Starting first with the last-named, "**Snow**" **Leighton** was a strong supporter of our Branch and a regular attender at our meetings and functions.

ROLL OF HONOUR (continued)

During World War 2, he became well-known and much admired for his prowess on the football field, playing as half-back in many of the matches of our 22nd Battalion Rugby team.

Even better known as a Rugby footballer was "**Mick Kenny**", who died last May at the age of 83 and was given a thoroughly-deserved newspaper write-up by **TP (Terry) McLean**. Terry's obituary write-up was headed "Bullets Stole his Rugby Destiny" and began with this sentence:- "But for a burst of Spandau Machinegun fire across his chest on the night of December 14, 1944, "Mick" Kenny might now rank above Bob Scott in the gallery of great All Black fullbacks". In the Appendix entitled "Rugby Memories" at the close of 22 Battalion's Official History, the late PAUL DONOGHUE described Mick's play at fullback in Battalion, Brigade and 2NZEF Rugby teams as having been "SUPERB"; it would have been impossible to pay Mick a higher compliment as a rugby player. Had he not been severely wounded, his selection as a member of the NZ Army Rugby team that toured in England and elsewhere at the end of WW2 would surely have been automatic. Mick was so outstanding at full-back that the subsequently celebrated All Black, Bob Scott, might well have failed to gain selection in that Army touring team.

In "Rugby Memories", Paul Donaghue expressed it like this:- "A machine gun in Italy prevented NZ from seeing the real Kenny but even on his return and only partial recovery from a serious chest wound, Mick was still able to become a Maori All Black". Terry McLean expanded on this comment by saying that "despite the effect of his terrible wounds, Kenny played post-war at senior club and provincial level for five or six years".

Sir Thaddeus McCarthy:- Last April the NZ Herald recorded that one of New Zealand's most gifted and most respected jurists had died in Wellington at the age of 93. The obituary notice said that THADDY McCARTHY "thought of himself as an ordinary man but he was not – he was an uncommon man with a common touch". A full list of his achievements would take up a good deal of space:- he was a Knight Bachelor, a member of the Privy Council, a Supreme Court (now the High Court) judge, a KBE and a member of the Order of New Zealand (ONZ), this country's highest honour. During his career, he headed an unprecedented total of seven royal commissions.

His war service was not nearly so impressive but still worth recording. When the war broke out in 1939, Sir Thaddeus held the rank of captain in Wellington Fortress Command. He could probably have seen out the war in New Zealand but was determined to go overseas and resigned his commission in order to do so. He joined the 22nd Battalion in Italy with the rank of sergeant but soon got his commission back. After being wounded while in action as a Platoon Commander, he was appointed a deputy Judge Advocate-General on General Freyberg's headquarters staff. Back in civilian life after the war, he continued his career as a barrister until 1957, when he was appointed a judge, eventually rising to the high post of president of the Court of Appeal.

MEMORIAL WINDOWS AT WAIOURU

Our Branch has recently been sent a copy of a report on this topic issued by the Executive Management Committee of the Army Museum, Waiouru. The report says that the Museum wishes to create a **large-scale** stained glass window as a National Memorial to the NZEF units which took part in World War 2. We do not have enough space here to reprint the report in full but the following paragraph is of particular interest.

It is recognised that some unit associations have worked hard in the development of their own concepts for their unit windows. The Committee apologises for having changed its mind. It is however now clear that it is necessary to design the project as a whole – incorporating windows memorialising each battalion – but with control of the use of battle honours, symbols, geographical expressions, unit badges, etc, in order to make the most vivid impression possible. The Committee is convinced that only in this way can we achieve a suitable tribute to the men and women who served in the NZEF and a fitting memorial to those who did not return.

GERMAN USE OF PANTHER-TURRETS

A few months ago, the Branch Secretary received a letter (personally addressed) from an American researcher seeking information on the above topic. This enquiry has led to an exchange of letters (see excerpts below) that is still in progress.

ORIGINAL ENQUIRY

"Please allow me to briefly introduce myself. I have been researching the WWII German use of detached Panther-turrets, "**Panther-turmstellungen**," and permanently dug-in Panther Tanks, "**Eingebaute Panther**," as static fortifications for some time. My goal is to accumulate enough data (photos and written text) to publish an in-depth publication on the topic. I have found that a number of detached Panther-turrets and dug-in Panther Tanks were encountered in various locations on both the Eastern and Western Fronts with an inordinate number found in the vicinity of Rimini. It is interesting to note that during the last days of the war in Europe, a few dug-in Panther Tanks were used to defend the streets of Berlin".

"Through my research I have discovered that during the night of 21-22 September 1944, the "22nd Bn" attacked and captured a Panther-turret emplacement in the Celle hamlet just north of Rimini. From the little I know about this running engagement, **Joe Coppell** and **Maurice Reeve** both at different times during that night single-handedly attacked this Panther-turret emplacement, of which **Maurice Norman Reeve** was awarded a medal commendation for his heroic action".

"Please Mr Randerson, do you have any additional details about these attacks by both Joe Coppell and Maurice Norman Reeve on that Panther-turret at Celle during the night of 21-22 September 1944? If both of these soldiers attacked the Panther-turret single-handedly, and only Maurice Norman Reeve was awarded a commendation, does this mean that he alone captured that Panther-turret? If Reeve captured the Panther-turret without assistance, what happened when Coppell attacked the Panther-turret? Do you know why either was not given fire support during their attacks? Please, any details about either of these attacks would be most helpful?"

"Do you by chance know the current whereabouts of **Joe Coppell** and **Maurice Norman Reeve**? I would most appreciate making contact with both Joe Coppell and Maurice Norman Reeve if possible, any recollections they are willing to share with me regarding this event would be most welcome indeed. I am also very interested in obtaining 1944-45 photographs of both Joe Coppell and Maurice N Reeve for my publication if available."

"Would it be possible to place an advertisement in an up-coming issue of the 22nd Bn Newsletter asking for assistance for the whereabouts and photographs of Joe Coppell and Maurice Norman Reeve? I am very willing to pay any fees necessary for an advertisement in your newsletter, please advise?"

Sincerely
Wm A Borchardt

BRANCH SECRETARY'S REPLY

In reply to your letter dated June 4, 2001, I regret that I have not yet been able to obtain any additional details that would be helpful to your research into the fighting that took place in the Celle area near Rimini in September, 1944. I was not with 22 Battalion at that time (having been sent on a course) and people I have contacted by mail since your enquiry reached me have been unable to fill in the gaps in my knowledge of the incidents at Celle. Also, I rather doubt whether either **JOE COPPELL** or **MAURICE REEVE** is still in the land of the living at this point in time.

USE OF PANTHER-TURRETS (continued)

The only source of this kind of information at present available to me is the Official History of 22 Battalion and I enclose a photo-copy of a page of that book. It seems to me that, whereas Maurice Reeve and a small handful of men succeeded in capturing the enemy strongpoint, Joe Coppell's "furious one-man charge" almost but not quite succeeded. The records suggest that Reeve had sufficient fire support to capture the enemy tank turret but that Coppell did not. This could explain why Reeve was awarded an immediate MM. It is also significant that while both men held NCO rank at the time of the Celle fighting, they had both been commissioned by the end of the war. On the question of "fire-support", Maurice Reeve's group would have had the support of Infantry weapons only. I'm told that there was no artillery barrage that night.

As requested by you, we will publish your enquiry in the next issue of our Auckland Branch Newsletter and send you the details of any reply that may be received. We make no charge for this kind of service, but any donation to our Branch funds that you may wish to make will be gratefully received.

FURTHER LETTER FROM WM A BORCHARDT

Thank you very much for your letter received yesterday, 22 July, along with the enclosed photo-copy. I appreciate the details you enclosed with your correspondence and your willingness to offer your time and expense to my request for assistance. I also want to Thank You for answering my questions concerning the battle/combat with the Celle Panther-turret and 22nd Battalion's 6 & 7 Platoons.

After reading your letter and reading page 353 (the photo-copy you enclosed), I am to understand Joe Coppell with his "party from 6 Platoon" was unable to retake the Panther-turret, yes? And only with the assistance of Corporal Reeve and his 7th Platoon did Joe Coppell along with his 6th Platoon party were they able to retake the Panther-turret, yes?

Yes...I am very interested in making contact with any New Zealand soldier who could offer any details or recollections about the German usage of "tank-turret emplacements" in Italy. My interest also includes making contact with any New Zealander who can offer any additional details dealing with 6th & 7th Platoon's attack on the Celle Panther-turret of 21-22 Sept 1944. I would also enjoy obtaining "photos" of both "Joe Coppell and Corporal Reeve" circa 1944-45 if at all possible. Do you know how I would be able to obtain a listing of the troopers from that "party from 6th Platoon and 7th Platoon" (can you tell me, how many men in a platoon) which participated in those two attacks on the Celle Panther-turret? As you would imagine, I would "love" making contact with each of those troopers, their recollections/first hand accounts would be invaluable.

Thank you very much for your time and your willingness to advertise my request in a coming up issue of the 22nd Battalion Association News Letter!

FURTHER REPLY FROM BRANCH SECRETARY

Many thanks for your letter dated July 23 and also for your donation of US \$10.00. Much to my regret, I am unable at this stage to give you any other detailed replies to your questions to supplement the information included in my previous letter and the photo-copy of a page from Jim Henderson's Official History of 22 Battalion. But it seems fairly clear from the photo-copy that I sent to you that Nos 6 and 7 Platoons of One Company carried out separate attacks on the Panther-turret manned by German troops in the Celle area in Italy. It also seems clear that the 6 Platoon attack that culminated in Joe Coppell's "furious one-man charge" almost succeeded in

USE OF PANTHER-TURRETS (continued)

capturing the strongpoint" but could not complete the task. On the previous page of the History, it is recorded that 6 Platoon was "weak in numbers and had lost its officer, Wally Hart" who had been mortally wounded while charging a German Spandau. My reading of the account in the History is that it was because 6 Platoon was short in numbers that Maurice Reeve, and his Section from 7 Platoon, was given the job of completing the attacks on the Panther-turret at Celle.

I would think that only a small group of men from each of the platoons (6 and 7) took part in these attacks and it may now be very difficult to obtain full lists of them. In reply to your question, an Infantry platoon at full strength would have consisted of about 27 privates, plus 4 NCOs and the platoon commander, a total of 32, but in the course of a battle a platoon could quickly be reduced to about half-strength or even less, depending on the numbers killed and wounded and on pre-battle losses through illness, injury and other causes. I'm sorry that I cannot give you fuller replies at the moment but I hope that publication of your enquiries in the next issue of our Branch Newsletter will give a worth-while result.

FOOTNOTE:- If any reader of this Newsletter is able to supply the kind of information, etc that William Borchardt is seeking, the Branch Secretary will gladly send it on to William.

LAST PARADE FOR PETER

(From the Eulogy given by Doug Froggatt at the funeral service for PETER HOCKEY held in the Mount Harbour Chapel, Mt Maunganui, Tauranga on June 6, 2001)

Peter has had a long life, and because of this, I would suggest we are come together today more in sadness than in sorrow. To reflect upon his life, and to say our farewells to this fine New Zealander who has now gone from amongst us.

He was amongst the first to volunteer at the commencement of hostilities in September 1939. At aged 22 years and in May of 1940 he sailed to war as a Junior Subaltern aboard the "*Empress of Britain*". In Australia the convoy was joined by the "*Queen Mary*" and these two fine liners each carrying 8,000 NZ troops and 8,000 Australian troops and escorted by a screen of warships set course for Egypt. But within a few days of the convoy being at sea in the Indian Ocean,

* France surrendered to the Germans

*The British Forces were forced to withdraw at Dunkirk.

Britain now stood alone. They were dark days indeed.

The NZ-Australian convoy was hurriedly diverted to Britain, and there Peter Hockley found himself standing guard on the English Channel Coast and daily expecting a German invasion. It was an attack that never came. When no invasion eventuated, the NZ troops resumed their journey to Egypt. Peter Hockley saw action in the early desert campaigns; in Greece; and in the see-saw battles up and down the Western Desert chasing Rommel or being chased by Rommel. Then came the Battle of Alamein and the eventual defeat of the German and Italian Forces and their expulsion from Africa.

After a period of rest the NZ Division and Peter Hockley, again put to sea and sailed to Italy in pursuit of our old German foe. In Italy Peter saw further action and he was now commanding a Company and with the rank of Major. Soldiering became part of Peter's life and after the War he made a career in the Regular NZ Army. Sometime after his retirement he came to Mt Maunganui

LAST PARADE FOR PETER (continued)

to quietly live out his life in this favoured part of New Zealand.

And now we come to today. To this time of reflecting on the life of Peter and thinking of what he meant to each of us as individuals. To the part he played in each of our lives.

And as you are having personal thoughts of Peter I would tell you that there are eight of us here today, from amongst the fast diminishing numbers of his old Regiment. We have come to give Peter a Soldier's Farewell. Amongst us is Colonel Donald from Taupo, a contemporary of Peter's and who sailed with him on the *Empress of Britain* – 61 years ago. Also from Taupo is Major Lloyd Cross, a close contemporary of Peter's. There is too, a group from Auckland who served alongside Peter Hockley, so long ago.

And as you think now, about the Peter Hockley that you knew, we will be thinking of the Peter Hockley we knew. Thinking of how he stepped forward and stood tall at a time when it really counted: Thinking of many incidents grim and pleasant during times of battle and times of play.

And We will be thinking of how he most surely has earned the honour to be lying today, beneath his country's flag. And so we, his Comrades-in-Arms, would now say our Final Farewell to one of our own. And say that in a way that is special to us.

Peter: Vale, Old Comrade!
Farewell!
You were 22nd – but YOU were 22nd to NONE.

With your comrades gathered round and with your country's flag displayed,
As one of the Old Campaigners you have come to this parade.
You have faced The Great Commander and your last command obeyed.
"Dismiss!!"
And for you, Old Soldier, this is YOUR Last Parade.

THIS YEAR'S BURSARY PRESENTATION

A recent Newsletter from the Wellington Branch of our Association reported that this year's presentation of the 22nd Battalion LW Andrew VC Bursary was held at Horowhenua College, Levin on September 21. The function was attended by some forty members of the Association, mainly we would think from Manawatu and Wellington Branches. The organising of the function was once again in the hands of the Manawatu Branch Committee, to whom Wellington Branch extended congratulations on a job very well done.

This year's Bursary was awarded to ALANA SMALL and the presentation was made by the recipient of the first award, whose name these days is MAGGIE WASSILEFF. We join with Wellington Branch in extending our thanks and congratulations to Manawatu.

ON THE SICK LIST

This Wellington Newsletter also reported that JOHN BOWKER, Keeper of the National Roll, was recovering after recent major surgery but was saying that he will still achieve his ambition to become the last surviving member of the Battalion. It sounds like a somewhat lonely post to aspire to! We in Auckland received a communication from John himself during October, sent not long after he left hospital following a six-hour operation. A footnote reads:-

"Still not allowed to drive but gradually improving, though the operation itself knocked memory to hell, causing confusion all over the place and especially at my bank.

But all's well that ends well".

John

22ND BATTALION ASSOCIATION AUCKLAND BRANCH**BRANCH COMMITTEE – YEAR ENDING 28/2/2002**

<u>PATRON:</u>	DR FROGGATT	28 Freyberg Street, Tauranga
<u>PRESIDENT:</u>	HG MATTHEWS	2 Cron Avenue, Te Atatu South, Auckland 8
<u>VICE-PRESIDENTS:</u>	J ALLEN JG McMILLAN	1 Mayville Avenue, New Lynn 8C Seddon Street, Rotorua
<u>SECRETARY</u>	CW RANDERSON	PO Box 26-314, Epsom, Auckland
<u>TREASURER:</u>		<u>RES:</u> 13 Alexis Avenue, Mt Albert, Auckland
<u>WELFARE OFFICER:</u>	RG JONES	3/10 Mahon Place, Papatoetoe
<u>COMMITTEE:</u>	G HUDSON MI KNIGHT HB McRAE SR (STU) SOUTHALL CHARLES FRASER	3/89 Centreway Road, Orewa 24 Carisbrook Street, Katikati West 34 Gifford Road, Papatoetoe 29 Francis Drive, Katikati 9 Lipscombe Avenue, Papatoetoe

November, 2001

22nd Battalion Association
Box 26-314
AUCKLAND 1003

Branch Social Function - Sunday, November 25, 2001

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

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

Name & Address (Block Letters):-

Army No: _____

PROMPT REPLIES PLEASE