

**A New Zealand Style of Military Leadership?
Battalion and Regimental Combat Officers of
the New Zealand Expeditionary Forces of the
First and Second World Wars**

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Abstract

This thesis examines the origins, selection process, training, promotion and general performance, at battalion and regimental level, of combat officers of the New Zealand Expeditionary Forces of the First and Second World Wars. These were easily the greatest armed conflicts in the country's history. Through a prosopographical analysis of data obtained from personnel records and established databases, along with evidence from diaries, letters, biographies and interviews, comparisons are made not only between the experiences of those New Zealand officers who served in the Great War and those who served in the Second World War, but also with the officers of other British Empire forces.

During both wars New Zealand soldiers were generally led by competent and capable combat officers at all levels of command, from leading a platoon or troop through to command of a whole battalion or regiment. What makes this so remarkable was that the majority of these officers were citizen-soldiers who had mostly volunteered or had been conscripted to serve overseas. With only limited training before embarking for war, most of them became efficient and effective combat leaders through experiencing battle. Not all reached the required standard and those who did not were replaced to ensure a high level of performance was maintained within the combat units.

Casualties were heavy among the battalion officers, especially with platoon commanders. The constant need for replacements during both wars led to the promotion of experienced non-commissioned officers from the ranks who had proven their leadership abilities in the turmoil of fighting on the frontline. Such measures further enhanced the performance of the New Zealand divisions, where a team ethos, reflective of the character of New Zealand society, was embraced. The opportunities for promotion on merit at all levels, regardless of previous civilian social class or occupation, provided a sense of egalitarianism seldom found in professional military forces. This, together with the familiarity between the officers and other ranks within the regional-based infantry battalions that formed the foundations of the forces, led to a preferred style of leadership that the New Zealanders responded well to. It was the

officers who provided this leadership in the cauldron of battle who helped forge the expeditionary forces into elite fighting formations.

Preface

In 2003 I enrolled at the University of Canterbury as a mature student to study for a degree in history. After eighteen years in the New Zealand Police, and with a young family, I considered it time that I re-evaluated my career options. I had always been a prolific reader of history and my thirst for historical knowledge remained unquenched, so undertaking a programme of formal study was the obvious option for me to take. During my undergraduate study I was fortunate enough to enrol in *British Isles Rebellions in the Eighteenth-Century*, a course taught by Emeritus Professor John Cookson, which sadly, due to his retirement, is no longer available to students at the University of Canterbury. This course introduced me to the 1798 Irish Rebellion, a revolt which I had previously known very little about but which now intrigued me, especially due to my Irish ancestry. Thus, the decision to conduct a study of the military history of Ireland during the period 1793-1815 for my Masters thesis proved a natural choice in that it combined my longstanding interests in military and Irish history. Following the completion of my MA in 2008 it was Professor Cookson who suggested the Officer Corps of the New Zealand Army as a suitable subject for a PhD thesis when I was at a loss as to what my topic would be. I remain heavily indebted to him, especially as he stepped in to be my senior supervisor in the last years of my study, and the support I have received from him has been extraordinary. I have found researching the wealth of primary source material fascinating, while gaining a greater appreciation of the experiences and sacrifices made by the citizen-soldiers who fought for New Zealand and the interests of its allies in the two world wars.

In this thesis I have attempted to provide a balanced analysis of the performance of the front-line combat officers of the New Zealand expeditionary forces, while comparing the similarities and contrasts concerning the officer corps of both major conflicts. I have also attempted to provide a greater understanding of how the amateur civilian volunteers and conscripts, with limited military experience, became seasoned combat leaders who played a not insignificant part in fighting and defeating armies led by professional officers. From reading the diaries and letters of the officers and enlisted men written while on active service, it is evident that most had a determination to succeed in defeating the enemy. A strong sense of national identity and duty to ones mates and unit was prevalent among the New Zealanders. Junior officers recorded that

the fear of letting their troops and their battalions down inspired them in their leadership where they were expected to lead by example. Not all officers proved capable, but the majority who did ensured that the New Zealand divisions of both conflicts evolved into veteran combat formations. Until now there has been no in-depth study of the combat officers at battalion and regimental level of the New Zealand expeditionary forces and this work rectifies that.

Over the years of my research I have been fortunate in receiving assistance and support from numerous people. Apart from John Cookson, I am also indebted to Professor Philippa Mein Smith, who as my initial senior supervisor provided sound guidance, encouragement and critique that ensured the improved structure of the thesis. She allowed me the flexibility I needed to complete the work while balancing family commitments. I would also like to acknowledge the support and advice I received from Dr Chris Pugsley who agreed to act as adjunct advisor on this project. His knowledge of New Zealand military history, especially for the Great War, is astounding. Thanks must also go to Judy Robertson, office administrator of the Department of History, for her welcoming smile and helpful manner that has ensured my time studying history has remained hassle free in the ten years or so I have been studying in the History Department. I would also like to acknowledge the dedication and professionalism of the other academic staff in History who have provided me with enthusiasm and support throughout my time at Canterbury.

Others I wish to thank who have assisted my research include: Pete Connor, Lieutenant-General Rhys Jones, Geoff Martin, Peter Scott, Emeritus Professor Ewen McCann, Matt Pomeroy, Barry O'Sullivan, Dolores Ho and the staff of the Kippenberger Military Archive and Research Library, Mary Slatter and the staff of the New Zealand Defence Force Library, the staff of the New Zealand Defence Force Archives, Trentham, as well as the staff of Archives New Zealand, Wellington. I am indebted to Sandy Thomas, Haddon Donald, Harold Todd and my uncle, Jack Collins, for sharing their wartime experiences and thoughts with me. I would also like to thank Jane Campbell for not only supplying me with transcripts of Denver Fountaine's unpublished wartime letters and photographs, but for also allowing me to quote from them in this thesis; this work is greatly enriched by the originality this material has provided. I would also like to acknowledge Chris Hewitt and Graeme Wilson from the Selwyn District Council who have graciously allowed me flexibility in working hours to complete this thesis in the six months leading up to submission. I must also thank my

parents, Brian and Claire Stack, who have not only encouraged me in my academic studies, but who have also provided financial support.

Undoubtedly, my greatest thanks must go to my wife, Susanne, whose support and sacrifice has ensured that I have been able to take my passion for history to the highest level. She encouraged me to follow my dream when others questioned my sanity in relinquishing ‘a perfectly good salary’ to lead the impoverished life of a student with a young family. However, the student lifestyle has ensured that I have been able to combine study with quality family time with our children, Seamus and Niamh. They have unavoidably been indoctrinated with my views of historical issues. Thus, it is to my family that I dedicate this work.

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Introduction

In the one hundred years since the formation of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force to serve overseas in the Great War, little has been written concerning the battalion and regimental officers who provided the essential leadership of this large military body, and of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force in the Second World War. This silence has been due mainly to the generations who lived through and experienced these conflicts not wanting to dwell on the sacrifice New Zealand society suffered during these periods as they preferred to focus on the future. The anti-war sentiment that followed the First World War helped to limit the literature on the war experiences of New Zealanders to regimental histories and a few autobiographies. Most returned soldiers, including the officers, believed that only those who had shared the experiences of war could understand what they had been through. Many had practised self-censorship and sanitised their descriptions of their war experiences in letters home to families, mainly focusing on the mundane life out of the trenches and frontline in an effort to reduce the worry families had for their loved ones serving overseas.

In the last twenty years there has been an increase in the output of studies of New Zealand military history. Until the 1970s the official and unofficial war and regimental histories, mostly written by officers who had either served in the specific units or campaigns, followed the pattern where military history was conceived as a history of military operations, comparatively limited in exploration of the relationships between military forces involved and the societies out of which they came. In 1961 British historian Sir Michael Howard signalled a change in this pattern with his book on the Franco-Prussian War where he included a broader approach by looking at how the armies of the two belligerents reflected the social structures of the two nations.¹ This approach gained academic and international acknowledgement and was adopted in academic journals and periodicals such as *War and Society* and *Armed Forces and Society*. Such an approach has specific relevance to obtaining a greater understanding of the New Zealand expeditionary forces which were raised from civilian volunteers

¹ Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Invasion of France, 1870-1871* (London, 1961)

and conscripts. However, the anti-war protests of the 1960s and 1970s, resulting from the country's involvement in the Vietnam War, stifled public enthusiasm in acknowledging New Zealand's fairly constant involvement in the main conflicts of the twentieth century. This has since been replaced by a growing appreciation of the impact war has had on individuals and families, and indeed New Zealand society. The public thirst for a greater understanding of New Zealand's military past has led to a flurry of monographs, autobiographies, biographies, diaries and general histories being published. Notable works such as Christopher Pugsley's *Gallipoli: The New Zealand Story* in 1984, followed by John McLeod's book *Myth and Reality: The New Zealand Soldier in World War Two* in 1986 sparked interest and debate over long-held images of the New Zealand soldier in both wars. Since that time historians, notably Ian McGibbon, John Crawford and Glyn Harper, have added further major contributions. This thesis builds on their work, filling the gap in the historiography of the two world wars by providing an analysis of the lower levels of combat command by officers within the New Zealand expeditionary forces that has so far not been examined in-depth.

Much of the evidence analyzed in this work was obtained through a prosopographical approach to the abundant primary sources that identify the officers of the New Zealand expeditionary forces and therefore make it possible to study them as coherent groups. Such sources were personnel records from the New Zealand Defence Force Archives and Archives New Zealand, along with data obtained from published Gradation Lists and Embarkation Rolls, cross-referenced with the Cenotaph database of the Auckland War Memorial Museum and Studholme's 1928 book, *Some Records of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force*.² Not all these records were complete, but there was sufficient material available to provide sizable samples of over three hundred officers from each of the expeditionary forces. These databases, which are included as appendices to this thesis, are a useful historical source in their own right. The thesis's subsequent analysis of the make-up and experience of the junior combat officers within the New Zealand forces, breaks entirely new ground.

Other primary sources examined included the recorded experiences of soldiers from privates through to major-generals. Evidence obtained and analysed from a post-

² Lt-Col John Studholme, *Some Records of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force: record of Personal Services during the War of Officers, Nurses, and First-Class Warrant Officers; And Other Facts Relating to the N.Z.E.F. – Unofficial But Based on official Records* (Wellington, 1928)

World War Two survey of senior officer of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force conducted by Major-General Howard Kippenberger and the previously unpublished wartime letters of Colonel Denver Fountaine are examples of primary sources that have hitherto received little or no attention. From these and other such material a theme became clear that the New Zealand military forces which served overseas during the First and Second World Wars were generally led by competent officers at all levels. This was despite the fiscal restraints on defence spending by the New Zealand government in the 1920s and 1930s that limited officer recruitments and training during the inter-war years.

In 1986 John McLeod published his MA thesis which became the controversial book *Myth and Reality: The New Zealand Soldier in World War II*.³ McLeod's study challenged the traditional sanitised images of the Kiwi citizen-soldiers during the Second World War where the New Zealanders saw themselves as superior soldiers to other nationalities and natural leaders of men. These images had emerged in the First World War and were reinforced in the next. McLeod successfully exposed the myth of a totally egalitarian army in that he argued that initially officer commissions were generally only offered to those whose socio-economic status and level of education was relatively high.⁴ He also examined the relationships between officers and the ordinary soldiers to explain the 2nd New Zealand Division's distinctiveness within the army. However, although he formed some sound conclusions regarding the composition of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force and of the experience of the average soldier during the war, his work on the officer corps was limited. New Zealand military historians such as Christopher Pugsley⁵ and Glyn Harper⁶ agree that McLeod's work is valuable as the first attempt to analyse the officer corps. However, they also believe that further in-depth study is required to gain a greater understanding of leadership within the New Zealand military forces.

³ John McLeod, *Myth and Reality: The New Zealand Soldier in World War Two* (Auckland, 1986)

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 156-159

⁵ Christopher Pugsley, Interview with author, 16 March 2009

⁶ Glyn Harper, 'A New Zealand Way of War and a New Zealand Style of Command?' in *Born to Lead? Portraits of New Zealand Commanders*, eds. Glyn Harper & Joel Hayward (Auckland, 2003), pp. 27-38

In 2003 Glyn Harper and Joel Hayward published their book *Born to Lead? Portraits of New Zealand Commanders*.⁷ This was a collection of biographical essays of a small selection of senior New Zealand officers that focussed on commanders from divisional down to battalion level, rather than a study of the officer corps at all levels. In recent times there has been a myriad of books published⁸ regarding the experiences of officers during both conflicts but these tend to be based on diaries and letters of individuals, therefore biographical or autobiographical, rather than a study of the corps as a whole.

The intention of this thesis is to provide a substantial study of combat officers within the two expeditionary forces to fill the gap in the current historiography. This proved to be the most formative and active period for New Zealand military forces, when the Kiwis carved out a reputation as hardy and effective fighters. This work concentrates not only on the commanders who directed the combat regiments and battalions, but also the platoon, company, troop, squadron and battery officers who physically led the rank and file in battle, and who were, arguably more instrumental than senior officers in forging the citizen-soldiers of the New Zealand forces into elite combat formations. It particularly focuses on their recruitment, training and experiences as a way of redressing the little attention they have received from historians.

This thesis builds on McLeod's work by testing his conclusions through analysis of comprehensive data sets covering topics not previously examined, such as religion, marital status and promotion within the various elements of the army. The thesis is more expansive in that it considers both the First and Second World Wars. It identifies differences and trends regarding recruiting, formation, training, relations with other ranks, experiences and overall performance. It particularly focuses on the recruitment, training and experiences of junior officers, who provided most of the front line leadership.

The thesis also identifies characteristics of the style of leadership that New Zealanders preferred or responded well to. This was done by analyzing the recorded experiences and opinions of both officers and enlisted men in an attempt to attain a

⁷ Glyn Harper & Joel Hayward (eds.), *Born to Lead? Portraits of New Zealand Commanders* (Auckland, 2003)

⁸ Glyn Harper, *Kippenberger: An Inspired Commander New Zealand Commander*, Paperback edition (Auckland, 2005); Jock Vennell, *The Forgotten General: New Zealand's World War 1 Commander Major-General Sir Andrew Russell* (Auckland, 2011), John Crawford (ed.), *The Devil's Own War: The First World War Diary of Brigadier-General Herbert Hart* (Auckland, 2008)

balanced conclusion, while also comparing the New Zealand experience to those of Australia, Canada and of Britain. These nations all appear to have followed the same training practices of the British Army. However, there were some unique features of the New Zealand expeditionary forces that determined the relationships between officers and enlisted men that fed into their combat performance. These national characteristics both hindered and assisted the performance of officers and the military forces. It is only through this comparison with other similar armies that a better understanding can be gained concerning the performance in leadership and level of professionalism of the New Zealand officers on the international stage.

It is very important to cover various periods of the two wars. The data from personnel records and Embarkation Rolls shed light on the background of the individual officers and give some indication as to the recruiting of officer candidates from the civilian population. Education can be assumed to be an important factor in officer selection. But there is also the question of whether vacancies in the commissioned ranks, as the wars progressed, were made up largely from NCOs, breaking down whatever social exclusiveness the officer corps possessed. Did leadership skills and battle experience come to count for more? This is examined in Chapter 2 which relates to officer selection and promotion.

It is also important to point out that the term ‘officer corps’ in relation to the New Zealand military forces differs from the definition used by other armies at the time. Sandy Thomas rightly stated that New Zealand never had an officer corps comparable to those in large professional armies, such as the German Army.⁹ He argued that in his knowledge and experience, German officers owed their honour and duty first to the professional officer corps to which they belonged, rather than to the regiment they served in.¹⁰ In his opinion German officers considered themselves ‘like gods’, and had an air of superiority that ensured a degree a separation from their troops.¹¹ Thomas states this was not the case with New Zealand officers, whose loyalty was always to the battalion or regiment in which they served.¹² This attitude is in keeping with British Army tradition.¹³ But close civilian relationships between the officers and men should

⁹ W.B. ‘Sandy’ Thomas, Interview, 6 June 2010

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ G.D. Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches: Officer-man Relations, Morale and Discipline in the British Army in the era of the First World War* (London, 2000), pp. 130-132

be expected in armies formed from citizen-soldiers. The question is whether such relationships were more intense in New Zealand forces than in the British Army. This issue is addressed in the chapters which concern battalion officers and their relationships with their men.

The standards of what determined a good officer changed from the beginning of the Great War in 1914 to the end of the Second World War in 1945. As in Edwardian Britain and throughout the Empire, initially officers in the New Zealand Staff Corps and Territorial Force were expected to be well-educated gentlemen who lived by traditional codes of social and moral conduct.¹⁴ A sense of personal and collective social-class duty to the King and Empire, fostered by stories of imperial heroic martial exploits, saw the New Zealand officer corps at the beginning of World War One consist of middle-class men who saw duty, stoicism and bravery as the mark of a quality officer.¹⁵

The rigours of modern mechanised warfare proved that such notable qualities were not enough to make a competent and effective officer. A more professional approach to leadership was required. Simon Robbins summed the situation facing the British and Empire forces at the beginning of the Great War:

[The] Army was to a great extent an amateur facing a professional army, and those in command, in fact in all ranks from general to lance-corporal, had to train their men and fight at the same time. But by 1917-1918 all ranks, including generals had learned to compete on equal terms.¹⁶

The performance of combat officers in the two New Zealand expeditionary forces can be measured by their style of leadership and ability to command and inspire their men. The principles of effective leadership were universal and traditional traits remained; a bearing of competence and self-confidence, moral and physical courage, decisiveness and initiative, dependability and endurance, responsibility for actions and decisions, while remaining loyal to fellow officers and subordinates.¹⁷ But modern warfare meant combat officers now also had to be technically and tactically

¹⁴ Christopher Moore-Beck, *Playing the Game: The British Junior Infantry Officer on the Western Front 1914-18* (Solihull, West Midlands, 2011), pp. 206-208

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Simon Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914-1918: Defeat into Victory* (Oxford & New York, 2005), p. 18

¹⁷ Robert A Fitton (ed.), *Leadership: Quotations from the Military Tradition* (Oxford & Boulder, Colorado, 1990), pp. 325-332

knowledgeable to achieve success with minimal casualties. Such leadership qualities were essential in establishing an *esprit de corps* within formations at every level of command.¹⁸ It is recognised that to achieve this constant training was essential. Besides focusing on improving the technical skills of themselves and their men, just as essential was the fostering of a team culture within the units they level, whatever level of command; especially during the Second World War, where small units often became isolated and left to their own devices due to the mobile nature of some campaigns. Good officers needed to lead by example in maintaining high standards in their own performance, to continually show care for the welfare of their troops, and to share the dangers and hardships of their soldiers.¹⁹ The analysis of the training and leadership of New Zealand officers is examined in chapters 3 to 8.

It is the intention of this thesis to answer a number of key questions relating to the combat officers of the Dominion's expeditionary forces during the two major conflicts of the twentieth century:

1. What provisions made for officer selection, training and promotion within the two expeditionary forces, under what influences, and with what results?
2. Were these regimes and experiences unique to New Zealand officers in comparison to those of other British imperial forces?
3. What differences, if any, were there regarding the above between the two New Zealand expeditionary forces, and how did they come about?
4. How did officer-men relations within the expeditionary forces affect the combat effectiveness of the divisions; and were there any differences between the two New Zealand forces and those of other allied Dominions?
5. How did the different leadership styles of the officers of combat units affect the overall performance of the formations they were fighting in?

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Ultimately, what this thesis attempts to provide is a holistic study of the officers who physically led and directed the troops of the front line fighting units of the New Zealand expeditionary forces during the First and Second World Wars. It identifies the strengths and weaknesses within the officer corps at battalion and regimental level and provides an analysis as to why these occurred. It is important to move away from a too idealistic view of New Zealand soldiery. What this study seeks to identify are characteristics and a style of command and leadership that New Zealanders responded well to or preferred from their officers. It is intended that this study will build on the work of other historians by providing an original contribution to New Zealand military history through a wider and more in-depth examination of the officers who led the combat units of the Dominion's expeditionary forces.. Until now, apart from several celebrated individuals such as Charles Upham, Sandy Thomas and Moananui Ngarimu, the experiences of such officers as an identifiable group have remained untold.

Chapter 1

Literature, Methodology and Sources

Since the 1980s there has been a growing awareness within the New Zealand public of the sacrifices made by young Kiwis in going to war for their country, especially in regard to the First and Second World Wars. This has led to an increase of publications on New Zealand's military history, including books recounting personal experiences that add a more human touch that express the ordeals of war that individuals faced. Such literature ranges from official unit histories, monographs of various campaigns and wars, biographies and autobiographies of prominent officers, as well as publications of wartime photographic collections and maps. These have generally made up a corpus of conventional military history in focusing on either individual soldiers, especially generals and heroes, or specific campaigns or battles.

In contrast, this work has taken a fresh approach by identifying and analysing a specific, but sizable, element within the New Zealand expeditionary forces to gain a greater understanding of the human aspect in the make-up of leadership within these civilian-soldier forces. In doing so, this work provides a significant contribution to New Zealand's 'army and society' history; an aspect of New Zealand's military history that has seen little development until now. This is the first comprehensive study of the junior officers who played such a crucial role in leading their fellow citizen-soldiers into combat and by studying them we can also gain a greater understanding of the society from which they came. To analyse the culture, efficiency, command and leadership of the combat officers of the New Zealand Army expeditionary forces that served overseas during the two conflicts it was essential to have an in-depth knowledge of the New Zealand military forces and an understanding of their experiences in the campaigns in which they fought. To achieve this it was necessary to become fully immersed in the ever-increasing primary and secondary literature relating to this country's military history.

Initially, my reading for this study was focused on two prominent New Zealand military historians, Glyn Harper and Christopher Pugsley, both of whom had been serving army officers. Their major works, which generally follow the old directions in military history, provided a thorough overview of the New Zealand military forces during the two main conflicts. Harper's work included: *Dark Journey: Three Key New Zealand Battles of the Western Front*,²⁰ *Born to Lead?: Portraits of New Zealand Commanders* (edited with Joel Hayward),²¹ *Kippenberger: An Inspired New Zealand Commander*,²² *Spring Offensive: New Zealand and the Second Battle of the Somme*,²³ and *Images of War: World War One - A Photographic Record of New Zealanders at War 1914-1918*.²⁴ Pugsley's publications included: *Gallipoli: The New Zealand Story*,²⁵ *Anzac: The New Zealanders at Gallipoli*,²⁶ *The Anzac Experience: New Zealand, Australia and Empire in the First World War*,²⁷ and *Scars on the Heart: Two Centuries of New Zealand at War*.²⁸ These historians focused on providing accounts of military actions, operations and campaigns, but provided more searching expositions than what the official histories of the First and Second World Wars offered. Associated with this focus on military operations is an interest in generalship, and therefore military biographies. John McLeod, a serving officer at the time of his writing, took a different stance with his book, *Myth and Reality: The New Zealand Soldier in World War II*.²⁹ McLeod's work challenged the perceptions of the New Zealanders fighting in the expeditionary force during the Second World War, especially in relation to them being natural soldiers and leaders. McLeod's work, along with several chapters in Harper's and Hayward's *Born to Lead?* come the closest to dealing with the officers who physically led their troops into battle.

Through their works, both Pugsley and Harper have made major contributions to New Zealand military history, albeit mostly concentrating on generalship and

²⁰ Glyn Harper, *Dark Journey: Three key New Zealand battles of the Western Front* (Auckland, 2007)

²¹ Glyn Harper & Joel Hayward (eds.), *Born To Lead? Portraits of New Zealand Commanders* (Auckland, 2003)

²² Glyn Harper, *Kippenberger: An Inspired New Zealand Commander*, paperback ed. (Auckland, 2005)

²³ Glyn Harper, *Spring Offensive: New Zealand and the second battle of the Somme* (Auckland, 2003)

²⁴ Glyn Harper (ed.), *Images of War: World War One - A photographic record of New Zealanders at War 1914-1918* (Auckland, 2008)

²⁵ Christopher Pugsley, *Gallipoli: The New Zealand Story*, 2nd. ed. (Auckland, 1990)

²⁶ Christopher Pugsley, *Anzac: The New Zealanders at Gallipoli* (Auckland, 1995)

²⁷ Christopher Pugsley, *The Anzac Experience: New Zealand, Australia and Empire in the First World War* (Auckland, 2004)

²⁸ Christopher Pugsley (ed.), *Scars on the Heart: Two Centuries of New Zealand at War* (Auckland, 1996)

²⁹ John McLeod, *Myth and Reality: The New Zealand soldier in World War II* (Auckland, 1986)

military campaigns and operations. They have challenged the limited historiography, primarily based on official war histories that developed after the two conflicts and have provided the public with a greater understanding of the New Zealand military experience in the two world wars. Pugsley was the first historian to identify Colonel William Malone as a competent battalion commander whose inspired leadership led to the Wellington Infantry Battalion capturing the strategic height of Chunuk Bair at Gallipoli in August 1915. Prior to Pugsley publishing his research, Malone had been blamed by his superior officers for the loss of the position, even though he died defending it. Harper has followed Pugsley in concentrating on researching the New Zealand experience of the Great War, although he holds a more critical view of Major-General Andrew Russell, the commander of the New Zealand Division on the Western Front, than Pugsley. Russell and Malone had remained relatively unknown by the current generations of New Zealanders until Pugsley and Harper published their work.

Another respected New Zealand military author, John Crawford, provided an insight into the experiences of a Kiwi officer in the Great War with *The Devil's Own War: The First World War Diary of Brigadier General Herbert Hart*,³⁰ which he had edited. Crawford, with Ian McGibbon, produced *New Zealand's Great War: New Zealand, the Allies and the First World War*,³¹ which provided a readable overview of the Dominion's military participation in the conflict. The Maori experience was presented by reading Wira Gardiner's *Te Mura O Te Ahi: The Story of the Maori Battalion*,³² Chris Pugsley's *Te Hokowhitu A Tu: The Maori Pioneer Battalion in the First World War*,³³ and Monty Soutar's *Nga Tama Toa: The Price of Citizenship – C Company 28 (Maori) Battalion, 1939-1945*.³⁴

This thesis expands on the study of New Zealand's senior military commanders by Glyn Harper and Joel Hayward. In their book *Born to Lead? Portraits of New Zealander Commanders*, they not only furnished a collection of biographical essays of the most prominent senior officers of the New Zealand Army in the twentieth century, but they also examined the question as to whether there was a distinctive New Zealand

³⁰ John Crawford, *The Devil's Own War: The First World War Diary of Brigadier-General Herbert Hart* (Auckland, 2008)

³¹ John Crawford & Ian McGibbon (eds.), *New Zealand's Great War: New Zealand, the Allies, and the First World War* (Auckland, 2007)

³² Wira Gardiner, *Te Mura O Te Ahi: The Story of the Maori Battalion* (Auckland, 1992)

³³ Christopher Pugsley, *Te Hokowhitu A Tu: The Maori Pioneer Battalion in the First World War* (Auckland, 1995)

³⁴ Monty Soutar, *Nga Tama Toa: The Price of Citizenship – C Company 28 (Maori) Battalion, 1939-1945* (Auckland, 2008)

style of command. By comparing the New Zealanders forces to those of Britain, the United States and Australia, they concluded that New Zealand has an informal style of command that favours a practical approach while avoiding ceremony where possible. This thesis provides evidence to support their argument, but it does so by focusing on the battalion and regimental officers of combat units who physically led their troops through the cauldron of battle and who shared the experiences of defeat and victory with them, including the physical and emotional effects of such ordeals.

Methodology – Creating Sample Lists

To gain a greater understanding of the type of person considered most suitable to be commissioned as an officer an examination of the officer personnel records at Defence Force Archives, Trentham was essential. Ultimately, this proved very fruitful. However, there were some difficulties in this process as there is only a limited amount of available surviving primary source material. Fortunately copies of New Zealand Army Officer Gradation lists were able to be obtained from the Defence Force Library in Wellington. However, in regard to the Second World War, these lists were only available for 1940, 1943, 1944 and 1945. Some of these lists were incomplete and later comparison with Embarkation Rolls revealed a number of names had been incorrectly recorded.

Insufficient identification on Gradation Lists also created further problems. To create a sample list for New Zealand Defence Force Archives, full names and serial numbers were required to ensure proper identification of individual officers. This information was not provided on the Gradation Lists. However, this issue was rectified by examining Embarkation Rolls that are held on microfiche in the Macmillan Brown Library at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch. The originals are held at the New Zealand Defence Force Library, Wellington.

Restricted access to the NZDF Archives created further difficulties. Due to the number of researchers wanting access to the Archives and to the demands on staff assisting in accessing personnel files, access is usually limited to one researcher at the unit at one time. This ensured that access could not be gained to the unit until late April 2009 due to the large sample of 350 files required, which required a significant number of hours for staff to retrieve, and the waiting list of researchers. The lack of consistency

in the presentation and information provided in the annual Gradation Lists also led to some confusion when attempting to identify specific units within the Expeditionary Force.

From the available official Gradation Lists from the Defence Force Library, Wellington, officer lists were created for 1940, 1943 (3rd NZ Division in the Pacific) and 1945. These years were chosen to help identify trends or differences for each period of the war, from the creation of the Expeditionary Force in September 1939, the height of mobilization in 1943, through to the return of the majority of the troops in late 1945 after the war had ended. The list selection process varied and was determined by what information was available. List selection for 1940 was done by selecting five 2nd lieutenants and five 1st lieutenants from each of the 11 infantry battalions, along with 5 lieutenants from the artillery, Divisional Cavalry, Engineers and Signals. Most of the infantry battalions were recruited on a regional basis where the majority of the recruits were already enlisted in Territorial regiments. The 18th, 21st and 24th battalions were recruited from the Northern region of Auckland, North Auckland, Waikato and Bay of Plenty. The 19th, 22nd and 25th Battalions were from the central region of Wellington, Taranaki, Manawatu, Hawke's Bay and the Wairarapa. The 20th, 23rd and 26th battalions were recruited from the Southern region which included the whole of the South Island. The 27th (Machine Gun) battalion comprised specially trained machine gunners who were recruited from throughout the country. The 28th (Maori) battalion was recruited on a tribal basis, with each company of over 100 men representing tribal regions. The battalion A company was recruited amongst Nga Puhi of North Auckland, while B Company was predominantly from Te Arawa of Rotorua, with C Company recruited from Ngati Porou from the East Coast.³⁵

By sampling from each infantry battalion in 1940 a comprehensive snap shot of the junior officers and platoon commanders within each front line infantry unit of the newly raised battalions was obtained. This was done in an effort to identify any differences or trends in the officer selection process, and specifically whether there was any obvious bias toward certain social groups within the local communities and varying provinces. The results are analysed in chapter 2 concerning officer selection and promotion.

³⁵ Gardiner, p. 30

Gaining accurate data for the mid-war years proved more difficult. The 1943 Gradation List was incomplete as it did not have the lists for the 2nd NZ Division infantry units based in the Mediterranean which made up the bulk of the New Zealand military forces serving overseas. However, it did provide a comprehensive list of the officers serving in the short-lived 3rd NZ Division in the Pacific theatre. The significance of this is that almost all junior officers from this formation who later served with the 2nd NZ Division were required to revert to NCO rank before being considered suitable for promotion in the Mediterranean.³⁶

The third sample was taken from the 1945 Gradation list which differed again from the way the previous Gradation lists had been recorded. This list referred solely to officers serving with the New Zealand Division in the Mediterranean. Officers were listed by what region their unit was from instead of being listed with individual battalions. This saw officers serving in the 18th Armoured Regiment, and the 21st and 24th infantry battalions being placed on the Northern Region list, those from the 19th Armoured Regiment, and the 22nd and 25th infantry battalions were recorded on the Central Region list, while officers from the 20th, 23rd and 26th infantry battalions were grouped together on the Southern Region list.

There were a number of issues that had to be addressed when creating the Second World War samples. The first significant problem to be faced was that most of the gradation lists held by the New Zealand Defence Force Library were incomplete, even though the library had all the known available gradation lists. This then limited what years could be examined. These returns provided only limited personal details of officers, such as surname, initials, rank, and the unit the officer belonged to. The gradation lists only recorded officers on strength at one given time and did not include enlisted men. These lists were an obvious starting point but other primary sources needed to be found to find essential data.

The official Embarkation Rolls of troops leaving New Zealand to serve in the Expeditionary Force provided such detail. Fortunately, the Macmillan Brown Library has a complete list of Embarkation Rolls for World War 2. The Embarkation Rolls are a complete list of every member of the New Zealand Army who left New Zealand to serve overseas during the war. It took several weeks of laborious work going through every list to obtain the full name of individual officers on the lists created from the

³⁶ W.B. 'Sandy' Thomas, Interview, 6 June 2010

Gradation lists. Although the data was easily obtained from the early rolls, due to officers from the Main Body being commissioned in New Zealand prior to embarkation, this proved more difficult for the 1945 sample list. Most of those officers had been commissioned overseas and had embarked from New Zealand as either privates or non-commissioned officers. This then required a significant amount of cross-referencing between the Gradation lists and Embarkation Rolls to ensure correct personal details were obtained for each individual officer selected. The Embarkation Rolls proved fruitful in that they also provided personal details such as the individual's serial number, previous occupation, marital status, place of enlistment, and details of their next-of-kin.

In late April 2009 research was conducted at the New Zealand Defence Force Archives, Trentham near Wellington which saw the examination of officer personnel paper files. The original sample list that was provided to the Defence Force archivists was of 350 individuals. My supervisors advised that a sample of 300 officers was needed to provide a sufficient amount of raw data for analysis, but a sample list of 350 was provided in case some files were incomplete. However, given the time restrictions and size of some of the files this proved somewhat ambitious. Fortunately, thanks to the help from several of the archivists who allowed extra time which exceeded the hours available to researchers, a total of 325 individual files were able to be examined.

Methodology of sampling

Details examined for each individual were:

1. Date of Attestation; this is the day that the individual formally enlisted in the army which assisted in determining the individual's length of service.
2. Date of first commission and at what rank; an officer's commission is bestowed by the monarch, with the lowest officer's rank being Second-Lieutenant.
3. Age when commissioned; to determine the range of ages of those sampled to get an accurate indication of the general age of the officer corps as a whole.
4. Date of Birth; to determine the age of the individual when he enlisted.

5. Highest level of education; to help identify any trends regarding levels of education when selecting officer candidates or cadets.
6. Previous military experience; to help determine if previous service assisted in officer selection and the proficiency of the individual.
7. Religion; to help determine whether religious persuasion affected or influenced officer selection.
8. Decorations and awards: i.e., gallantry medals or citations such as 'mentioned in dispatches'; to indicate leadership qualities and bravery of officers.
9. Records of being wounded in action, killed in action, died of wounds or made prisoner of war; to give a general overview of casualties suffered within the officer corps.

These details were determined from the two most important documents of each file; these being the Attestation Paper and the History Record sheet.

The Attestation Paper proved the most important record in that it provided personal details of the officer prior to his enlisting in the army. Details of age, date of birth, place of birth, parents' nationality and place of birth, height, weight, chest measurement, complexion, colour of eyes, hair colour, religion, highest educational qualification, previous occupation, address of next-of-kin, previous military service, marital status and place of enlistment are all recorded on the paper. Collectively the Attestation Papers also proved invaluable in assisting to analyse the demographic makeup of the officer corps during both conflicts. This information helped to expose certain trends, differences, and regional and social bias that may have affected the officer selection process, especially when the expeditionary forces were first being formed in 1914 and 1939. One major aim of this thesis is to make the comparisons between the officer selection process of the two wars to identify similarities and differences that indicate social changes within New Zealand society during these periods, and these documents helped to achieve this.

The History Sheets were also very important in that they provided information regarding the individual's active service during the war. This included where and when

the officer served, any promotions and when, any awards or decorations that the individual had received, any disciplinary actions taken against the individual, transfers to other units or locations, time spent in hospital, any promotion or training course attended, any injuries, wounds in action, whether prisoner of war or dying as a result of wounds or killed in action. Through this information it was possible to identify trends concerning promotion of officers and enlisted soldiers to officer rank, average length of time of promotion to the next level, who was most likely to be promoted, differences within various corps and theatres of operation that could determine further promotion.

It was from the information gained from the Attestation Papers and History sheets that a substantial database was created. Such a database was essential in providing sufficient primary evidence to support the arguments within the thesis. It was also required as an instrument for comparison, first to measure any similarities or differences with data found in the research for this thesis relating to the officer corps of the New Zealand Army in World War One, and second for comparison with the officer corps of other nations within the British Empire during the period.

Obtaining the above data for the officer corps of World War One proved more difficult due to limited access of files. This was mainly due to the majority of paper personnel files relating to those who served in the military forces prior to 1920 being stored with Archives New Zealand in Wellington which was being temporarily reorganised and renovated. This was further complicated by the files of Great War officers who continued to serve in some capacity after 1920, either in the Staff Corps, Territorial Force or Home Guard during the Second World War, being kept at the Defence Force Archives at Trentham. This was not an issue in researching files of high profile officers such as Inglis, Hargest and Kippenberger, but proved excessively time-consuming when attempting to identify junior officers.

Limited access to data at Archives New Zealand also created some difficulties. At the time the initial research was being conducted the Archives building was being refurbished to relocate the Alexander Turnbull Library from the National Library to Archives New Zealand. As a result public access was restricted from 10 am to 5 pm daily. This would pose no problem to a researcher living locally. However, it meant the loss of five hours productive research time per week for a researcher based in Christchurch. Furthermore, unlike the New Zealand Defence Force Archives, there was a restriction on the number of items each researcher could examine. At Archives New Zealand each researcher is limited to receiving only five items at one time. With

archivists only retrieving batches of requested items on an hourly basis, this ensured that only approximately 35 personnel files could be examined each day. This made it impossible to examine the 300 officer personnel files needed to provide a credible comparison sample within the time available. In addition, many of the historical military archives had restricted public access and required authority from the Defence Force to view them. Such applications to view these could take a number of months to be processed and still result in access being denied.

A different approach was needed to obtain the required sample. First, sample lists needed to be compiled for the early, middle and late years of the Great War. This was achieved by obtaining copies of the official New Zealand Expeditionary Force gradation lists from the New Zealand Defence Force Library at Defence House, Wellington. These lists were generally produced twice yearly for the duration of the conflict. However, not all of these had been retained by the Army, although the Defence Force Library had the most complete set. Thankfully, this included the 1914 gradation list for the Main Body, which recorded all of the officers who sailed with the first echelon of the Expeditionary Force in September 1914, as well as those who were part of the small force sent to occupy German Samoa in August of the same year.

This list proved to be the most informative in that it recorded the officers' full names, which previous regular or territorial unit they served in and at what rank, the dates they received that rank, what position or unit they were appointed to in the Expeditionary Force and at what rank. The list also indicated those officers who were serving with the Samoan Advance Party. What also makes this the most important gradation list is that it includes all those officers who were the original leaders of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, and those junior officers who gained promotion to become senior officers. By taking a sample of individuals from this list and examining their personnel files, it was possible to create a database that provided an insight into the characteristics and qualities that were sought when selecting officers.

The lists for other years proved less informative. The only other available lists for the First World War were those for October 1915, November 1916 and October 1918. The information recorded in them was limited to the officer's surname, initials, unit serving with, rank and appointments date to that rank, as well as noting any military decorations that had been awarded. This information proved most important in allowing samples to be taken from each unit to ensure that a cross section of the whole Expeditionary Force could be analysed. This allowed a comparison to be made not only

between various units and corps, but also between the qualities and characteristics of officers in individual units throughout the various stages of the war. Such analysis proved significant, especially in the late war period when the demands of war had led to a shortage of manpower available to replace casualties within the Expeditionary Force.

The limited data available on the gradation lists meant that vital information had to be obtained from other sources. Archives New Zealand had previously been funded for a project to scan and digitise all the military personnel records that they held. Although this funding was later withdrawn, more than 4,000 of the 100,000 files held had been processed and were now available to the public via the Archives New Zealand website. This ensured that more than 300 officer personnel files could be viewed via the internet to extract vital information for comparison with officers from the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force in the Second World War. The only way to establish a sizable sample was to view laboriously every digitised entry to establish those who had held an officer's commission. Unfortunately, it became clear that many files had important documents, such as Attestation and History papers, that were missing or incomplete. It was also apparent that information recorded on the Attestation papers for the Great War varied from those of the Second World War. An example of this included the question regarding the level of education that only required the soldier to record whether he had achieved proficiency level at school. This was in comparison to the Attestation papers for the later conflict that asked individuals to record their highest level of education achieved.

Another on-line research source was used to gather the required data. The Cenotaph database of the Auckland War Memorial Museum, which is available via the museum website, has been established to record information for all New Zealand armed service personnel who have served overseas and is intended to cover every conflict New Zealand forces have been involved in.³⁷ However, to date, only the records for World War One servicemen and women are complete. At this time the database includes over 112,000 individuals who served during the Great War, along with a select number of those who served in the Second World War and the Korean conflict, especially those

³⁷ Auckland War Memorial Museum - Cenotaph Database: www.aucklandmuseum.com/130/cenotaph-database

who were killed or died of wounds. The data base has been put together by sourcing information from official records, such as Embarkation Rolls, Gradation Lists and the library manuscript collection, as well as from biographical information provided by family members. It is intended that the database will become a permanent record that provides extensive personal details about the lives and military careers of every New Zealander who served in the conflicts of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Another invaluable primary source was obtained on the advice of Dr. Chris Pugsley, who as an adjunct in History at the University of Canterbury, kindly agreed to be an associate advisor for this project. Lieutenant-Colonel John Studholme, CBE, DSO published *Some Records of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force: Unofficial, but compiled from official records* in 1928, which Pugsley describes as his ‘bible’.³⁸ On his recommendation a copy of this scarce and valuable publication was purchased through a militaria dealer at some cost. Importantly, the book provides a complete list of all New Zealand officers, nurses and warrant officers who served in the Expeditionary Force in the Great War. Still more importantly it records their units, highest rank and date promoted, date and rank when first commissioned, awards and honours received, date when struck off strength, as well as recording whether suffering any wounds or death. The book also records dates of attestation of enlisted men who later were commissioned as officers. This helped to determine a general trend about the length of time it took for enlisted men with leadership qualities to gain commissions. The book also proved its worth in providing a cross reference to details obtained from the Gradation Lists and Embarkation Rolls for the First World War.

By combining the information obtained from the Cenotaph database with that taken from the Embarkation Rolls held on microfiche at the Macmillan Brown Library, a sizable database for New Zealand Army officers for World War One was established. Information relating to an individual’s full name, previous occupation, serial number, next of kin details, rank at embarkation, regiment or unit, place of embarkation, vessel travelled on, destination, nominal roll numbers, decorations or awards, previous military service and marital status was ascertained. Although some records remained incomplete due to inconsistencies in recording, it was also possible to establish the age of certain servicemen and whether they had become casualties during the conflict. In

³⁸ John Studholme (compiled by), *Some Records of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force: Record of Personal Services during the War of Officers, Nurses, and First-Class Warrant Officers; And Other Facts Relating to the N.Z.E.F. – Unofficial But Based on official Records* (Wellington, 1928)

effect, because of the inconsistencies in the recording of official information during the two conflicts two data bases had to be created for the officer corps of World War One to provide sufficient data for comparison with the database created for World War Two.

In an unusual twist of fate some vital primary source data was obtained through a chance meeting while returning from the excursion to Waiouru. Emeritus Professor Ewen McCann, who had previously been Head of the School of Economics at the University of Canterbury, was on the flight and through conversation he offered some primary material that he thought might be relevant to this study. Subsequently, he posted his original copy of a small booklet, *Southland Soldiers and their Next of Kin Roll of Honour* compiled by Robert Troup in 1920. What made this so significant is that it provided a sample of a specific recruiting region that recorded all those men who had served in the Great War from Southland and included such details as their full names, rank, unit and their next of kin details. Through analysis of this material significant evidence was obtained to show the unique characteristics of the close relationships between the officers and enlisted men of the Dominion's 'citizen' army. This will be elaborated on further in other chapters but suffice to say that this sample provided evidence that soldiers recruited into region-based battalions and regiments were led by officers they had close relationships with in civilian life. This invites a question as to whether this had positive or negative effects on the efficiency of the units on campaign, which is also addressed in a later chapter.

Sources

The primary literature provided the greatest insight into the experiences of officers in the New Zealand expeditionary forces. One of the most outstanding examples was the memoirs of Major-General Sir Howard Kippenberger, *Infantry Brigadier*.³⁹ This covered his service in the Second World War, from when he was first appointed to command a battalion in September 1939 through until he was seriously wounded while commanding the 2nd New Zealand Division at Cassino in Italy in March 1944. Other memoirs from the Second World War that provide similar important insights included Major-General W.B. 'Sandy' Thomas's two volumes, *Dare to be*

³⁹ Major-General Sir Howard Kippenberger, *Infantry Brigadier* (London, 1949)

*Free*⁴⁰ and *Pathways to Adventure* (edited by Denis McLean),⁴¹ along with Lieutenant-Colonel Haddon Donald's recent autobiography, *In Peace & War – A Civilian Soldier's Story*,⁴² written when he was 88, Brigadier-General Jim Burrow's *Pathway Among Men*,⁴³ Brigadier George Clifton's *The Happy Haunted*,⁴⁴ and Lieutenant-Colonel Arapeta Awatere's *Awatere: A Soldier's Story*.⁴⁵ It was only after reading the above works, along with published First World War memoirs and collections of letters, such as Alexander Aitken's *Gallipoli to the Somme: Recollections of a New Zealand Infantryman*,⁴⁶ Lieutenant-Colonel Claude Weston's *Three Years with the New Zealander's*,⁴⁷ R.A. Wilson's *A Two Years Interlude, France 1916-1918*,⁴⁸ the collection of published letters of Lieutenant Harold Bell, *Your Soldier Boy: The Letters of Harold Bell, 1915-1918*,⁴⁹ Cecil Malthus's *Armentieres and the Somme*,⁵⁰ *The Diaries of Ernest George Moncrief MC, 1914-1919*,⁵¹ and E.P.F Lynch's *Somme Mud*,⁵² which provides an Australian perspective of service on the Western Front, that a sufficient grasp of the historiography of the thesis topic could be gained to ensure the path of the necessary research.

Other primary sources were used to obtain a wealth of relevant information. The *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives* provided the annual official reports of the General Officer Commanding the New Zealand Military Forces. These reports included information regarding the nominal strength of the Staff Corps, Permanent Staff, Territorial Force and School Cadets for each year, as well as staff appointments, promotions and appointments of officers and officer cadets to military colleges in Australia, Britain and India. The reports also include information relating to issues concerning recruitment and training of officers and other ranks for the period covered. Of significance, these reports record military expenditure and budgets that

⁴⁰ W.B. 'Sandy' Thomas, *Dare to be Free*, paperback ed. (Hororata, 2001)

⁴¹ W.B. 'Sandy' Thomas, *Pathways to Adventure*, compiled by Denis Mclean (Hororata, 2004)

⁴² Haddon Donald, *In Peace & War: A Civilian Soldier's Story* (Masterton, 2005)

⁴³ J.T. Burrows, *Pathway Among Men* (Christchurch, 1974)

⁴⁴ George Clifton, *The Happy Hunted* (London, Cassell & Co, 1952)

⁴⁵ Arapeta Awatere, *Awatere: A Soldier's Story*, ed. Hinemoa Ruataupare Awatere (Wellington, 2003)

⁴⁶ Alexander Aitken, *Gallipoli to the Somme: Recollections of a New Zealand Infantryman* (London, 1963)

⁴⁷ C.H. Weston, *Three Years with the New Zealanders* (London, Skeffington & Son, n.d.)

⁴⁸ Major R.A. Wilson, *A Two Years Interlude: France, 1916-1918* (Palmerston North, n.d.)

⁴⁹ Michael Burton (ed), *Your Soldier Boy: The Letters of Harold Bell 1915 to 1918* (Bath, 1995)

⁵⁰ Cecil Malthus, *Armentieres and the Somme* (Auckland, 2002)

⁵¹ Margorie Spittle (ed.), *The Diaries of Ernest George Moncrief MC, 1914 – 1919* (Dunedin, 2010)

⁵² E.P.F Lynch, *Somme Mud: The war experiences of an Australian infantryman in France, 1916-1919*, ed. Will Davies, paperback edition (Sydney, 2008)

fluctuate depending of the financial situation of the national government at the time. This proved to be important in that the reduced budget for the military during the period between the two World Wars reflected on the training available to those who were to become leaders within the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in the Second World War.

The Alexander Turnbull Library, which was situated at the National Library at the time initial research for this thesis was being conducted, but temporarily relocated at Archives New Zealand, Wellington, held a wealth of primary material relevant to this thesis. This mainly comprised of contemporary manuscripts, diaries, journals, letters, postcards and photographs written and taken by individuals who were, or who had, served in the New Zealand Expeditionary forces during both main conflicts. Also included were documents written by government officials relating to the New Zealand military forces during the first half of the twentieth century. Such material proved significant in that it ranged from official complaints made by serving Brigadier-Generals to General Freyberg during World War Two, such as that of Brigadier A. E. Conway in December 1944⁵³, to diaries sent home to relatives by lowly ranked privates, such as that written by Alfred Cameron who was a trumpeter in the Canterbury Mounted Rifles and who had embarked for overseas service in World War One with the Main Body in September 1914.⁵⁴

What makes such documents important is that they provide an insight into the range of experiences these individuals had and provides the reader with a greater understanding of what New Zealand soldiers were exposed to through military service overseas. Archives such as the Alexander Turnbull Library are achieving greater importance in New Zealand history in the twenty-first century as they are securing permanent records of those servicemen and women from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who have since died. A significant example of this, which is of major importance to this thesis, is the set of diaries belonging to Lieutenant-Colonel William Malone that are held in the Library. With the increasing celebration of New Zealand nationalism through military experience, Malone has become recognised as a hero of the fateful Gallipoli campaign of 1915 and his leadership qualities, determination and professionalism became obvious when reading his diary entries.⁵⁵

⁵³ Brig.-Gen. A. E. Conway, Letter to Freyberg, 11 December 1944, MS Papers 616, ATL

⁵⁴ Alfred L. Cameron, Diary, MSX-2853, ATL

⁵⁵ W.G. Malone, Diaries and Letters, MSX- 2541 to 2546, ATL

The Alexander Turnbull Library also has a large photographic collection that includes a vast range of images of New Zealand military personnel serving overseas during the two world wars. These can be viewed on-line via the library website and many well-known images have been published in secondary sources. Such images were important to this thesis in that they provided visual evidence of the terrain and climates that the New Zealanders campaigned in. Although Kiwi soldiers were forbidden to take cameras to war, most of the images in the collection were taken by individuals who had secreted cameras in their kit bags when embarking from New Zealand or had purchased one, or traded to get one, while on active service. What makes these images so valuable is that they portray the real experiences of the officers and troops, good and bad, compared to the sometimes sanitised photographs taken by official army photographers that were provided to the media during and after the conflicts.

Any serious student of New Zealand military history could not claim to have exhausted their search for primary source material without a visit to the Kippenberger Military Archive and Research Library based at the newly named National Army Museum, Waiouru. Though woefully understaffed due to the constant financial constraints placed on the New Zealand Defence Force budget, this establishment should be regarded as a national treasure in that it not only houses an ever-increasing archive of diaries, letters, journals, postcards, written and oral interviews of veterans, but also arguably contains the largest and most comprehensive military library in the country.

The relative isolation of Waiouru and the distance from Christchurch ensured that several logistical issues had to be overcome before travelling to the museum. Firstly, contact was made with the sole archivist, Dolores Ho, who is responsible for the collation of material donated to the archive by veterans and their families. Unfortunately, Dolores is the only person in the establishment who has the knowledge of where items are stored in the archive, including material which is kept off site and must be manually collected by her. As retrieving requested items is so time-consuming, especially when she is dealing with numerous researchers at one time, it was imperative that contact was made directly with her more than a month in advance of any visit to conduct research. Having a sole archivist posed other issues when researching; the demand for searching for requested material has led to a restriction of only two researchers at one time being admitted to the archives. This measure has been necessary to ensure the quality of service is maintained. This means that dates for researching at the archives must be confirmed well in advance to ensure the availability of the

archivist. Further, as there are no others in the establishment who can fill the archivist role, researchers are prevented from having access to material when the archivist is on leave. Such an occurrence happened when conducting research for this thesis when the archivist was on sick leave for a day. This proved an inconvenience in that it restricted the amount of material that could be accessed. This was particularly disappointing considering the limited time available for this research trip, the isolated location and the extra cost in possibly having to return to Waiouru to complete the work. Officially the archive is only available to researchers between 10 am and 4 pm, Monday to Friday. However, thanks to the kindness of the archivist who had taken into account the distance travelled to complete this research, on this occasion she generously extended the hours from 9 am to 4.30 pm, thus allowing for more items to be examined.

The visit to KMARL was somewhat of a 'fishing expedition' due to the large amount of material available. Early contact with the archivist proved crucial in that it ensured that the most relevant material could be determined. An initial phone call, followed by a series of emails confirming the focus of the thesis ensured that a comprehensive list of primary sources was available for examination. These were predominantly diaries, post cards and letters of officers and enlisted men who had served in the New Zealand expeditionary forces during both world wars. These proved fruitful in providing an insight into individual experiences and attitudes of serving soldiers, especially in regard to relationships between senior and junior officers, as well as how the other ranks perceived commissioned officers. When taken as a whole, such information can identify and help to explain certain trends that became obvious while collating research material.

The most significant material examined was a collection of officer training manuals that had not been found elsewhere. It was obvious that these items had not been viewed by other researchers in recent times as they had been stored off-site and it had taken the archivist some time to locate them. The finding of these manuals proved crucial to this thesis in that they provided detailed information on every duty required of company grade officers on active service and in the training and supervision of the men under their command. What became obvious after reading these manuals is how important they must have been in assisting young junior officers to become proficient in their roles, especially the majority who had previously been civilians who had either volunteered or been conscripted into the army. Small enough to fit into a tunic pocket, these manuals provided an *aide-memoir* that could be carried around by the officer and

easily referred to as required. From the number held in the archive it would appear that such booklets were in common use by New Zealand army officers during both world wars, with many manuals distributed in the Great War being reprinted and issued in the Second World War. An example of such manuals included *The Officer and Fighting Efficiency* which had been published by the War Office in London and reprinted in New Zealand under authority of the Chief of General Staff, New Zealand Military Forces in 1941.⁵⁶ This particular example was typical of the majority of manuals examined and included chapters on dealing with the welfare and training of the men, the importance of creating *Esprit de Corps* within units, promoting a fighting spirit and effective leadership, self-test of knowledge, and administrative efficiency, which included how to perform an inspection of the troops and points to which a troop or platoon commander should pay attention before, during and after a move. The final chapter covered the army as a fighting instrument, emphasizing to officers that ‘example is everything’ and that an effective officer will become a hero to their men, resulting in success through inspired leadership.⁵⁷ Other such examples included; *Hints to officers on Command, Discipline and Care of the Men*, which had been published in 1916 and which was used by Brigadier A.E. Conway during the Second World War;⁵⁸ *Infantry Training- Company Organisation*;⁵⁹ *Instructions for the Training of Cadets in Officer Cadet Battalions*;⁶⁰ *The Company, Etc., Officer and his Job*;⁶¹ *The Officer’s Field Note and Sketch Book and Reconnaissance Aide-Memoire*;⁶² *Notes on Courts Martial – For the Use of Officers of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force*;⁶³ *A Précis of The King’s Regulations and The Manual of Military Law for Officers*;⁶⁴ *Notes of Trench Warfare for Infantry Officers*;⁶⁵ *The Officer and his Job: Morale and Fighting Efficiency*.⁶⁶ Such publications were obviously abundant during the war years as some manuals were to

⁵⁶ *The Officer and Fighting Efficiency*, (Extracted from Army Training Memoranda) 1940, The War Office 1941, reprinted under authority of HM Stationary Office for Chief, General Staff, NZ Military Force, July 1941

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 46

⁵⁸ *Hints to Officers on Command, Discipline and Care of the Men*, (Melbourne, 1916)

⁵⁹ *Infantry Training- Company Organisation*, (London, 1914)

⁶⁰ *Instructions for the Training of Cadets in Officer Cadet Battalions*, (London, 1917)

⁶¹ *The Company, Etc., Officer and his Job*, (Wellington, 1942)

⁶² *The Officer’s Field Note and Sketch Book and Reconnaissance Aide-Memoire*, (London, 1915)

⁶³ *Notes on Court Martial – For the Use of Officers of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force*, (London-date unknown)

⁶⁴ *A Précis of The King’s Regulations and The Manual of Military Law for Officers*, (Christchurch, Wellington, Dunedin, Auckland, n.d.)

⁶⁵ *Notes on Trench Warfare for Infantry Officers*, (London, 1916)

⁶⁶ *The Officer and his Job: Morale and Fighting Efficiency*, (London, 1940)

be distributed to every officer and officer cadet in the New Zealand Military Forces.⁶⁷ However, they are now scarce and to have gained access to such a large collection proved critical to the explanatory power of this thesis.

Among the secondary material held in the library, the original Kippenberger Collection was of particular interest, which the estate of Major-General Sir Howard Kippenberger had donated to the New Zealand Army. This legacy formed the foundation of the military archive and library. In his book *Kippenberger – An Inspired New Zealand Commander*, Glyn Harper describes Kippenberger as one of the great military commanders of the Second World War who should be added to the short list of great but rare military commanders who could combine extreme professionalism with warm humanity to gain the lasting affection and loyalty of their men.⁶⁸ Harper claims that Kippenberger's command and leadership qualities initially stemmed from his very wide reading on military matters during the 1920s and 1930s and finally honed through active service with the New Zealand Division during World War Two.⁶⁹ Importantly, perusal of his original collection established who and what influenced his military thought and style of command, leading to his inspired leadership. It was clear that Kippenberger was a serious student of military history, including the study of leadership, strategy and tactics from the eclectic collection of volumes of histories of the Napoleonic Wars, the American Civil War, and the Franco-Prussian War, as well as the Great War. He also kept himself informed of the tactics of modern warfare, including those of the enemy, Germany, which was evident by some of the definitive titles in the collection. These included Sir John Fortescue's *The History of the British Army*, Colonel John Dunlop's *The Development of the British Army, 1899-1914*, Marshal Foch's *The Principles of War*, Major-General J.F.C. Fuller's *The Decisive Battles of the Western World*, Liddell Hart's *The Remaking of Modern Armies*, Albert Muller's *Germany's War Machine*, A. Hilliard Atteridge's *The German Army at War* and D.G. Brown's *The Tank in Action*. Although Kippenberger was only a Territorial officer in the inter-war years it is clear that he took that position seriously enough to educate himself through reading the most up to date literature of command that was being taught to regular officers throughout the British Empire. It became clear in conducting this research that Kippenberger was passionate about passing his knowledge

⁶⁷ *The Officer and Fighting Efficiency*, p. i

⁶⁸ Glyn Harper, *Kippenberger- An Inspired New Zealand Commander* (Auckland, 2005), p. 289

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 49-62

on to officers under his command to ensure his troops were moulded into effective fighting formations in the Second World War.

The library also holds the personal collections of other outstanding and influential senior New Zealand commanders from both conflicts. Of particular note is that of Major-General Sir Andrew Russell who commanded the New Zealand Division on the Western Front from 1916 through to the end of the war in November 1918. He had seen service as a regular officer in the British Army in the late nineteenth century before retiring to farm on the family sheep-run in Hawke's Bay. He too had been a Territorial officer before the Great War and was fanatical about training his officers and troops for the rigours of trench warfare. His methods did not endear him to his men but his drive and intolerance of incompetent officers ensured the division earned the reputation of an elite fighting force. An inspection of his collection shows that he had studied the most recent major conflicts that had involved the British Army which included studies of the Boer and Crimean Wars, as well as Fortescue's *History of the British Army*.

Another noted collection is that of Major-General Lindsay Inglis who had been a junior officer during the Great War and a brigade commander during the Second World War who on several occasions had command of the 2nd New Zealand Division in the absence of General Freyberg. His collection included a number of monographs concerning the American Civil War, Liddell Hart's *Defence of the West*, Fortescue's histories, as well as official histories of the First World War. What is apparent from viewing these collections is that although all of these men had been Territorial officers before marching to war, they had taken a professional approach to studying the art of war, especially in regard to modern warfare. Without doubt, such an approach had a major influence on their style of command and the fighting effectiveness of the New Zealand officers and other ranks that they led.

Another way to achieve greater insight into the officer corps of the New Zealand military forces of the period was to contact some of the few surviving officers from the Second World War as well as members of the other ranks. In the early post-war years many returned servicemen declined to speak of their experiences for various reasons; some wanted to try and forget the horrors of war while others believed they could only share their experiences with those who had endured the same ordeals. Hence the popularity of Returned Servicemen's Association clubs throughout the country where veterans could speak of their war-time service without being judged by those who could

not understand the realities of war. Very few wives and children of veterans got to know of what their husbands and fathers did in the war due to the tendency of servicemen to keep things to themselves. However, as the war-time generation have reached their twilight years, many veterans are more willing to share their experiences in an effort to preserve our military heritage and provide a greater understanding of what war meant to them.

The first interview for this thesis was conducted with Jack Collins, a Second World War veteran who had been a member of C Company, 26 Battalion. He had seen service in the Tunisian and Italian campaigns, being wounded twice. He was fortunate enough to have travelled back to Cassino for the 60th anniversary remembrance of the battle that proved so costly for the 2nd New Zealand Division. Collins, now aged 92, is an uncle of the author and it has only been in the last decade that he has openly spoken of his experiences. He agreed to have an interview recorded, not only for the benefit of this project but also to leave a permanent record of his experiences for his family. Collins served as a private and refused promotion to non-commissioned officer rank. Through this interview he was able to provide an insight into how some other ranks perceived officers, especially those junior officers who led their platoons. Having served in a rifle company at the forefront of battle on numerous occasions, Collins could speak with some authority on what the average soldier required and mostly received in leadership from their officers.

The military historian fraternity within New Zealand is quite small which made it easier to identify any surviving officers who would be interested in being interviewed. Through connections with the Canterbury branch of the Italian Star Association contact was made with two senior officers who had served with the 2nd New Zealand Division in the Mediterranean theatre. These included Major-General W.B. 'Sandy' Thomas, CB, DSO, MC and Bar, and Lieutenant-Colonel Haddon Donald, DSO, MC. The great significance of being in contact with these highly decorated soldiers was that they had both begun their military service in the Territorials as enlisted men, had been commissioned to serve as junior platoon commanders at the beginning of the Second World War, and through active service and rapid promotion both had ended the conflict commanding battalions of over 600 men. Most importantly they were able to provide a vast range of experiences from the initial training received to prepare them to actually lead men into battle through to being experienced battalion commanders required to direct subordinate officers in action. Although both have written books on their wartime

experiences, what proved significant through the recent contact was their ability to recount what qualities and characteristics they looked for when recommending officers for promotion and commissions for non-commissioned officers from within the ranks. Both men are in their mid-nineties and surprisingly active and lucid. As Thomas lives in Australia and Donald lives in the North Island, the cost of travel prohibited any face-to-face traditional interviews. This challenge was overcome through a series of phone calls, letters and email correspondence that resulted in a record of personal views and experiences that proved invaluable to the integrity of the thesis. A more traditional approach was taken when interviewing Private Harold Todd who served in 23 Battalion in Egypt and Libya, and is a resident of Christchurch. This interview was conducted using a digital voice recorder borrowed from the History Department of the University of Canterbury and later permanently saved on disc. Todd was able to provide the perspective of an average infantryman, including being captured and sent to a prisoner of war camp in Italy.

With no Great War veterans left alive in New Zealand and with the number of World War Two veterans rapidly dwindling this work has had to rely significantly on various written primary sources that record the experiences and opinions of servicemen, as opposed to face-to-face oral interviews. Contemporary letters, journals, diaries and official documents provide researchers with information that was recorded either at the time of an event or experience, or shortly afterwards. When conducting interviews with veterans sixty to seventy years after their war service the reliability of their recollections may be less than contemporary records. After this length of time memories of certain events can fade or be influenced by social attitudes that have dramatically changed towards war.⁷⁰ Some veterans chose to focus on the lighter side of their war time experiences to balance the horrors that only those who had been through battle could understand. For some this is a way of coping with the psychological effects of exposure to war and sudden death on a sometimes daily basis. However, this can give a less than accurate account of what really happened. In contrast, overseas service during the war was the probably the most dramatic time of their lives and many veterans retain vivid memories of what they experienced - in some cases, only recalling what they endured to family and friends in their later years. What has also been found is that some of

⁷⁰ Miles Fairburn, *Social History: Problems, Strategies and Methods* (Basingstoke & London, 1999), pp. 52-54

personal accounts differ from the official histories written shortly after the wars while some support them. It is because of this that this thesis attempts to provide a balance between the available official documentation and the personal recollections to gain a sound analysis of the combat officers of the New Zealand expeditionary forces during the two great conflicts.

One of the significant original contributions of this thesis is the inclusion of the previously unpublished World War Two letters of Colonel Denver Fountaine. I am indebted to his daughter, Jane Campbell for transcribing them for me and allowing me to include them in this work. Fountaine was typical of many young officers of the 1st Echelon in that he had been a junior officer in the Territorial Force prior the outbreak of war in 1939 and gained rapid promotion through merit and opportunity. He ended the war as a full colonel but had been an acting brigadier-general in command for 6 Brigade in Italy for a brief time during 1944. His letters provide a unique insight into not only the experiences of an inexperienced platoon leader, but also that of a veteran battalion commander. Included in his personal photographs is a previously unpublished image of the officers of C Company, 20 Battalion in 1941, which includes Charles Upham VC and Bar. It is from such primary source material that we can obtain a greater understanding of the experiences of the men who provided the leadership necessary for the combat units of the New Zealand expeditionary forces to function as effective fighting formations in both world wars.

Comparisons

To gain some comparison of the combat officers of the New Zealand expeditionary forces with those of the other dominions, a number of primary and secondary sources were examined. Although the bulk of such research was reliant on secondary sources, the digitised archives of the Australian War Memorial Museum provided some significant primary documentation. The C.E.W. Bean Collection provided a wealth of letters and official documentation relating the experiences and opinions of Australian senior and junior officers from the Australian Imperial Force of the Great War. The volumes of Bean's official history of Australia in the First World War also provided an abundance of relevant material for comparison. Information

relating to the senior commanders was found in numerous biographies of officers from both conflicts; notably, David Horner's works, *Blamey: The Commander-in-Chief*,⁷¹ together with *Crisis of Command: Australian Generalship and the Japanese Threat*⁷² and *General Vasey's War*⁷³. Peter Pedersen's *The Anzacs: Gallipoli to the Western Front*⁷⁴ proved very insightful, while F.M. Cutlack's *War Letters of General Monash*⁷⁵ provided a clear picture of the style of command Monash preferred when leading the Australians on the Western Front. One of the most relevant comparative monographs was that of Garth Pratten, whose *Australian Battalion Commanders in the Second World War*⁷⁶ is the most comprehensive study of the experience and leadership style of Australian battalion commanders to date. Information regarding officers of the Canadian expeditionary forces was mainly obtained from secondary sources. However, the most insightful of these were two academic articles from military historian, Geoffrey Hayes; 'Science and the Magic Eye: Innovations in the Selection of Canadian Army Officers, 1939-1945'⁷⁷ and 'We Need Leaders-God, How We Need Leaders: exploring 'Bad' Officership in the Canadian Army, 1939-1945,'⁷⁸ provided an understanding of the issues facing the Canadians regarding selection and training of officers during the Second World War. With such material it was possible to identify the similarities and contrasts to the New Zealand experience.

⁷¹ David Horner, *Blamey: The Commander-in-Chief* (St. Leonards, Australia, 1998)

⁷² Horner, *Crisis of Command: Australian Generalship and the Japanese Threat* (Canberra, 1978)

⁷³ Horner, *General Vasey's War* (Melbourne, 1992)

⁷⁴ Peter Pedersen, *The Anzacs: Gallipoli to the Western Front* (Camberwell, Victoria, 2007)

⁷⁵ F.M. Cutlack, *War Letters of General Monash* (Sydney, 1934)

⁷⁶ Garth Pratten, *Australian Battalion Commanders in the Second World War* (Cambridge, New York & Melbourne, 2009)

⁷⁷ Geoffrey Hayes, 'Science and the Magic Eye: Innovations in the Selection of Canadian Army Officers, 1939-1945,'

⁷⁸ Hayes, 'We Need Leaders-God, How We Need Leaders: exploring 'Bad' Officership in the Canadian Army, 1939-1945,'

Chapter 2

Officer Selection and Promotion

This chapter will reveal how officers, as military leaders, were selected from the civilian population, and later from within the expeditionary forces, while analysing certain trends that developed in this process as the wars progressed. Both senior and junior battalion and regimental officers are represented in the study so that the officer corps are considered as a whole. The data from personnel records and Embarkation Rolls sheds light on the background of the individual officers. Information from these primary sources is included in a series of databases provided in the appendices of this thesis which relate to officers from both major wars. The analysis of these has helped to gain a greater understanding of the selection process.

This study is the first comprehensive analysis of the selection process for combat officers of the New Zealand expeditionary forces. Various other works have touched on the subject with some historians basing their conclusions on small samples taken from single battalions or anecdotal evidence from a selection of biographies. An example is *Born to Lead? Portraits of New Zealand Commanders* edited by Glyn Harper and Joel Hayward.⁷⁹ This work is significant in providing a collection of biographies of twentieth-century senior New Zealand military commanders, as well as exposing various styles of command displayed by them. Included in this book is a table listing of all battalion commanders of the nine provincial based infantry battalions that served in the Second World War.⁸⁰ This table provides a limited sample of data for each individual commander including any previous military service and civilian occupation. Such a sample is important in providing an insight into the selection of senior officers. However, it is limited in that it only relates to World War Two and does not reflect company officers who made up the majority of the officer corps.

⁷⁹ Glyn Harper and Joel Hayward (eds.), *Born to Lead? Portraits of New Zealand Commanders* (Auckland, 2003)

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 193-197

An examination of personnel files provided the best primary data needed to gain an insight into the officer selection process. The process of retrieving information from such files is explained in the previous chapter. It must be stressed that the information gained from these files is extremely important in providing a more accurate account of what attributes and characteristics were considered essential in those who were to lead New Zealander troops into battle during the period. What becomes obvious by examining the individual level data is that certain trends are evident in the selection process for both conflicts and that the process evolved over time. These changes came about for a number of reasons ranging from a shortage of available manpower from a small dominion, through to the increase in campaign experience of officer candidates and the personal attributes of the soldiers themselves. A comparison of the officer personnel files for different periods of both conflicts make it clear that some criteria for officer selection certainly changed as the wars progressed and this is corroborated by statements from a number of battalion commanders.⁸¹ Hence, those enlisted soldiers not considered officer material when the expeditionary forces were formed could eventually find themselves leading companies and even battalions at war's end.

Significance of Territorial Force Service

When forming the New Zealand expeditionary forces by far the most important criterion in the selection of officers was previous military experience. In both 1914 and 1939 almost every officer commissioned to embark with the first echelon, commonly known as the Main Body, had seen some form of military service. This is not surprising when considering the beliefs and attitudes of the time. The majority of European-descent New Zealanders of military service age had either emigrated from Britain or were of British stock, having grown up with stories of gaining martial glory fighting for the British Empire.⁸² Some, such as New Zealand-born Edward Chaytor who had initially been a volunteer militia officer from Marlborough, had already volunteered and fought in the Boer War at the turn of the century, while the Great War provided an

⁸¹ W.B. 'Sandy' Thomas, Interview, 26 June 2010; and Haddon Donald, Letter to Author, 13 July 2010

⁸² W. David McIntyre, 'Imperialism and Nationalism,' in *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, 2nd ed., ed. Geoffrey W. Rice (Auckland, 1992), pp. 342-345

opportunity for others to also do their bit for 'King and Country'.⁸³ The arms race amongst the European powers at the time led many to believe that war in Europe was inevitable which led to a rise in social militarism in the new dominion. This eventually saw the passing of the Defence Act of 1909 which provided for compulsory military training for every male aged from 12 to 35.⁸⁴ Christopher Pugsley argues that peace-time conscription was spurred on by Great Britain, specifically the War Office, to ensure that the military forces of the Empire were prepared for the coming war.⁸⁵ In 1909 an Imperial Conference was held in London to determine the naval and military defence of the Empire. A number of meetings were held at the Foreign Office and the War Office where representatives from Britain and the self-governing dominions of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Cape Colony, Natal, Transvaal, Orange River Colony and Newfoundland discussed general questions that were to determine defence policy. As a result it was decided that military forces throughout the Empire were:

to be standardised, the formation of units, the arrangement for transport, the pattern of weapons, etc., being as far possible, assimilated to those which has recently been worked out for the British Army. Thus, while the Dominion troops would in each case be raised for the defence of the dominion concerned, it would be made readily practicable in case of need for that dominion to mobilise and use them in the defence of the Empire as a whole.⁸⁶

This led to the antiquated New Zealand Volunteer Force system being replaced with the formation of a Territorial Force for defence of the country. The significant difference in conditions of service saw medically fit males from the age of 18 receiving some form of regular compulsory military training in the new Territorial Force until the age of 25, as opposed to the old system that relied entirely on volunteer enlistment.⁸⁷ This further led to a significant increase in the number of trained officers within the New Zealand military establishment leading up to the beginning of the Great War in late 1914. Evidence of this can be found in the annual reports provided by the General Officer Commanding, New Zealand Military Forces. In February 1909 the New

⁸³ Harper & Hayward (eds.), *Born to Lead?*, pp. 69-71

⁸⁴ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *Appendices to the Journals, New Zealand House of Representatives*, 1909, Vol. 1, A-19, pp. 17-19

⁸⁵ Christopher Pugsley, *Anzac: The New Zealanders at Gallipoli* (Auckland, 1995), p. 12

⁸⁶ 'Naval and Military Defence of the Empire: II Proceedings of the Imperial Conference,' *AJHR*, 1909, Vol. 1, A-4a, pp. 17-19

⁸⁷ Defence Amendment Act 1910; Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1911, H-19, p. 4

Zealand Militia establishment was recorded as having only 201 officers, which did not include those professional officers attached to the New Zealand Staff Corps.⁸⁸

With the introduction of the new Territorial Force and compulsory military training, the number of commissioned officers rose rapidly. Field Marshal Lord Kitchener, commander-in-chief of the British Army, visited the Dominion in February and March 1910 to inspect the military forces and promote the Territorial system. At that time he made proposals and recommendations to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the new establishment. These included raising the age of liability for service from those aged 18 years-old through to 26 years-old.⁸⁹ He also proposed that during peace time the Territorial Force should have a permanent strength of 18,800 rank and file with 1,087 officers to lead them.⁹⁰ Further to this, short-lived Officer Training Corps were established at Otago University, Canterbury College, Victoria College, with a junior division at King's College, Auckland. The purpose of these corps was 'first to train members of these corps as men in the ranks, and then require them to act as instructors and leaders. The corps should therefore furnish a valuable source for supply of citizen officers, and if the improvement as present observable continues, the formation of the corps should be fully justified by the results.'⁹¹ However, excluding the Otago University Officer Training Corps which was retained for the purpose of training medical and dental officers, the other corps were dissolved in 1911 with the creation of the Territorial Force.⁹² Another of Kitchener's recommendations was that the New Zealand Staff Corps should be increased from 63 to 100 officers to provide the necessary administrative, logistical and training requirements of the expanded military establishment of the Dominion.⁹³

The Defence Act of 1909 provided the official structure for officer selection within the Territorial Force. This legislation led to the establishment of Boards of Selection and Promotion that were set up in each military district throughout the country. Staff Corps adjutants from each district were required to report to the officer commanding the particular corps they were attached to from time to time in regard to

⁸⁸ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1910, Vol. 3, H-19, p. 2

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4

⁹¹ Report by the Council of Defence, *AJHR*, 1910, Vol. 3, H-19a, p. 3

⁹² Peter Cooke and John Crawford, *The Territorials: A History of the Territorial and Volunteer Forces of New Zealand* (Auckland, 2011), p. 136

⁹³ ⁹³ Report by the Council of Defence, *AJHR*, 1910, Vol. 3, H-19a, p. 6

promising members of the rank and file who were likely to make good officers.⁹⁴ Kitchener, in a memorandum on the defence of Australia, which he had visited prior to coming to New Zealand, argued that officer candidates should be selected from the most promising material available, that they should be chosen young and selected solely for capacity for leadership, military knowledge and devotion to duty.⁹⁵ ‘The citizen officer should be appointed as early as possible in his military career, so that he may...study his duties as an officer and develop his qualifications for imparting instructions and leadership of men’ in what Kitchener believed was the most receptive time of the officer’s life.⁹⁶

Although Kitchener’s criteria for officer selection seem well-founded, they are too simplistic. In reality there is compelling evidence to show that officer selection was more complex and fluid, with a variety of factors being considered when selecting candidates, especially in times of war. Anecdotal evidence from veteran officers provides a personal perspective on the selection process. But by far the most substantial evidence comes from surveying the personnel files of those men who were commissioned when the demand of war required the rapid expansion of New Zealand’s military forces. By analysing this data a greater understanding can be gained of what qualities were considered essential in the making of an officer.

When considering Kitchener’s criteria for officer selection for those serving in the two expeditionary forces there are three distinct periods to be considered. The formation of the original expeditionary forces, commonly known as the Main Bodies, consisted almost exclusively of professional army officers from the New Zealand Staff Corps, commissioned officers from within the Territorial Army or Territorial non-commissioned officers who were commissioned at the outbreak of the wars. Clearly, these men satisfied the criteria of leadership, military knowledge and devotion to duty. The ranks that they held in the peacetime military establishment were gained through proven ability and experience of leading men and they were trained soldiers with a range of military knowledge. The fact that they had all volunteered to serve overseas at the outbreak of war proved their devotion to duty.

⁹⁴ Ibid., H-19a, p. 8

⁹⁵ ‘Memorandum of the Defence of Australia,’ by Field Marshal Kitchener, February 1910, in *AJHR*, 1910, Vol. 3, H-19a, p. 26

⁹⁶ Ibid.

This sense of duty was further highlighted by those who volunteered from the Territorials in 1939; compulsory military service had been previously abolished. However, as the conflicts progressed and the need for replacement junior officers increased due to casualties and the expansion of the expeditionary forces, the pool of experienced regular and Territorial officers dried up and candidates had to be found from civilian volunteers and conscripts. While the criteria were fundamentally still the same, with most only having limited military knowledge and leadership experience, other factors were taken into account in the selection process, such as age, education, previous occupation and social status in the community. In the latter years of both wars, these factors became less important as commissions were predominantly given to experienced NCOs who had proven their leadership abilities on active service.⁹⁷

Although biographies of well-known senior New Zealand commanders, such as Sir Andrew Russell, Sir Edward Chaytor, Sir Herbert Hart, Sir Bernard Freyberg and Sir Howard Kippenberger, provide in-depth background knowledge of these celebrated leaders, it is the attestation papers and embarkation rolls that provide information regarding the majority of lesser-known officers who are equally as important in the nation's military heritage. This was recognised shortly after the Great War by the laborious study carried out by Lieutenant-Colonel John Studholme, in his government-funded publication, *Some Records of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force: Record of Personal Services During the War of Officers, Nurses and First-Class Warrant Officers*. This book provides the most comprehensive list of every New Zealand commissioned officer, senior warrant officer and nurse who served overseas during the First World War. The work was published to provide a permanent record of personal services, as opposed to official histories that were being published at the time. In compiling the lists, Studholme relied heavily on information gained from attestation papers and embarkation rolls.⁹⁸ Likewise, this current study relies on these official records to determine the previous military service of officers before they saw active campaigning with the expeditionary forces.

⁹⁷ Major-General Bernard Freyberg, Correspondence to Peter Fraser, 30 September 1944, in *Documents, Vol 2, Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War, 1939-45* (Wellington, 1951), pp. 363-364

⁹⁸ John Studholme, *Some Records of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force: Record of Personal Services During the War of Officers, Nurses and First-Class Warrant Officers- Unofficial, But Compiled From Official Records* (Wellington, 1928)

The gradation list for the New Zealand Expeditionary Force of 1914 shows that every officer from second-lieutenant to major-general had previous military experience, either in the British Army, New Zealand Staff Corps or Territorials. Some, such as Godley, Chaytor, Russell and Lieutenant-Colonel Harry Fulton, had seen active service in the Boer War and India.⁹⁹ Similarly, in 1940 when 2NZEF embarked for overseas service only 3 out of 100 junior officers sampled had no previous military experience (refer Appendix 5). Eighty-two percent had served in the Territorial Force before enlisting, while 40 percent had served in the school cadets (although cadet service alone had limited worthiness). Around 30 percent had served in both. Twenty-three had recorded on their attestation papers as having Territorial Force commissions. Most of these volunteers had their commissions transferred to the expeditionary force due to the large number of trained officers required for the newly formed rifle battalions and artillery batteries. Freyberg was reliant on the experience of the Territorial soldiers when forming the 2nd New Zealand Division in Egypt. In March 1940 he sent a memorandum to the Minister of Defence suggesting that preference for reinforcement officers from New Zealand should be given to good Territorial officers and ‘that the only reason for commissioning into the NZEF straight from civil life should be the possession of special technical qualifications and that except in absolutely outstanding cases, men in the ranks should wait for commissions until they have joined the Division.’¹⁰⁰ This selection policy proved to be fortuitous in ensuring the New Zealand divisions eventually became elite fighting formations, generally led by proficient officers, after extensive training and lessons learned through campaigning.

Analysis of previous military service of officers from the expeditionary forces of both wars also identified certain differences. The introduction of compulsory military training leading up to the Great War ensured that in 1914 almost every commissioned officer, as well as the vast majority of enlisted men, had received some form of military training prior to volunteering for active service. This trend was maintained throughout the conflict even after conscription was introduced in 1916, as all physically fit males were required to enrol in the Territorial Army once they turned 18.¹⁰¹ In theory, personnel were not permitted to serve overseas until they reached the age of twenty,

⁹⁹ *New Zealand Expeditionary Force Gradation List, 1914*, New Zealand Defence Force Library, pp. 1-2

¹⁰⁰ Freyberg, Memorandum to Minister of Defence, 6 March 1940, WAI 1/9, DA 1/9/27/2, ANZ

¹⁰¹ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1910, Vol. 3, H-19, p. 2

which should have ensured that recruits had two years Territorial service prior to joining the expeditionary force.¹⁰² This would have certainly been the case for most junior officers commissioned in New Zealand and sent on active service with reinforcement drafts. However, many enlisted men still in their teens, and some as young as 15, managed to see active service by falsifying their personal details on enlistment.¹⁰³

In the Second World War this was not the case. A reduction in military expenditure by the New Zealand government immediately after the Great War, followed by heavy reductions in the 1930s due to fiscal constraints as a result of the Great Depression, dramatically affected the training capabilities of the New Zealand Territorial Force. Compulsory military training was abolished and for a number of years training was restricted to annual camps for officers and non-commissioned officers only.¹⁰⁴ The theory was that those who attended annual camps could then pass on their training to the rank and file of their particular units at their drill halls and parades held monthly.¹⁰⁵ While the military budget increased from 1937 as the country moved out of recession and the prospect of war in Europe seemed imminent, the effects of these cuts ensured that some of those who volunteered to serve in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in late 1939 and early 1940, and who were commissioned, had very little or no previous military service. This certainly had some effect on the initial proficiency of the 2nd New Zealand Division.¹⁰⁶ This became less of a problem as the war progressed with the ever-increasing policy of promoting experienced NCOs to officer vacancies. The policy of promoting combat-proven junior officers and NCOs ensured that by the end of the Great War in November 1918 and the Second World War in 1945, the combat arm of the officer corps of the New Zealand Expeditionary Forces generally consisted of experienced and battle-hardened leaders who had developed into professional soldiers.¹⁰⁷

While there were still a significant number of officers from the 1943 sample who had served either in the Territorial Force or the school cadets, compared to the 1940 sample, there was an increasing number who had no previous military training before enlisting. In the 1940 sample only 3 percent of those sampled had no previous

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Christopher Pugsley, *Gallipoli: The New Zealand Story*, Penguin edition (Auckland, 2008), pp. 34-35

¹⁰⁴ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1935, Vol. 3, H-19, p. 2

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Major-General Sir Howard Kippenberger, *Infantry Brigadier* (London, 1949), pp. 6-7

¹⁰⁷ Harper, *Dark Journey*, pp. 487-490

military service before volunteering, while the figure was 15 percent in the 1943 sample (refer to Appendices 5 & 6). By this time the number of officers transferred from the Territorials had also reduced. This was indicative of the increasing shortage of physically fit and able men in New Zealand for military service, as well as the inter-war policy that saw the abolition of compulsory military training. By 1945 approximately 25 percent of newly commissioned officers sampled had no previous experience before enlisting and this was to have a detrimental effect on the performance of the New Zealand Division in the final stages of the Italian campaign. Almost all had been promoted from the ranks and had fighting experience, but were now expected to lead from the front and thus expose themselves to being killed or seriously wounded. This was at a time when the war was coming to a close and very few were willing to take risks that increased their chances of being maimed or killed.

Maori Officer Selection

The most obvious example of a unique officer selection process was within the Maori Contingent of the First World War and that of the 28th (Maori) Battalion of the Second World War where, initially, junior officers were chosen by Maori leaders from the traditional chiefly families from dominant tribes. According to Wira Gardiner, inherited ancestral *mana* (honour and prestige) was the basis on which many young Maori originally received a commission.¹⁰⁸ An examination of Maori officer details in the data bases provided in Appendices 1 to 7 clearly indicates that most of these men were also relatively highly educated for the time, which puts them in line with the officer selection process of the regional battalions. An example includes Major (later Sir) Peter Buck (Te Rangi Hiroa), who in 1914, as a registered medical practitioner, had the dual roles of medical officer and second in command of the contingent.¹⁰⁹

Initially, both the Maori Contingent of the First World War and 28 (Maori) Battalion of the Second World War were raised with the stipulation from the Government that the senior ranking officers were to be appointed by the General Officer

¹⁰⁸ Wira Gardiner, *Te Mura O Te Ahi: The Story of the Maori Battalion* (Auckland, 1992), pp. 8-9

¹⁰⁹ Christopher Pugsley, *Te Hokowhitu A Tu: The Maori Pioneer Battalion in the First World War* (Auckland, 1995), p. 34

Commanding the expeditionary forces and not selected by Maori leaders.¹¹⁰ In 1914 Major-General Godley believed the selection of officers should be left to Maori to decide and did not want the army to be involved in any inter-tribal issues.¹¹¹ This ensured that although the junior officers were nominated by their tribal elders, command of the formations was given to experienced non-Maori officers until suitable Maori officers had sufficient experience and opportunity to take command. This policy was unpopular within Maoridom, but similarly to other newly formed units within both expeditionary forces, it was found that some of the original officers selected were not of the desired calibre. In October 1914, the Minister of Defence, James Allen, inspected the 'Natives' in camp at Auckland prior to the Maori Contingent's departure for overseas service and recorded his opinion of the officers in a letter to Major-General Godley:

I found in camp a very good lot, but some who certainly must be weeded out at an early date. So far as I can judge there is very good material for non-commissioned officers and junior officers, but I am quite persuaded it would be wrong to send a Maori major and I am very doubtful about Maori captains. All the officers have gone in on probation. None have been selected to go.¹¹²

Allen stated in the same letter that he was under considerable pressure and 'agitation' from Maori political leaders, such as Sir James Carroll and others, as well as from the Maori troops themselves that all the officers be allowed to travel to Egypt with the unit to join the expeditionary force.¹¹³ Once serving overseas it appears that some of Allen's concerns came to fruition, with a number of junior officers condemned/criticised by the commanding officer of the Maori Contingent, Major A.H. Herbert, for not performing to the expected standard. Four officers from the Maori Contingent (Captain W.T. Pitt and Lieutenants R. Dansey, T. Hiroti and T. Hetet) were returned to New Zealand in 1915, which Pugsley argues was due to tensions between these officers and Herbert.¹¹⁴ Whether their perceived unsuitability was due to a clash of cultural attitudes, personality conflicts, racism or genuine incompetence as commissioned officers, it is clear from official correspondence that Herbert's opinion of these officers

¹¹⁰ Gardiner, p. 14

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Sir James Allen, Letter to Godley, 30 October 1914, Allen 1, 1 M1/15, Part 1, ANZ

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Christopher Pugsley, *Te Hokowhitu A Tu: The Maori Pioneer Battalion in the First World War* (Auckland, 1995), p. 44

was supported by his superiors, if not by the Maori troops serving under them. Maori leaders in the Dominion felt disgraced by this and pressured the Minister of Defence for their return to the Contingent. Allen wrote to Godley explaining the situation:

...the Maoris are very sore over the break-up of their unit and the treatment of their officers. I do not for one moment say they are right; I think you have done what is best, still they are very sensitive and it has been very difficult to deal with them. I am sorry that the two Maori officers, McGregor and Broughton, have got into trouble.¹¹⁵

In December 1915 Brigadier-General Andrew Russell made his opinion clear to Godley about the proposal to have Pitt and Dansey returned to the expeditionary force stating:

Thinking over the Maori question last night, I came to the conclusion that it would be a pity to see Dansey and Pitt again. Pitt at any rate will start mischief probably and Dansey is a fool. Neither are competent...Is it an act of grace to the Maori race to give them incompetent leaders?¹¹⁶

However, political pressure eventually saw Dansey, Hiroti and Hetet posted to the New Zealand Pioneer Battalion on the Western Front, where Pugsley argues they performed good deeds.¹¹⁷ Ironically, in response to Maori criticism of Herbert's leadership of the Contingent, Godley concurred that although he was not the most suitable officer to command Maori, he was the most suitable that was available at the time:

I do not think for one moment that he is ideal, or that he was in every way qualified to command Maoris, but at the time I could not hear of anybody better qualified, nor for the matter that, have I heard of anyone since, and this is one of the main difficulties about having them [Maori] in one contingent.¹¹⁸

Eventually, combat leadership experience identified those Maori officers who were the most suitable to command their own troops. As both wars progressed promotion within the battalions was based on merit, ensuring that Maori officers became battalion commanders of their own formation. Limited combat roles for the

¹¹⁵ Allen, Letter to Godley, 6 March 1916, Allen 1, 1 M1/15, Part 2, ANZ

¹¹⁶ Russell, Letter to Godley, 23 December 1915, Allen 1, 1 M1/15, Part 2, ANZ

¹¹⁷ Pugsley, *Te Hokowhitu A Tu: The Maori Pioneer Battalion in the First World War*, p. 44

¹¹⁸ Major-General Alexander Godley, Letter to Allen, 19 February 1916, Allen 1, 1 M1/15, Part 2, ANZ

New Zealand (Maori) Pioneer Battalion on the Western Front during the Great War ensured that it was not until the Second World War that a Maori battalion commander led in battle. During World War Two the high casualty rate amongst senior officers of the 28th (Maori) Battalion provided opportunities for six Maori officers to command the unit throughout the war; the first being Lieutenant-Colonel Tiwi Love, a Territorial officer for fifteen years who was given temporary command of the battalion in November 1941.¹¹⁹ Others achieved high rank, including men from more humble ancestry who had gained *mana* through their battlefield exploits and were offered commissions. An example was Peta Awatere who became the commanding officer of the battalion in 1945 after having been promoted from the ranks.¹²⁰ Sir Charles Bennett, who began the war as a platoon commander and who progressed to command the Battalion at Tebaga Gap, Tunisia in March 1943, summed up after the war the strong need for Maori to be led by their own officers:

The Maori attitude to European officers must not be interpreted as racial prejudice. It was simply a manifestation of that strong natural urge, inherent in all self-respecting peoples, which is not willing to accept any inferences of racial inferiority or ineptitude.¹²¹

Age when first commissioned

Analysis of recorded ages of officers when they were first commissioned shows that in both conflicts there was some variation in ages between those commissioned early in the wars and those at the end of the wars. The age of commissioned officers is relevant in providing a greater appreciation of the command structure of the New Zealand Expeditionary Forces and assists in explaining any strengths or shortcomings in the effectiveness of the combat formations. The variations throughout the conflicts were determined by a number of factors that had to be overcome to ensure effective command structures were maintained at every level. High officer casualty rates meant

¹¹⁹ J.F. Cody, *The Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War: 28 (Maori) Battalion*, War History Branch, Department of Internal Affairs (Wellington, 1956), p. 186

¹²⁰ *The Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force (Middle East) Gradation List*, 27 April 1945, NZ Defence Library, Wellington

¹²¹ Correspondence of Lieutenant-Colonel C.M. Bennett, 1947, WA II, DA 1, 68/15/9, ANZ

there was always a shortage of replacements; indeed the age of company officers varied according to the number of casualties sustained. Thus, the greatest variance can be found in the analysis of junior officers.

There was also some variation in the ages of the senior officers of the main bodies of the two expeditionary forces. It seems obvious that those who were to command brigades and battalions should have had extensive military experience and knowledge. To have reached this level of command these officers needed to have served in military formations for many years, either as regular officers in the Imperial army, the New Zealand Staff Corps, or as officers in the Territorial Force. Promotion in the peace-time army was very slow compared to that during war. Hence, it took many years to achieve the field rank of major and above, ensuring the early senior commanders were mostly in their forties when they were commissioned to lead the first fighting formations.

The senior officers of the Main Body who embarked for overseas service in the Great War were generally older than those who held the same positions in 2NZEF. Lieutenant-Colonel William Malone was 55 when he was appointed commanding officer of the Wellington Infantry Regiment in late 1914, while Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Mackesy who commanded the Auckland Mounted Rifles was 53.¹²² William Meldrum, Lieutenant-Colonel commanding the Wellington Mounted Rifles was 49, while Brigadier-General Andrew Russell and Colonel Edward Chaytor were both 46.¹²³ All of the regimental commanders had achieved their rank in Territorial units, while Russell and Chaytor had seen substantial service as regular officers. There appears not to have been any formal directive restricting overseas service for senior officers on the grounds of age. However, the rigours of modern warfare experienced during the First World War did have some influence over command appointments during the Second World War.

There was a slight difference in the ages of those senior commanders who led 2NZEF when it was formed in late 1939 for service in the Second World War. At age 50, Major-General Bernard Freyberg was the most senior ranking officer to embark with the First Echelon in 1940.¹²⁴ He was followed closely by Brigadiers Edward

¹²² *New Zealand Expeditionary Force Gradation List*, 1914, New Zealand Defence Force Library, pp. 1-2

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *2nd N.Z.E.F Gradation List*, 15 November 1940, New Zealand Defence Force Library, pp. 1-3

Puttick and James Hargest who were 49 and 48 respectively.¹²⁵ Colonel Frederick Varnham who had command of the 19th Battalion was 51 when 2NZEF was being formed in 1939 and was the eldest battalion commander to embark for overseas service in the Second World War.¹²⁶ At age 39, Colonel John Gray who led the 18th Battalion appears to have been the youngest commanding officer of a rifle battalion in the First Echelon.¹²⁷ Colonels Lindsay Inglis and Howard Kippenberger, who each commanded fighting battalions, were 45 and 42 respectively and represent the average ages of unit commanders who travelled with the Main Body.¹²⁸ This is ironic considering that Glyn Harper states in his biography of Kippenberger, that when war broke out in September 1939 Kippenberger was concerned that he might be passed over for command of a battalion because of his age.¹²⁹ However, initially, the need for experienced senior officers to lead the expanding and inexperienced citizen army outweighed any concerns regarding the age of unit commanders.

In general, battalion commanders of 2NZEF were younger than their World War One counterparts. This resulted from a change in selection policy. When Freyberg first became General Officer Commanding of the New Zealand Forces he was concerned about the ages of his subordinate commanders. He issued a directive that future battalion commanders were to be Regular Force officers under the age of 35.¹³⁰ Fortunately for Kippenberger, his commander was so impressed with his knowledge of the men within the battalion, including knowing their preference for Speights beer, that he retained command of the 20th Battalion prior to embarkation.¹³¹ As the war progressed the age of replacement battalion commanders certainly became younger. In extreme cases some newly appointed commanding officers were only in their mid-twenties. Haddon Donald was 27 when he was appointed Lieutenant-Colonel of 22nd Battalion in May 1944.¹³² After receiving his commission as a 22 year-old lieutenant in the Territorials one week prior to the outbreak of war, he had rapidly risen in rank due to experience, performance and the need to fill a number of vacancies among senior positions in his battalion after numerous campaigns.¹³³ Another example was W.B.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Glyn Harper, *Kippenberger: An Inspired New Zealand Commander*, p. 61

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Kippenberger, *Infantry Brigadier*, p.6

¹³² Haddon Donald, *In Peace & War: A Civilian Soldier's Story* (Masterton, 2005), p. 103

¹³³ Ibid., p. 6

‘Sandy’ Thomas, who at 24, became the youngest lieutenant-colonel to command a New Zealand battalion in either war, and probably the youngest battalion commander of any Allied force in Italy during the Second World War.¹³⁴ Such a feat seems incredible when considering that only four years before he had been a newly commissioned and inexperienced 20-year-old second-lieutenant who had previously been a bank clerk before volunteering for the army at the outbreak of war.¹³⁵ An analysis of his elevation and the rise of other junior officers through the ranks are covered further in this chapter.

In general, Kitchener’s 1910 selection criteria regarding the optimum age for junior officers was adhered to. An analysis of officer personnel files shows that with the rapid expansion of the expeditionary forces during the wars there was a trend for newly commissioned officers to be younger as the war progressed. Samples from Gradation lists from the early, mid and last years of World War Two provide evidence of this. The age range of second-lieutenants and lieutenants in 1940 was from 21 to 50, with most being in their mid-20s and early 30s. Out of a sample of 100, there were eight over the age of 35, including three in their 40s. In the 1943 sample of 123 junior officers, the ages ranged from 20 to 46. The bulk of the officers were aged between 21 and 26, although there were a significant number in their early to mid-30s. By 1945 the age range of the 110 officers sampled was from 19 to 39, with all but a small minority under 30 (refer Appendices 5-7).

The number of older newly commissioned officers in 2NZEF in 1940 was due to many having their Territorial Force commissions transferred into the expeditionary force. Most of these men had been in the Territorials for many years and had experience in organising and leading men on military exercises. It appears that there was generally no political influence in the appointment of combat officer commissions at this time, although the appointment of Brigadier James Hargest was one notable exception to this. Hargest had been a decorated battalion commander during the Great War and had continued to serve in the Territorial Force as a brigadier during the inter-war years. When he volunteered to serve in the 2nd NZEF in 1939 army medical officers initially considered him to be unfit for overseas service due to his history of suffering from shellshock. However, as a member of parliament, he used his political influence with

¹³⁴ W.B. ‘Sandy’ Thomas, *Pathways to Adventure: An Extraordinary Life*, compiled by Denis McLean (Hororata, 2004) p. 94

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14

the future prime minister, Peter Fraser, to be appointed as a brigadier in the Expeditionary Force. Despite Freyberg's reluctance to accept Hargest's appointment, the situation was out of his hands, with the New Zealand Chief of Staff informing him: 'This was a Government decision, and they took all responsibility from myself and the D.M.S. [Director of Medical services].'¹³⁶ A number of those who received commissions in their late 30s and 40s had seen active service in the First World War and their experience was thought to be invaluable in preparing troops for the rigours of modern warfare. However, some of these officers, including some holding senior rank, such as Brigadier Edward Puttick and Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie Andrew, proved unfit for combat command once they had seen action in the Mediterranean campaigns and were eventually sent back to New Zealand.¹³⁷ Both were considered suitable for high level administrative roles and subsequently were promoted; Puttick was appointed as Chief of General Staff, while Andrew was given command of the Wellington Fortress area.¹³⁸

The 1943 sample was taken from the 3rd New Zealand Division that served in the Pacific from 1942 to 1944. By the time this formation was formed conscription had been introduced which led to younger and less experienced men gaining commissions. The division was created at a time when New Zealand had a military man-power shortage and it considered the 'poor cousin' compared to the 2nd NZ Division serving in the Mediterranean.¹³⁹ When it was disbanded in 1944, most of the junior officers were demoted to non-commissioned rank before being sent to serve with the 2nd NZ Division. However, the majority regained their commissions once they had proven themselves as leaders in combat conditions in Italy.¹⁴⁰ This was a policy fostered by Freyberg who was of the opinion that promotion in the New Zealand Division first had to be earned.¹⁴¹ The few officers of the 3rd Division who refused to accept a reduction

¹³⁶ Chief of Staff, New Zealand Military Forces, Correspondence to Freyberg, 12 February 1940, WA II, 8, ANZ

¹³⁷ Freyberg, Correspondence to Peter Fraser, 5 January 1942, in *Documents, Vol 2, Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War, 1939-45* (Wellington, 1951), pp. 38-39

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 36 & 39

¹³⁹ Reginald Newell, 'New Zealand's Forgotten Warriors: 3 NZ Division in the South Pacific in World War II, PhD Thesis, Massey University, 2008, pp. 2-4

¹⁴⁰ Freyberg, Correspondence to Peter Fraser, 30 September 1944, *Documents, Vol 2, Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War, 1939-45* (Wellington, 1951), pp. 363-364

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

in rank were posted back to New Zealand and either demobilised or utilised in training camps where it was made clear that they would not be promoted further.¹⁴²

By 1945 the majority of newly commissioned combat officers were under 30. However, by this time almost all had seen active service as non-commissioned officers and had proven leadership ability before becoming officers. This was a repeat of what had occurred in the New Zealand Division during the Great War where physically fit young men with combat leadership experience proved to be the most effective platoon and company commanders. It was a belief strongly held by both Freyberg and Russell that commissioning experienced NCOs was also good for maintaining morale.¹⁴³

There are numerous examples of fit young leaders with some previous form of military training rapidly gaining promotion, once combat experienced, to senior roles within the expeditionary forces. A significant number of lieutenants and second-lieutenants who were newly commissioned from within Territorial units at the beginning of both conflicts went on to become brigade and battalion commanders by the end of the end of hostilities, especially during World War Two. Examples of this includes Monty Fairbrother who was only a lieutenant in 20 Battalion in 1940 but by 1945 was the lieutenant-colonel in command of the same battalion; and Ian Bonifant who held the same junior officer rank in the Divisional cavalry in 1940, but who by 1945 had risen to the rank of brigadier and had commanded both 5 and 6 Brigades.¹⁴⁴

As previously mentioned Haddon Donald and 'Sandy' Thomas were the youngest to achieve such rank but the high casualty rate amongst senior officers of frontline units, especially during the Second World War, meant that there was always opportunity for promotion for those who showed leadership ability. One such example was Denver Fountaine, a 19-year-old company clerk from Westport, who had enlisted as a private in the Territorials in 1933 and had risen through the ranks to be commissioned in 1937.¹⁴⁵ When war broke out in September 1939, and then aged 25, he volunteered to serve overseas and went to Burnham Military Camp where he was made a lieutenant in the newly formed 20 Battalion.¹⁴⁶ By mid-1942 after experiencing and surviving campaigns in Greece, Crete, Libya and Egypt, Fountaine had risen to

¹⁴² Puttick, Letter to Freyberg, 8 November 1944, Puttick 5, 1-2, ANZ

¹⁴³ Freyberg, Memo to Units, HQ 2 NZEF, 1 November 1940, DA 21/9, MS 103, ANZ

¹⁴⁴ 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force Gradation List, 15 November 1940, Army Headquarters, Wellington, p. 8, Defence Force Library, Wellington

¹⁴⁵ Amber Jo Illsley, 'Colonel Denver Fountaine Remembers El Alamein,' *The News*, Westport, 22 October 1992

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

command B Company of the battalion. At this time he was only 28 and was then promoted to lieutenant-colonel in command of the 800 men of the 26th Battalion as preparations were made for the defence of Egypt.¹⁴⁷ He was made a full colonel in April 1945 when commanding the 2NZEF Advance Base at Bari, Italy, but prior to that he had, for a brief period in July 1944, been acting brigadier in command of 6 NZ Infantry Brigade.¹⁴⁸ Although less common in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force during the Great War, possibly due to the large number of officers within the Territorial Army at the time and with less turn over in senior commanders than experienced in 2NZEF, some junior officers did reach high command. James Hargest was one of the better known examples; having being attested into the Otago Mounted Rifles as a second-lieutenant in August 1914, four years later he was a decorated lieutenant-colonel commanding the second battalion of the Otago Infantry Regiment on the Western Front.¹⁴⁹

Education

Education appears to have been a significant factor in officer candidate selection in the New Zealand military forces during the first half of the twentieth century. The available primary source material indicates that even in times of war when the demand for replacement junior officers was high, those with a higher level of education were more likely to be commissioned. This seems obvious when considering that regular officer cadets were required to study for three years at the Royal Military College of Australia at Duntroon, New South Wales (now Australian Capital Territory) before being commissioned.¹⁵⁰

Likewise, pre-war Territorial officer candidates were required to pass intense written examinations before being promoted. Even during the war years, those who had been nominated from the ranks had to attend Officer Cadet Training courses for varying periods up to three months, which involved studying numerous military topics; the purpose of such courses was to ‘turn-out out a young officer fit to be of immediate

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Nominal Roll, 2 NZ Division, Italy, 1 July 1944, KMARL, Waiouru

¹⁴⁹ Studholme, p. 142

¹⁵⁰ Piers Reid, ‘Lieutenant-General Leonard Thornton: Command in War and Peace,’ in *Born to Lead?: Portraits of New Zealand Commanders*, eds. Glyn Harper & Joel Hayward (Auckland, 2003), pp. 209-221

practical use in quarters and in the field'.¹⁵¹ This required the individuals to have the ability to study and retain information, essential if they were to become competent leaders of men in modern warfare.

However, leading up to, and including, the period of the Great War, higher education was limited to relatively few young men within the Dominion. In the early half of the twentieth century it was common for New Zealand children to leave school once they completed their primary education and had passed the Proficiency examination at the end of Standard 6 (later known as Form 2 and now referred to as Year 8).

Economic and social factors helped to determine this trend, as unless students received scholarships they were required to pay for their secondary education. There were fewer secondary schools established in New Zealand, especially prior to 1914, compared to the late twentieth century and rural students had to travel considerable distances or become 'boarders' to attend them. It was common practice for wealthy landowners and farmers, many living in isolated rural locations, to send their sons to prestigious colleges in the cities and main provincial centres, while it was not uncommon for some, such as Andrew Russell, to have been sent to England to receive their education.¹⁵²

Data from the Attestation Papers from both expeditionary forces reveal that there was a high proportion of officers who had attended this mixture of single-sex state and elite private secondary schools. This should not be surprising. Schools such as Christ's College, Christchurch Boys' High School, St. Andrews College, Otago Boys' High School, Waitaki Boys' High School, Wellington College, Nelson College, Wanganui Collegiate, Auckland Grammar, St Stephens College and Te Aute College all had cadets corps which were compulsory for students. These young men were taught rudimentary military skills such as marching drill, weapons drill, musketry, basic battlefield tactics and leadership skills.¹⁵³

Patriotism amongst the students was further fostered by the teaching of British military history and the duty of individuals to defend their country and the Empire in times of war.¹⁵⁴ This was especially so leading up to and during the Great War, where

¹⁵¹ *Instructions for the Training of Cadets in Officer Cadet Battalions* (London, 1917), p. 9

¹⁵² Jock Vennell, *The Forgotten General: New Zealander's World War 1 Commander Major-General Sir Andrew Russell* (Auckland, 2011), p. 9

¹⁵³ McGibbon, *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Military History*, pp. 76-77

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

the social militarization of New Zealand ensured that there were strong expectations placed on the young men of the Dominion to volunteer.¹⁵⁵ The above named schools consistently appear on the Attestation Papers and there is anecdotal evidence from diaries and letters from officers who were students of these colleges that there was an ‘old boy’ network within the officer corps.

A prime example was Christ’s College, Christchurch, which had many past pupils serving as officers in the Canterbury Mounted Rifles and the Canterbury Infantry Regiment. Names of sons of prominent Canterbury landed families, such as the Deans, Rhodes and Westenras, who had attended the school, dominated the Gradation lists of these regiments in both conflicts.¹⁵⁶ The extent of such networks of school mates serving together at Gallipoli is portrayed in a letter to Mrs Bevan-Brown, the wife of the senior master of Christ’s College from Lieutenant Gordon Harper, serving in the machine gun section of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles in Egypt in March, 1916; after thanking her for the gifts for the old boys of his school he stated,

...Petre, W. Cookson & A.J.W. Bain were the three surviving members of a band of some 14 mates, in which were numbered Lionel Parson, Nelson, Syme, Buttle, Erwin and Kitson. Everyone had been killed or wounded, and that very night Petre and Bain joined the rest whose lives had been spent in the same classrooms and on the same playing fields. In the night attack of August 6th I stumbled upon Bruce Brown and a few minutes after I had passed Will Deans who has since lost a foot.¹⁵⁷

The bonds and friendships developed during their school days proved important in providing unity in times of war: ‘Of the rest of the great band who are fighting and have come through alive, I can only say that the great bond of sentiment which united us all in times of peace has proved itself by the times we have been through, to be a never failing source of help when help was most needed.’¹⁵⁸ Such old school networks were also prevalent amongst the affluent and educated Maori officers of the Pioneer Battalion of the Great War and the 28th (Maori) Battalion, with schools such as Te Aute College, St. Stephens, Hikurangi, Otaki and Three Kings Colleges being well represented in these corps.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ E.P. Malone, ‘The New Zealand School Journal and the Imperial Ideology,’ *New Zealand Journal of History*, 7:1, 1973, pp. 12-27

¹⁵⁶ *New Zealand Expeditionary Force Staff and Regimental List of Officers*, October 1915, New Zealand Defence Force Library, p.4

¹⁵⁷ Gordon Harper, Letter to Mrs Bevan-Brown, 1 March 1916, MS Papers 1444, ATL

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Pugsley, *Te Hokowhiti A Tu*, pp. 24-25

Most large working class families could not afford the luxury of a high school education, especially in times of low wages and economic depression, such as during the Great Depression of the 1930s. The majority of working-class boys would have been required to seek employment after completing primary school to supplement the family income, while children from the middling classes were more likely to progress to secondary school. Then as now, those who gained a higher level of education were more likely to have greater vocational and financial opportunities than those with less, and this was reflected in the data collated from personnel files from both conflicts. The most valuable evidence was obtained from the Attestation Papers of those who enlisted for the Second World War. These papers differed from the Attestation Papers of the Great War in that the soldiers were now required to record their highest level of education which provides researchers with a more precise measure of education levels. This is in contrast to the Attestation Papers of the First World War that only required recruits to confirm whether they had achieved 'Proficiency', an examination sat in the final year of primary school which entitled students to progress to secondary school (see Table 1), which almost all had.¹⁶⁰ In most cases, the only way to determine whether the volunteers and conscripts from the Great War had attended secondary school was if they had recorded that they had attended cadet training on their Attestation papers.

Comparison of three samples taken from the Second World War personnel files indicates that levels of education for officer candidates remained constant throughout the war (see Appendices 5-7). Samples were taken from junior officers serving in various periods of the war; those of the First Echelon of 1940, the mid-war period of 1943, and the final year of the war, 1945. Analysis revealed that 78 percent of junior officers from the 1940 sample had attended secondary school, while 51 percent recorded their highest education qualification as 'Matriculation' or University Entrance. The establishment of a large number of district high schools throughout the country during the 1920s and 1930s made secondary education more available to the population, especially those living in rural areas, leading to more students attaining a high level of education.¹⁶¹ From the 1940 sample 20 percent of those surveyed had university degrees, were attending university prior to enlistment or had attained papers towards degrees. Only 14 percent recorded 'Proficiency' as their highest qualification.

¹⁶⁰ Colin McGeorge, Interview, 19 November 2010

¹⁶¹ Erik Olssen, 'Towards a New Society,' in *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, 2nd ed., ed. Geoffrey W. Rice (Auckland, 1992), pp. 276-277

There was little variation in the samples for 1943 and 1945, although one officer in the 1945 sample had left school after standard five (now Year 7). In both later samples 20 percent had attended university and had completed or partially completed degrees. There was a significant increase by 1943 in those who had attended secondary school, with 99 out of 111 recording this on their attestation papers. A similar number was recorded for 1945.

Table 1: Recorded Highest Education Levels of Sampled Junior Officers of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force in the Second World War

Qualification Recorded	1940 (100)		1943 (123)		1945 (110)	
Proficiency	14	14%	12	10%	9	8%
Secondary School	78	78%	99	80.5%	93	84.5%
Junior Free Place	1	1%	0		0	
Senior Free Place	2	2%	6	5%	7	6%
English Public School	2	2%	0		0	
School Certificate	2	2%	1	1%	0	
Matriculation/ University Entrance	51	51%	49	40%	43	39%
Higher Leaving Certificate	4	4%	3	2.5%	3	3%
Public Service Examination	4	4%	3	2.5%	4	4%
Professional Papers	10	10%	10	8%	6	5.5%
University	20	20%	21	17%	21	19%

Source: Compiled by the author from Personnel Records, New Zealand Defence Force Archives, Trentham

Note: School Certificate and University Entrance qualifications were only introduced in 1944 which accounts for the low numbers recorded for School Certificate. University Entrance replaced Matriculation as an equivalent qualification.

This evidence alone would indicate that the junior officers within the expeditionary force in 1945 were better educated than those in 1940. However, these figures are possibly misleading when compared to the number who attained matriculation or university entrance. In 1940, 51 out of 100 had done so while in 1945 43 out of 102 had achieved this qualification. Most importantly, what this information demonstrates is that the officer corps of 2NZEF as a whole was relatively highly educated for that period. As James Belich points out, secondary education remained a minority experience until the 1930s, but this minority was increasingly large and included not only most middle-class children but also an increasing number from working-class families.¹⁶² It also illustrates that officers were intelligent enough to learn and pass on to the rank and file, modern military strategy, tactics and technical expertise that they required to mould into an efficient combat force. The limited personal education information provided on the First World War Attestation Papers prevents any proper comparison to be made concerning levels of officer education. However, analysis of recorded previous occupations of New Zealand officers serving in the Great War gives some indication of education levels of these officers.

Previous occupations

In his book John McLeod touched on the previous occupations of officers in a single chapter entitled 'All blokes together?' He based his findings on data obtained from every fifth page of the first three embarkation rolls of the 2nd NZEF. He has limited occupation classification to only four occupation classes; solicitor, teacher, shop assistant and labourer. He claims that the majority of officers were professionals such as solicitors, accountants, teachers and farmers.¹⁶³ This was certainly the case in 1940 when many senior officers with commissions from Territorial regiments transferred into the new regular units. Territorial commissions were usually held by the educated social elite who could afford to take time from their occupations to commit to the

¹⁶² James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders From the 1880s to the Year 2000* (Auckland, 2001), p. 130

¹⁶³ McLeod, Table 2, p. 158

required training. Glyn Harper portrays this in his biography of Major-General Howard Kippenberger who took time from his legal practice to train as an officer in the Territorials before the war.¹⁶⁴

However, McLeod's sample is limited in that it is only relevant for 1940 and his occupation classifications are too narrow. An example of this is that he does not differentiate between farmers, whether they were landed gentry with large estates, small holders with a few acres, or a stockman such as Charles Upham. He also appears to include tradesmen with labourers, but this does not indicate whether they were self-employed or a navvy for the local council. His thesis also seems to intimate that occupation identifies the level of education and socio-economic status groups within the officer corps. This is not necessarily so.

A small but useful body of data comprising all of the battalion commanders of nine battalions of 2nd NZEF has been assembled by Roger McElwain. He listed the previous occupations of these officers which show that of the 67 commanders listed, only six were professional soldiers.¹⁶⁵ On the other hand, all but ten of these men had some military service either as a regular officer or as a Territorial.¹⁶⁶ Unfortunately, some doubt exists over the accuracy of the information; Lieutenant-Colonel Denver Fountaine, who at various times commanded both 20 and 26 Battalions, is shown as having not served in the Territorial Force, but he is known to have done so as mentioned earlier in this chapter. What the battalion commander charts clearly show is that there was an overwhelming predominance of unit commanders who had professional occupations in their civilian lives. Of the nine original lieutenant-colonels who led these battalions when the Main Body was formed, three were barristers or solicitors, three were professional soldiers, while the others included a farmer, newspaper manager and a tobacconist.¹⁶⁷ Significantly, the last three had all seen service during the Great War and had continued their military service as senior officers in the Territorials during the inter-war years.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ Harper, *Kippenberger*, pp. 56-58

¹⁶⁵ Roger McElwain, 'Commanding Officers of the Infantry Battalions of 2nd New Zealand,' in *Born to Lead? Portraits of New Zealand Commanders*, eds. Glyn Harper and Joel Hayward (Auckland, 2003), pp. 177-197

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

Table 2: Occupation Classifications of Officers from NZEF						
Occupation Classification	Reinforcements 1915	%	Reinforcements 1917	%	Archives NZ 1914-1918	%
Professional	27	19.57	33	29.20	77	35.16
Semi-Professional	5	3.62	8	7.08	10	4.57
Petty Official	10	7.25	3	2.65	0	0
White Collar	41	29.71	40	35.40	52	23.74
Skilled	8	5.80	8	7.08	17	7.76
Semi-Skilled	9	6.52	6	5.31	18	8.22
Labourer	1	0.73	3	2.66	15	6.85
Farmer	36	26.09	12	10.62	28	12.79
Not Recorded	1	0.72	0	0	2	0.91
Total	138		113		219	
Sources: Compiled by the author from Embarkation Rolls and digitised Army Personnel Files, Archives NZ, and cross-referenced with the Cenotaph Database, Auckland War Memorial Museum.						

To provide a deeper overall analysis of the officer corps of the New Zealand expeditionary forces a database was created from Embarkation Rolls covering a selection of lieutenants and second-lieutenants who served overseas during the First and Second World Wars. Using this data I surveyed the previous occupations of the soldiers to establish any class bias in officer selection. The conclusion is clear that the majority of the junior officers in 1915 and 1940 were from middle-class occupations; teachers, accountants, clerks, farmers, stock agents, bank officers, students and salesmen were prevalent. However, there were examples of some with skilled trade

occupations, such as a painter, a storeman, a bricklayer and a farrier gaining commissions prior to leaving New Zealand (see Tables 2 and 3).¹⁶⁹ The most obvious explanation for this is that these officers had previous service in the Territorials and had gained their commissions on merit.

By referring to the contemporary occupation classifications used by Erik Olssen in his work on late nineteenth century Caversham, Dunedin, I have classified the previous occupations of officers into the following categories: unskilled & semi-skilled labourer, skilled labourer, white collar, petty official, professional and farmer. Although such classification is arguably subjective, for the purpose of this study unskilled and semi-skilled labourers include occupations such as miner, shepherd, shearer, apprentice, station hand and seaman. Skilled labourers include tradesmen such as tailors, mechanics, bakers, blacksmiths, carpenters and cabinet makers, while white collar and petty officials incorporate policemen, clerks, station masters, mine managers and civil servants. Finally, the professional and semi-professional categories cover barristers and solicitors, doctors, accountants, teachers, engineers, company directors and large business owners. University students are also included in this category as their academic qualifications would most likely have taken them into a profession had they not served in the army. A separate category for farmers is included, though, there is no way of determining whether these men were owners of large estates, such as Sir Andrew Russell, or struggling leaseholders of small farms. What is evident from Table 2 is that there was a predominance of men from professional and white-collar occupations within the officer corps of NZEF throughout the First War World War. This also implies that such men predominantly came from an urban background.

The trends from within the officer corps of NZEF in the First World War were repeated in 2NZEF in the Second World War. The statistics provided in Table 3 show the same predominance of professional and white-collar occupations of officers that once again also implies most came from urban backgrounds. However, by 1945, a greater number of 'unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled' labouring occupations were represented within the junior ranks of the officer corps, such as labourers, barmen, paper hangers, mechanics and warehousemen. By this stage almost all junior officers of combat units were enlisted men promoted on merit from the ranks. They had proven experience as non-commissioned officers leading troops in battle and had earned their

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

commissions despite their civilian occupations. This will be examined further in the thesis. However, an interesting point to make is that data from these later Embarkation Rolls show many of these officers, despite having previous ‘labouring’ or tradesmen occupations, had attended socially elite secondary schools. This was indicated by comparing their occupations recorded in the rolls with the school cadet information written on their attestation papers.¹⁷⁰ This shows that not all those who attended affluent schools went on to professional occupations.

Occupation Classification	Nov 1940	%	Nov 1943	%	April 1945	%
Professional	30	24.0 %	37	26.43 %	31	20.13 %
Semi-Professional	7	5.6 %	8	5.72 %	14	9.10 %
Petty Official	6	4.8 %	3	2.14 %	2	1.30 %
White Collar	47	37.6 %	51	36.43 %	55	35.70 %
Skilled	3	2.4 %	7	5.0 %	14	9.10 %
Semi-Skilled	8	6.4 %	14	10.0 %	16	10.39 %
Labourer	4	3.2 %	12	8.57 %	11	7.14 %
Farmer	13	10.4 %	8	5.72 %	10	6.50 %
Not Recorded	7	5.6 %	0	0	1	0.66 %
Total	125		140		154	

Sources: Compiled from Gradation Lists and Army Personnel Files, NZDF Archives, Trentham.
Note: The 1943 data relates to officers from the 3rd NZ Division

There is evidence indicating that civilian occupations could also determine a man’s chance of being commissioned in the Australian Imperial Force during the Great War. A study of 982 original members, all ranks, of the 1st Australian Infantry Battalion revealed that 53.12 percent of the officers were drawn from professional or clerical occupations.¹⁷¹ This was completely out of proportion to the overall representation of the battalion, with 16.27 percent of the total personnel coming from these

¹⁷⁰ Data collated by the author from Personnel Files, New Zealand Defence Force Archives, Trentham

¹⁷¹ Dale Blair, *Dinkum Diggers: An Australian Battalion at War* (Melbourne, 2001), pp. 23-24

backgrounds.¹⁷² When comparing the lieutenants with the sergeants, 57.14 percent of the lieutenants came from either professional or clerical backgrounds, while 48.32 percent of the sergeants came from labour intensive occupations.¹⁷³ It appears that this trend continued throughout the war. Major-General John Monash showed his bias towards selecting replacement officers for the 3rd Australian Division, which he commanded on the Western Front:

The officers (the great majority of whom I promoted from the ranks) represent the cream of our professional and educated classes; young engineers, architects, medicals, accountants, pastoralists, public-school boys and so on.¹⁷⁴

Such attitudes towards officer selection were not unique. It was a common trend among all the forces of the British dominions that saw the officers predominantly selected from the educated and professional classes in both major conflicts. However, the evidence does show that towards the end of both wars, those experienced soldiers from the ranks who came from labour intensive occupations had a better chance of being selected for a commission than when the wars began.

Religion

It appears that there was no obvious religious bias in the selection of officers in either expeditionary force. Considering the predominance of Protestants in New Zealand society, particularly Anglicans and Presbyterians, it is not surprising that the overwhelmingly percentage of the junior officers within the officer corps during both conflicts professed adherence to these two churches (see Table 5).¹⁷⁵ In 1940 approximately 56 percent were Anglican and 22 percent Presbyterian.¹⁷⁶ Roman Catholics accounted for 9 percent, with a small number of Methodists also being present.¹⁷⁷ When comparing these percentages with religious statistics of the general population taken from the 1936 New Zealand census, Anglicans were over-represented in the officer corps by 16 percent, while Catholics were under-represented by 4

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ F.M. Cutlack (ed.), *War Letters of General Monash* (Sydney, 1934), p. 233

¹⁷⁵ Personnel Files, New Zealand Defence Force Archives, Trentham

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

percent.¹⁷⁸ Although these figures could indicate a bias towards Anglicans and against Catholics if used as the sole measurement, the argument of this thesis is that the soldiers' previous occupation and education had a greater influence on determining who was offered a commission. Other officers identified themselves as Congregationalists and Free Thinkers, while only one stated that he had no religion at all, indicating that those from less orthodox faiths were considered for commissions.¹⁷⁹ These percentages remained the same throughout the war, although less well-established faiths in New Zealand were represented in the later years, including a Jew, a Christian Scientist, a Baptist and members of the Church of Christ and Ringatu faith.

A report from Major-General Robin to the Minister of Defence in May 1917 indicates that these percentages were reflective of the religious make-up of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force during the Great War. Of the 70,445 personnel who had served overseas at that time 35,777 (51 percent) had listed their religion as Church of England, 18,316 (26 percent) as Presbyterian and 9,721 (14 percent) as Roman Catholic. Methodists were the next largest representation with 4,084 (6 percent), while there were 26 other religious faiths recorded on the report.¹⁸⁰ Arguably this sample is a relatively close reflection of the religious makeup of the Dominion's society at the time according to the 1911 Census, although Anglicans were over-represented in the NZEF by 10 percent and Methodists under-represented by 4 percent.¹⁸¹ A sample of religions adherence taken from Archives New Zealand digitised personnel files of 221 officers of all ranks replicates Robin's all-army information. As Table 4 indicates, there is an over-representation of those who were Anglican, while Catholics and Methodists are under-represented. There was a similar trend in the study made of the 1st Australian Battalion in the Great War. The data from the Embarkation Rolls of the battalion showed that only one out of the 32 original officers was a Catholic.¹⁸² This was disproportionate to the 17.80 percent of the total personnel of the battalion who were Catholics.¹⁸³ Dale Blair argues that there was a clear bias against Catholics when the

¹⁷⁸ *New Zealand Official Year Book 1940*;

www3.stats.govt.nz/New_Zealand_Official_Yearbooks/1945

¹⁷⁹ Personnel Files, New Zealand Defence Force Archives, Trentham

¹⁸⁰ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1917, Vol.23, H-19

¹⁸¹ *New Zealand Official Year Book 1914*;

www3.stats.govt.nz/New_Zealand_Official_Yearbooks/1914

¹⁸² Blair, pp.25-26

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

unit was formed considering that 11.95 percent of the Catholic volunteers came from professional or clerical backgrounds.¹⁸⁴

Religion	NZ Population from 1911 Census	NZEF Officers (sample of 221 from Personnel Files, Archives NZ)	%	
Church of England	41.14 %	131	59.27 %	
Presbyterian	23.32 %	53	23.98 %	
Roman Catholic	13.97 %	19	8.60 %	
Methodist	9.43 %	13	5.98 %	
Other Christian Faiths	6.53 %	3	1.36 %	
Non-Christian	1.49 %	1	0.45 %	
Atheist	0.55 %	1	0.45 %	

Although New Zealand was predominantly a Protestant country, there is no evidence to suggest that being Catholic had a negative influence on the potential for officer selection in the New Zealand military forces. This can be compared to the British Army where Catholics had been treated with suspicion since the Jacobite uprisings of the eighteenth century. An example to support this argument from the First World War is Colonel William Malone who was a practising Roman Catholic when he was appointed to command the Wellington Infantry Regiment in 1914. His religious beliefs had not hindered his promotion in the Territorials prior to the war where he had command of the Taranaki Regiment.¹⁸⁵ Likewise in World War Two, Colonel Denver Fountaine was a Roman Catholic from the West Coast of the South Island. His religion appeared not to have been detrimental to his promotional prospects, which saw him being promoted to command two infantry battalions, as well as briefly commanding 6 NZ Infantry Brigade in Italy during July 1944.¹⁸⁶ Haddon Donald stated that a soldier's

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Malone, William George, WW1 10/1039, Digitised Personnel File, Archway Database, Archives New Zealand

¹⁸⁶ Nominal Roll, 2 NZ Division, Italy, 1 July 1944, KMARL

religion was never taken into consideration when recommending him as an officer candidate.¹⁸⁷ Similarly, ‘Sandy’ Thomas was of the same opinion, stating that the most important thing to consider was the individual’s proven ability to lead men into battle.¹⁸⁸ Perhaps this should not be so surprising since Sir Joseph Ward, who led the Liberal government from 1906 to 1912, had become the Dominion’s first Roman Catholic premier, something that has never occurred in modern Britain (although Tony Blair converted to Catholicism after his tenure as prime minister).

Table 5: Recorded Religion of Sampled Junior Officers of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force in the Second World War

Religion	1940 (100)		1943 (123)		1945 (110)	
Church of England	56	56%	53	43%	64	58%
Presbyterian	22	22%	40	33%	24	22%
Roman Catholic	9	9%	11	9%	11	10%
Methodists	4	4%	12	10%	4	3.5%
Congregational	1	1%	2	1.5%	1	1%
Free Thinker	1	1%	0		0	
Christian Scientist	0		1	1%		
Protestant	0		2	1.5%	1	1%
Baptist	0		0		1	1%
Church of Christ	0		0		1	1%
Jewish	0		1	1%	0	
Ringatu	0		0		1	1%
No religion	1	1%	0		0	
Not recorded	6	6%	1	1%	2	2%

Source: Personnel Records, New Zealand Defence Force Archives, Trentham

¹⁸⁷ Haddon Donald, Interview, 29 June 2010.

¹⁸⁸ Sandy Thomas, Interview, 6 June 2010

Chapter 3

Opportunity for Promotion on Active Service

The greatest opportunity for promotion of junior officers and the commissioning of soldiers from the ranks within the New Zealand expeditionary forces came through active service overseas. Whereas, those officers who had been appointed in the Main Body of NZEF in 1914 and those of the first three echelons of 2NZEF in 1939-1940 having already served as officers in peace-time in either the staff corps or Territorial Force, increasingly, as the wars progressed, officer vacancies were filled by those who had proven themselves as competent combat leaders. Primarily, vacancies occurred through the expansion of the expeditionary forces once serving overseas, through 'wastage' due to combat casualties and campaign fatigue, and through the need to replace those officers who proved incompetent or physically or psychologically unfit in battle. This natural attrition saw the loss of many highly-capable and experienced combat leaders within battalions and regiments, but it also paved the way for the promotion of battle-hardened veterans whose proven leadership ensured the continued fighting capabilities of units within the expeditionary forces. Although there were occasions when situations dictated the need for immediate field promotions and commissions, even on active service, most promotions were determined by a traditional formal process.

There were set regulations regarding the promotions, appointments and transfers of commissioned officers. Formulated on systems established in the British Army, the purpose of these was to provide a standardized structure for promotion of regular officers based on seniority.¹⁸⁹ During the First World War the General Officer Commanding the New Zealand Expeditionary Force introduced a policy for officer promotion based on the peace-time regulations. The policy was amended on occasions

¹⁸⁹ Studholme, pp. 8-9

and was published as part of the officer gradations list of the New Zealand military forces.¹⁹⁰ By the regular publication of the gradation lists, along with the updated policy, officers were kept aware of their current seniority and could calculate their prospects for promotion.

These regulations provided individuals with a level of certainty. Those seeking promotion could feel confident that promotions would be made in accordance with the spirit, if not to the letter, of the published regulations. In theory officers could expect full consideration, no matter in what capacity or location they might be serving.¹⁹¹ However, this was not always the case. Studholme records that though these regulations were rigidly adhered to as far as possible, the regulations themselves were not rigid and were extended and changed as the expeditionary force expanded and as the demands of war required.¹⁹²

There was a set of principles applied in regard to promotions. All promotions to the rank of lieutenant-colonel and over, and all appointments carrying such ranks, were made solely by selection.¹⁹³ The purpose of this regulation was not only to prevent an abundance of senior officers, but also to encourage officers to remain serving with their units rather than seeking secondments to other appointments.¹⁹⁴ In the case of officers of the rank of captain and under, promotions up to the rank of major were determined by seniority.¹⁹⁵ Even so, such promotions would only be made provided the individual was recommended by his commanding officer as being 'fit for promotion to a higher rank.'¹⁹⁶

To determine such fitness for promotion, a policy was introduced that directed all commanding officers of units to report periodically on their subordinate officers. This came in the form of a questionnaire that was required to be submitted every three to six months, depending on where the units were serving.¹⁹⁷ The purpose of these was to facilitate prompt filling of vacancies. Officers were deemed to be fit for promotion to a higher rank or not, and those who received an unfavourable report were shown the document, with all reports then being forwarded to divisional headquarters.¹⁹⁸ When a

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

vacancy occurred, the most senior officer having a favourable recommendation was immediately promoted. Accordingly, no officer with a current unfavourable report was to be promoted, no matter what his seniority might be.¹⁹⁹

This system was maintained in the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force during the Second World War. In theory, the regulations should have neutralised bias for or against an individual. However, in the case of appointments of senior officers this certainly was not the case. An example is that of Major-General Lindsay Inglis of 2NZEF. Having already temporarily replaced Freyberg as the commander of the 2nd New Zealand Division as a result of Freyberg being wounded at Minqar Qaim in June 1942, Inglis was overlooked twice for the position when Freyberg was later appointed to command the 2nd New Zealand Corps at Cassino in March 1944.²⁰⁰ Inglis was so disillusioned by the decision that he resigned his position as 4 NZ Armoured Brigade commander and returned to New Zealand.²⁰¹ Freyberg, and likewise Godley, Russell and Chaytor in the First World War, had the sole authority to determine such senior appointments.²⁰² This provided the flexibility to promote those who had performed well in senior positions, such as brigadiers Barrowclough, Kippenberger, Weir and Parkinson during the Second World War, along with brigadiers Braithwaite, Fulton, Hart and Meldrum in the Great War, while preventing those who had not performed to the expected level from progressing any further. In regard to Inglis, there had been some questions regarding his style of leadership during the costly attack at Ruweisat Ridge during the first battle of El Alamein in July 1942, and although he was regarded as a competent brigade commander, Freyberg overlooked him twice for temporary command of the division after that.²⁰³

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Major-General Lindsay Inglis, Letter to Freyberg, 5 September 1944, Inglis Papers, MS Papers 0421-67, ATL

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² N.Z.E.F. Regulations 20 and 26 (Promotions, Appointments and Transfers of Officers), as quoted in *Some Records of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force: record of Personal Services during the War of Officers, Nurses, and First-Class Warrant Officers; And Other Facts Relating to the N.Z.E.F. – Unofficial But Based on official Records*, compiled by Lieutenant-Colonel John Studholme (Wellington, 1928), pp. 8-9

²⁰³ Harper, *Kippenberger*, p. 163

Promotion from the ranks in World War 1

In 1994 Peter Hodge in a BA Honours research essay, challenged some myths surrounding the egalitarian nature of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force during the Great War. He argues that although officially, due to public pressure, the government made changes to policies regarding replacement commissioned officers in the NZEF towards the end of the conflict to ensure it was seen as an army of opportunity, unofficially it was not.²⁰⁴ He concluded that the promotion of Territorial officers directly from New Zealand into the expeditionary force for the duration of the war acted as ‘a physical block to promotion’ of more experienced and proven leaders from the ranks. He also stated that education and social class were determining factors in the selection of officers, and that the selection process was slanted towards the ‘natural officer group’ from the middle classes.²⁰⁵ While this work has merit, it is limited in that Hodge’s sample of 100 officers from the NZEF in the First World War is quite small in comparison to the number of officers surveyed in this work. While Hodge’s conclusions concerning education and social class having some influence in officer selection support the findings of this thesis, his other argument that the commissioning of officers direct from New Zealand quelled the prospects of others is contestable.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to determine how egalitarian New Zealand society actually was. The complexity of the issue has seen New Zealanders take up widely differing positions. David Pitt, a sociologist, in a scholarly approach to the question, has stated that until recently the official and intellectual ideology, and popular mythology, was that New Zealand was egalitarian, but that evidence suggests that there developed a significant amount of social stratification, especially after the Second World War with the migration of Maori and Pacific Islanders to the main urban centres.²⁰⁶ The Marxist view linking capitalism with the class society sees an inherent antagonism between the capital-owning class and the majority working class which can only be resolved by a transfer of power from one to the other.²⁰⁷ Other schools of

²⁰⁴ Peter Hodge, ‘The Army of Opportunity? Social and Military backgrounds of NZEF Officers in the Great War, 1914-1918,’ BA Honours Essay, Victoria University, 1994, p. 31 (copy provided by John Crawford)

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 38

²⁰⁶ David Pitt, ‘Are there Social Classes in New Zealand?’ in *Social Class in New Zealand*, ed. David Pitt (Auckland, 1977), pp. 1-6

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

thought argue that societies are naturally or inevitably under the control of a dominant elite.²⁰⁸

The concept of egalitarianism within the New Zealand expeditionary forces has to be taken in the context of the time. James Belich argues that accepted egalitarianism in European New Zealand society in the early twentieth century did not mean an absence of class but more an absence of extreme class distinction, class oppression and direct gentry rule.²⁰⁹ He states that cap-doffing and respectful addressing to social superiors became less common during this period, indicating that there was an increasing sense of measured equality within society, especially in comparison to Britain.²¹⁰ Erik Olssen argues that the class structure of Britain did not fit the New Zealand model, which he states was more complex, and that although there was limited class conflict within the growing urban society, there was very little in rural communities where the majority of people ‘enjoyed acceptance and difference.’²¹¹ The early pioneering society most certainly fostered a sense of egalitarianism within the European population. Olssen states that in the goldfields of the 1860s and 1870s, though most of the miners were from the British middling classes, the ‘overwhelming preponderance of men, the roughness of their life, the importance of strength and luck created fiercely egalitarian...communities...where the brotherhood of miners was essentially a one-class community’ irrespective of their previous social status in Britain.²¹² The introduction of universal suffrage for both men and women by 1893 and the progressive social policies of successive Liberal governments during the 1890s through to 1912 would have also reinforced a growing sense of equality and opportunity for the working classes in New Zealand compared to the society many had left behind in Britain.²¹³ At that time most working class people did not expect equality in every aspect of life, especially in the military forces which are based on hierarchies of leadership.²¹⁴ Even in Maori society there were hierarchies of leadership based on tradition and *mana* (honour), but unlike European society, monetary or property wealth

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders From the 1880s to the Year 2000*, (Auckland, 2001), p. 22

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Erik Olssen, ‘Social Class in Nineteenth Century New Zealand,’ in *Social Class in New Zealand*, ed. David Pitt (Auckland, 1977), pp. 28-30

²¹² Ibid, p. 31

²¹³ Olssen, ‘Towards a New Society,’ in *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Second Edition, ed. Geoffrey Rice (Auckland, 1992), pp. 256-278

²¹⁴ Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, p. 22

was not a significant factor in social status.²¹⁵ It was this sense of egalitarianism, real or perceived, that the citizen-soldiers of the Dominion took with them into the expeditionary forces.

Clearly, there were opportunities for those who had the proven leadership, ability and communication skills required of an officer during that era, although more so in during the Second World War than during the First World War. The fact that many experienced soldiers from the ranks, who had been coal miners, saw-millers and farm labourers in civilian life, were being commissioned was a progressive step in the development of the New Zealand military forces. Few such men would have been given or earned the opportunity to be officers in the Territorial Force prior to the war. An example of this was Private Denis O'Brien, a Roman Catholic who was a coal miner from the coastal village of Millerton in Buller, a geographically isolated region on the west coast of New Zealand's South Island. He volunteered to serve overseas in 1915 and initially served with the Canterbury Infantry Regiment.²¹⁶ On the Western Front he transferred to the New Zealand Pioneer Battalion and received a commission, ending the war as a second-lieutenant, but later served in the Territorial Force as a captain.²¹⁷ At the end of the war, O'Brien was accepted to study at Oxford and it is unlikely that this would have happened had he not been a commissioned officer.²¹⁸ He certainly would not have had this opportunity in his previous civilian life.

What is evidently clear is that, unlike the British Army, low social status in civilian life was not necessarily a barrier to deserving soldiers from the rank and file of the New Zealand forces from eventually receiving commissions and promotions during both conflicts; competent and effective leaders at all levels were recognised. The expansion of the divisions and the high attrition rate due to combat and exhaustion from years of campaigning ensured that there was always a demand for replacement officers and non-commissioned officers. The increasingly limited number of regular Staff officers and trained Territorial officers fit enough for active overseas service and available as reinforcements from New Zealand meant that promotion of experienced

²¹⁵ Michael King, 'Between Two Worlds,' in *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Second Edition, ed. Geoffrey Rice (Auckland, 1992), pp. 285-286

²¹⁶ D.Q. O'Brien, Personnel File, Archway Database, Archives New Zealand

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ella Matthews, *Yesterdays in Golden Buller* (Westport, 1957), p. 150

junior officers and NCOs became the most effective and efficient option in filling commissioned vacancies.²¹⁹

When the expeditionary forces were being formed in 1914 and 1939, Godley and Freyberg openly recognised the need to promote those enlisted men from within the established formations who possessed the qualities and proven leadership skills required of a commissioned officer. Both knew that the level of wastage of personnel while on active service overseas would require regular replacements of officers and NCOs, although neither would have anticipated the extreme casualty rates suffered in the early stages of both conflicts.²²⁰ By July 1942 the 2nd New Zealand Division had sustained 680 officer casualties as a result of the fighting in Greece, Crete, Operation Crusader and the break out at Minqar Qaim. Of these 75 had been killed in action, 17 died of wounds, 16 died as a result of accidents or illness, three died while prisoners of war, 304 were prisoners of war, 256 had been wounded and nine were reported missing.²²¹ The official reported total of 2NZEF officers killed in action or dying of wounds was 442, while 1,206 were wounded.²²² The casualty rate among officers in the NZEF during the Great War was even higher, with 773 being either killed in action or died of wounds or illness, while 1,686 were wounded during the conflict.²²³ As Alexander Aitken stated in his autobiography recounting his experiences in the First World War and commenting on the excessive number of platoon commanders his battalion lost in the fighting on the Somme: ‘The life of a subaltern at the Somme and Passchendaele was...nasty, brutish, and short.’²²⁴ It was the same experience for those officers who served at Gallipoli. Ewen Pilling who served there in the ranks of the Otago Infantry Regiment at Gallipoli, and who later served as an officer on the Western Front, provided sobering evidence of this in his diary in July 1915, describing the heavy losses of leaders within his battalion:

Out of the original officers and non-coms in our regiment, we have only one officer and three corporals remaining. My promotion, first to corporal, and later to sergeant, in each case filled a gap.

²¹⁹ Studholme, p. 10

²²⁰ Major-General Alexander Godley, Letter to Sir James Allen, 21 October 1914, WA 252-1, ANZ

²²¹ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 21 July 1942, Vol.2, H-19, p. 6

²²² Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 20 June 1946, Vol.3, H-19, p. 9

²²³ Studholme, p. 383

²²⁴ Alexander Aitken, *Gallipoli to the Somme: Recollections of a New Zealand Infantryman* (Oxford, 1963), p. 119

Those at home may think that those promotions out here are the reward for some special piece of work. That is not so. One's old ambitions and childish visions of winning a V.C. or some other distinction fade away under such active service conditions as we have experienced here. We put little value on decorations now, and will be satisfied if we do our work and get back home alive.²²⁵

The loss of officers on Gallipoli, as elsewhere, was the balance of casualties and those returning to their units having recovered from wounds or illness. Again, according to Pilling, the Otago Infantry Battalion in January 1916, after it had been evacuated from the Peninsula, had only two of the original officers of the battalion on strength.²²⁶

However, during the Great War, it was not until the New Zealand Division was serving on the Western Front that a system was established for enlisted men to be commissioned from the ranks. As the conflict continued the demand for replacement officers made it clear that the supply of officers depended both on reinforcements from home and, increasingly, the promotion of suitable combat-experienced candidates from other ranks. Battalion commanders were tasked with nominating experienced enlisted soldiers from within their units whom they thought had the experience and potential to become platoon commanders.²²⁷ Under this system, once nominated, the candidates were transferred to officer cadet battalions in England where they underwent rigorous training in leadership and field craft from between six to nine months, depending on whether a major offensive was to occur or had occurred.²²⁸ It was believed that with this period away from the front and in the company of other officer cadets these men would begin to think and behave as officers prior to returning to their units.²²⁹ Some of those nominated were returned to New Zealand where they were commissioned and eventually returned to the Western Front and Palestine with reinforcement detachments.²³⁰ Pilling was one such example of this policy. In March 1916, after having originally served as a private and rising through the ranks to become a sergeant-major, he was posted back to New Zealand to attend a two-month commissioning course and subsequently returned to the New Zealand Division later that year as a lieutenant in the 17th Reinforcements.²³¹

²²⁵ Lieutenant E.G. Pilling, 21 July 1915, *An Anzac Memory: Extracts from the Rough Diary of Lieutenant E.G. Pilling, N.Z. Expeditionary Force* (Dunedin, 1933), pp. 44-45

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 10 January 1916, p. 74

²²⁷ Studholme, p. 10

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ Major-General A.W. Robin, 14 November 1916, AD1, 827, 29/81, ANZ

²³¹ Pilling, pp. 82-92

The idea behind this policy was to prefer the allocation of commissions to those who had seen active service, thus providing experienced combat officers while avoiding any animosity among the rank and file.²³² Godley clearly stated the importance of this policy in a letter to the Minister of Defence in early 1916:

The authority which you have given me to recommend a certain proportion of suitable N.C.O.s and men for commissions in the Army at Home, and also to send a certain proportion back to New Zealand, with a view to their being trained as officers of reinforcements, is a great help, and will make matters much better as regards the relationship of the reinforcement officers with those who have been here all the time, and who may be qualified for commissions, but for whom vacancies may not hitherto have been forthcoming.²³³

An example of the animosity that could occur when inexperienced reinforcement officers were given command over veterans is provided by Sergeant Gary Clunie of the Wellington Mounted Rifle serving in Egypt in a letter to his family in June 1916:

When we went back to the trenches we had officers and men over us that did not know the first thing about war in the trenches. I had an argument with our o.c. squadron who was only a second lieutenant about standing to arms morning and evening. He tried to tell me that the supports did not stand to, when that is the part of the army that stand to is especially for, as men in the trenches are always ready. Anyhow, you can imagine how you would like a new chum out from home to come and start telling you how to run the farm. Well its almost the same thing, only that you would be able to take a stand and tell him what you thought of him and that is just what we can't do.²³⁴

Clunie had volunteered at the outbreak of war and had embarked with the Main Body for Egypt. Whether Clunie was angry at being personally passed over for promotion after the Gallipoli campaign or whether his grievance was generally representative is unclear. However, his letters show that he did hold the original officers of his unit in high regard, especially having followed them into the battle for Chunuk Bair in August 1915: 'Our captain had his leg blown off below the knee. He was the best officer we had too. All our officers got knocked out and poor old Colonel Bauchop

²³² Studholme, p. 10

²³³ Godley, Letter to Allen, 20 January 1916, Allen 1, 1, M1/15, Part 2, ANZ

²³⁴ Ron Austin (ed.), *From Gallipoli to Palestine: The War Writings of Sergeant G.T. Clunie of the Wellington Mounted Rifles, 1914-1919*, compiled by Kevin Clunie (McCrae, Victoria, 2009), p. 71

got very badly hit.’²³⁵ Prior to returning to New Zealand to be commissioned, Pilling was another combat veteran who wrote of his concern at the quality of the inexperienced replacement officers coming from home. It was his opinion that the commissions should be offered to those who had already proven leadership in combat and who had earned such promotion: ‘Personally, I am prouder of having started at the bottom, in the ranks, and of having been a private at the landing at Gallipoli, than of any other part of my military career.’²³⁶

The number of combat commissions available in the NZEF and the demand for replacements fluctuated throughout the First World War, making it extremely difficult to achieve a balance of the required number of newly commissioned junior officers. In February 1916 when the combat units of the NZEF had returned from Gallipoli and were rebuilding their strength, Godley reported to Allen that at that time he believed that there was a ‘quite fair and satisfactory balance’ being maintained between those officers coming from New Zealand and those currently serving in Egypt looking for commissions.²³⁷ Godley highlighted the difficulties he faced in attempting to achieve such a balance:

I think what you say about calling up [Territorial] non-commissioned officers, who are likely to be suitable as officers, to go through a special course of training before their reinforcement units go into camp is very good and should have satisfactory results. But, now for some time we shall probably have no serious casualties, and I hope you will send as few officers as possible. I know you will say that I am inconsistent and that one moment I am complaining of a shortage of officers, and the next saying that we have too many, and this is quite true. It would be very easy and simple if, directly an officer went away sick or wounded, someone was promoted to fill his place, but this would let you in for a great deal of excess of establishment, and the payment of altogether of too many officers. It is one of the difficulties incidental to active service, which we must make the best of and try to hit off a happy medium as regards dealing with it.²³⁸

However, combat casualties and the rigours of campaigning on the Western Front increased the wastage of officers within the New Zealand Division and ensured a fluctuating demand for replacements. In September 1916, Brigadier-General George Richardson, who was in command of NZEF troops stationed in the United Kingdom

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 31

²³⁶ Pilling, 24 February 1915, p. 81

²³⁷ Godley, Letter to Allen, 19 February 1916, Allen 1, 1, M1/15, Part 2, ANZ

²³⁸ Godley, Letter to Allen, 10 January 1916, Allen 1, 1, M1/15, Part 2, ANZ

and who administered the training of reinforcements prior to their joining combat units on the Western Front, suggested that the question of the supply of officers should be reviewed frequently in order to avoid too large a surplus during periods of comparative inactivity in the field. He calculated that the New Zealand Division required 360 to 400 replacement officers per year, or 30 per month for infantry alone.²³⁹ At that time he indicated that the supply of replacement junior officers from the reserve group in England was not equal to the demand from the Division, but that with the numbers of officers recovering from wounds and sickness, the supply might in future be satisfactory.²⁴⁰ Such a demand for replacement junior officers could not be sustained without the promotion of experienced soldiers from the ranks, and according to Studholme's research of official records, 2,100 enlisted soldiers were commissioned in the NZEF prior to it being disbanded in 1919.²⁴¹

Providing a balance between supplying newly-commissioned combat-experienced junior officers and suitable inexperienced junior officers from the Dominion for the New Zealand Division on the Western Front was no easy task. In November 1916 Major-General Alfred Robin, who was commander of the New Zealand Military Forces in the Dominion for the duration of the war in Godley's absence, outlined the difficulties he faced in supplying junior officers for service overseas:

This is a difficult problem as our New Zealander generally considers himself fit and is ambitious for a commission, likewise so many parents clamour for promotion of their sons. The N.C.O.s sent from [the] Division to New Zealand to train and returned with commissions if qualified are not an unmixed blessing. They come to us and resent being practically put to recruit work. They demand their commissions at once on going into camp and state that they were promised all sorts of things. However, we will do our best to send them away fit.²⁴²

There were a number of principles adopted and, supposedly, strictly adhered to regarding the commissioning of soldiers from the ranks in the First World War. Firstly,

²³⁹ Brigadier-General George Richardson, Memorandum to Minister of Defence, 4 September 1916, AD1, 827, 29/81, ANZ

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Studholme, p. 372

²⁴² Major-General Alfred Robin, Letter to Godley, 14 November 1916, AD1 827, 29/81, ANZ

no member of the NZEF was to be considered for nomination to an Officer Cadet Corps or commissioning course unless he had been nominated by the commanding officer of his unit.²⁴³ In the case of those serving in non-combatant units, no nomination could be accepted without the recommendation of the commanding officer of his unit, but in addition he needed to have been subsequently transferred to a combat unit serving at the front.²⁴⁴ After having served at least three months with the unit, the candidate required a favourable report from the senior officer regarding the candidate's behaviour under fire.²⁴⁵ According to Studholme, many of those candidates serving this probationary period at the front were killed in action.²⁴⁶ Alexander Aitken mentions an incident at Armentieres where two officer cadets studying for commissions from another unit were killed by a single bullet from an enemy sniper when standing together in a trench while seconded to his Otago infantry battalion.²⁴⁷

Not all those promoted from the ranks attended commissioning courses. The need to urgently replace platoon commanders who had become casualties during major offensives meant that some enlisted men were commissioned in the field. This was through necessity to ensure an effective leadership structure remained in place while the units were in the frontline, where demand for experienced junior officers outweighed the ability to supply them through the normal process. To be commissioned in the field was considered a great honour during both wars, but was more likely to happen in the Great War. An example of this was the commissioning of Alexander Aitken in August 1916; after his battalion had lost 180 men in a costly trench raid at Armentieres, Aitken and four other experienced NCOs were given immediate commissions, without having to attend any courses.²⁴⁸ Of the five commissioned at that time, all were to become casualties, with four being killed.²⁴⁹ Aitken also recalls that two sergeant-majors had been commissioned in the field a month earlier in an effort to provide immediate replacements for the battalion.²⁵⁰ In contradiction to the official process, newly commissioned ex-rankers were supposed to be transferred to other

²⁴³ Studholme, p. 10

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Aitken, p. 97

²⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 118-119

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

battalions or regiments after becoming officers as it was believed familiarity with those from their own unit would be detrimental to discipline.²⁵¹

As the Great War progressed, experience ensured that the official guidelines and directives concerning the selection and commissioning of reinforcement officers from New Zealand for active service overseas were tightened. The aim was to ensure that the best candidates were selected and that a reasonable balance could be maintained between the number of commissions offered and the number of officer vacancies within the NZEF. The contentious issue regarding the appointment of inexperienced combat platoon and company commander ahead of worthy combat veterans of the NZEF was acknowledged in an official memorandum to the commandant of Trentham Camp in October 1918 which stated that due to the surplus of inexperienced Territorial officers being 'called up' or volunteering to serve overseas, that all such officers were now required to serve as sergeants or face being court-martialled as deserters. This directive proved very unpopular with those it affected and it was hoped that the official explanation would help to provide some understanding regarding the policy:

It may assist them (officer candidates) if they admit what is due to the gallant fellows who joined the ranks years ago, not as sergeants but as privates, and who fought and suffered all sorts of dangers and privations to attain to commissioned rank, and realize what the feelings of these fellows would be to see brand-new officers coming in over their heads four years after the war had begun.²⁵²

However, there was a reduction in the number of reinforcement officers sent from the Dominion as early as 1916. Commencing with the 17th Reinforcements, the establishment per draft was reduced from 45 to 39, with officer candidates of such drafts having to undergo a preliminary training course of twelve weeks prior to embarkation.²⁵³ Part of such courses included prospective officers undergoing six written examinations of 90-minute duration which covered Field Service Regulations, administration, an essay on march discipline, arithmetic, infantry training and military sanitation. Examples of such questions included: 'what are the duties of a platoon commander in the firing line in the attack,' and 'explain what is meant by active defence.'²⁵⁴ Those who failed these examinations reverted to the rank of temporary

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Army Department Memorandum, 31 October 1918, AD1 913, 43/546/2, ANZ

²⁵³ Army Department Memorandum, 6 September 1916, AD1 913, 43/546/2, ANZ

²⁵⁴ Army Department Memorandum, 12 December 1917, AD1 874, 38/76/1, ANZ

sergeant and were posted to the next reinforcement draft, while even those who passed were not guaranteed a commission during the middle-war years.²⁵⁵

According to an Army Department memorandum, British Imperial Army Regulations stipulated that ‘an officer must not serve in a rank lower than that which he has acquired by examination or appointment,’ which, together with complaints from members of the public regarding the legality of reducing qualified officers in rank, proved problematic.²⁵⁶ This was highlighted when a Territorial captain, L.H. Levien, complained of being reduced in rank to a second-lieutenant prior to being posted to the New Zealand Division in France. However, Robin, as Commandant of New Zealand Military Forces, took a pragmatic approach and simply ignored them. He wrote that the public would not accept a position whereby officers could not be sent abroad because they were too senior in rank, resulting in them being retained in New Zealand on leave without pay, which was not in the interests of the service.²⁵⁷

At this stage of the war it does not seem fair that Territorial officers should proceed to the front with senior ranks, thus superseding officers who have had considerable experience of active service. Individual cases of apparent hardship in this connection can hardly be considered, as efficiency is the first consideration. Expeditionary Force headquarters are continually asking that ranks in reinforcements be kept as low as possible as it is difficult to place officers of senior rank who lack previous experience in the present war.²⁵⁸

It was for this reason that Robin introduced a policy change in June 1917 that stipulated that in future no Territorial officer of subaltern rank belonging to combatant branches would be accepted for appointment to the Expeditionary Force reinforcements in rank higher than second-lieutenant.²⁵⁹

Robin also argued that if no vacancies could be found for surplus officers then the introduced local policy of reducing officers to non-commissioned rank was a practical approach and would over-ride other considerations.²⁶⁰ An example of this policy was the 29th Reinforcements, where only the top four qualified officer candidates

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Major-General Robin to Minister of Defence, 15 August 1917, AD1 912, 43/517, ANZ

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Army Department Memorandum, 18 June 1917, AD1 913, 43/517, ANZ

²⁶⁰ Robin to Minister of Defence, 15 August 1917, AD1 912, 43/517, ANZ

were given commissions (who included Second-Lieutenant Leslie Averill who famously won a Military Cross scaling the walls of Le Quesnoy in 1918), compared to the 20 and 25 officers commissioned in the 27th and 28th Reinforcements.²⁶¹ Those qualified candidates for whom there were insufficient vacancies in the NZEF and who scored highly in their examinations were to be considered for appointments as company sergeant-majors in later drafts. This trend appears to have continued with no non-commissioned officers who qualified for commissions from the 32nd and 33rd Reinforcements being commissioned before embarkation to England due to a lack of vacancies.²⁶² What makes this so significant is that it provides evidence that as the war progressed and officer casualties mounted, vacancies within the NZEF were increasingly filled by combat experienced non-commissioned officers already serving overseas, thus reducing the need to rely on qualified, but inexperienced, reinforcement officers from New Zealand.

Promotion from the ranks in World War 2

During the Second World War Freyberg fostered the commissioning of experienced NCOs from within the expeditionary force, believing it made the 2nd New Zealand Division a more effective fighting formation. Early in the war he was confident that he could supply the required commissioned personnel to fill the vacancies resulting from losses sustained during the campaigns in Greece and Crete from within the Division. In a secret ciphered message to Prime Minister Peter Fraser on 17 May 1941, only several days before the German invasion of Crete, Freyberg stated that he was not anxious about the successors to commissioned vacancies as the quality of the officers within the division was excellent and that good men could be promoted from the ranks.²⁶³ Freyberg's experience during the Great War had shown him that veteran NCOs who maintained the trust and confidence of the men serving under them and who had proven combat leadership, generally made excellent commissioned platoon commanders.²⁶⁴ He was also conscious of the ill-feeling that occurred within units when

²⁶¹ Robin to Camp Commandant, Trentham Military Camp, 31 October 1917, AD1 874, 38/76/1, ANZ

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Freyberg, Ciphered correspondence to Peter Fraser, 17 May 1941, WA II -8, Box 17, Historical Papers- Orders, May 1941, ANZ

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

reinforcement officers recently arrived from New Zealand, and lacking combat experience, were used to fill vacancies that the troops believed should have been filled by deserving and experienced NCOs. To counter this, during the Italian campaign Freyberg insisted that those officers from the disbanded 3rd New Zealand Division who were to be transferred to the 2nd New Zealand Division in the Mediterranean, were required to accept demotion by at least one rank.²⁶⁵ In part this was an effort to maintain morale within the veteran units serving in the 2nd Division, as well as ensuring the reinforcements, who only had limited combat experience, became acclimatised to the more open warfare characterized by the fighting in Italy. Major-General Barrowclough who had commanded the 3rd New Zealand Division protested against this measure, claiming that his officers were experienced and deserved better treatment.²⁶⁶ In the event, most of these officers, many of whom had been reduced to NCO rank, were generally promoted to commissioned rank once they had proved themselves during the fighting in Italy, with Freyberg later praising the quality of these reinforcements.

The responsibility of finding suitable replacement junior officers from within the ranks remained with the battalion commanders. From recent interviews and correspondence with Sandy Thomas and Haddon Donald, along with anecdotal evidence from autobiographies, biographies, diaries and letters of other battalion officers, there appears to be a common practice as to how this was achieved. According to Sandy Thomas, when he was commanding 23 Battalion he followed a 'committee style' selection process.²⁶⁷ This involved him seeking recommendations for possible candidates from his company and platoon commanders, with Thomas having the final say as the battalion commander.²⁶⁸ It was his belief that platoon and company commanders who bonded with their troops got to know the strengths and weaknesses of their subordinates well. He stated that all ranks were considered after they had proven combat experience and that he and his officers were always looking for individuals who showed leadership potential. He claims that this was necessary as there was always a shortage of good junior officers after a battle due to the high casualty rates of platoon commanders who led from the front.²⁶⁹ Those selected for commissioning

²⁶⁵ Freyberg, Memorandum to Puttick, 20 November 1944, Puttick 5 1-2, ANZ

²⁶⁶ Peter Fraser, Correspondence with Freyberg, 27 September 1944, *Documents, Vol 2, Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War, 1939-45* (Wellington, 1951), pp. 362-363

²⁶⁷ Thomas, Interview, 6 June 2010

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

courses from his battalion were usually posted to other South Island battalions (i.e. 20 or 26 Battalions) once commissioned as there remained a strong sense of regional identity among the South Islanders.²⁷⁰

Haddon Donald practiced a similar style selection process. As a young platoon subaltern in 1940 he was asked to nominate enlisted members from his platoon whom he thought would make suitable officer candidates. At that time he nominated six, all of whom passed their commissioning course. Included amongst these men was Corporal Ted Norman who rose through the ranks to eventually become the lieutenant-colonel in command of 25 Battalion, being awarded the DSO and MC. After the war Norman was knighted and became the Anglican bishop of Wellington. Donald was certainly in favour of commissioning soldiers from the ranks:

The calibre of my platoon was very impressive as they were all country types, very self-reliant and reliable; whereas the city boys did not seem to adapt as well to army life. There were three others in my platoon whom I wanted to nominate who turned the offer down as they wanted to get away [overseas] with their friends. Living close to our men as we did made it fairly easy to select the most promising. Natural leaders stood out, but I would not choose any one who talked too much – better if they listened carefully and then acted.²⁷¹

The belief or perception of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force being egalitarian in nature during the Second World War has some foundation when considering the recruitment of the officer corps. In 1939 there were less than 100 regular officers in the New Zealand Staff Corps.²⁷² This number was insufficient to provide leadership for the proposed 6,000 strong first echelon of the expeditionary force. Each battalion required approximately 25 officers of which the majority were subalterns (lieutenants and second-lieutenants), who commanded platoons of around 30 men. To initially solve this problem, Territorial Force officers were offered commissions, mostly at their substantive rank, in the newly formed regular battalions.²⁷³ This proved practical in that the battalions were generally raised from volunteers from within the Territorial units. The transfer of the officer establishment provided cohesion and the experience needed to provide adequate training to the new formations. This policy is

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Haddon Donald, Letter to Author, 20 June 2010

²⁷² Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1939, Vol. 3, H-19, p. 12

²⁷³ Ibid., p. 8

evident in the 1940 sample where 78 out of 100 junior officers had their commissions transferred from the Territorials.

Initially, Freyberg attempted to maintain a reasonable balance in seeking replacement junior officers from reinforcements from New Zealand and by promoting other ranks from within the Division. In March 1940 he had proposed that 60 percent of the junior officer vacancies due to wastage be filled from officers of the 4th and 5th Reinforcements expected from the Dominion, while 40 percent of the vacancies be filled from within the Division;²⁷⁴ although this was later changed to 50 percent each for the 5th Reinforcements.²⁷⁵ The same figures were suggested for the 6th and 7th Reinforcements; however, by this time only one third of the vacancies were filled from reinforcements, with two-thirds being filled from promotion within the Division.²⁷⁶ In late 1940 the proportion of officers to other ranks within the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force was 1 to 19.3, but there still remained a problem of filling vacancies. According to a memorandum from the 2NZEF Headquarters it was estimated that a further 169 to 190 replacement junior officers would be required by April 1941 and that the Division would need 64 replacements per month from January to April 1941.²⁷⁷ It was at this time that a request was made for the Division to establish its own Officer Cadet Training Unit (OCTU) in Egypt so that it could provide a short two-month course for prospective officers from the ranks that would help to satisfy the supply demand for junior officers, especially in combat units.²⁷⁸

As the war progressed and the demand for combat-experienced replacement officers increased, the practice of filling vacancies direct from New Zealand could not be sustained at previous levels. The 1943 and 1945 samples clearly indicate a change in recruitment policy. In the 1943 sample 102 out of 123 officers had been promoted from the ranks, while almost all of the 110 officers of the 1945 sample had done the same. There are a number of reasons for this. The veterans of the early campaigns of Greece, Crete and North Africa resented inexperienced officers coming directly from New Zealand and leading them into battle.²⁷⁹ Their lack of experience could lead to unnecessary casualties in a division that had already suffered heavily early in the war.

²⁷⁴ Freyberg, Memorandum to Minister of Defence, 6 March 1940, WAI 1 9, DA 1/9/27/2, ANZ

²⁷⁵ Headquarter 2NZEF Memorandum, 29 October 1940, WAI 1 9, DA 1/9/27/2, ANZ

²⁷⁶ Freyberg, Memorandum to Minister of Defence, 6 March 1940, WAI 1 9, DA 1/9/27/2, ANZ

²⁷⁷ Headquarter 2NZEF Memorandum, 29 October 1940, WAI 1 9, DA 1/9/27/2, ANZ

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁹ Jack Collins, Interview, 14 April 2010

This was recognised by Freyberg, who had always encouraged the promotion of experienced non-commissioned officers. This practice had the dual effect of maintaining the fighting efficiency of his formations as well as promoting morale.

The policy had a dramatic effect on the officers of the 3rd NZ Division who were to be transferred to the 2nd NZ Division in the Mediterranean. Most of the junior officers were required to relinquish their commissions and became temporary sergeants, while those who had been battalion and regiment commanders in the Pacific, such as Lieutenant-Colonels F.L.H. Davis, J. Brook-White and B. Wicksteed, were reduced to majors.²⁸⁰ Ironically for Davis and Brook-White, who were regular officers in the New Zealand Staff Corps, service with the 3rd NZ Division had limited their chances of promotion; both had previously served with the 2nd NZ Division in the Mediterranean and had been transferred to serve in the Pacific to provide combat leadership in the inexperienced 3rd NZ Division.²⁸¹ Had they remained with the 2nd NZ Division they would have had a greater chance of obtaining substantive rank sooner.

However, after some experience with the 2nd NZ Division most of the men who were forced to resign their commissions and who had proven themselves in combat in Italy were promoted to commissioned rank on merit.²⁸² Of all those officers from the 3rd NZ Division who remained in New Zealand after the division had been withdrawn from the Pacific none of those sampled were promoted above their substantive rank. There was certainly some prejudice towards the junior officers of the 3rd Division, especially from within the 2nd Division. The reason was mainly due to the limited fighting experience of the 3rd Division which had been used as a garrison for Fiji and in a supporting role in the Solomon Islands. This was in comparison to the 2nd Division which had forged a reputation as an elite fighting force after years of continuous operations in the Mediterranean.

However, the reinforcements from the 3rd New Zealand Division provided a good source of officer candidates. Sandy Thomas agreed with Freyberg's stance on initially reducing these men in rank to prevent any ill-feeling among the veterans of the 2nd Division, but was happy to recommend them for promotion once they had proven themselves and survived battle:

²⁸⁰ Puttick, Letter to Freyberg, 8 November 1944, Puttick 5 1-2, ANZ

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Thomas, Interview, 6 June 2010

We had some good officers come from the 3rd Division in the Pacific. General Freyberg didn't want them to command the experienced troops of the 2nd Division until they had proven themselves in battle...I remember one particular corporal who I thought would have made an excellent officer but he was killed in battle before I could recommend him.²⁸³

It is ironic that Barrowclough should complain about Freyberg's stance regarding replacements from the 3rd NZ Division when he took a similar approach himself. In October 1943 Barrowclough complained to Puttick that he had a surplus of over 100 officers within the 3rd NZ Division, mainly due to the disbandment of 15 Brigade, and requested that no more reinforcement officers be sent from New Zealand.²⁸⁴ He stated that he intended posting some of the older officers back to the Dominion which would not only provide opportunities for promotion for younger fit combat officers but would also address the surplus issue. He clearly took the same approach as Freyberg in wanting to provide opportunities to those experienced and deserving officers and other ranks from within his division when he wrote to Puttick:

There will be other officers whose services could be dispensed with but I will not want to replace them with officers from New Zealand who have had no experience or training in island operations. It may be that some officers whose services were required in New Zealand all through the war would feel a sense of injustice at not being allowed to proceed overseas. There may, in fact, be some injustice done [to] them but I have to be careful that I do not do a greater injustice to the officers of this force who have served abroad so long and who have, at last, had an opportunity of getting battle experience. I am sure you will realise that with the best intentions possible it will be extremely difficult for me to absorb officers from New Zealand. The Middle East (2nd NZ Division), of course, have felt this difficulty in a much greater degree as their officers have had a great deal more active service experience and you have had to solve that difficulty by asking officers to resign their commissions in order to get overseas. As time goes on the same conditions will apply to my force and it will be unfair to the 3rd Division if promotion is forever blocked by the absorption of commissioned officers from New Zealand.²⁸⁵

The surplus of Territorial officers who were commissioned in New Zealand came about through the expansion of the Territorial Force for home defence due to the threat of a Japanese invasion from 1941. The issue Puttick faced was what to do with

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Major-General H. Barrowclough, Memorandum to Puttick, 21 October 1943, Puttick 5 1/5, ANZ

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

those officers who were 'called up' for overseas service once the invasion threat had passed. Like Robin in the Great War, Puttick had to take a pragmatic approach and reported in July 1943 that the surplus officer problem was mostly solved, with 300 surplus officers having volunteered to train as pilots in the Air Force, while over 500 others had voluntarily relinquished their commissions so that they could proceed overseas to serve in the expeditionary force.²⁸⁶ He praised the sacrifice of these volunteers stating: 'It is a fine tribute to their strength of character and common-sense and makes one think that the selection of these officers was not so bad as one was inclined to think.'²⁸⁷

Australia and Canada followed much the same practice in their selection process when choosing officers for combat units. Like New Zealand, these dominions only had small staff corps and cadres of regular soldiers to provide the administration and training of their civilian militia forces leading up to both major conflicts. However the rapid expansion and large size of their expeditionary forces ensured that finding suitable officers was a constant issue. As with New Zealand, these countries relied heavily on the volunteer officers from their militias to provide the leadership within the newly formed battalions and regiments of the expeditionary forces.

Of the two allied dominions, Canada had the most contrasting experience. In contrast to New Zealand's single division on the Western Front, during the First World War Canada's expeditionary force consisted of four fighting divisions which were eventually formed into a corps.²⁸⁸ In the Second World War, at its peak, the Canadian combat formations that served in the Mediterranean and Northern European theatres included three infantry divisions, two armoured divisions and two independent armoured brigades, together with numerous attached allied units, which were formed into the 1st Canadian Army by 1945.²⁸⁹ As Geoffrey Hayes states, there was a fundamental change in the selection policy of Canadian officers in the Second World War from the process of the First World War. Similar to New Zealand and Australia, the Canadian military forces had suffered from governmental financial constraints

²⁸⁶ Puttick, Letter to Barrowclough, 1 July 1943, Puttick 5 1/5, ANZ

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Andrew Iarocci, *Shoestring Soldiers: The 1st Canadian Division at War, 1914-1915* (Toronto, 2008), p. 4

²⁸⁹ Colonel C.P. Stacey, *Six Years of War: The Army in Canada, Britain and the Pacific – Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War*, Vol. 1, 4th Edition (Ottawa, 1967), pp. 108-109

during the inter-war period and were unprepared for war in 1939. The country had 7,000 army officers on strength at this time, but only 455 of them were regular officers.²⁹⁰ He argues that the need to find sufficient officers led to a change in the Canadian selection policy from 1943, where a series of 'scientific' officer selection practices evolved which challenged the underlying principles and methods by which officers had previously been selected. Until that time units had been authorised to select suitable candidates from within established formations or from the reserve, and followed the methods used within the British Army.²⁹¹ The system of the 'magic eye' where the experience and judgement of commanding officers determined who were considered suitable candidates to receive a commission was the traditional method used by most military forces of the Empire and Commonwealth. However, unlike New Zealand and Australia, the Canadians looked to a more sustainable practice as the war progressed and demand for junior officers increased.

Educational qualifications and psychological testing became the main focus of the Canadian selection process. Unlike New Zealand, the Canadian universities had established 'Canadian Officer Training Corps' from which members received commissions directly into the army until mid-1943. This proved unpopular with some politicians who considered that enlisted men were being overlooked for commissions in favour of privileged college students who became officers due to their social status rather than merit.²⁹² This then led to the establishment of Officer Selection and Appraisal Centres in Canada and England where candidates took a series of written and practical tests to determine suitability for a commission. These included the new Bion 'leaderless group test' where a section of candidates were given physical tasks with no prearranged plan or leaders. Observers then assessed individuals on how well they could organise and control the actions of the section. Further assessment included interviews with Personnel Selection Officers and psychiatrists.²⁹³ This practice followed those used by the United States and was ideal for recruiting large armies.²⁹⁴ Although such practises are now used in 'Possible Officer Selection Boards' for the New Zealand Army Reserve, from the evidence provided by battalion commanders

²⁹⁰ Geoffrey Hayes, 'Science and the Magic Eye: Innovations in the Selection of Canadian Army Officers, 1939-1945,' *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol.22, no. 2, Winter 1995/96, pp. 275-295

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

Sandy Thomas and Haddon Donald, the traditional method of nomination of officer candidates using the 'magic eye' was considered more suitable for the New Zealand Expeditionary Force during the Second World War, where proven leadership experience remained the focus for selecting officers from the ranks.²⁹⁵

Conclusion

Clearly, the main finding of this chapter is that previous military service was the most important criterion in the initial selection of both senior and junior officers during the formation of the main bodies for both expeditionary forces. Education was also important in that officers were required to study military theory and practice to ensure the effectiveness of their regiments. Those with higher education were more likely to enter professions in civilian life that allowed them the freedom to spend time training with the Territorial units, thus having more opportunity for achieving commissioned rank and promotion. Old School networks were also important in pre-war society, particularly prior to the First World War, and were influential in the provincial Territorial regiments from which the officer corps of the expeditionary forces was formed. An obvious example was the Canterbury Yeomanry Cavalry that included officers and enlisted men who had attended Christ's College and who were prominent in the Canterbury Mounted Rifles. However, as the wars progressed promotion was on merit and not on social status in civilian life. The shared experiences of war ensured that eventually only those who had proved themselves in battle were given command.

There were plenty of opportunities for promotion on merit within both expeditionary forces, with many junior officers reaching high rank. This was especially so for those who left with the Expeditionary Force for Egypt in 1940. Of the 100 junior officers sampled for this year 81 percent achieved the rank of captain or above, with two becoming brigadier by 1945. To put this in perspective, these two officers had gone from being responsible for 30 men of a platoon to a brigade of around 3,000 men. However, such opportunity for promotion was also available for some during the Great War, with the likes of James Hargest and Edward Puttick ending the war leading infantry battalions after for being commissioned as platoon commanders.

²⁹⁵ Thomas, Interview, 6 June 2010; Donald, Letter to Author, 20 June 2010

The rapid promotion of some came about through a number of circumstances. Gallipoli, the Somme and Passchendaele in the First World War, along with the disastrous early campaigns in Greece, Crete, Libya and Egypt during the Second World War saw the New Zealand forces suffer high casualties, especially amongst combat officers. A significant number were killed, seriously wounded or made prisoners of war leaving vacancies for others. A number of older senior officers were found to be unfit for frontline duties and were sent back to New Zealand or transferred to training camps. An example of this was Brigadier James Hargest, a veteran of World War One and a member of parliament, who had used his political clout to gain a senior position. He was heavily criticised for his lack of action and poor leadership on Crete.²⁹⁶ His subsequent capture, and that of other senior officers during Operation Crusader in North Africa in 1941 made way for more youthful officers to experience high command. This had a flow-on effect with lower positions having to be filled by junior officers.

Even those commissioned later in the war had a good chance of attaining high rank. Many senior officers from the early war years were exhausted from years of campaigning and were given administrative positions. Around 32 percent of the junior officers (lieutenants and second-lieutenants) sampled for 1945 were made captains and around 9 percent became majors (see Table 6). This mainly came about due to veterans being sent home to New Zealand prior to the end of the war on furlough, creating a large number of vacancies. What is significant is that most of these newly promoted officers had enlisted as privates earlier in the war.

Table 6: Highest Rank Attained By Junior Officers, 2NZEF						
Substantive, Acting of Temporary Rank	1940 (100 sampled)		1943 (123 sampled)		1945 (110 sampled)	
Captain	34	34 %	26	21.14 %	35	31.82 %
Major	31	31 %	4	3.25 %	10	9.10 %
Lieutenant-Colonel	13	13 %	0		0	
Colonel	1	1 %	0		0	
Brigadier-General	2	2 %	0		0	
Note: The 1943 sample was taken from the 3 rd NZ Division where there were minimal opportunities for promotion.						

²⁹⁶ David Filer, *Crete: Death From the Skies – New Zealand's Role in the Loss of Crete* (Auckland, 2010), pp. 147-149

Chapter 4

Officer Training: World War One

It is generally accepted by New Zealand military historians that the Main Body of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force of the First World War was the better trained and better prepared military force of the two expeditionary forces that embarked from this country for overseas service in the first half of the twentieth century. If this is so, then it could only have come about through efficient and effective leadership and training provided by the officer corps of the army. To date only Glyn Harper and Joel Hayward have attempted to provide some understanding of the training New Zealand senior officers received in their book *Born to lead? Portraits of New Zealand Commanders*. However, this is more of a collection of biographical essays than a study of the military training curriculum of junior and senior officers. This chapter will provide an in-depth understanding of how the officer corps developed in the years leading up to the Great War and how the continually evolving curriculum provided senior and junior officers, as well as non-commissioned officers, of front-line combat units with the knowledge and skills to confidently lead men into battle in modern warfare.

The training of officers within the New Zealand military forces during the first half of the twentieth century was fluid in that officers were required to be knowledgeable in the latest tactics and military developments to succeed. Training provided prior to the Great War and during the inter-war years soon became outdated with the development of trench warfare in the First World War and the mechanised mobile warfare of the Second World War. Such developments required that officers at all levels needed constant training and education to ensure they remained proficient in their particular area of expertise as well as military matters in general; as was the case for officers from other dominions of the British Empire.

Almost all the official training received by the New Zealanders during the war years was based on British Army manuals and practice. This was the same for the Australian and Canadian military forces. To cater for the large numbers of newly

commissioned junior officers of the volunteer, and later conscripted, 'citizen' armies, the War Office in London produced hundreds of constantly updated instruction manuals. These were distributed throughout the empire to assist in educating the thousands of inexperienced men in the basic principles of military field craft, engineering, drills, musketry, military law and leadership. Regular force officers from New Zealand, Australia and Canada had usually graduated from military colleges at Duntroon, New South Wales (later Australian Capital Territory), Kingston, Ontario and Sandhurst in England, and in the case of a few officers, from the prestigious Staff College at Camberley. However, during both wars the vast majority of officers serving in the expeditionary forces were limited to experience in the Territorials and short-term courses at local officer cadet training units. Ultimately, it was the combination of front line experience, formal and informal training that provided the best education for officers of all levels.

Before the Territorials

Compulsory military training laid the foundation for a proficient officer corps within the World War One New Zealand Expeditionary Force. Prior to the establishment of the Territorial Force through the Defence Act of 1909, which directly led to compulsory military training being introduced, there appears to have been little or no formal structure for the training of officers within the numerous volunteer militias scattered throughout the Dominion. These volunteer formations of citizen soldiery maintained local autonomy, with the officers being chosen through election by the rank and file of the corps.²⁹⁷ This ensured that influential land owners and prominent local businessmen were elected to lead the militias, even though they were not necessarily the most appropriate choice. In the Edwardian era colonial social connections, wealth and education were prime prerequisites to becoming an officer in the militia. An example of this was the Canterbury Yeomanry Cavalry Regiment that was regarded as more of a private club for the social elite of the province than a military formation; members of prominent landed families such as the Rhodes, Deans, Birdlings and

²⁹⁷ Michael Smith, *Fiery Ted: Anzac Commander* (Christchurch, 2008), p. 14

Westenras were listed as officers and non-commissioned officers of the unit through to the Second World War.²⁹⁸

Even in less fashionable corps, such as the Marlborough Hussars, which later became the Marlborough Mounted Rifles, the landed middle-classes tended to occupy leadership roles. Edward Chaytor is an example of this. His family farmed sizable estates throughout the district and were influential in local politics.²⁹⁹ As an 18 year-old, Chaytor, who was later to become a career officer in the New Zealand Staff Corps, enrolled in the unit as a trumpeter in 1886.³⁰⁰ However, he was soon promoted to sergeant and within two years was elected to the vacancy of lieutenant.³⁰¹ It is doubtful whether such rapid promotion from the ranks would have been possible for someone less influentially connected.

Overseas service in the Second Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 also influenced the structure and training of militia and Territorial officers in New Zealand leading up to the Great War. More than 6,500 New Zealanders volunteered and fought in the South African conflict, with many veterans providing much needed military experience and knowledge to the militia corps and the newly formed Territorial Force.³⁰² Chaytor had served as a captain in the 3rd Contingent, known as the 'Rough Riders,' due to the lack of military experience of the officers, and it was during the conflict that he befriended Harry Chauvel, an Australian officer with whom he served in Egypt and Palestine during the First World War.³⁰³ After receiving a wound and returning to New Zealand, Chaytor later accepted promotion to lieutenant-colonel in command of the 8th Contingent, anticipating that it would lead to a permanent position in the army and a reasonable salary due to his service in South Africa.³⁰⁴ After resigning from the Volunteers he was reinstated to the regular rank of lieutenant-colonel and appointed as the Assistant Adjutant-General at the Defence Department headquarters in Wellington.³⁰⁵ It was in this position that Chaytor was to play a significant role in the

²⁹⁸ *Staff and Regimental Lists of Officers, New Zealand Expeditionary Force, October 1915* (Wellington, 1916), NZ Defence Force Library, Wellington, p. 4

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 12

³⁰⁰ Smith, p. 14

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

³⁰² John Thomson, *Warrior Nation: New Zealanders at the Front, 1900-2000* (Christchurch, 2000), p. 37

³⁰³ Smith, p. 18

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51

³⁰⁵ Colin Richardson, 'Major-General Sir Edward Walter Clervaux Chaytor – Anzac Commander,' in *Born to Lead? Portraits of New Zealand Commanders*, eds. Glyn Harper & Joel Hayward (Auckland, 2003), p. 70

restructuring of the military forces of New Zealand prior to the Great War, particularly in regard to the selection and training of officers.

With the threat of war with Germany looming, Chaytor was aware of the need for constant and rigorous up-to-date training of both regular and volunteer officers to ensure competency and efficiency. He himself had increased his military education by being the first New Zealander to attend a two year course at the British Staff College at Camberley from 1907.³⁰⁶ What made this so significant was that at age 39 he was considerably older than his contemporaries on the course and he was also lacking in social background and education compared to the other students.³⁰⁷

The timing of Chaytor's advanced military education was crucial in preparing the New Zealand military forces for war in that it was at a time when the British Army was implementing significant changes to its establishment and training. In completing this intensive course he became the Dominion's first fully trained professional officer and an important resource in the reformation of its military forces. He had studied all the necessary facets of warfare and command, including military history, geography, strategy and tactics, strategic geography, reconnaissance, staff duties, administration and training of troops.³⁰⁸ His course also covered the study of naval supremacy, coastal defence, permanent fortifications, artillery, engineering, transport and supply; all of which were particularly important in the defence of New Zealand.³⁰⁹ Afterwards he attended a four-month course at the Royal Naval War College where he was instructed in dealing with the problems of overseas expeditions and naval attacks on coastal defences.³¹⁰ The lessons he learned here proved fundamental in the rapid mobilization of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in 1914.

On his return to New Zealand in 1909, Chaytor played a pivotal role in the training of both the few professional officers and the hundreds of volunteer officers scattered throughout the country. He arrived back from Great Britain several months prior to the passing of the new Defence Act and was appointed to the temporary position of Director of Military Training and Education until a sufficient number of Imperial training officers could be seconded from the British Army, after which he became the

³⁰⁶ Smith, pp. 64-65

³⁰⁷ Richardson, p. 72

³⁰⁸ Smith, pp. 64-65

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

commanding officer of the Wellington Military District.³¹¹ After his inspection of Territorial camps, Major-General Alexander Godley, General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, identified him as being a most proficient senior officer; ‘I have had little opportunity of judging his capacity for command, but I should think from what I know of him that his line were more administrative. He is hard-working and conscientious, and sets a good example of duty to all under his command.’³¹² What set Chaytor aside from other colonial officers and made him so valuable was that his recent educational opportunities had made him conversant with the changes in the formation, training, strategy and tactics used by the British Army which he then helped to introduce to the New Zealand forces.

The Territorial Force

The 1909 Defence Act that led to the introduction of the Territorial Force in New Zealand was a direct response to the outcomes of the Imperial Conference that had been held in London earlier that year. A series of meetings between the British prime minister and representatives of the self-governing dominions within the British Empire was held at the Foreign Office and the War Office during July and August to discuss general questions regarding the military and naval defence of the Empire with the increasing likelihood of war.³¹³ It was decided that to ensure the forces of the Empire could rapidly combine into one homogenous Imperial Army for defence in times of emergency that the military forces of the dominions were to ‘be standardised, the formations of the units, the arrangements for transport, the patterns of weapons, etc, being as far possible assimilated to those which have recently been worked out for the British Army.’³¹⁴ It was further decided that while the dominion troops were to be raised for the defence of their dominion ‘it would be made readily practicable in case of need for that dominion to mobilise and use them for the defence of the Empire as a whole.’³¹⁵ Thus, Chaytor’s acquired knowledge and experience within the recently

³¹¹ *Register of Commissions*, New Zealand Defence Forces, AD 20/13, ANZ, p. 11

³¹² Report of General Officer Commanding, 7/12/10 -27/7/11, AD 1, Box 1058 -39/19/12, ANZ

³¹³ Proceedings of the Imperial Conference, *AJHR*, 1909, Vol. 1 (I & II), A-4a, pp. 17-19

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*

revamped British military system made him pivotal in the implementing of the required training and reorganisation of the New Zealand Forces prior to the Great War.

The restructuring of both the professional and volunteer officer corps within the Dominion's military forces was essential to provide competent leadership within the army. This came about with the creation of the small New Zealand Staff Corps (NZSC) of less than 100 professional career officers, and the restructuring of the volunteer forces. Although the new Defence Act provided the legislation for change, it took some time for improvements to happen. In early 1910 there were only 63 permanent officers on the establishment to oversee the administration and training of the expanding Territorial Force, while there were 1,087 Territorial officers to command the 18,800 rank and file of the 'volunteer' formations.³¹⁶ It had earlier been thought necessary to find young educated men of good character to take commissions as junior officers in the expanding military establishment. Hence, officer training corps had initially been established at Otago University, Canterbury College, Victoria College and a junior division at King's College, Auckland by 1910, through which a combined total of 486 students were enlisted.³¹⁷ These recruits were first trained as soldiers in the ranks before being required to act as instructors and leaders in order that 'The corps should therefore furnish a valuable source for supply of citizen officers, and if the improvement as present observable continues, the formation of the Corps should be fully justified by the results.'³¹⁸ However, except for the Otago University corps, these units were short-lived as it was argued that the newly formed Territorial Force would provide the number of officers required.

The policies formulated at the Imperial Conference of 1909 directly promoted the professionalism and the competency of the officer corps within the New Zealand Defence Force. In contrast to the old militia policy of electing officers, officer candidates for both the Staff Corps and the Territorial Force now had to follow the British Army model of passing entrance examinations for commissions. The quality and ability of candidates appears to have been high when considering the results of the examinations; in 1909, of the 170 candidates who presented themselves for examination, 152 or 89 per cent passed, while in 1910, of the 263 who attempted the

³¹⁶ Report of the General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1910 (3rd Session), Vol. 3, H 19, p. 6

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

tests, 205 or 78 per cent passed.³¹⁹ Without knowing the exact content of the examinations, what these results indicate is that those young men who succeeded in gaining commissions by passing the written tests were able to communicate in written form to the standard expected of British officer candidates and were of high intelligence in that they had the ability to study and retain the required information. These qualities were necessary in an officer who was expected to pass on clear written and verbal instructions to his subordinates as well as to analyse situations and to report to superiors. A high standard of education and intelligence was certainly required for candidates who applied for regular commissions in the Staff Corps who were then required to attend an intensive three-year officer cadet course at the Royal Military College of Australia at Duntroon, known at the time as West Point College.³²⁰

With only a small professional military force, New Zealand could not justify establishing its own military college and this was unnecessary while Australia had an academy. Such trans-Tasman cooperation in the training of officers was actively encouraged at the highest levels as early as March 1910 when Field Marshal Lord Kitchener wrote a letter to the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, Sir Joseph Ward, stating 'It appears to me that for your land forces New Zealand and Australia should adopt homogeneous military systems, in order to be able to efficiently support one another in the event of national danger. The desirability of such cooperation is evident by reason of the geographical position of the two countries. I think, therefore, that uniformity in training and establishment of units, as well as the closest ties of comradeship, in the armed land forces of New Zealand and Australia should be fostered in every way.'³²¹

It was imperial initiatives that ensured New Zealand and Australian officers received the same training and expected to achieve the same professional standards. From 1910 New Zealand Permanent Force officers and Australian officers were examined using the same papers supplied from Britain. Again, this decision was made as a result of the Imperial Conference where it was decided that officers of the New Zealand, Australian and Canadian defence forces were to sit the same examinations as those of the British Army.³²² The purpose of this was to ensure a marked improvement

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Ibid., H-19a, p.2

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Ibid., p. 16

in military education throughout the Empire and this certainly was the case in New Zealand.

Chaytor was a prime example of what a colonial officer could achieve through better military education opportunities. When he was appointed to the New Zealand Permanent Staff, he recognised his deficiencies in his professional understanding, most likely apparent to him through his recent service in the Boer War and further highlighted during his 1905 tour of training establishments in Britain.³²³ He actively sought positions on senior training courses in England, and although he was the first New Zealand officer to attend such prestigious military colleges, he became the first of many to have the opportunity to improve their professional knowledge at overseas military institutions.

In January 1909 an interchange system was introduced that saw Imperial officers seconded to the New Zealand Staff Corps while a number of officers from the New Zealand Permanent Forces attended courses and were attached to regiments in Britain.³²⁴ Some examples include Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Bauchop who followed Chaytor in attending a two-year course at the Staff College at Camberley in 1911, while around this time Brigadier-General R.H. Davies, Lieutenant-Colonel F.W. Abbott and Captain R.J.S. Seddon were attached to regular regiments in England for training.³²⁵ A further eight lieutenants were also sent to Britain on secondment for the purpose of improving training of other junior officers and non-commissioned officers on their return to New Zealand.³²⁶ This interchange system was implemented at the same time as the number of officer cadets being sent to Duntroon was increasing.

These policies resulted in a marked improvement in the professionalism of the Staff Corps, Permanent Staff and the Territorial Force leading up the Great War. Those senior officers who returned from the Staff College in England were usually then appointed to command military districts to oversee the implementation of the current training practices of the British Army throughout the Territorial units.³²⁷ Lieutenant-Colonel Bauchop took command of the Canterbury Military District on his return in

³²³ Richardson, pp. 71-72

³²⁴ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1910 (3rd Session), Vol. 3, H-19, p. 1

³²⁵ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1912 (2nd Session), Vol. 1, H-19, p. 16

³²⁶ *Ibid.*

³²⁷ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1912 (2nd Session), Vol. 4, H-19, pp. 2-4

1912, while Lieutenant-Colonel Abbott was appointed to command the Auckland Military District but died on the return journey before being able to take the position.³²⁸

At this time the majority of the Staff Corps officers were scattered throughout the military districts where their main purpose was to implement regular training of Territorial formations and provide administration.³²⁹ However, the size of the corps remained small and even as late as 1912 it had not reached its official strength of 100, with only 66 being recorded in Godley's annual report.³³⁰ This meant that there was an insufficient number of professional officers to provide all the training for the increasing number of Territorial soldiers, even though Godley argued otherwise. He stated in an annual report that the proportion of one permanent officer, non-commissioned officer or other rank to every 50 Territorials was appropriate given the high standard of the permanent soldiers.³³¹

However, the responsibility of implementing regular training within individual battalions, regiments and artillery batteries mainly fell of the shoulders on Territorial officers. By 1912 there were 1,174 Territorial officers registered to provide leadership for the 30,000 strong defence force of active Territorials and reservists.³³² Although only part-time civilian-soldiers, these officers were required to achieve a high standard of proficiency. Territorial Force officers in New Zealand were required to sit the same examinations as Territorial Army officers in Britain before being commissioned.³³³ It is clear that they were required to have a high standard of military knowledge and had to be self-motivated in their study.

Influence of Military Literature

The Defence Department extended military knowledge by issuing a variety of training manuals from Britain free to every officer and NCO within the Territorial Force.³³⁴ In addition, copies of the *Handbook on Military Law* and the *New Zealand*

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1910 (3rd Session), Vol. 3, H 19, p. 6

³³⁰ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1912 (2nd Session), Vol. 4, H-19, pp. 2-4

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Ibid.,

³³⁴ Ibid., p. 6

Military Journal were issued free to all officers on the active list.³³⁵ Such reading was essential for experienced senior officers and inexperienced junior officers alike in that these part-time leaders of men were required to be cognizant with accepted protocols and regulations of the British Army to function effectively, as well as remain up-to-date with strategies and tactics of modern warfare. Although these books and journals proved indispensable in educating Territorial officers and non-commissioned officers, the more discerning officer was required to extend his study to the plethora of available manuals and relevant reading material related to his particular corps to become proficient. The War Office in London was the main supplier of manuals to the New Zealand Defence Department leading up to the First World War, but with the demand for such material increasing with the expansion of the Territorial Force, the government commissioned local printing companies, such as Whitcombe & Tombs, to provide sufficient copies to satisfy the thirst for military knowledge from the Dominion's citizen soldiers.³³⁶ An example was the *British Field Service Regulations, 1909*, which was the essential handbook for both professional and Territorial officers before the outbreak of war.³³⁷

Officers needed a certain level of education and intelligence to be able to read and understand the material that was available to them. This was to be expected of officers within the technical corps, such as those in the engineers and artillery, who were required to be *au fait* with the sciences, mathematics and recent advances in their particular fields. However, the evolution of modern warfare meant that even the most junior infantry platoon commander was required to study aspects of all the various corps that made up the army to ensure the coordinated mutual support required for military operations. Anthony Clayton argues this was in contrast to the experience of infantry officers in the previous two centuries where linear tactics of attack and defence required that a junior officer, such as an ensign or lieutenant, only needed to be familiar with the rudiments of platoon drill in musketry, marching and advancing in particular formations.³³⁸ In the British Army of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries officers very seldom trained with their men, mainly leaving these duties to the senior non-

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Stephen Bull (ed.), *An Officer's Manual of the Western Front, 1914-1918* (London, 2008), p. 5

³³⁸ Anthony Clayton, *The British Officer: Leading the Army from 1660 to the Present* (London, New York & Paris, 2007), pp. 51-54

commissioned officers.³³⁹ The advances in artillery during the last half of the nineteenth century, particularly with the introduction of long-range quick-firing heavy guns and machine guns had changed the nature of battlefield tactics. Some relevant lessons had been learned during the Boer War and in the numerous small colonial wars of the late nineteenth century where officers commanding small formations had more responsibility in directing and leading their men in battle. To do this effectively an infantry officer was expected to become a 'jack of all trades' and the only way to achieve this was through studying the increasing number of journals and manuals being published.

No single manual was ever sufficient to cover all aspects of what an officer needed to study for service in a 'modern war.' This was mainly due to the development of trench warfare that required new and dynamic tactics for attack and defence; tactics that were not anticipated before the First World War. The desire to defeat an enemy has always fostered continual improvements in weapons and how they were to be used to gain superiority over the foe. Strategies and tactics implemented at the outbreak of the Great War very quickly became outdated. This posed a problem of how best to keep the officers and NCOs informed about the new systems that were being introduced without the need to keep the men longer in training camps and out of the front line where they were needed. Even prior to war being declared in August 1914, the War Office had produced and supplied the British Army and the defence forces throughout the Empire, including New Zealand, with numerous publications that summarised the military arts. There were general treatises, such as *Field Service Regulations*, *Military Cooking*, *Military Law*, the *Clothing Regulations* and *Care of Barracks* that had universal relevance to every officer, but there were also numerous textbooks for most corps that were distributed widely through His Majesty's Stationary Office in London.³⁴⁰ For New Zealand Staff Corps officers and those infantry officers in the Territorials, the manual *Infantry Training 1914* was the most up-to-date title available and considered essential reading, with the chapters on musketry being crucial.³⁴¹ As for the cavalry, the standard essential title was *Cavalry Training*, although not all the tactics stipulated in this manual were appropriate for the New Zealand Mounted Rifles.³⁴² The

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Bull, p, 5

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Ibid.

technical corps within the army were saturated with official instructions; engineer officers were required to be fully conversant with all aspects of their profession covering many different types of general construction, surveying, drainage, electrics, railways, signalling, as well as providing defensive and offensive constructions. Although there were individual manuals covering each of the above, the *Field Engineering* manual of 1911 proved to be the ‘bible’ for engineer officers throughout the Empire.³⁴³ Likewise, the Royal Artillery disseminated handbooks for every piece of ordnance in use by British forces, plus volumes of text relating to ranges, instruments and the use of horse artillery.³⁴⁴ These were issued to artillery officers and NCOs throughout the dominions and colonies to help ensure that the artillery corps maintained a high level of proficiency.³⁴⁵

The required reading of both Regular and Territorial officers was not restricted to that of their respective corps. Sub-genres of manuals relating to foreign armies, countries, pay, military history, command and leadership, medical and veterinary matters were distributed so that officers had a general understanding and knowledge of military-related topics outside their specific expertise. In 1912, over 7,000 various training manuals imported from England had been issued free to every officer and NCO of the Territorial Force to increase their knowledge.³⁴⁶ Clearly, the officers, both from the Staff Corps and the Territorials, who led the Main Body of the expeditionary force in late 1914 had sufficient reading material to ensure they were fully conversant with the theories, practices, law and tactics of the British Army when they embarked for active service. Major-General Sir Andrew Russell’s personal library, now held at the National Army Museum, indicates the importance such senior officers attached to studying recent conflicts involving the British Army. Russell’s collection included Sir John Fortescues’s *History of the British Army*, as well as official histories of the Second Anglo-Boer War and the Crimean War. Russell was one of a few who had seen service as a regular officer, having graduated from Sandhurst, but typically, what the majority of officers in the Dominion’s military forces lacked was essential experience.³⁴⁷

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

³⁴⁵ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1912 (2nd Session), Vol.4 – H19, p. 6

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ Glyn Harper, ‘Major-General Sir Andrew Russell: Divisional commander on the Western Front,’ in *Born to Lead? Portraits of New Zealand Commanders*, eds. Glyn Harper & Joel Hayward (Auckland, 2003), pp. 54-55

To compensate for initial lack of military experience the *Field Service Pocket Book, 1914* was issued to every New Zealand officer and NCO training in Egypt in early 1915.³⁴⁸ This was an official War Office handbook that was issued to all officers and senior NCOs within the British Army during the Great War and provided details of many aspects of the British military, beginning with the war establishment of the British Army and covering cavalry and infantry divisions, as well as ancillary units.³⁴⁹ The handbook detailed everyday military conduct in the field and provided the regulations and guidelines for marches, water supply, quarters, camp cooking, and sanitation.³⁵⁰ There were chapters that covered orders and the means of communication, map reading, field sketching, overseas operations and intelligence functions. Basic field engineering was also included, covering aspects of tools, explosives, together with defensive systems, obstacles and working parties.³⁵¹ Minutiae of engineering field craft covered such specifics as knots, blocks and tackles, bridging and demolitions. Chapter V provided the necessary details for transportation, including convoys and movements by sea and rail, while chapter VI dealt with the important details of small arms and heavier guns, the supply of ammunition, rations, fuel, together with their storage.³⁵² Other aspects covered included pay, clothing, field equipment, office work, billeting orders, discipline and courts martial. There was also a chapter covering the Indian Army and the military forces of other British dominions, as well as details of foreign armies. This handbook, and the revised 1916 edition, proved invaluable to the citizen-soldier officers and NCOs of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force as it provided them with a concise compendium of the rules and regulations governing the British Army.

Forming the Expeditionary Force

Officers of the Main Body of the expeditionary force had very little time for training in New Zealand prior to embarking for overseas service. In July 1914 the War

³⁴⁸ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1912 (2nd Session), Vol.4 – H19, p. 6

³⁴⁹ The General Staff, War Office, *Field Service Pocket Book, 1914* (London, 1914), reprinted 2003

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*

³⁵² *Ibid.*

Office warned the New Zealand government that war was imminent and to begin preparations.³⁵³ When war was declared on 5 August the preparations for mobilisation had already begun, with Territorial officers preparing themselves and their families for their departure. Within days of the declaration of war both officers and the rank and file of the Territorial Force who had volunteered to serve overseas, plus civilian volunteers, were gathering and forming new battalions and regiments in locations throughout the country. Training began immediately with parades, drills, musketry, forced marches and mock battles held on a daily basis to attain unit cohesion and improve military effectiveness.³⁵⁴ The officers within these units had very little time to improve their own military knowledge before the force embarked from Wellington on 16 October. However, the six-week sea voyage from New Zealand to Egypt provided an opportunity to rectify this. Conscientious junior officers keen to develop a sound knowledge of their profession and anxious to be proficient platoon and company commanders, spent much of their spare time studying the wealth of military related manuals and journals made available to them.³⁵⁵

In an effort to promote proficiency and standards, as well as to combat boredom, formal lessons were also provided. Senior officers such as Major Herbert Hart of the Wellington Infantry Battalion held daily courses of instruction for junior officers, covering a variety of subjects, including lectures on infantry tactics taken from the *Training and Manoeuvre Regulations, 1914* and *Infantry Training, 1914*.³⁵⁶ According to Hart, lectures for the officers were usually held every evening between 8 and 9 pm, while officer physical training was held every morning between 7 and 7.30 am.³⁵⁷ In between times the officers were required to attend parades and lead sessions of instruction to the rank and file.³⁵⁸ Hart also recorded that there were evening lectures provided for non-commissioned officers and those who were considered potential NCOs.³⁵⁹ Many of these men were later commissioned, and such lectures and instructions marked the beginning of their officer training.

³⁵³ Christopher Pugsley, *Gallipoli: The New Zealand Story*, 2008 edition (Auckland, 2008), p.46

³⁵⁴ John Crawford (ed.), *The Devil's Own War: The First World War Diary of Brigadier-General Herbert Hart* (Auckland, 2008), pp. 22-25

³⁵⁵ Lieutenant Calvin Stewart Algie, Auckland Infantry Regiment, Diary, entry 23 September 1914, MS Papers 1374, ATL

³⁵⁶ Crawford, pp. 27-32

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 27

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

The experience for officers selected and sent in the numerous reinforcement detachments for the expeditionary force differed from those of the Main Body. The officers who embarked with the 1st Reinforcements that accompanied the Main Body all had extensive Territorial training and experience, similar or equivalent to those in the Main Body. However, with most of the experienced officers from the Staff corps and Territorials serving overseas in the Main Body, there was only a limited number of experienced officers available in New Zealand to fill the commissioned vacancies in the reinforcement drafts. The commanders of each military district were asked to recommend officers for active foreign service with preference given to those in the following order: Territorial officers on the active list, Territorial officers on the unattached list, officers on the Reserve list, officers on the Retired list and officers who have had previous military service in the forces of New Zealand or Britain.³⁶⁰

These selection criteria proved practical in that these officers already had sufficient experience as Territorial platoon, troop or company commanders and were familiar with the necessary military protocols, reducing the amount of time required to prepare them for military service overseas. For this very reason Godley initially decided not to accept civilian officer candidates and required those civilians who aspired to gain commissions in the expeditionary force to serve in the ranks first.³⁶¹ Subsequent selection criteria included a provision that nominated lieutenants were only accepted up to the age of 38, while captains and majors had to be no older than 48.³⁶² These rules were introduced as a result of actual experience in the officer training courses held at Trentham Camp, where it was found that some older officers were not fit enough to handle the physical demands.³⁶³ Another condition was that nominated officers must have held a commission for at least six months before being recommended. This rule was adopted when it was found that some officers had less service than non-commissioned officers who had been training in Trentham Camp with a view to obtaining a commission from the ranks.³⁶⁴

In contrast to officers of the Main Body, those in the reinforcement drafts were required to undergo a five-week training course at Trentham before the rank and file of

³⁶⁰ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Force , *AJHR*, Vol. 3, 1915, 19-C, p. 6

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*

³⁶² *Ibid.*

³⁶³ W.G. Malone, *Diaries & Letters, Diary One: 6 August 1914 – 10 November 1914*, MSX-2541, ATL, p. 20

³⁶⁴ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Force , *AJHR*, Vol. 3, 1915, 19-C, p. 6

the draft were due.³⁶⁵ According to Brigadier-General A.W. Robin, a Boer War veteran and General Officer Commanding the New Zealand Forces in 1915, the preliminary training course had produced excellent results, with the officers found to be fully competent to undertake preliminary training of their men on arrival in camp.³⁶⁶ Robin also noted that these preliminary officer courses promoted efficiency in providing an opportunity to ‘weed out those officers who are not likely to prove efficient.’³⁶⁷ Not all candidates were found to be suitable and those who had not reached the appropriate standard were told that their services were not required in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force or were offered a lower rank or resignation.³⁶⁸ How the army achieved this was by making all the appointments in Trentham Camp probationary only during the training courses, with the officers not being gazetted into the NZEF until they were finally approved the week of their embarkation.³⁶⁹ Once on the sea voyage to Egypt, and later England, these officers received a similar on-board regime of lectures and drills experienced by those of the Main Body.

Prior to embarking for overseas service, reinforcement officers received an opportunity to hone their leadership skills when they undertook further training with the other ranks when they entered camp. Although the training the reinforcements received in New Zealand developed as the war progressed, the training syllabus of the 8th Reinforcements in August 1915 was generally typical of what the officers and other ranks experienced early in the Great War. For the infantry and mounted rifles this included squad drill, physical drill, route marches, lectures on discipline, health and soldierly spirit, musketry and care of weapons, bayonet fighting, entrenching, platoon, troop, company and squadron attack exercises, while learning the fundamentals of manning outposts and advance guards.³⁷⁰ Artillery personnel underwent the same training as above but their instruction also included lectures and practice on gun drill, battery foot drill, signalling, semaphore and working field telephones.³⁷¹

An important factor to note regarding training of expeditionary force personnel in New Zealand prior to service overseas is that all nominated non-commissioned officers were required to complete a course at Trentham identical to the officers.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

³⁷⁰ Territorial Force, *Training Syllabus*, Trentham 1914 -1915, AD1 726 10/172, ANZ

³⁷¹ Ibid.

Preference was given to NCOs from within the Territorial Force or with previous military service; otherwise civilians were selected who had a good education and some military knowledge.³⁷² Like the officers, these men were put through a five-week course where those found unsuitable were identified and removed.³⁷³ This is significant in that most NCOs who survived the early campaigns of the war went on to receive commissions to replace heavy combat officer casualties, especially within the infantry battalions. The initial training they received at Trentham would have certainly provided them with the basic foundation of the knowledge and leadership skills they would require to lead men into battle.

Training in Egypt

It was in Egypt where the officer corps of the expeditionary force had sufficient time to develop their military skills and put their knowledge into practice. The Main Body arrived at Alexandria on 2 December 1914 and from then until mid-April 1915 when elements of the force embarked for the Gallipoli campaign, the majority of time was spent in various forms of training. The New Zealanders were encamped at Zeitoun on the outskirts of Cairo and it was here that the officers and men spent endless days enduring parades, marching drills, musketry training, bayonet drills and forced marches while combating the heat, thirst and flies.³⁷⁴ This was the first opportunity that the senior officers got to train and command brigade-size formations in exercises involving positions of attack and defence in mock battles. Godley was determined to forge the New Zealanders into the best force of citizen soldiery gathering in Egypt but his repeated comments that they were nearly as good as British regulars did not endear him to his subordinates.³⁷⁵ However, the constant training did help to promote cohesion and camaraderie within units, while reducing the potential for a break down in discipline which had been an issue for the Australian commanders.³⁷⁶ During this period the senior

³⁷² Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Force, *AJHR*, Vol. 3, 1915, 19-C, p. 6

³⁷³ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁴ Lieutenant Edmund John Foley, Auckland Mounted Rifles, Diary -11 October 1914 to 12 December 1915, MSS 048, KMARL

³⁷⁵ Colin Richardson, 'General Sir Alexander John Godley: The Last Imperial Commander,' in *Born to Lead? Portraits of New Zealand Commanders*, eds. Glyn Harper & Joel Hayward (Auckland, 2003), pp. 49

³⁷⁶ J.H. Moore (ed.), *Anzac Jack: Letters of Jack Moore, A.I.F. in World War One* (Auckland, 2004), p. 14

officers had a chance to get to know the qualities of the junior officers under their command, while platoon and company commanders attempted to gain the trust and respect of their men through their shared experiences during the desert training.

The time spent training in Egypt provided the volunteer ‘civilian’ officers with the opportunity to gain some confidence as leaders prior to seeing action in the Dardanelles. The members of the NZEF had a lot to learn, especially the junior officers. In early December 1914 Colonel Russell wrote in his diary that there was plenty of room for improvement in the development of young and inexperienced officers within the Mounted Rifle Brigade: ‘Troop training – many young officers as yet by no means understand how to lead – and many are ignorant of details they should have at their fingertips.’³⁷⁷ However, combined exercises with British and Australian formations fostered healthy competition, where the New Zealand officers, led by Godley, strived to be as professional as the regular British Army officers. Godley was wary that family and social ties within the provincial battalions and regiments were not necessarily conducive to maintaining military discipline. To counteract this he demanded that strict military protocol be adhered to in relation to officers and the rank and file.³⁷⁸ This ensured that the volunteer Territorial officers, and particularly the junior officers, began to develop a greater sense of professionalism. Any familiarity between officers and their men was actively discouraged by senior commanders, who expected their subordinates to follow the examples of their British Army counterparts in maintaining strictly professional relationships with their men.³⁷⁹ While comparing themselves to fellow British and Australian officers, the New Zealanders began to gain confidence in their own martial abilities. Training in the desert presented unique challenges, especially in regard to map reading and navigation, where the expansive desert and shifting dunes made maps unreliable. According to Lieutenant-Colonel William Malone of the Wellington Infantry Regiment, what helped was that many New Zealand officers came from rural backgrounds, especially those in the Mounted Rifles, and were used to using geographical features to determine their locations; officers of British Territorial units usually had little or no experience in such matters.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁷ Major-General Sir Andrew Russell, Diary, 14 December 1914, ‘The Russell Saga,’ MS Papers 0822, ATL

³⁷⁸ Pugsley, *Gallipoli*, p. 70

³⁷⁹ Malone, *Diaries & Letters*, Diary Three: 6 December 1914 – 9 January 1915, MSX-2543, ATL, p.

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³⁸⁰ *Ibid.* p. 6

Provincial rivalry and the competitive nature of battalion and regimental commanders also fostered strict training regimes for junior officers. Malone and Lieutenant-Colonel D. McBean Stewart of the Canterbury Infantry Regiment were two such officers who struck up a rivalry and were determined that their respective battalions were going to be the best units in the expeditionary force.³⁸¹ To achieve this they both recognised that their company officers required constant training for the rank and file to be efficient. Even before the troops embarked for Egypt Malone demanded that his officers improve their military knowledge and performance. Entries in his diaries indicate his determination and drive in providing the required training for both officers and rank and file: ‘They are of all classes. Sons of wealthy run holders, farmers, schoolmasters, scholars, MAs, BAs, musicians, tradesmen, mechanics, lawyers and all sorts. They will make good soldiers and the regiment I trust will lead the other regiments in the Brigade. I will do my best to make it.’³⁸² He had particular concern for the lack of experience of his company grade officers prior to embarkation and was determined to improve their performance through constant training. Repeated diary entries made while leading battalion training in the hills surrounding Miramar near Wellington portray this:

Regiment training in Wellington - work by company commanders not good...paraded all officers and went for them for not arranging facilities for men to wash their cloths and criticized work of yesterday...regiment to Karori Hills, company in attack practice – not well done. Officers don’t rise to the occasion. Must keep away at them until they do...Went with regiment to Miramar – attack practice-not good enough. I sailed into [verbally attacked] two of my company commanders. Determined to go back to most elementary work and take each company myself or get Hart and McDonnell to do so. I have given the commanders a good show and they cannot train their companies because they don’t know their work. I have been too considerate.³⁸³

While in transit Malone remained active in improving the military knowledge and training for his officers. On board ship at night he would attend the lectures provided for young officers and read extracts from Ruskin’s lecture on war, ‘Crown of Wild Olive’ while also instructing on tactics and engagements of the Boer War.³⁸⁴ He

³⁸¹ Malone, *Diaries & Letters, Diary One: 6 August 1914 – 10 November 1914*, MSX-2541, ATL, p. 20

³⁸² *Ibid.*

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-29

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 29

obviously thought the officers of the battalion were not proficient at this time and voiced some frustration in his entry for 9 November 1914, 'I am reviewing the training and am going to begin again! More work for the NCOs and officers and less for the men until the officers and NCOs are better able to teach 'Festina Lente' – make haste slowly.'³⁸⁵

Once settled into camp life at Zeitoun Malone continued to train his battalion hard, particularly in an effort to make his officers and NCOs professional. Emphasis was placed on musketry and bayonet drills in keeping with the British Army practice and it was the job of the officers to instruct the rank and file; 'I got [Major] Temperley up to give my officers some points on bayonet fighting to pass on to the men and NCOs.'³⁸⁶ There is no doubt from reading his diaries that Malone was a perfectionist and demanded nothing short of excellence from his officers. He was determined to prepare his troops as best he could for the physical and tactical demands of modern warfare and remained critical of his subordinate officers, at least leading up to the Gallipoli campaign. This is evident in his entry for 18 January 1915:

Battalion training. March, protection on the move, 'attack.' I had the advance guard struck up and then put 3 companies into attack. The work fairly done, but company commanders do not co-operate together, and the flank company, as usual sprayed out too wide. In the afternoon, I had a marked position laid out and put the whole battalion into action pinning the company commands down to an exact frontage, so that they may get the full picture of a properly built up firing and assaulting line. Their spraying out does away with weight in the assault....Our brigadier, who unknown to us had been watching the show, came and complimented me saying the work was 'exceedingly well done.' He was easier pleased than I. There is lots of room for improvement.'³⁸⁷

Malone was obviously a hard task master and rightly strove for professional standards from his 'citizen-soldier' officers. However, it is debatable whether his expectations were realistic when most of his junior commanders had never experienced battle.

The initial experience of the officers of the mounted rifle regiments was slightly different from that of the infantry. An examination of the training syllabus for the first five weeks that the 2nd Reinforcements of the Otago Mounted Rifles were in Egypt

³⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 49

³⁸⁶ Malone, Diaries and Letters, Diary Two, MSX-2544, ATL, p. 3

³⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 7

shows similarities in training to that of the infantry, but also the limitations they laboured under initially. It took three to five weeks before the horses of the mounted rifle units were considered fit enough for any heavy work, which ensured the first few weeks of training were restricted.³⁸⁸ Training was initially confined to five hours a day, mainly due to the need for the men and horses to acclimatise to the Egyptian heat. The syllabus for the first week included the care and light exercise of the horses, squadron drill, musketry (concentrating on fire direction and control), dismounted outpost exercises, and a series of lectures which the regimental officers gave to the other ranks. This training regime was repeated for the next four weeks but also included the introduction of advanced musketry and exercises in providing advance, rear and flank guards in week two, entrenching and exercises in attack and defence in week three, and exercises in conducting patrols, reconnaissance and providing protection on the march and at rest.³⁸⁹

The infantry and artillery officers were equally kept busy on arrival in Egypt, learning from more intensive training than they had previously received in New Zealand. In the first five weeks in Egypt infantry officers were required to develop their skills in leading platoon and company drill, along with exercises in musketry and bayonet fighting, extended order drill, skirmishing, attack practice and night operations.³⁹⁰ By the fourth and fifth weeks battalion officers were required to lead their troops in outpost duties, route marches across the desert and exercises in attack and defence. As a technical branch of the expeditionary force, the officers of the New Zealand Field Artillery were expected to be experts in all the tasks and technical knowledge required of combat artillerists. While not only having to instruct their gunners in standing guns drills, the laying of their guns, fuse setting, and providing lectures on gunnery and ammunition, the battery officers also had to refine their skills as artillery directors and observers, while practising the fundamentals of fire discipline and leading batteries in action. Once in Egypt artillery officers also had the opportunity to experience regular brigade-scale exercises where they could practice march discipline, reconnaissance and communication skills, along with the occupation and

³⁸⁸ NZEF Syllabus of Training, Egypt, 1914, AD1 727 10/189, ANZ

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

retirement from positions, and methods of target engagement and observation under pseudo-combat conditions.³⁹¹

Although the months of constant training in Egypt leading up to the Gallipoli campaign proved monotonous for the officers and other ranks of the expeditionary force, this period was crucial in moulding the New Zealanders into an effective military formation. Many soldiers, like Private Peter Thompson of the Otago Infantry Battalion, complained in diaries and letters home of the filth, heat and taxing route marches in the desert, but they remained eager to have an active role in the war: ‘Life here is very monotonous as a permanent job... We are all sick of this show and want to be doing something somewhere.’³⁹² There was criticism from some quarters concerning the quality of the training provided to the colonial troops, with Australian war correspondent (and later official historian) Charles Bean claiming what they received was ‘simply the old British Army training. Little advice came from the Western Front. The Australian and New Zealand officers had to rely almost entirely upon themselves. They had not seen a bomb [hand grenade]; they had scarcely heard of a periscope [a device using mirrors for safe observation from trenches].’³⁹³ However, although the training the New Zealand and Australian troops received at this time was certainly not as advanced as that which they received in the later years of the war, it was in Egypt in late 1914 – early 1915 that the citizen volunteer officers and other ranks had time to learn the fundamentals of military life, develop regimental *élan* and fitness, while acquiring essential combat skills that would be required in the campaigns ahead.

Learning from Experience

It was also in Egypt that officers of the New Zealand Infantry Brigade got to put their recent training into practice. In late January 1915 the Turks made a reconnaissance in force towards the Suez Canal and the New Zealanders were sent from Zeitoun Camp to help defend it. This was the first action that the expeditionary force was involved in during the Great War and provided the officers with an opportunity to apply their skills

³⁹¹ Ibid.

³⁹² Private P.M. Thompson, Diary, 13 August 1914 – 15 September 1915, MS-1999.803, KMARL

³⁹³ C.E.W. Bean, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Vol. I: The Story of Anzac*, 1981 edition (St Lucia, Queensland, 1981), p. 139

in maintaining a defensive position under fire. On 31 January Major Hart was in command of the Wellington Battalion located on the west bank of the canal when it became the first New Zealand unit to be fired upon during the war: ‘The right of my line was fired on at 4 am... We all got into the trenches but the enemy withdrew before morning.’³⁹⁴ This initial experience also provided the officers and men a taste of what to expect in trench warfare; on 4 February Hart wrote in his diary:

Rained hard for two hours last night and everyone got soaked through. Frightfully unpleasant standing still in the trenches watching and watching and waiting in case of alarm, with the rain running down one’s back. In addition to sentries being on guard all night, all ranks stand to arms at 4 am. The sun came out warm and bright and we got dry again during the morning.³⁹⁵

However, this experience in action proved invaluable in boosting the confidence of officers where their professional abilities were recognised by their superiors and exposed any shortcomings in their training that needed be dealt with. This short ‘stunt’ (a term used by the soldiers for combat operations) at the front was followed by a return to Zeitoun where daily training recommenced until early April.

Training in the NZEF leading up to the landing at Anzac Cove on 25 April 1915 had not prepared the officers and men for the required tactics and also rigours of the failed campaign. Even as late as March 1915, the infantry battalions were continuing to prepare for fighting on the Western Front, as evident from another of Hart’s diary entries: ‘At 5 pm the Division paraded and marched for two hours into the desert to Beet el Shahat and there our Brigade and the Australian Infantry Brigade occupied imaginary trenches on the assumption we were part of the British line in France. The enemy was 400 yards in front entrenched and protected by flares and entanglements. Our Battalion was in the front line and sent out patrols seeking information, and to destroy the entanglements and flares and disturb and annoy the enemy.’³⁹⁶ However, such tactics proved near impossible during the Gallipoli campaign as the Turks held the high ground that restricted the British forces from movement in the open. No units within the expeditionary force had received any training for operating in hill-covered terrain as none of the senior officers, such as Godley, Russell and Johnston, had ever

³⁹⁴ Crawford, *The Devil’s Own War*, p. 42

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 43

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 48

expected to be campaigning anywhere other than the plains of northern France or the deserts of the Middle East.

Both the officers and the NCOs had to adapt quickly in finding ways to operate in what effectively became siege warfare, for which they had not been trained. The experience of Lieutenant Arthur Batchelor who led No. 2 Troop of the 9th Squadron of the Wellington Mounted Rifles was typical of officers when they first landed at Gallipoli:

Ordered ashore at 6 o'clock. Taken ashore in destroyers. Bullets splashing all around us. Rotten feeling at first, soon got used to them. . . Landed at Suicide Point and proceeded 600 yards to left of beach to Shrapnel Gully. Heavy fire above us. Camped for night in Deadman's Gully. Dead tired and slept in spite of bullets. . . Ordered to relieve Naval Brigade now in Reserve Trenches. Had to climb to top of cliffs up a very steep grade road made by our troops. Made ourselves comfortable in dug-outs in side of 4 ft trench.³⁹⁷

The difficulties in fighting at Gallipoli and the need for the officers to quickly adapt tactics were apparent from the day of the landing. Lieutenant Herbert Westmacott led a platoon of the Auckland Battalion ashore and immediately advanced up the rugged terrain in support of the Australians:

The regiment was very confused and bunched up, owing to Dawson's company having run into an unclimbable cliff and being turned about towards the rest of us. No parade ground formation seemed possible here. . . I called to my platoon to follow as they were and led the way up, by what seemed the shortest route along the hill side. . . I came quickly to where a party of Australian engineers were making a zig-zag track to the top, and almost immediately cut off an angle of it by making a run up. I was followed by some of the more active men and from where I was above them helped others by taking their rifles by the muzzle and pulling them up till six men were with me, when I saw it was too steep for most of them and told the others to follow the track already well defined and half formed.³⁹⁸

It was the difficult terrain that determined the new tactics that now needed to be developed and used; officers at all levels now were receiving their practical training through experience.

³⁹⁷ Lieutenant Arthur Frederick Batchelor, Diary, MS 1999.1088, KMARL

³⁹⁸ H.H.S. Westmacott, Diary, pp. 1748-1749, quoted in Christopher Pugsley, *Gallipoli: The New Zealand Story* (Auckland, 2008), p. 118

The continual selection and training of junior officers while the expeditionary force was on campaign was essential to ensure the fighting effectiveness of the units by providing replacements for the heavy losses of company commanders. Officer candidates, increasingly chosen from experienced NCOs, were sent to officer training courses in Egypt and Britain where they received instructions about the various duties and knowledge deemed to be required. One such Gallipoli veteran to be selected to attend a commissioning course at Sling Camp in England was Cecil Howden, who had been a trooper in the Mounted Rifles but later transferred to the Wellington Infantry Regiment in March 1916. After a year of service on the Western Front Howden found himself attending a six-week commissioning course at Sling in late April 1917: ‘commenced our classes today with short lectures and drill, etc, having in all about 15 different subjects during the day.’³⁹⁹ He recorded in his diary that during the course the candidates were examined for their knowledge on bombing, field engineering, administration, musketry, pistol use, as well as drills in advancing in company, platoon and extended order, along with bayonet fighting and physical drill.⁴⁰⁰ Howden passed the course and was then commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant in the NZ Machine Gun Corps, remaining at that rank until the end of the war.⁴⁰¹ His experience was typical of those who were fortunate enough to attend commissioning courses in England and Egypt for officer candidates.

Some officer candidates from the New Zealand Division were sent to England to serve in Officer Cadet Battalions. These units were introduced in 1916 and were predominantly created to train potential officers from the ranks.⁴⁰² Many of these units were based at universities, which reinforced the link between education and the officer class of the British Army.⁴⁰³ This system ensured that those candidates who proved unsuitable could be identified and returned to their original regiments. The officer cadets within these training battalions only received their commissions once they had successfully completed the four-month course. The content of these courses remained fairly constant throughout the war and included various subjects, such as drill,

³⁹⁹ Cecil Howden, Diary, 26 April 1917, MS Papers 4133, ATL

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁰¹ Lt.Col. John Studholme, *Some Records of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force: Unofficial but compiled from official records* (Wellington, 1928), p. 159

⁴⁰² G.D. Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches: Officer-Man Relations, Morale and Discipline in the British Army in the Era of the First World War* (Basingstoke & London, 2000), pp. 54-55

⁴⁰³ Christopher Moore-Bick, *Playing the Game: The British Junior Infantry Officer on the Western Front, 1914-18* (Solihull, West Midlands, 2011), pp. 47-48

musketry, tactics, military law and recent military history. Other subjects covered included anti-gas measures, open warfare, field engineering (which included the siting and lay of trenches and the construction of dugout and tunnels), administration, map-reading, reconnaissance and bombing.⁴⁰⁴ Gary Sheffield states that one of the primary roles of the battalions was to teach the officer cadets to think like officers and raise their level of thinking so that they could think for themselves and issue orders with confidence.⁴⁰⁵ The socialisation of the cadets was also a priority, where they were instructed on the appropriate expected behaviour of an officer in the British Army. Sheffield argues that this system was a pragmatic response to the shortage of officers from the 'traditional providing classes' and an attempt to manufacture passable imitations of gentlemanly officers through an intense course that taught the 'public school values' and social training that upper-class men received in their youth.⁴⁰⁶ The whole process stemmed from the belief that officers had to possess certain qualities to be effective.⁴⁰⁷

Not all officers promoted from the ranks were fortunate enough to attend commissioning courses. At times the severe losses of company officers on the Western Front during an offensive meant that vacancies had to be filled without delay to provide platoons with effective leaders. These positions were usually filled by experienced NCOs who had proven ability in leadership and were knowledgeable on the tactics required for trench warfare. One such example was that of Alexander Aitken of the Otago Infantry Regiment, who as a student at Otago University in 1915, had enlisted and served as a private during the Gallipoli campaign. While serving on the Western Front in mid-1916 he was promoted to sergeant and only several months later was awarded a commission as a 2nd lieutenant in the same regiment.⁴⁰⁸ In his autobiography, Aitken states that his battalion had sustained heavy casualties among its platoon commanders during operations leading up to the battle of the Somme and that a number of NCOs were promoted without attending a commissioning course:

Without our knowledge several others and myself, on leaving Armentieres, had been recommended for commissions in the field; this had gone through, and we were now received by the

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., pp. 53-54

⁴⁰⁵ Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches*, pp. 54-55

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 56

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸ Alexander Aitken, *Gallipoli to the Somme: Recollections of a New Zealand Infantryman* (London, 1963), pp. 118-119

Brigadier-General. Promotion, antedated by three days, was really from 26th August; the other new subalterns were Sergeant Bain of the 4th company, Gabites and Rallinshaw of the 8th, and R.Q.M. Pascoe. For me the Brigadier-General's handshake meant wounds a month later on 27th September (though as an N.C.O. I might well have been killed), for three of the others death – Bain and Rallinshaw on this same 27th, Gabites at Polderhoek Chateau on 3rd December 1917.⁴⁰⁹

Aitken makes it quite clear in his memoir that neither he nor his compatriots received any form of officer training before becoming platoon commanders prior to the involvement of the NZ Division in the battle of the Somme in September 1916. It appears that operational requirements made it impossible for these men to attend a commissioning course that would have been the usual protocol; they only had sufficient time to secure the appropriate kit. Aitken states that on 29 August the five new subalterns were congratulated by their colonel and given leave to proceed to Abbeville to invest their kit allowance of £25 in procuring officers' clothing and equipment.⁴¹⁰ Once this was achieved, and after a few days leave, he was then transferred to take command of the 1st Platoon of the 4th Company of the Otago Infantry Regiment prior to embarking for the Somme sector.⁴¹¹ After being severely wounded leading his platoon into combat, Aitken was subsequently invalided out of the army. He eventually became a professor of mathematics and occupied the Chair in that field at Edinburgh University.⁴¹²

Junior officers who accompanied the numerous reinforcement detachments that were sent from the Dominion to serve with the New Zealand Division on the Western Front underwent a rigorous training regime at Sling Camp prior to transferring to France. Reinforcement infantry officers and other ranks were initially posted to the New Zealand Reserve Group where personnel were exposed to a comprehensive training syllabus that catered for the introduction of new weapons, such as the Lewis Gun, and tactics developed through the experiences of trench warfare. Such training was more advanced than that which the Main Body of the expeditionary force initially received in Egypt before the Gallipoli campaign. A memorandum providing a synopsis of the training the infantry reinforcement officers and other ranks underwent in August 1917 indicates that although musketry and drill remained an important focus of training, other

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., p. 119

⁴¹¹ Ibid., p. 123

⁴¹² Ibid., p. 164

essential topics had been introduced. At this time reinforcements were initially required to undergo 23 days of training on their arrival at Sling, which included 153 hours of instruction.⁴¹³

Lectures	36 hours
Musketry	36 hours
Drill	18 hours
Bayonet Fighting & PT	13 hours
Bombing (hand grenades)	12 hours
Anti –gas training	6 hours
Fire Control	6 hours
Lewis Gun	6 hours
Compass	6 hours
Problem Solving	6 hours
Revolver	4 hours
Wiring	4 hours

Combat officers of the NZEF received further training opportunities at Sling from 1916 onwards at the 2nd Army Central School of Instruction. Reports on lectures provided to officers at the school show that there was heavy importance placed on the continuing education of combat officers throughout the war. The roles of frontline officers were varied and the responsibilities of leadership in the trenches were seen as fundamental to efficiency and maintenance of morale. One of the lectures given at the school focussed on the importance of frontline officers and their troops in gathering military intelligence. Emphasis was placed on regimental officers in gathering information from sentries, scouts, patrols into ‘no man’s land,’ enemy prisoners and civilians, where information regarding movement in the enemy trenches, positions of machine guns, artillery positions, identification of enemy units and any change in enemy activity could be recorded and sent back to designated battalion intelligence officers.⁴¹⁴

Heavy emphasis was also placed on providing combat officers with knowledge and skills in the command and leadership of their men. One such lecture given to New

⁴¹³ Memorandum, Syllabus of Officer Training, NZEF Infantry Reserve Group, Sling Camp, 15 August 1917, AD1 737, 10/565, ANZ

⁴¹⁴ Training Papers, 2nd Army School of Instruction, Sling Camp, WA250 1/36, ANZ

Zealand junior officers at Sling in early 1918 provided a list of principal attributes seen as necessary in establishing successful combat leadership. This lecture, entitled 'Command and Leading of Men,' stated that it was most important for officers to gain the confidence of their subordinates which could be achieved by showing professional knowledge; by displaying physical courage which was considered 'absolutely essential in every platoon commander and every man who has to deal with men'; and by constantly displaying moral courage and positivity, stating 'A man who can display cheeriness under all circumstances and conditions is invaluable.'⁴¹⁵ The conditions and experiences of trench warfare made it almost impossible for young officers to live up to these ideals, where the compounding affects of exposure to artillery bombardment, sudden death and life in the trenches proved physically and emotionally taxing on those who had to live through it.

Such lectures also focussed on instilling a sense of duty of officers to their men and fellow officers. One such practical tip provided in one of the lectures would have struck a chord with the national sporting character and role of team captain many New Zealanders identified with:

Another thing which will make your men follow you through thick and thin, and that is, devotion to duty, and to play the game. Remember that you are soldiers and that you are leading the finest men in the world. You cannot give too much of your time, thought, and work to the manner in which you are to lead them. Remember the lives of your men are in your hands, and if you do not know your work you are risking those men's lives.⁴¹⁶

The young officers were also encouraged to show duty to fellow officers from neighbouring platoons and companies when fighting in the trenches. One example given was to not always have machine guns facing forward, but to consider providing covering support fire to units on each flank. Another point emphasized was to never revert responsibility onto subordinates but to shoulder responsibility yourself.⁴¹⁷ This responsibility included stepping up to take control if a superior officer became a casualty:

⁴¹⁵ Notes on 'Command and Leading Men' Lecture, Training Papers, February – May 1918, 2nd Army Central School of Instruction, Sling, WA250 1/30, ANZ

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

If you are a platoon commander you should be able to take the place of a company commander, and if you are a company commander, you should be able to take the place of a battalion commander.⁴¹⁸

This encouragement of junior officers to up-skill to the next level of command proved practical in that it promoted self-confidence of individual officers and helped to ensure that unit cohesion was maintained in combat if commanding officers became casualties. The training was relevant in both the First and Second World Wars where the New Zealand expeditionary forces suffered heavy casualty rates among combat officers.

Officers were also responsible for the maintenance of moral strength in combat units and the importance of this was stressed in lectures given while training at Sling. Emphasis was placed on strength of character and the use of common sense which it was argued provided the power of clear thinking.⁴¹⁹ An example of the rhetoric used in lectures of the late war period in early 1918 indicates that officers of fighting units were also now encouraged to use a certain amount of initiative, based on the skills and knowledge they had acquired through study and experience:

Success in war depends more on moral than physical qualities. Skill cannot compensate for want of courage, energy and determination, but even high moral qualities may not avail without careful preparation and skilful direction. The development of the necessary moral qualities is therefore the first of the objects to be attained. The next, organization and discipline, which enable those qualities to be controlled and used when required. A further essential is skill in applying the powers which the attainment of these objects confers on the troops. The fundamental principles of war are neither very numerous nor in themselves very abstruse, but the application of them is difficult and cannot be made subject to rules. The correct application of principles to circumstances is the outcome of sound military knowledge, built up by study and practice until it has become instinct.⁴²⁰

Such advice was also mixed with an instilled sense of national superiority focusing on the virtues and characteristics of the British officer and his men. In the same lecture as above the young officers were told that they were superior to the enemy because of their physique, they received better training, better food, and that coming from New Zealand they have greater initiative and resourcefulness, while having a

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid

⁴²⁰ Ibid.

better cause to fight for.⁴²¹ The officers were also told that they must always retain a determination to win and that they must encourage this spirit in their men as the offensive doctrine of war has been the doctrine of the British Army for over a century; they must foster and cherish it as it is the only doctrine of war that can assist a nation to win.⁴²² It is questionable whether many officers experienced in trench warfare would be totally convinced by such jingoism, but they were provided with some practical leadership advice that could assist in gaining and maintaining the respect of their subordinates:

Show your men that you know more than they do, look to their wants, their clothes, their food, their sorrows, their joys, treat them firmly and fairly and let them keep their place as you have to keep yours. Show them you are their leader in every way.⁴²³

Most importantly, these young officers were told not to ask their men to do impossible tasks.⁴²⁴ While this was sound advice, the irony was that junior officers were unlikely to play any part in the planning of large-scale attacks but were expected to lead advances across difficult terrain in ‘no man’s land,’ where they were exposed to heavy artillery and machine gun fire, and were likely to be killed or seriously wounded. Some attacks did prove impossible where heavy casualties were sustained; most notably at Passchendaele on 12 October 1917 where a combination of poor planning, preparation and co-ordination at divisional level, combined with a determined German defence and terrain that proved almost un-crossable, led to the heaviest losses of officers and other ranks of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force sustained in any single battle of the war.⁴²⁵ Many of those officers who attempted to cross ‘no man’s land’ in this doomed attack and who survived, felt let down by the senior commanders. Captain Leslie Taylor who led B Company of the 3rd Battalion of the NZ Rifle Brigade wrote after the battle that:

⁴²¹ Ibid.

⁴²² Ibid.

⁴²³ Ibid.

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

⁴²⁵ Glyn Harper, *Dark Journey*, pp. 15-18

As far as the 3rd Battalion was concerned, the whole affair from the beginning appeared to be rushed. This was seen in the time allowed officers to impart to the other ranks the meagre information received about the essential features of the attack, and in the belated issue of the bombs, flares, etc.⁴²⁶

The disaster at Passchendaele proved that the senior commanders within the New Zealand Division could not expect success in battle by relying solely on the training, experience, leadership, courage, initiative and patriotism of the regimental and battalion officers and their men. While these traits were necessary, timely preparation was also essential if the officers of fighting units were expected to achieve success, and without it, their task was almost impossible.

Russell's determination to make the New Zealand Division the best fighting formation on the Western Front ensured that not only the most inexperienced junior platoon commanders but also experienced brigadiers were constantly subjected to various forms of training when away from the front. A perfectionist like Malone, Russell was forced to rebuild the NZ Division repeatedly after it suffered heavy casualties in France, especially during the battle of the Somme in September 1916 and at Passchendaele in October 1917.⁴²⁷ Casualties were particularly high amongst infantry company and platoon commanders which had the potential to reduce the efficiency of the battalions. To counter this, Russell ensured that training remained a priority whenever units were pulled out of the front line. Experienced officers were expected to instruct not only recently arrived officer replacements from reinforcement contingents arriving from New Zealand, but also those NCOs who proved themselves candidates for promotion.

The officers and troops were exposed to a regime of constant training from when the division first arrived on the Western Front in April 1916 up to when it garrisoned Cologne in December 1918. Interest was maintained, and standards improved by adding an element of competition to facets of training. Competitions in rifle exercises and physical drill were held between platoons, companies and battalions in an effort to get the best out of the men, with the responsibility of a good performance being placed on the officers.⁴²⁸ Russell established Divisional Training Schools for officers, NCOs

⁴²⁶ Remarks of Captain L.J. Taylor, 3rd Battalion, NZ Rifle Brigade, WA 20/5, 36, ANZ

⁴²⁷ Harper, *Dark Journey*, pp. 135-138

⁴²⁸ Crawford, *The Devil's Own War*, p. 106

and other ranks where they received a range of military instruction while being held in reserve in the rear of the front line or when the whole division had been withdrawn from the front to rest.⁴²⁹

During these times experienced officers got to hone their military skills while the inexperienced replacement platoon commanders practised tactics and developed leadership skills with their men prior to going into action. Such training included musketry, route marches, bayonet fighting, trench-bombing and close order drill. Battalion and brigade size exercises were held when the opportunities arose, including practicing advancing over open ground under a supporting creeping barrage using live fire.⁴³⁰ Battalions from the NZ Division received such training at the infamous 'Bull Ring' training camp near Etaples on the Channel coast where the severity of the training was notorious. It was here, and at other similar training camps at Rouen, Harfleur and Havre that Kiwi officers and other ranks attended refresher courses and assault training before being included in an offensive.⁴³¹

The nature of warfare on the Western Front was ever changing, especially in the last months of the war where the stalemate of trench warfare gave way to a more mobile conflict where successful offensives by both sides led to rapid advances across open terrain. It was at this time that the New Zealand officers realised the benefit from the training they had received in leading raids and patrols into 'no man's land.' Raiding, patrolling and scouting had always been essential offensive and active defensive tactics in trench warfare where the aim was to gain information regarding the enemy and the area of operations, to inflict losses on the enemy and to destroy his morale while increasing that of your own troops.⁴³² Although such tactics had been taught to infantry and cavalry officers prior to the Great War, they had become increasingly relevant to trench warfare on the Western Front where the Germans generally held the high ground, which restricted the observation of the British forces in low lying positions. By May 1917 New Zealand junior infantry officers at Sling were being lectured on scouting and leading small patrols forward of the front line, where emphasis was placed on the officers reporting on enemy positions, determining the best route to bring up support

⁴²⁹ E.P.F Lynch, *Somme Mud: The war experiences of an Australian infantryman in France, 1916-1919* (Sydney, 2008), pp. 15-20

⁴³⁰ Crawford, p. 106

⁴³¹ Aitken, pp. 82-86

⁴³² Brigadier-General C.W. Melvill, Lecture on Raids, Training Papers, February – May 1918, 2nd Army Central School of Instruction, Sling, WA250 1/30, ANZ

troops, locating the best point to observe the enemy while identifying good positions to place machine guns.⁴³³ They were also instructed on how to distinguish between the enemy forward posts and the main defence line, while noting positions of wire entanglements, sunken roads and fordable points of a river.⁴³⁴

By early 1918 the junior officers and non-commissioned officers of reinforcement drafts that were arriving from New Zealand were receiving very similar, if not the same, comprehensive preparations at Sling prior to being posted to front-line units on the Western Front. Training papers held at Archives New Zealand in Wellington indicate that from at least February 1918 NCOs were systematically trained to step up to command platoons when required. This training policy proved a practical measure to help retain the effectiveness and cohesion of small combat formations during operations where casualties among junior officers were very high. In a memorandum titled 'Special Training for Reinforcement Officers and NCOs,' it states that on arrival at Sling, officers and all NCOs above the rank of lance-corporal were detached from their units from 8.30 am to 6.30 pm daily for the purpose of going through a special course of instruction.⁴³⁵ This course lasted for five weeks, during which time they were given instruction in all subjects with a view for preparing them for leadership roles in the trenches. During this time they were available only for administrative duties and recreational training with their units at weekends and in the evenings.⁴³⁶

The differences in the later-war training within the NZEF compared to that of 1914-1915 were quite marked. Most significant was that reinforcement junior officers and NCOs were training together. Classes were organised into training platoons and sections, with individual officers and NCOs each having a turn acting as platoon and section commanders respectively. The intention of this was to ensure that all were made thoroughly competent with the latest platoon organisation and tactics, which were generally new to them.⁴³⁷

Such courses provided intensive training and the performance of individuals was highly scrutinised. During the first week the classes were put through a thorough

⁴³³ Captain Cozens-Hardy, Lecture on Scouting and Patrolling, 15 May 1917, Training Papers, February – May 1918, 2nd Army Central School of Instruction, Sling, WA250 1/30, ANZ

⁴³⁴ Ibid.

⁴³⁵ Memorandum, 'Special Training for Reinforcement Officers and NCOs,' 22 February 1918, Training Papers, 2nd Army Central School of Instruction, Sling, WA250 1/29, ANZ

⁴³⁶ Ibid.

⁴³⁷ Ibid.

preliminary grounding in all subjects by experienced instructors, with special attention placed on drill, bayonet work and physical training, bombing [grenade throwing], musketry, Lewis Gun, gas and wiring.⁴³⁸ In the second week members of the class were expected to do the instructing on these subjects while working under supervision and criticism of the experienced instructors. By the third week the principles of the platoon and company in attack and defence were explained and carried out as a drill, with each officer given an opportunity to act as a platoon commander. In the fourth and fifth weeks live ammunition and grenades was used on ranges, while the participants were examined on all subjects.⁴³⁹ Field work was also carried out using live ammunition, grenades and gas, with special attention being paid to ‘Trench to Trench Attack,’ ‘Attack on a Strong Point’ and ‘Attack in Open Warfare.’ All course participants were required to take notes on lectures and their notebooks were examined at the end of the course. Lecture subjects included: topography and use of a compass; command and leading men; trench raids; organisation of a battalion and a division; scouting and patrolling; trench discipline; trench to trench attack; theory on use of artillery, rifles and grenades; the system of supply in the field; military law; and the tactical employment of machine guns and Lewis Guns.⁴⁴⁰ On the last day of the course the officers and NCOs were given practical and written examinations that could determine their future roles. While the officers were only subjected to a confidential written assessment, the NCOs could find themselves demoted if they failed to achieve the required standard; a pass of 70 percent was required for sergeants and 60 percent for the rank of corporal.⁴⁴¹ Once the officers and NCOs had completed this course they returned to their units to undertake field training, focusing on the platoon and company in attack. Further advanced training was also provided to the reinforcements if they remained at Sling after they had completed an initial nine weeks of training.⁴⁴²

Such training and experience gained from using these new weapons and evolving tactics during the years of static trench warfare proved invaluable in the rapid advances of the Hundred Days campaign in late 1918. When the opportunities came, the training, fighting qualities and confident professionalism of the NZ Division was recognised and ensured its success in the battle of Bapaume and the drive to the

⁴³⁸ Ibid.

⁴³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴⁴² Ibid.

Hindenburg Line in the last month of the conflict. It was this training that provided officers with the essential confidence needed to successfully lead men into battle.

The Mounted Rifles

The training experience of the officer corps of the New Zealand Mounted Rifle Brigade in Egypt and Palestine was somewhat different to their counterparts in France. Prior to landing at Gallipoli in May 1915, the brigade had received months of intensive training in the deserts of Egypt, where route marches, long-range patrols and mock engagements were the norm. Russell initially commanded the brigade and he was fully aware that his men had a lot to learn, especially his junior officers: ‘...many young officers as yet by no means understand how to lead – and many are ignorant of details they should have at their fingertips.’⁴⁴³ This situation did not last long as the months of constant military exercises and lectures on command and tactics transformed the volunteers into trained officers.

A certain amount of colonial initiative was required by the senior command to ensure this happened, while the Mounted Rifle regiment and squadron commanders were determined to ensure their units were prepared to engage with the Turks at any time. Good horsemanship was imperative for the survival in the desert and it was just as important for the officers of the Mounted Rifles to learn to care for their mounts in campaign conditions in the desert as it was for them to learn the art of war. Exercises included fording rivers, navigation, using the geographical features of the desert, such as dunes and wadis as defensive and offensive positions, as well as conducting rapid mounted advances to then dismount and lead bayonet charges.⁴⁴⁴ What made such work harder was having to conduct such training in excessive heat that drained the energy of both the horses and the soldiers.⁴⁴⁵

Ironically, it was as infantry in the trenches on the hills of the Gallipoli Peninsula that the Mounted Rifle Brigade first saw major action. The formation was used to reinforce the Anzac Corps that had suffered extreme casualties. Although the

⁴⁴³ Colonel Andrew Russell, Diary, 14 December 1914, in Gambrell, R.F. (compiler), *The Russell Saga, Volume 3: World War I*, MS-0822, ATL,

⁴⁴⁴ Terry Kinloch, *Echoes of Gallipoli*, (Auckland, 2005), pp. 90-95

⁴⁴⁵ Harold Judge, NZ Mounted Rifle Brigade, Diary, 9 June 1916, MS Papers 4312 (4), ATL

mounted regiments had not been training to operate in such terrain, they acquitted themselves well and earned a reputation as tenacious fighters. Brigadier Russell proved to be one of the few surviving senior officers to come out of the campaign with credibility, which directly led to him later being appointed to command the NZ Division. However, the brigade sustained heavy casualties, especially in commissioned officers.⁴⁴⁶ The recorded officer casualties of the Canterbury Mounted Rifle Regiment in September 1915 are an example of this; of the 26 officers who had originally landed at Gallipoli with the regiment on 12 May 1915, along with six replacement officers, up until that time five had been killed in action, two had died of sickness, one was missing, and 23 had either been wounded or hospitalised through illness.⁴⁴⁷ The mounted regiments were further decimated in regard to well-trained and experienced combat officers with the formation of the NZ Division in early 1916; 41 officers, and 2,000 NCOs and troopers were drafted into the infantry and artillery for service in France.⁴⁴⁸ This ensured that the depleted brigade was left with only 62 officers, with each of the three remaining mounted rifle regiments only having a cadre of experienced officers who were familiar with desert warfare.⁴⁴⁹

To counter this, the new commander of the brigade, Brigadier-General Edward Chaytor, was given the task of rebuilding the regiments where he used his outstanding administrative ability to eventually train and create an elite mobile fighting force. At Moascar in April 1916 he established a base training camp with a training regiment to provide replacements for each active regiment, as well as schools on instruction which also catered for young commissioned officers; the training depot was later transferred to Tel el Kebir.⁴⁵⁰ The instructors were all veterans who were rotated every three months from regiments in the field. This system ensured that those receiving the training were gaining the experience from seasoned campaigners and being instructed on the most up-to-date tactics and practices being used at the front. Such training included horsemanship, marksmanship, scouting, reconnaissance, patrolling and the 'cultivation of initiative and self-reliance.'⁴⁵¹ This innovative system of training proved successful in ensuring a constant supply of competent replacement troop commanders

⁴⁴⁶ Studholme, p. 383

⁴⁴⁷ Colonel C.G. Powles (ed.), *The History of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles, 1914-1919* (Christchurch, 1928), p. 65

⁴⁴⁸ Memorandum, HQ NZ Division, 4 March 1916, WA 2 1, Box 2, 14/3, ANZ

⁴⁴⁹ Smith, p. 111

⁴⁵⁰ HQ NZMR Brigade War Diary, WA 40/1, ANZ

⁴⁵¹ Smith, pp. 116-117

and NCOs to the brigade for the duration of hostilities in Egypt and Palestine. Such a system was necessary, especially in 1916 when the brigade received a number of inexperienced reinforcement junior officers from New Zealand, which caused considerable ill-feeling among veteran NCOs who had initially been overlooked for commissions.⁴⁵²

Chaytor refused to take any credit for his work. Instead he claimed after the war that he was fortunate in the calibre of his men and the reinforcements he received: ‘One could not go wrong; even if I made bad mistakes they would pull me through.’⁴⁵³ Chaytor was also fortunate in that the brigade sustained relatively minimal officer casualties compared to the NZ Division in France; throughout the whole conflict only 77 officers within the NZ Mounted Rifle Brigade (including the detached Otago Mounted Rifle Regiment) were either killed in action or died of wounds or illness compared to 514 officers from infantry regiments.⁴⁵⁴ This ensured that once the regiments within the Mounted Rifle Brigade had been rebuilt, the units maintained effectiveness in retaining experienced leadership while ensuring junior officers had time to learn their roles.⁴⁵⁵

In general, the officers of the New Zealand military forces leading up to the Great War, and during it, did receive sufficient training and instruction to make them proficient leaders in the field. The imminent prospect of war had ensured that the New Zealand government provided senior commanders with sufficient funds and *materiel* to prepare both their professional and Territorial officers to a standard of leadership and command that allowed them to operate within the protocols and tactics of the British Army. However, the changing nature and tactics used in the war, combined with the contrasting geographical features within the various theatres the forces of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force had to operate in ensured that continuous training and combat experience were crucial in developing the professional *élan* that the New Zealand officers strived so hard to achieve.

⁴⁵² Terry Kinloch, *Devils on Horses: In the words of the Anzacs in the Middle east, 1916-19* (Auckland, 2007), pp. 55-56

⁴⁵³ *The Dominion*, 19 November 1919, p. 5, Papers Past, National Library of New Zealand, www.paperspast.natlib.govt.nz

⁴⁵⁴ *The Great War, 1914-1918: New Zealand Expeditionary Force Roll of Honour* (Wellington, Government Printer, 1924), pp xvi-xvii

⁴⁵⁵ Studholme, p. 383

Chapter 5

Officer Training: Inter-War Years

Although the topic of this thesis concerns the combat officers of the two New Zealand expeditionary forces that served in the overseas campaigns of the First and Second World Wars, a full understanding of the initial problems facing the leadership of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force cannot be appreciated without acknowledging the experience of the Dominion's military forces during the inter-war years of the 1920s and 1930s. The purpose of this chapter is to outline the difficulties the officers of the New Zealand Staff Corps and the Territorial Force faced in maintaining training and experience to achieve a sufficient standard of competency required of combat leaders. These difficulties were not unique to the New Zealand military forces, with Australia and Canada suffering from the same issues. What is evident is that the combat officers of the NZEF had a different experience in the lead-up to the First World War from those who served in the Second World War.

Compared to the officers of the Main Body of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force of the Great War, in general, the officers of the 1st Echelon who embarked for overseas service in the Second World War were less prepared and had received only minimal training. Prior to the First World War, the New Zealand military forces were comparatively highly organised and fully funded in preparation for the coming armed conflict that was supported by a patriotic population; whereas leading up to the Second World War, local anti-war feeling and economic depression had restricted military training in the Dominion. The fiscal policies of successive governments of the Dominion during the inter-war years had a negative effect on the recruitment and training of both the Permanent and Territorial forces, ensuring a reduction in the effectiveness of both. The shortage of experienced and highly trained officers within the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force in 1939 initially limited its involvement in combat operations until the formation had sufficient time to receive sufficient training. This chapter examines why this occurred.

To date little has been written about the training of officers of the New Zealand military forces leading up to and during the First and Second World Wars, and yet the importance of such training was fundamental in determining how the expeditionary forces were led and performed during the conflicts. In 1986 John McLeod published a comprehensive and ground-breaking study, *Myth and Reality: The New Zealand Soldier in World War II*, based on his Masters thesis. This work challenged some contemporary and lasting views regarding the experiences and attitudes of New Zealand soldiers in general during the conflict. Although McLeod did not concentrate specifically on the training of officers, he did identify that the limited training available to officers during the inter-war years and immediately leading up to the start of the conflict had a detrimental effect on the units of the expeditionary force when they first experienced combat.⁴⁵⁶ McLeod identified that the years of neglect of the New Zealand military forces had eroded the training base and effectiveness of the army to the point where equipment was obsolete and training was on an ad-hoc basis, where officers were still learning their duties while attempting to turn civilian volunteers into soldiers.⁴⁵⁷ He directly blamed the initial defeats of 2NZEF in Greece and Crete on ‘The pre-war military system, through a lack of finance, numbers and initiative, [that] had failed both to train officers and senior NCOs for their likely war role and to imbue them with the necessary positive and aggressive principles required for success in war.’⁴⁵⁸ Glyn Harper also alludes to this view when writing of Howard Kippenberger, a self-taught military theorist, in his biography, *Kippenberger: An Inspired New Zealand Commander*, stating that ‘The 1930s were without doubt the nadir of the fortunes of the New Zealand Army.’⁴⁵⁹ This chapter expands on the issues regarding officer training during the period and provides a more in-depth study of what training and education was provided to the men who were expected to lead the nation’s citizen-soldiers into combat in World War Two.

The war-weary attitude of the New Zealand public as a result of the unprecedented casualties suffered in the Great War had a dramatic, immediate and lasting effect on the training provided to the military forces of the country in the inter-war years. This began with the demobilization of the expeditionary force in 1919 when

⁴⁵⁶ John McLeod, *Myth and Reality: The New Zealand soldier in World War II* (Auckland, 1986), p. 26

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 30

⁴⁵⁹ Glyn Harper, *Kippenberger: An Inspired New Zealand Commander* (Auckland, 1997), p. 57

those surviving officers who had either volunteered for overseas service from the Territorials or who had been conscripted were gradually released from the army to return to civilian life, either in New Zealand or in Britain. By June 1920 the permanent military establishment of the Dominion had been reduced to near the pre-war numbers, with 191 Regular officers (including 114 from the Staff Corps) and 919 other ranks.⁴⁶⁰ This was reduced even further by June the following year, with only 156 officers and 676 other ranks registered in the Permanent Force.⁴⁶¹ Likewise, the Territorial Force was also reduced from a strength of 1,183 officers and 30,292 other ranks in June 1920 to 1,031 officers and 22,157 rank and file by June 1921.⁴⁶² By this time Major-General Sir Edward Chaytor had been appointed as the general officer commanding of the New Zealand Forces, the first New Zealand-born officer to hold this position, and it was his responsibility to ensure the military establishment remained a proficient force of sufficient size for Dominion and imperial defence in a time of economic hardship.⁴⁶³

Chaytor formulated a plan to reorganise the post-war defence forces to promote economy and efficiency. A single General Staff was created and the positions of Adjutant-General and Quartermaster-General were abolished. In addition, staff work was divided into three branches; 'G' branch was to oversee training and operations, 'A' branch was responsible for the former duties of the Adjutant-General, and 'Q' branch was responsible for the former duties of the Quartermaster-General.⁴⁶⁴ To ensure efficiency, Chaytor argued that all staff officers were to be trained so that they could be interchangeable between branches.⁴⁶⁵ He also ensured that promising New Zealand officers with war experience were given positions on the Staff Corps, which gave the army a greater New Zealand character than the pre-war establishment.

Chaytor further argued for more formal training for officers. He called for a reduction in drill training but an increase in training in the field; this was to include an 11-day annual camp for other ranks and 13 days for all officers.⁴⁶⁶ Increased compulsory formal training for officers and NCOs was to replace the voluntary course that they could previously choose to attend and only selected NCOs who had attended

⁴⁶⁰ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1921-1922, Vol. 3 (Session II), H-19, p. 2

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*

⁴⁶³ Michael Smith, *Fiery Ted: Anzac Commander* (Christchurch, 2008) p. 307

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 311

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁶ General-Officer-Commanding (GOC) Paper, 5 February 1920, AD 10, 25/6, ANZ

a four-week compulsory course in camp would be eligible to receive a commission.⁴⁶⁷ Similarly, all officers would have to attend a two-week compulsory camp before they were considered for promotion.⁴⁶⁸ He stipulated that only officers and NCOs should attend a seven-day refresher course annually and that time spent training in camp with the whole unit should be reduced.⁴⁶⁹ This scheme was designed to provide better provision for the instruction of officers and NCOs while attempting to provide greater efficiency. The scheme called for the retention of the same number of officers and NCOs in the Territorial Force but a reduction in the number of privates in half from 30,000 to 15,000, with the emphasis on ensuring efficient and rapid mobilization if and when required.⁴⁷⁰ Chaytor's scheme was endorsed by a Joint Committee in October 1920, but it was identified in the subsequent report as not providing 'a highly trained force, but it will provide an efficient one which can be quickly brought to a high state of training on mobilisation.'⁴⁷¹ The reorganisation began in early 1921.

Similar to the reduced allocation of funding faced by the recently retired Chief of the New Zealand Defence Force, Lieutenant-General Rhys Jones, the reduction in military funding from the national budget at that time forced Chaytor to reformulate the policy that further reduced the amount of training provided to officers and other ranks for the whole military establishment. He outlined this policy in his annual report in 1922 where universal military training was to continue as prescribed in the Defence Act of 1909 but the amount of training was to be less than that provided leading up to the Great War.⁴⁷² Economy in expenditure was to be achieved by reducing the size of the Territorial Force and reducing the period of service in the force from seven years to four years.⁴⁷³ He planned to balance the reductions by ensuring that the available training was to be carried out by a highly trained permanent staff that could provide quality training under a progressive system, if not quantity.⁴⁷⁴ A general training section was to provide cadets with physical and musketry training, along with military drill to platoon level, while Territorial soldiers at the age of 19 were to receive the same but up to company standard. Territorial Force officers and NCOs were also to attend special

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁷¹ Joint Committee Report, 11 November 1921, AD 1, Box 1060, 39/19/21, ANZ

⁴⁷² Report of General Officer Commanding, *AJHR*, 1921-1922, Vol. 3 (Session II), H-19, p. 1

⁴⁷³ General Officer Commanding Paper, 5 February 1920, AD10, 25/6, ANZ

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

courses of instruction, while whole units were only to attend a limited number of drills each year, which included attending an annual camp.⁴⁷⁵

Financial restrictions meant that the policy was not carried out as planned, and that only officers and NCOs attended annual camps. Also, as with the current situation, the reduction in the military vote led to the forced retirement of experienced officers and non-commissioned officers which further affected the number of personnel available to provide the necessary training, although Chaytor attempted to put a positive spin on it:

In the carrying-out of this reorganisation it has unfortunately been necessary to dispense with the services of a number of permanent officers and non-commissioned officers surplus to establishment, and to reduce the number of units in the Territorial Force. The present organisation, however, is better adapted to the needs of modern war; it will be more economical to administer, and, in the event of a national emergency, can be mobilized more quickly and effectively than the pre-war organisation.⁴⁷⁶

Ironically, at this time the New Zealand Staff Corps had increased in strength from the pre-war establishment. In 1913 there were only 74 officers in the 'understrength and over-worked' Staff Corps at a time when the country was preparing for war and when there were increasing demands placed on professional officers to provide instruction to the Territorial units.⁴⁷⁷ By 1917 the number had risen to the ideal peace-time establishment of 101, of whom 74 were on active service overseas, while 29 officer cadets were studying at the Royal Military College at Duntroon.⁴⁷⁸ This continuation of recruiting and educating officer cadets throughout the war and immediately afterwards ensured that by 1920 the Staff Corps had increased to 138 professional officers.⁴⁷⁹ However, these ideal numbers were short-lived.

⁴⁷⁵ Report of General Officer Commanding, *AJHR*, 1921-1922, Vol. 3 (Session II), H-19, p. 1

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2

⁴⁷⁷ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1913, H-19, pp. 1-3

⁴⁷⁸ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1917, H-19, pp. 1-4

⁴⁷⁹ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1922, H-19, p. 1

Retrenchment

Continued fiscal constraint throughout the 1920s and 1930s had an immediate and lasting adverse effect on the military establishment leading up to the Second World War. Officer recruitment and training, both in the Staff Corps and the Territorial Force, were heavily restricted which affected the whole military structure of the country. In November 1921 Chaytor received a directive from the government that military expenditure was to be reduced by £107,000. This necessitated drastic cuts where possible, including the discharge of most of the temporary personnel, the closing of the School of Instruction and the cancellations of annual camps.⁴⁸⁰ In his 1922 annual report Chaytor was clearly upset at having to make cuts that he viewed as detrimental to the service:

The decision to reduce the Defence vote to £350,000 necessitated the reduction of the permanent personnel by over one-third; among those retired being many highly qualified officers, warrant officers and non-commissioned officers with excellent records of service both in New Zealand and in the field; also thirteen Staff cadets at the Royal Military College of Australia. Of the officers retained, four lieutenant-colonels were reverted to the rank of major, and one major to the rank of captain.⁴⁸¹

Such action reduced the efficiency and effectiveness of the defence force, with the recruiting and training of officer cadets ceasing altogether. Chaytor's disappointment in having to implement such measures was obvious:

The personnel of the Staff Corps, the Permanent Staff, and the Royal NZ Artillery is no less than half of that maintained prior to the war, and obviously cannot carry out the same amount of work as the pre-war staff; but by economising work by closing all obsolete defences, by abandoning the attempt to keep touch with those trainees posted to the non-effective list, by reducing the number of compulsory parades, and by consolidating the training as much as possible, it is hoped that training can be continued at all except in very small centres.⁴⁸²

It was at this time that the Staff officer cadets withdrawn from Duntroon were offered positions in the British and Indian armies, as there was no opportunity to be

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid.

⁴⁸² Ibid., p. 2

commissioned in New Zealand.⁴⁸³ However, there were only a limited number of graduates, the same number 'allotted to graduates from the Royal Military College, Kingston' in Canada, who were also offered commissions in the British Army.⁴⁸⁴ Only six graduates each year from Duntroon received such opportunities, limiting the career prospects of those graduates not selected.⁴⁸⁵ It was also from this time that many promising officers became demoralised and left the service.

The prospects for adequate officer training and a future career in the New Zealand Permanent Force were much reduced by 1923. At this time no New Zealand officer cadets were enrolled at Duntroon and the professional development of serving officers was severely limited by the reduction in training. Chaytor argued that the Turkish Crisis of September 1922 had highlighted the need to maintain the military forces in an efficient state and with sufficient available reserves of clothing and equipment to allow a small expeditionary force to be mobilised and dispatched without undue delay.⁴⁸⁶ He further stated that of the 790 officers and 11,197 other ranks that had volunteered and registered to serve during the crisis, sixty percent were too young to have served in the Great War, which emphasised the necessity for training young officers and rankers who were coming of age for service.⁴⁸⁷ In his 1923 annual report Chaytor clearly warned his political superiors that the reduced number of regular officers and the lack of sufficient training for them needed to be addressed to ensure the situation did not get any worse:

The uncertainty regarding the future prospects in the Permanent Forces is causing much dissatisfaction, and some of the best of the younger officers are preparing themselves for outside employment in preference to studying for their promotion examinations. Unless their prospects are improved many of the more able and enterprising officers may be expected to resign as soon as they can obtain suitable employment elsewhere... In view of the shortages of officers it is hoped that three cadets may be sent next year for training at Sandhurst, Woolwich or Cranwell, and that three more will follow each year after that. The question of exchanging NZ Service Cadet officers with officers of British units has not yet been settled, but such exchanges offer the only opportunity for NZ officers to obtain necessary experience in regimental duties or in handling men in the field.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸³ Memorandum from the High Commissioner, London to the Acting Prime Minister, 2 June 1921, AD1, 1010 52/253, ANZ

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1923, H-19, p. 1

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 2

Prior to his retirement in 1924, Chaytor continued to voice his concerns to the government, promoting ideas that he believed would assist in the recruitment and retention of experienced, competent and youthful officers. In a confidential memorandum to the Minister of Defence in January 1924, Chaytor suggested that one solution would be to encourage the retirement of older officers. This would see them being replaced by more youthful officers, with promotion providing them with an incentive to stay in the service.⁴⁸⁹ He further argued that the selection of such officers should be based on merit, not solely on seniority.⁴⁹⁰ It was also his opinion that sending cadets on a four-year course to RMC Duntroon was proving too expensive and that a cheaper alternative was to send three cadets each year for 18-month courses at either Sandhurst, Woolwich or Cranwell in England. On graduation, he recommended that these cadets be commissioned as second-lieutenants and then posted to British Army units for 10-month secondments to gain experience prior to returning to New Zealand.⁴⁹¹

Chaytor also pointed out that the continually reducing defence budget was directly affecting his ability to retain experienced Staff Corps officers. In a memorandum to the Minister of Defence in January 1923 he made it clear the uncertainty of the Defence policy had reduced the prospects of a career as an officer in the New Zealand Staff Corps and:

has greatly discouraged the present officers and tends to make them feel that they are wasting their time and energy by remaining in the service...Recent experience has shown that New Zealand may be called on at any time to provide an expeditionary force at short notice and proves the necessity for maintaining the N.Z. military in an efficient state; but the efficiency of the N.Z. Military Forces must depend primarily on that of the officers, who are responsible for the organization and training in peace, and for the staff work and leadership in war. It is therefore essential that every possible means should be employed to obtain and retain the right type of officer and that any officer who falls below the required standard should be retired.⁴⁹²

⁴⁸⁹ Confidential Memorandum, Chaytor to Minister of Defence, 14 January 1924, AD 10, 25 59/2, ANZ

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

⁴⁹² Confidential Memorandum, Chaytor to Minister of Defence, 31 January 1923, AD 10, 25 59/2, ANZ

Poor salaries were identified as an issue in the retention of Staff Corps officers. In July 1923 Chaytor actively campaigned for an increase in pay of regular officers in New Zealand. He claimed that their current salaries 'compare most unfavourable' to officers in the British Army and the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy who were paid nearly double the rates of New Zealand Staff Corps officers.⁴⁹³ In October the same year he pushed for colonel-commandants to receive a pay increase to £900 per annum to cover the expenses incurred in entertaining visiting officers:

Officers commanding commands are rightly expected to extend hospitality to visiting officers, and this cannot be done without an expense which their present rate of pay will not stand, and it is not just that an O.C. Command should have to call upon his private means to fulfil an official obligation.⁴⁹⁴

Chaytor's successor, Major-General C.G. Powles, suffered the same frustration in trying to maintain a minimum state of efficiency under a reducing Defence budget. In March 1924 he wrote to the Minister of Defence strongly recommending that the training of New Zealand officer cadets at military colleges in the United Kingdom be commenced forthwith. He argued that the earliest such cadets would be available for duty in New Zealand, if accepted, would be in 1927, by which time the officer corps of the Permanent Forces would be under strength.⁴⁹⁵ He made it clear that the current situation was having a detrimental affect on the service, advising: 'There is already a danger of having to adopt the bad policy of appointing partially qualified men because there are no cadets coming forward, a danger which will increase as the delay in enrolling cadets continues.'⁴⁹⁶

Although some measures were taken regarding the recruitment of officer cadets, the general decline in the efficiency of the New Zealand military forces due to reduced personnel continued throughout the 1920s. This was identified in a military training review conducted by Major Edward Puttick in 1929. In his report Puttick pointed out that for the Dominion's military forces to achieve the dual roles of local defence and defence of the Empire it was essential to maintain a highly-trained corps of regular officers and non-commissioned officers sufficient in strength to provide around 50 per cent of the numbers in those ranks required for the forces mobilized on the declaration

⁴⁹³ Memorandum, Chaytor to Minister of Defence, 10 July 1923, AD 10, 25 59/2, ANZ

⁴⁹⁴ Memorandum, Chaytor to Minister of Defence, 19 October 1923, AD 10, 25 59/2, ANZ

⁴⁹⁵ Confidential Memorandum, Powles to Minister of Defence, 31 March 1924, AD 10, 25 59/2, ANZ

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

of war, and to provide sufficient instructors for training camps and Staff in New Zealand.⁴⁹⁷ He also argued that it was essential to ensure that Territorial officers and non-commissioned officers were as highly trained as circumstances permit, to provide a proportion of leadership requirements for the first units mobilized, as well as for the establishment of subsequent units and reinforcements.⁴⁹⁸ He further pointed out that the military training of soldiers needed to be comprehensive to give officers and NCOs sufficient practice in command and tactical exercises, while providing knowledge of administrative services.⁴⁹⁹

Puttick therefore highlighted the importance that for the military organization to function well in times of war, it must maintain a sufficient corps of highly trained regular officers, and reasonably well trained Territorial officers, in peace-time.⁵⁰⁰ As he pointed out in his report, particular importance had to be given to the training of Territorial soldiers in that it was the Territorial Force that ‘produced practically all the officers and NCOs required on mobilization’ of the expeditionary force in the Great War.⁵⁰¹ The findings of his report made it very clear that government policy had seriously limited the country’s ability to provide an effective expeditionary force if the need arose:

The reduction of the training age [for Territorials] from 25 years to 21, the abolition of the one camp per trainee’s period of service, the reduction in courses of instruction, and many other similar measures of economy have very seriously affected the efficiency of the forces... The present system does not – on account of reduced training age – provide a trained force immediately available, the existing Territorials being below ‘active service’ age. In the event of war practically all the men required must be found from the Reserve, i.e. from men who have passed through the Territorial Force.⁵⁰²

However, one of the few positive findings within Puttick’s report was, that in his opinion, the knowledge and ability of personnel within the small New Zealand Permanent Force was of a high standard, and that a large proportion of Territorial officer and NCOs were capable, under supervision, of providing the required training of units in the event of mobilization.⁵⁰³ In order to achieve this New Zealand was reliant

⁴⁹⁷ Report on Military Training Review, 17 July 1929, Puttick 3 1/e, ANZ

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.

⁵⁰² Ibid.

⁵⁰³ Ibid.

on the British Army to provide the necessary training. In the mid-1920s the British government established the Imperial Defence College where its function was the training of a body of staff officers from the Navy, Army and Air Force 'in the broadest aspects of Imperial strategy, and the occasional examination of current problems of Imperial defence referred to it by the Chiefs of Staff Committee, in which the supervision of the College for professional purposes is vested.'⁵⁰⁴ From February 1927 New Zealand was allocated two vacancies, but only one was filled due to financial considerations.⁵⁰⁵

At this time a limited amount of professional development was still being provided and the recruitment of officer cadets had resumed, albeit, on a very small scale. An interchange system had been introduced with the British Army that saw three New Zealand officers seconded to British infantry regiments serving in India in 1927.⁵⁰⁶ Such opportunities were invaluable in ensuring these officers experienced service and duties in active battalions; an experience they could not attain in New Zealand where there were no regular infantry regiments. Further to this, two officer cadets had been selected to attend an 18-month commissioning course at the prestigious Royal Military College at Sandhurst in England, where after graduating they were attached to regular British infantry regiments in England for twelve months before returning to New Zealand.⁵⁰⁷

The secondment to regular infantry regiments was probably the most beneficial aspect of this system for the New Zealanders as it would provide the only opportunity for newly commissioned junior officers to experience command of troops prior to returning to the Dominion; an experience that was not provided at the Royal Military Colleges. According to a War Office memorandum from 1926, the purpose of the new syllabus of the commissioning course at Sandhurst was not meant to directly produce effective junior combat leaders, but was intended to provide foundations from which the cadet's future military studies could be built, as well as extending the general education of the cadets where subjects such as the modern history of England, European geography, languages and similar subjects were taught.⁵⁰⁸

⁵⁰⁴ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1927, Vol. 3, H-19, p. 1

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁸ War Office Memorandum to the General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, 26 November 1926, AD1, 1010 52/130/1, ANZ

In the first place it must be emphasized that under the new syllabus no attempt is made to turn out a trained troop leader or platoon commander. The young officer's training in these capacities will begin when he joins his regiment... Thus, for example, in tactics and strategy cadets receive instruction on very broad lines during their first two terms, and are only introduced to the elements of platoon and section work only in their last term, as it is considered that the more general forms of tactical and strategical instructions can be better dealt with in classes at Sandhurst, whilst a young officers' training as a platoon commander can most certainly be better carried out in his regiment.⁵⁰⁹

Another memorandum sent from the War Office in 1927 shows that the new syllabus was focussed on expanding the knowledge and military skills of the cadets, rather than directly developing their leadership skills. Apart from tactics and strategy, other subjects in the syllabus included field engineering, map reading and field sketching, organisation and administration, military law, military hygiene, along with drill, weapons training and physical training. Some subjects, such as German, French and Political and Economic History were voluntary and there was an effort to encourage cadets to study teaching methods.⁵¹⁰ However, very few New Zealand officer cadets got the benefit of this scheme.

Although a small number of Staff officers continued to attend courses in Britain during this period, the recruitment of officer cadets eventually ceased. In his 1930 GOC annual report, Major-General Robert Young stated that since September 1928 no officer cadets of the New Zealand Permanent Forces had been selected for training at the military colleges in England and that the approved policy of appointment of officers had been in abeyance for two years.⁵¹¹ His frustration at the current situation was evident as he argued the importance of receiving training provided by the British Army:

The system has been found to be the most suitable from all points of view, and whatever establishment of officers is maintained in the future, it is essential that vacancies shall be filled from specially selected cadets who graduate at one of the colleges in England, and who are given further opportunity of undergoing a course of training with a unit of the regular Army before returning to the Dominion. Owing to the constant development of military science it is important that, in the interests of

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁵¹⁰ War Office Memorandum to the General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, 21 January 1927, AD1, 1010 52/130/1, ANZ

⁵¹¹ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1930, Vol. 3, H-19, p. 1

the Forces generally, our young officers should be adequately trained for their duties, and it is therefore hoped that it will soon be possible to resume sending cadets to England.⁵¹²

Such hopes proved fruitless and the economies placed on the Defence budget further reduced opportunities for regular and Territorial officers. In the case of officer cadets only those who could afford to support themselves were accepted. In 1930 several New Zealand cadets were accepted for commissions in the regular Army on the nomination by the Governor-General for cadetships at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst and the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, but all their expenses were to be paid by their parents.⁵¹³ Previously only those young men with a high level of education, the minimum being matriculation and its later equivalent of University Entrance, were accepted as regular officer cadets; whereas the financial constraints of that time meant that the families of prospective cadets also had to be extremely wealthy to afford the passage to and from England as well as paying for all course and accommodation-related expenses for the 18-month course.⁵¹⁴ An example is that of John Russell, whose wealthy and influential father, Major-General Sir Andrew Russell, financially sponsored his 19-year-old son as an officer cadet at Sandhurst in 1923.⁵¹⁵ Such practice did not reflect the egalitarian character of the officer corps of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force that had developed during the later half of the Great War, where officer selection was increasingly based on merit and experience rather than social class and wealth.

By the early 1930s the situation had become worse. Economic depression had seen further severe cuts to the Defence budget and a reduction in the number of professional officers to administer training for the Territorial Force. Major-General Young, a Great War veteran, was the general officer commanding the New Zealand Defence Force at this time and he had to suffer the same frustration as his predecessors in attempting to maintain a cadre of well-trained professional officers for the Staff Corps. The Territorial Force was also to suffer from the lack of government funding in 1930 and the years following. While expressing appreciation to a number of brigade and regimental commanders who had relinquished their positions after the regulation period of four years in their roles, and commending their valuable service that was

⁵¹² Ibid.

⁵¹³ Ibid.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid.

⁵¹⁵ The Russell Family Saga, Vol. 4, MS Papers 0823, ATL

‘reflected by the high standard of efficiency attained by the Territorial Force during the previous years,’ Major-General Young also noted in his annual report that there was some criticism from the public regarding the Territorial Force.⁵¹⁶ Such disparagement concerned both the organisation and the system of training in the Territorial Force that some considered obsolete, inefficient and that no attention had been paid to keeping up to date with modern military developments that were being fostered by the regular army in Britain.⁵¹⁷ Such criticism may have had some foundation considering that in March 1930, on the grounds of economy, the government had cancelled all Territorial training camps for that year which affected six Mounted Rifle regiments, the 3rd Field Battery of artillery and the NZ Medical Corps.⁵¹⁸ Such action would most certainly have reduced the potential efficiency of these units by preventing the officers and other ranks from training in large war-time formations.

The Wasted Years: Further Effects of Fiscal Constraints

It appears that 1931 was the year of despair for career officers and those officers within the Territorial Force who were serious about extending their military education and efficiency. In March of that year further retrenchment led to the enforced retirement of 19 officers and 117 other ranks from the Permanent Force, leaving a total number of only 86 officers and 263 other ranks within the regular force available to provide administration and training to the Territorial troops.⁵¹⁹ Such numbers were totally inadequate and may have assisted the government in deciding to make the Territorial Force a voluntary organisation. In 1930 the Territorial Force had a total complement of 16,990 all ranks, but by the end of 1931 it had been drastically reduced to a cadre of only 3,658.⁵²⁰ Such steps were necessary when examining the recorded Defence expenditure for that time; the expenditure for 1931 was £229,050 which was almost half that of the previous year of £401,645.⁵²¹ Those few fortunate career officers who were already attending courses in Britain were able to complete them but no new officer

⁵¹⁶ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1930, Vol. 3, H-19, p. 3

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁹ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1931, Vol. 2, H-19, p. 2

⁵²⁰ New Zealand Defence Force, www.army.mil.nz/culture-and-history/nz-army-history/historical-chronology

⁵²¹ Report of the General Officer commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1931, Vol. 2, H-19, p. 2

cadets were sent to commissioning courses at Sandhurst or Woolwich that year. Some officers were fortunate enough to be seconded to units within the British Army to further their experience, such as Captain K.L. Stewart, MBE, of the NZ Staff Corps who was attached to the Ceylon Defence Force after graduating from the Staff College at Camberley.⁵²² Another was Captain L.G. Goss who was attached to a regular British Army regiment in England after graduating from the same course.⁵²³

These secondments also had an economic value in that such appointments also saved on the cost of passage back to New Zealand at a time when military expenditure was at its lowest. Other officers were less fortunate; Lieutenant-Colonel N.W.B. Thom completed a course at the Imperial Staff College in London but was retired under the provisions of the Finance Act (No.2) of 1930 immediately afterwards.⁵²⁴ Major-General Young also retired that year as ‘General Officer Commanding’ and was replaced by Major-General W.L.H. Sinclair-Burgess. In his annual report Sinclair-Burgess explained how a large number of officer retirements were enforced from 31 March 1931 under the provisions of Section 39 of the Finance Act, 1930. The act referred to authorised retirement on superannuation of any member of the Permanent Force or the Permanent Staff under the Defence Act, 1909, who, due to age or length of service, would have been entitled to voluntarily retire within five years from 1930.⁵²⁵

Officer training for the Territorial Force also reached an all-time low during this period. The drastic reduction in Defence Department spending reduced most units in the Territorials to only cadres of officers and NCOs where training at annual camps was reduced to theory exercises of ‘Training Exercises Without Troops’ (TEWT). In accordance with the government policy, the Territorial Force was reorganised on a voluntary basis from 1 June 1931 which led to the total force being reduced to 10,000 personnel.⁵²⁶ Again the General Officer Commanding attempted to accentuate a positive stance of the situation:

The reduction in personnel has been brought about by adopting smaller peace establishments for certain units (eg. Infantry and Mounted Rifles) but care has been taken to ensure a proper allotment

⁵²² Ibid., p. 1

⁵²³ Ibid.

⁵²⁴ Ibid.

⁵²⁵ Ibid., p. 2

⁵²⁶ Ibid.

of officers, NCOs and men within units to enable progressive training to be satisfactorily carried out and to provide for a rapid expansion to a war footing if necessary.⁵²⁷

As at 31 March 1931 there were only 971 officers registered as serving in the Territorials, with only 86 regular officers on strength to provide training for them, and even then, some of these were Staff officers who were employed solely on administrative duties that did not involve training duties.⁵²⁸ This state of affairs proved unacceptable to Colonel Harold Barrowclough, who had previously served in combat leading a battalion of the New Zealand Rifle Brigade on the Western Front in 1918, and who at this time was the Territorial commander of the 3rd New Zealand Infantry Brigade. In July 1931 a memorandum from the officer in command of the Southern Command advised that Barrowclough was transferring from Christchurch to Auckland to take up a partnership in a law firm and thus was compelled to relinquish command of the brigade. However, Barrowclough's disillusionment at the changes to the new Territorial system led to his resignation from the Territorials which was recorded in the memorandum:

He states that in view of the difficulty he has felt in accepting the present Defence proposals with any degree of enthusiasm, he considers that it would be advisable for him to relinquish the command immediately, and so enable his successor to take up the duties as near as possible at the commencement of the new scheme.⁵²⁹

Barrowclough was subsequently transferred to the Reserve of Officers list, having no further active role until he volunteered to serve in the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force when it was established in 1939.⁵³⁰

The limited training opportunities for both regular and voluntary officers were to remain until the late 1930s. Sinclair-Burgess outlined the difficulties the army faced in providing the necessary training in his 1935 annual report, stating that through the shortage of available staff and the stoppage of promotions, the majority of the Staff officers were overworked by holding more than one appointment and that many junior

⁵²⁷ Ibid.

⁵²⁸ Ibid.

⁵²⁹ Memorandum from Officer Commanding, Southern Command, 13 July 1931, AD 1, 1521 253/3/38, ANZ

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

officers were carrying out responsible duties that would normally be given to senior officers. An example of this was the appointment of Captain L.W. Andrew VC, as adjutant of the 2nd Field Company, Corps of New Zealand Engineers, when at the same time holding the position of adjutant for the 2nd Field Ambulance.⁵³¹ Sinclair-Burgess argued that this was not in the best interests of the service but that there was no alternative due to the financial constraints placed on the military forces that prevented recruitment and promotion of officers.⁵³² The ‘abnormal conditions’ continued to affect the amount of training provided to existing officers with only a select few being able to receive training overseas; an example being three captains who successfully passed entrance examinations to attend the Staff College at Camberley in 1933, and Captain C.S.J. Duff of the Royal New Zealand Artillery who travelled to England in July of the same year to attend a gunnery course and an artillery survey course.⁵³³ Such opportunities were few and no New Zealand officers had been sent to the Imperial Staff College since 1930.⁵³⁴

The lack of funding to provide young regular officers and cadets with training with the British Army forced the General Officer Commanding once again to look to Australia for suitable alternatives. Major-General Sinclair-Burgess’s frustration is evident in his annual report and his argument for the need to provide sufficient training was valid:

It has not yet been found practicable for New Zealand to again resume representation at the Imperial Defence College, but the advantages of this college have not been lost sight of, and it is hoped that the time is not far distant when a nomination may be made...In order to keep up the steady inflow of young officers, to meet requirements occasioned by retirements, resignations and deaths, four cadets were sent to the Royal Military College of Australia on the 16th of February 1934. As pointed out previously, the Service is seriously understaffed in officers, and it is hoped it will be possible to send a further six cadets to the Royal Military College of Australia during the ensuing year.⁵³⁵

Such appointments were a great improvement from having only a few wealthy parents fund the military education of their officer-cadet sons; for cadets were once again selected on merit and not wealth alone. However, it took four years for the cadets

⁵³¹ New Zealand Gazette, No. 55, 1 August 1935, p. 2107, AD1, 1521 253/3/38, ANZ

⁵³² Report of the General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1934-35, Vol. 3, H-19, p.

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⁵³³ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*

to graduate for service as officers from the time they entered the college and as a consequence did not resolve the lack of continual training for serving officers at that time. Once again Australia provided a solution; at the invitation of the Australian Commonwealth Government an exchange of officers was effected during the camp training period during the same year, with a view to obtaining closer liaison between the military forces of the two countries. This initiative was seen as a positive move, with Sinclair-Burgess reporting:

Apart from the interchange of ideas on methods of training, etc, which such an arrangement affords, I regard the personal contact so established between the two forces as of primary importance. The Chief of the General Staff, Australian Military Forces, has expressed the desire that the scheme now initiated should continue, a proposal in which I fully concur.⁵³⁶

The training of the Territorial Force was equally important as its personnel would provide the bulk of the officers and non-commissioned officers of any future expanded expeditionary force. Sinclair-Burgess considered it vitally important and saw the object of the peace-time training role of the Territorials as providing a frame-work and machinery for expansion and training in the event of war. He argued:

This required not only a sound system of training the instructors themselves, but also an equally efficient organisation for training private soldiers, as it is from the latter that the additional non-commissioned officers required on mobilisation will be drawn. Most Territorial Force officers are more capable of training their subordinates to be leaders than training them to be instructors. It must be accepted therefore that the detail work of training instructors must be done by the Permanent Forces.⁵³⁷

Although his argument may have been valid, it is questionable whether there were sufficient regular personnel available at the time to provide such instruction and training, with the Permanent Force only consisting of 83 officers and 339 other ranks.⁵³⁸

A number of measures were taken to remedy the issue of insufficiently trained officers from the mid-1930s. In December 1934 seven regular warrant officers were appointed to lieutenant commissions within the New Zealand Staff Corps, but Sinclair-Burgess reported that even with the granting of these commissions, the shortage of

⁵³⁶ Ibid.

⁵³⁷ Ibid., p. 5

⁵³⁸ Ibid.

officers was still acute and further measures were necessary to remedy the situation once financial conditions permitted.⁵³⁹ A further seven cadets entered the Royal Military College of Australia that year and the system of interchange with Australian officers that had been introduced the previous year was continued.⁵⁴⁰ The liaison was further extended by the appointment of an officer of the NZSC as an instructor at the Australian Royal Military College.⁵⁴¹ This bi-lateral extension of officer training was certainly beneficial to the New Zealand military forces as both officer cadets and serving officers received training and were kept up-to-date with the current tactics, practices and military theory taught by the British Army. However, training for regular officers stationed in New Zealand was limited to attending 14-day refresher courses which were held periodically. These courses comprised an administrative and tactical exercise for officers, while warrant officers and other NCOs attended a course in signalling, weapon training and the instruction of subordinate leaders.⁵⁴² The training was carried out on the model used by the British Army in Great Britain, with the syllabus including infantry training, physical training, weapon training (rifle, Lewis Gun, Vickers Gun and use of the 3-inch mortar), gun drill, first-aid, signalling, anti-gas training, topography and administration.⁵⁴³ Such training filtered down to the 782 officers and 1,604 NCOS of the Territorial units where they received instruction on the same specific topics.⁵⁴⁴ At this time the Territorial Force was under-strength due to a high turn-over of personnel and short-term service of volunteers, which limited the reserve of trained officers and soldiers. Conversely, this did allow a high degree of concentration in specialist training such as machine gunners, signallers and mortar personnel, leaving Sinclair-Burgess to comment that ‘The standard of training of specialists in the Territorial Force has never been higher than it is at present.’⁵⁴⁵

⁵³⁹ Report of the General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1935, Vol.3, H-19, p. 2

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Improvements

The threat of war in Europe and the improved financial position of the New Zealand government saw a greater emphasis on officer training in the late 1930s. Ironically, the increased funding for the military forces was provided by the new Labour government from 1935, the cabinet of which included ministers who had been imprisoned as conscientious objectors during the Great War. In 1935 the Defence 'Vote' was £378,181; in 1937 it was £427,635, and by 1938 it had been increased to £529,632.⁵⁴⁶ Not surprisingly, the greatest increase in the Defence vote came about in 1939 when it appeared to many that war with Nazi Germany was inevitable. That year the government set aside £703,904 to spend on its military forces which was almost double the amount spent in 1935.⁵⁴⁷ The improved economic climate can account for the ability of the government to increase Defence expenditure during this period but the overriding reason must certainly be a change in priorities with the threat of war.

The increase in military expenditure provided greater opportunities for officers and NCOs of both the regular and Territorial forces to receive much needed training. In 1937 it was proposed that all personnel were to attend 20 days annual training, an increase from 12 days, and that they would be paid to attend such training.⁵⁴⁸ In October the same year, James Hargest, who had previously served as a battalion commander in the Great War, then served as a senior officer in the Territorials until 1930, and who was a member of parliament at the time, made a public plea for higher rates of pay for Territorial soldiers as an incentive to encourage more volunteers.⁵⁴⁹ Also that year an Army School of Instruction was established at Trentham for the training of all regular personnel, while Schools of Instruction were established in each of the national command districts for the training of Territorial soldiers of all ranks, including officers.⁵⁵⁰ Except for the Mounted Rifles, motorised transport was introduced for all other units at their annual camps, where officers and NCOs received training in the command and deployment of mobile troops.⁵⁵¹ Another progressive step towards

⁵⁴⁶ Reports of the General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1936, Vol. 3, H-19, p. 2; *AJHR*, 1937-38, Vol. 3, H-19, p. 4; *AJHR*, 1938, Vol. 3, H-19, p.1

⁵⁴⁷ Report of the General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1939, Vol. 3, H-19, p. 8

⁵⁴⁸ Report of the General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1937-38, Vol. 3, H-19, p.

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⁵⁴⁹ *The Dominion*, 28 October 1937, AD 1, 1111 209/1/9, ANZ

⁵⁵⁰ Report of the General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1937-38, Vol. 3, H-19, p.

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⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*

modernising the army at this time was the establishment of a motorised cavalry regiment, where British-made Vickers Light Tanks were to provide a modern reconnaissance element.⁵⁵² Subsequently officers and NCOs within this new corps received essential training in the operation and tactics for the use of these vehicles which was far different and more technical than those skills and knowledge required for the Mounted Rifles.

This period also saw an increase in the opportunities for officers to receive formal training and education overseas. While in 1937 there were still no members of the New Zealand Staff Corps attending courses at either Camberley or the British Army staff college at Quetta in India, another five officer cadets were sent to Duntroon, bringing the total number of officer cadets studying at the Royal Military College of Australia at that time to 20.⁵⁵³ Also that year Colonel Edward Puttick DSO became the first New Zealand officer to attend the one-year course at the Imperial Defence College in London since 1930.⁵⁵⁴ With war looming, there were further improvements in 1938 with one officer sent to study at the Staff College at Camberley and another to Quetta. Special emphasis was now placed on technical advances which included sending five regular officers to Duntroon for specific courses relating to artillery, while the officer interchange system with Australia was successfully continued.⁵⁵⁵ The newly-established Army School of Instruction at Trentham had seen 91 regular officers and NCOs attend extensive training courses that year; a vast improvement on the available training provided earlier in the decade. Such military education had a flow-on effect for the officers and NCOs serving in the Territorial units where most received up-to-date training in the mechanisation of the field artillery and infantry brigades at the district schools that had been set up for the Territorials at Burnham, Trentham and Narrow Neck, near Auckland.⁵⁵⁶

However, there were still some serious concerns from senior officers within the Territorial Force regarding the ability of the military forces available to defend the country. In 1938 four Territorial brigade commanders (Colonels C.R Spragg, N.L Macky, A.S. Wilder and R.F. Gambrill) issued a written public statement that challenged government assurances that the Territorial Force was sufficient in size and

⁵⁵² Ibid.

⁵⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 2

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁶ Report of the General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1938, Vol. 3, H-19, p. 1

well enough trained to protect the Dominion. They claimed that morale was low, that the force was inefficient and that successive governments had not encouraged voluntary enlistment.⁵⁵⁷ This proved a great public embarrassment to the government and Army Headquarters, subsequently leading to the officers being placed on the Retirement List in June of that year for breaching Kings' Regulations by making their protest public. The government's embarrassment was the greater because it was reported in the *Auckland Star* that the Minister of Defence admitted that there were training issues within the Territorial Force:

The Minister at Dargaville admitted that although 9,000 are wanted only 7,400 are enrolled, and of these only 41 per cent have attended camp this year. Thus only 3,000 men, or one-third of the required number, are being trained towards that 'high state of efficiency' which is the Minister's objective.⁵⁵⁸

The extension of training and instruction was the main focus of military planning leading up to the outbreak of war in September 1939. This was stressed by Major-General J.E. Duigan, the General Officer commanding, in his annual report submitted in June of that year:

With the rapid development of new weapons and changes in tactics resulting from their adoption, it has become increasingly important that officers and non-commissioned officers of the Regular Forces should gain experience with the British Army and at training establishments abroad. During the year five officers received instruction in England or India and four officers and thirteen non-commissioned officers attended short courses of a technical nature in Australia.⁵⁵⁹

What was also evident from his report was the important part the relationship with Australia played in the effective training of New Zealand officers:

The training of Regular personnel in Australia has been of great benefit to those concerned. The Chief of General Staff in Australia has been most helpful in arranging for the attendance of personnel from New Zealand at various courses of instruction throughout the year. Quite apart from the great value of the training received, the liaison established by our Regular personnel with the personnel of Australian Military Forces is most desirable.⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵⁷ 'Colonels' Manifesto,' The *Dominion*, Wellington, 19 May 1938, AD 1, 1111 209/1/9, ANZ

⁵⁵⁸ 'Minister and Officer' article, The *Auckland Star*, n.d, AD 1, 1111 209/1/9, ANZ

⁵⁵⁹ Report of the General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1939, Vol. 3, H-19, p. 2

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

The deteriorating international situation in 1939 led to an increase in public support for the military forces in New Zealand and the subsequent expansion of the Territorial Force. This further led to a greater demand for trained officers to lead it. However, there was frustration among officers within the Territorial Force concerning the government's hesitation in mobilising the Dominion's military forces with the increasing likelihood of war. Major-General Piers Mackesy, a British Army officer who had conducted a tour of inspection of New Zealand early that year, reported that Territorial officers were frustrated at the limited response to the situation, but that the officers were 'imbued with a desire to serve the state' and were proud to do so.⁵⁶¹ However, while acknowledging the valuable training provided to the Territorial officers and other ranks by the Army and District Schools of Instruction, he argued that such training were only 'paper schemes' compared to training within regular units, and that a lack of a regular force had proved detrimental in preparing both regular and Territorial officers for combat roles:

No regular officer in New Zealand ever, throughout his service, in peace, gets any opportunity at all to exercise tactical command, except when attached to a unit abroad. Neither as a young subaltern nor as a senior officer, does he ever command any of his troops in the field.⁵⁶²

At this time the government had authorised for the establishment of the Territorials to be expanded to 16,000 troops, all ranks.⁵⁶³ However, in June 1939 there were only 10,364 soldiers registered in the force, although there had been an influx of 3,252 new recruits from the same time the previous year.⁵⁶⁴ With only 100 Regular Officers on strength, it was clear that the majority of the officer corps for any expeditionary force would be provided from the 778 officers of the Territorial Force.⁵⁶⁵ A number of experienced senior officers then serving within the Territorials were considered either too old or unfit for overseas service and in the months and weeks leading up to the declaration of war with Germany there was a flurry of commissioning courses for prospective junior officers from within the NCOs of Territorial units. Many of these newly commissioned citizen-officers were to prove to be superb leaders of men

⁵⁶¹ Major-General P. J. Mackesy, 'Report on the Military Forces of NZ,' 22 May 1939, EA 87/3/2, Part 1, ANZ

⁵⁶² Ibid.

⁵⁶³ Report of the General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1939, Vol. 3, H-19, p. 5

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 2

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 12

in battle and were to achieve high rank during the war. One such example was Haddon Donald, and who at age 22, was offered a chance to sit an examination for an infantry commission which he passed on 25 August 1939.⁵⁶⁶ He was then commissioned as a second-lieutenant in the 22nd Battalion when it formed at Trentham in December that year.⁵⁶⁷ Donald initially served as a junior platoon commander, but by May 1944 he had risen to the rank of lieutenant-colonel and was in command of the same unit. At age 27, along with Sandy Thomas, he was one of the youngest battalion commanders in the New Zealand Division and the whole British Army.⁵⁶⁸

The fiscal constraints of successive New Zealand governments during the 1920s and 1930s, due to economic decline and anti-war sentiment, left the Dominion's military forces under-prepared for war. Mackesy summed this up in his report:

I fear that unless steps are taken at an early date to increase the prestige and to improve the conditions of the military forces of New Zealand, something approximating to this disastrous state of affairs may arise. The Army in New Zealand has, it appears to me, for causes which no doubt appeared at the time to be adequate, been allowed to drift into the position of the Cinderella of the fighting services.⁵⁶⁹

The shortage of trained officers at all levels when war was declared in 1939 led to the appointment of some senior officers who proved unfit to cope with the new mobile tactics of the enemy, and the commissioning of young but inexperienced junior officers. Frustrated at the constant reduction in the Defence budget throughout the inter-war years, successive General Officers Commanding the New Zealand Forces warned repeatedly that limited recruitment of officer cadets and the restricted training available for Staff Corps and Territorial officers was detrimental to the Dominion's ability to provide a trained fighting force. Such policies ensured it took eighteen months of sustained training before the officers and troops of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force were ready for combat.

⁵⁶⁶ Haddon Donald, *In Peace & War: A Civilian Soldier's Story* (Masterton, 2005), p. 6

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 109

⁵⁶⁹ Mackesy, 'Report on the Military Forces of NZ,' 22 May 1939, EA 87/3/2, Part 1, ANZ

Chapter 6

Officer Training: World War Two

An Under-Prepared Force

Compared to the Main Body of the NZEF in the First World War, initially the first three echelons of 2NZEF were under-prepared for their combat role in the Second World War. Freyberg was well aware of this and was able to hold back his troops from active campaigning, at least for 18 months, in an effort to provide the necessary training until the German invasion of Greece. It was during this campaign that the NZ Division, together with the Australian and British units within W Force were hopelessly outclassed by the enemy in terms of armaments, organisation and combat experience. Barrowclough, who had served in Greece and Crete, was determined that his 3rd NZ Division would not suffer the same fate and ensured his officers and men were battle-ready before committing them to combat operations in the Pacific. The losses the 2nd NZ Division sustained in 1941 and thereafter made it essential to develop training facilities in New Zealand and overseas to maintain the required supply of junior officers throughout 2NZEF. The training the officers received helped to transform the combat units into efficient and effective fighting formations.

The newly-commissioned junior officers received only minimal training as platoon commanders before embarking for overseas service with the 1st and 2nd Echelons of the expeditionary force in early 1940. Haddon Donald had only received his commission a week before war was declared and his experience was similar to many others.⁵⁷⁰ W.B. ‘Sandy’ Thomas was an under-aged lance-corporal in the Territorials in 1939 when he was selected to be an officer: ‘Out of the blue the army called me to a rather urgently organised course to commission young officers against the likelihood that New Zealand would again have to raise forces for overseas service. Normal officer cadet courses of this type would call for months or even years of training and evolution.

⁵⁷⁰ Haddon Donald, *In Peace & War: A Civilian Soldier's Story* (Masterton, 2005), p. 6

In my case, I was commissioned after one week in camp.⁵⁷¹ Such rushed measures were extreme when considering regular officer cadets attending Sandhurst, Duntroon and the United States Military Academy at West Point only received their commissions after four years of intense training and study.⁵⁷² However, such measures were necessary if the New Zealand government was to provide the required 400 junior officers fit enough to serve and lead troops on active service with the expeditionary force at that time.⁵⁷³

The length of training for officers embarking with the 1st Echelon differed from the following echelons and reinforcements. This was confirmed in Major-General Duigan's annual report in 1940:

Owing to the necessity of the rapid concentration of the First Echelon, its officers and NCOs received only one month's prior training. It was, however, possible with the Second and Third Echelons to grant officers and NCOs at least two months prior training. In future NCOs will receive three months, and officers and those selected to be granted commissions five months preliminary training. This latter course is dictated by the fact that most officers of the TF who are eligible as regards to age and medical fitness have already joined the NZEF, with the result that officers for future drafts will be composed very largely of newly-commissioned officers. These officers will, however, be reinforcements for formed units overseas, and their comparative inexperience will not be a disability.⁵⁷⁴

Duigan's opinion that the inexperience of reinforcement officers from New Zealand would not be a disability to units already serving overseas was not held by Freyberg or his enlisted veterans, which is covered in a later chapter.

The initial training experience of Denver Fountaine, a young lieutenant from Westport in C company of the 20th Battalion was typical of those officers who embarked with the 1st Echelon. On 26 September 1939 he arrived at Burnham Camp near Christchurch where a selected group of officers and NCOs who had volunteered from Territorial units were gathered to prepare for the arrival of the rank and file of the newly formed battalion. In a letter home to his future wife, written only four days after his arrival, Fountaine articulated the urgency in getting officers ready to receive their men: 'We have had to go like hell ever since we arrived here and although I've had time to

⁵⁷¹ W.B. 'Sandy' Thomas, *Pathways to Adventure: An Extraordinary Life*, compiled by Denis McLean (Hororata, 2004), p. 17

⁵⁷² Ibid.

⁵⁷³ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁴ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Force, *AJHR*, 1940, Vol. 3, H-19, p. 2

think about you and the folks at home, business and everything connected with it might never have existed...According to the programme laid down it will be hard work all day, lectures in the evening and after that we will have to prepare the following day's work.⁵⁷⁵ According to his battalion commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Howard Kippenberger, some of the officers and NCOs who had arrived at this time needed the most rudimentary training when they arrived in camp: 'officers and NCOs started with drill, the first thing obviously being to get saluting right....There was no doubt that our saluting was a horrible sight until we had all been induced to conform to the book.'⁵⁷⁶

Training for officers, NCOs and the other ranks began in earnest from the time they entered camp until embarking for overseas service. Fontaine recorded that the officers of the 20th Battalion continually attended conferences and received instruction from staff officers every night, while receiving special instruction on the weekends.⁵⁷⁷ Initially, this proved very tiring compared to their previous civilian life but became routine after several weeks.⁵⁷⁸ Heavy emphasis was placed on getting all ranks physically fit for the rigours of active service, with physical training being conducted by platoon commanders every morning from 6.15 am.⁵⁷⁹ Battalion route marches were constantly conducted which could also include mock battles to simulate campaign conditions. Fontaine described such training at a camp at Cave in South Canterbury prior to embarkation:

The first three days after we arrived here it rained but it has been fine since and hot as Hell. We have been marching up to 12 miles a day and we come back like wet towels. Fortunately there is a good stream alongside the camp and we can have a swim every day....Yesterday we had manoeuvres as far as Pleasant Point about 13 miles away, slept out under the stars, got up at 4 this morning, had another attack and arrived back in camp at 1 o'clock absolutely jiggered.⁵⁸⁰

Haddon Donald's 22nd Battalion embarked as part of the 2nd Echelon and his experience provides evidence of the typical inexperience and insufficient training provided to the officers and other ranks prior to embarkation:

⁵⁷⁵ Denver Fontaine, Letter to fiancée, 30 September 1939

⁵⁷⁶ Major-General Sir Howard Kippenberger, *Infantry Brigadier* (London, 1949), p. 3

⁵⁷⁷ Fontaine, Letter to fiancée, 6 October 1939

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁹ Fontaine, Letter to fiancée, 14 October 1939

⁵⁸⁰ Fontaine, Letter to fiancée, 23 October 1939

My call-up came when the 22nd Infantry Battalion officers gathered at Trentham Camp for a preliminary course in December 1939 to prepare for the arrival of the troops early in January 1940. Our commanding officer, the adjutant and the senior non-commissioned officer were regular soldiers, while the remaining officers and some NCOs were drawn from Territorial and school cadet units. Several early volunteers from the First Echelon, who had been recommended for commissions passed out in time to join our course as junior officers. The entire battalion of some 800 men, with the exception of the three regular soldiers, had volunteered direct from civilian jobs, showing how pitifully short New Zealand was of regular, trained soldiers.⁵⁸¹

Donald was critical of the training he and his men received in New Zealand, stating that the expenditure on the armed forces had been ‘criminally neglected’ by successive governments for the two decades prior to the outbreak of war; the officers and men were issued with equipment of dubious quality left over from World War One and there was not a high standard of marksmanship (except for country boys) due to shooting practice being severely restricted because of limited ammunition.⁵⁸² His disappointment at the lack of preparation for active service is clear and perhaps sums up what many officers felt about the early training they received: ‘We could not rely on the army to teach us much. However, plenty of discipline, route marching and physical training gradually moulded us into a workable infantry battalion.’⁵⁸³

Officers did receive some instruction on leadership, command and tactics prior to leaving New Zealand, but it is questionable whether such training was sufficient for sending young and inexperienced civilian-officers to war. Cross-referencing data from Embarkation Rolls and personnel records show that in 1939 almost all junior officers of the infantry battalions had served in the Territorial Force prior to the expeditionary force being formed; from the 1940 sample 40 percent had served in the cadets, 82 percent in the Territorials, 29 percent having served in both, while 23 percent had served as officers in the Territorial Force, with 3 percent having served in the First World War. Significantly, of the 100 officers sampled only two were professional soldiers; one from the NZ Staff Corps and one senior NCO who had been commissioned from the NZ Permanent Staff. Only 3 percent had no previous military experience, but as the war progressed there was a significant increase in those who had no previous military service before the conflict (see Table 7). Sandy Thomas was more generous

⁵⁸¹ Donald, *In Peace & War*, pp. 8-9

⁵⁸² Ibid.

⁵⁸³ Ibid.

in his description of the preliminary training the officers of 23 Battalion received prior to the arrival of the other ranks of the unit:

We were fortunate in having two months, before the main body of volunteers arrived, to train and be trained together. Miracles of improvisation were achieved as we studied tactics, infantry drills and manoeuvres, under the guidance of a handful of regular officers.⁵⁸⁴

Table 7: Recorded Previous Military Service of Sampled Junior Officers of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force in the Second World War

Service	1940 (100)		1943 (123)		1945 (110)	
Cadets	40	40%	44	36%	41	37%
Territorial Force	82	82%	70	57%	53	48%
Both Cadets and TF	29	29%	23	18.5%	21	19%
WW1	3	3%	1	1%	0	
NZSC	1	1%	2	1.5%	2	2%
NZPS	1	1%	3	2.5%	3	3%
TF Officer	23	23%	13	10.5%	2	2%
Home Guard	1	1%	0		2	2%
None	3	3%	19	15.5%	27	24.5%

Key: WW1 – World War 1
 NZSC – New Zealand Staff Corps
 NZPS – New Zealand Permanent Staff
 TF – Territorial Force

Source: Personnel Records, New Zealand Defence Force Archives, Trentham

⁵⁸⁴ Thomas, *Pathways to Adventure*, p. 18

Freyberg's Influence

Like the officers and NCOs of the NZEF in the Great War, those of the 1st Echelon of the 2nd NZEF in the Second World War began their training in earnest in Egypt. It was here that the officers had time to put their previous civilian occupations behind them and settle into military life in an effort to become professional soldiers before being sent into combat. Unlike the experience in the First World War, where the troops of the expeditionary force only had four months of training in Egypt before the Gallipoli Campaign, in the Second World War those of the 1st Echelon were stationed in Egypt for 14 months in preparation for a fighting role in Greece. General Freyberg emphasized the need for extensive training of the New Zealand troops to the British High Command prior to the force arriving in the Middle East: 'I have inspected the First Echelon. Its training has suffered from lack of equipment, ammunition, vehicles, and weapons. The force will require a further period of individual training and cannot be ready for war for three months.'⁵⁸⁵ Maadi Camp, on the edge of the desert nine miles from Cairo and within view of the Pyramids, became the home for the 2nd NZ Division for the duration of the war. A school of instruction was established where officers and other ranks alike attended courses covering all facets of military study, while officers also attended training at the British Army school at Abbassia.⁵⁸⁶ Officer training was varied and included receiving instruction from British Army warrant officers, attending specific courses such as infantry tactics, navigation, intelligence, military law, command and leadership, as well as instruction on basic engineering and field craft.⁵⁸⁷ Those officers of supporting units such as artillery, signals and engineers also received ongoing training specifically related to their trades.⁵⁸⁸

Freyberg was determined that his officers and men would be trained to a high standard before they were exposed to combat and there were challenges in ensuring this occurred. By May 1940 he felt that his troops were well trained and fit for the limited operations that it was contemplated they would be used for, but that no further headway in training of the 1st Echelon could be made due to the shortage of equipment.⁵⁸⁹ This

⁵⁸⁵ Freyberg to Headquarters, British Troops in Egypt, 3 January 1940, *Documents*, Vol. 1, Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War, 1935-45 (Wellington, 1949), p. 57

⁵⁸⁶ Fountaine, Letter to fiancée, 27 March 1940

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁸ Freyberg to the Minister of Defence, 28 October 1940, *Documents*, Vol. 1, Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War, 1935-45 (Wellington, 1949), p. 80

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, Freyberg to the Minister of Defence, 13 June 1940, p. 66

led him to seek authority to travel from Egypt to Britain with his training staff to oversee the training of the 2nd Echelon stationed there at that time. Such a move was a priority for him in his drive to ensure his men were led by competent officers trained in up-to-date tactics:

From all accounts the Second Echelon have benefited from the new training syllabus and I feel that with two months collective training they would be fit for war. What I wish my minister to realise is that none of the senior officers of the Second Echelon are fit to start unit or collective training without first being trained themselves. Every day I am kept from taking their preparation in hand will delay the ultimate preparedness of the troops.⁵⁹⁰

Freyberg eventually travelled to Britain to oversee the necessary training where he observed the officers of the 2nd Echelon in three full-scale training exercises, involving the defence of a seaside town, a brigade-size attack and an endurance march of 100 miles in six days. The object of these exercises was to practice Divisional staff in carrying out a bus move of the Division, to give brigadiers and battalion commander's experience in handling their commands in the field, and to try administrative services in the field.⁵⁹¹ He later reported:

During the exercises the Commanders learned how to handle their fast-moving bus columns and their transport, and the junior officers and men found their feet and got the idea of working together as a force...and I feel confident that if we are asked to take part in the defence of Great Britain the Second Echelon of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force is a force to be reckoned with, and will give an excellent account of itself wherever it may be used.⁵⁹²

Such confidence at that time may have been premature and history would prove that such training could not replace the value of combat experience.

A major challenge Freyberg faced in preparing and training his officers and troops of the expeditionary force to fight as a combat-ready division was the dispersal of his command and the need to provide essential training to reinforcements quickly. The arrival of the 3rd Echelon in Egypt in September 1940 meant that the officers and men within the newly arrived units needed months of intensive training to bring them up to the standard of those members of the 1st Echelon, which he felt had received

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid., Freyberg to the Prime Minister, 26 May 1940, pp. 65-66

⁵⁹¹ Ibid., Freyberg to the Minister of Defence, 15 August 1940, pp. 136-144

⁵⁹² Ibid.

sufficient training to the point where they were ready for combat operations.⁵⁹³ He was anxious to have the 2nd Echelon transferred to Egypt once the threat of German invasion of Britain had passed, so that all the senior officers of 2NZEF could train and have the experience in operating together within divisional size exercises and operations.⁵⁹⁴ Freyberg vented his frustration in the delay in achieving this to the Minister of Defence in October 1940, stating that it prevented full efficiency and smooth administration of the Division, and that assistance from the New Zealand government to ensure the rapid despatch of the 2nd Echelon to the Middle East was required.⁵⁹⁵

The 2nd Echelon did not arrive in Egypt until February 1941, giving no time for Freyberg to provide his officers with the opportunity to experience a divisional-size exercise before embarking for the campaign in Greece. Haddon Donald was a platoon commander at this time, and although he had been training with his men since January 1940, he felt that the Division as a whole was not sufficiently prepared. He claims that the feeling of most officers was that the expedition to Greece was ‘ill-conceived’ and that the decision makers were ‘well aware we were not strong enough to beat the Germans... We did not have the tanks, the aircraft or the expertise to be anywhere near a match for the victorious German army and, in my opinion, the Allies should never have gone to Greece.’⁵⁹⁶ He further stated that halfway through the battle the Allied forces were shown to be totally inadequate and that there was a need to find suitable replacement junior officers due to the high casualty rate of platoon commanders.⁵⁹⁷

Formal Officer Training

The establishment of Officer Cadet Training Units (OCTU) ensured that the 2nd New Zealand Division maintained a constant supply of trained replacement officers to fill vacancies sustained during campaigns. Commissioning courses for officer candidates serving overseas with the Division were usually eight to twelve weeks long and Freyberg, who took a particular interest in the development of his junior officers,

⁵⁹³ Freyberg to the Minister of Defence, 10 October 1940, *Documents*, Vol.1, Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War, 1939-1945 (Wellington, 1949), pp. 147

⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, Freyberg to the Minister of Defence, 19 September 1940, pp. 77-78

⁵⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, Freyberg to the Minister of Defence, 10 October 1940, pp. 147

⁵⁹⁶ Donald, *In Peace & War*, p. 17

⁵⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 20

had initially intended that all officer training would be conducted in Britain.⁵⁹⁸ However, this was overruled by the British Army decision to establish an OCTU at Abbassia, near Cairo, to save on the return travel costs of sending candidates from the Middle East to Britain.⁵⁹⁹ In October 1940 Freyberg authorised the establishment of a New Zealand OCTU at Maadi Camp where a syllabus, based on British Army officer training, but tailored to the particular requirements of 2NZEF, was taught.⁶⁰⁰ This short-lived establishment was officially known as the New Zealand Wing, Middle East Officer Cadet Training Unit (NZ Wing ME, OCTU), which Brigadier W.G Steven stated could provide training towards the things the New Zealanders considered most important in war and where the excessive amount of ‘spit and polish’ could be dispensed with.⁶⁰¹ This move proved unpopular with the hierarchy of the British Army in the Middle East who argued against any duplication of facilities. Under advice from his staff, Freyberg eventually relented and those New Zealand soldiers selected as officer cadets continued to be trained by the British at Abbassia.⁶⁰² However, by late 1943 New Zealand officer candidates were being sent to Britain for such training, where they attended courses at the Royal Military College at Sandhurst and at OCTUs established in England specifically to cater for the New Zealand Division.⁶⁰³ Incredibly, it was argued that this proved more cost effective than attending such training at the British Army establishment in the Middle East.⁶⁰⁴

Economic factors may also have been an influence in the 2nd NZ Division establishing its own OCTU at the 2NZEF Advance Base at Taranto, Italy in late December 1944.⁶⁰⁵ Maadi Camp in Egypt was originally the preferred site for the 2nd NZ Division’s own OCTU, where it was argued that suitable accommodation was available, while the favourable weather conditions would ensure less interruption to the syllabus.⁶⁰⁶ However, the hard-fought Italian campaign led to the constant need for

⁵⁹⁸ Diary of General Officer Commanding, 2NZEF, Part 1, January 1940 – September 1941, WAI 8, 5/43, ANZ

⁵⁹⁹ John McLeod, *Myth and Reality: The New Zealand soldier in World War II* (Auckland, 1986), p. 162

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁰¹ W.G. Steven, Maj. Gen., *Problems of 2 NZEF*, Appendix 1, NZ Unit Histories, Historical Publications Branch (Wellington, 1958), p. 281

⁶⁰² McLeod, p.162

⁶⁰³ Memorandum, 2 NZ Division HQ to 8th Army HQ, 5 November 1943, WA II, 1, 2, DA 21, 1/9/G1/6, ANZ

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁵ Memorandum, Establishment of OCTU – 2 NZEF, Taranto, Italy, January 1945, WA II 1, 900, ANZ

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid.

replacement platoon commanders to fill vacancies caused through casualties. By this stage of the war most officer candidates were experienced NCOs serving in the Division in Italy and it proved more practical to train the cadets near to where the Division was serving. This ensured that there was only minimal time in travelling to and from the course, compared to having to travel to courses in Britain and the Middle East, and thus vacancies were filled quickly.

The syllabus of the first OCTU course held at Taranto was typical of the courses previously held in Britain and Egypt throughout the war. However, this course and the two others that would follow before the last intake graduated in May 1945, were of six weeks duration, shorter than those previously held in Egypt and Britain.⁶⁰⁷ It is possible that one reason for the reduced length of such courses late in the war was that consideration was given to the combat and leadership experience of candidates, most of whom were battle-hardened veterans by the latter stages of the conflict. Typical days would begin with drill and parades taking up the first morning session. This was followed by lectures covering subjects such as map reading, divisional organisation, counter intelligence, military law, company and platoon administration, responsibilities of officers, first aid, mine school, the characteristics and employment of the New Zealand field Artillery, communication drill, staff duties, evacuation of casualties and history of 2NZEF. Weekly war reviews were also held.⁶⁰⁸ Church parades were compulsory on Sundays, with the Roman Catholic officer candidates and other ranks stationed in the area encouraged to attend mass at the local parish church in an effort to foster relations with the Italian community.⁶⁰⁹

At this time, Colonel Denver Fountaine, who had started the war as an inexperienced platoon commander in 20 Battalion and who became a battle-hardened commander of 26 Battalion in North Africa and Italy, was now commander of the 2NZEF Forward Base at Bari. The NZ OCTU came under his jurisdiction and it was he who took the salutes and made the presentations at the completion of each course.⁶¹⁰ Reports from the courses indicate that they proved successful in producing junior officers of the required standard; 65 cadets passed out at the completion of the second course in April 1945, with four receiving 'A' passes, 22 receiving 'B' passes and 39

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁹ Jack Collins, Interview, 24 April 2010

⁶¹⁰ Memorandum, Establishment of OCTU – 2 NZEF, Taranto, Italy, January 1945, WA II 1, 900, ANZ

‘C’ passes, while of the 41 cadets in the third course, only one was returned to his unit due to ‘behaviour unbecoming of an officer’ after an incident in the NZ Forces Club in Bari.⁶¹¹ The New Zealand OCTU at Taranto was short-lived, being established on 17 December 1944 and officially disbanded on 23 August 1945, even though the last officer candidates had ‘passed out’ in May of that year.⁶¹²

The Officer Cadet Training Unit based at the Army School of Instruction at Trentham Camp near Wellington catered for the training of officer candidates for reinforcement drafts to the 2nd NZ Division serving in the Middle East as well as personnel for the 3rd NZ Division serving in the Pacific theatre. An Army School of Instruction had been established at Trentham in 1937 at a time when the government was increasing defence spending, although there were still District Schools of Instruction in each of the three military districts at that time that catered for officer training. However, in 1939 there was an amalgamation of the Army School and District Schools of Instruction which saw the majority of training conducted at Trentham, while Territorial training for the southern and northern districts continued at Burnham, near Christchurch, and Papakura.⁶¹³ By May 1940 all officers who were to be posted from New Zealand to serve overseas with 2NZEF were required to undergo training at Trentham prior to embarkation, including officer cadets:

In accordance with the decision arrived at during the conference at Army Headquarters on 10 May [1940], all officers accepted for service in the N.Z.E.F., irrespective of rank, will carry out their preliminary training at the A.T.C. [Advanced Training Company], Army School, Trentham.⁶¹⁴

An examination of reports relating to the 4th OCTU course held at Trentham in mid-1940 provides an in-depth description of the training the candidates received prior to being commissioned and serving overseas. It is clear that by this time these officer candidates, who were to embark in the 3rd Echelon, were receiving more comprehensive instruction than that received by newly commissioned junior officers of the 1st Echelon in late 1939, with the 10-week course commencing on 31 May and concluding on 12

⁶¹¹ Ibid.

⁶¹² Memorandum, 2NZEF – War Establishment – NZ Officer Cadet Training Unit, 1944-1945, WA II 1, 2, DA 1/9/SD81/52, ANZ

⁶¹³ Memorandum, Training Establishment – Army School of Instruction, 1939, AD1 1131, 210/23/1, ANZ

⁶¹⁴ Memorandum, Army Headquarters, 14 May 1940, AD1, 1277, ANZ

August.⁶¹⁵ According to one report facilities for specialist corps training, such as artillery, divisional cavalry and engineers, were not available at Trentham and officers of those corps were transferred for unit training once they had completed the commissioning course.⁶¹⁶ The allocation for positions within each course was determined by the demand for replacements from the various corps, with the infantry and artillery being allocated the most vacancies. Of the 37 vacancies in the 4th OCTU course, 16 were filled by infantry cadets and 14 by artillery candidates.⁶¹⁷ On arrival at the course, cadets were graded and placed into squads according to the amount of previous military experience and training in an effort to maximise the best use of time and resources.⁶¹⁸

The general syllabus for the commissioning course mainly focused on infantry training. Topics of instruction included: light machine guns, signals, field craft, section leading, digging/ wiring, platoon fire power, platoon tactics, section training, section in attack, section in defence, street and village fighting, road blocks, fighting patrol, night patrol, pistol drill and administration.⁶¹⁹ The pre-course report recorded that all cadets, regardless of what corps they were in or previous military experience, would receive training in drill, physical training, infantry training covering topics previously mentioned in the general syllabus, anti-gas training, as well as training with weapons common to all arms: rifles, bayonets, hand grenades, Lewis Guns, 3 inch mortars and pistols.⁶²⁰ The course also included instruction relating to mess etiquette, the organisation of rifle battalions and artillery, map reading, orders and communication, evacuation of casualties, supply in the field, cooperation with artillery, sanitation and hygiene.⁶²¹ Officer cadets of technical corps, such as artillery and engineers, also had to attend lectures covering topics within their specialised fields. For artillery cadets these included subjects such as ballistics, organisation of field batteries, map reading and field sketching, duties of officers in a field regiment, deployment of batteries, engagement of targets, cooperation with infantry, observation of fire range tables, fire

⁶¹⁵ Report on 4th OCTU, Trentham, 6 September 1940, AD1, 1277, ANZ

⁶¹⁶ Report on 4th OCTU, Trentham, 25 June 1940, AD1, 1277, ANZ

⁶¹⁷ Report on 4th OCTU, Trentham, 6 September 1940, AD1, 1277, ANZ

⁶¹⁸ Report on 4th OCTU, Trentham, 28 May 1940, AD1, 1277, ANZ

⁶¹⁹ Report on 4th OCTU, Trentham, 25 June 1940, AD1, 1277, ANZ

⁶²⁰ Report on 4th OCTU, Trentham, 28 May 1940, AD1, 1277, ANZ

⁶²¹ Ibid.

control and numerous other related subjects that were practiced once the newly commissioned officers were posted to their units.⁶²²

The OCTUs generally proved successful in identifying and producing competent junior officers from within the citizen-soldiery of the 2nd New Zealand expeditionary Force. The reported results of the 4th OCTU Course provides evidence of this, with only eight of the 37 cadets failing to graduate.⁶²³ Of those eight, three were recommended for retraining in the following course and were later commissioned. This included Second-Lieutenants A.C. Williams and J.W. Godfrey who had initially attended the course as machine gunners but could not qualify as such and were later commissioned into the infantry.⁶²⁴ However, five of the eight who failed the course were Maori. These soldiers were posted back to 28 (Maori) Battalion and were not considered suitable for retraining.⁶²⁵ Although no reasons were given for their unsuitability, it is possible that these cadets struggled with written examinations and report writing given the limited education opportunities many rural Maori had received at that time. In contrast, some of the men who attended this course went on to achieve field rank after proving to be competent combat leaders. One example was C.A. ‘Sandy’ Slee who had risen to the rank of major in 23 Battalion by the time he died of wounds he received at Cassino in March 1944.⁶²⁶ However, the most notable was James C. ‘Jim’ Henare who was decorated for his ‘inspirational’ leadership as a company commander at Cassino and who was later promoted as lieutenant-colonel in command of 28 (Maori) Battalion in 1945.⁶²⁷

Not all junior officers who graduated from Officer Cadet Training Units proved to be of the right calibre. One example is that of Second-Lieutenant C.H. Telfer of 24 Battalion who faced serious disciplinary charges in August 1945 after only receiving his commission four months previously. While a student at a platoon commanders’ course at the School of Infantry at Warminster in England he lost his temper and failed to obey an order. The adverse report from the officer in charge of the course was disparaging:

⁶²² Report on 4th OCTU, Trentham, 25 June 1940, AD1, 1277, ANZ

⁶²³ Report on 4th OCTU, Trentham, 6 September 1940, AD1, 1277, ANZ

⁶²⁴ Ibid.

⁶²⁵ Report on 4th OCTU, Trentham, 10 August 1940, AD1, 1277

⁶²⁶ Report on 4th OCTU, Trentham, 10 August 1940, AD1, 1277, ANZ; Personnel Records, NZDF Archives, Trentham

⁶²⁷ Ibid.

This officer has been most difficult since his arrival at the school. He has made no attempt to do his best. He has been most obstructive and truculent in manner, and has been a distinct handicap to the smooth running of his section and platoon. He has not responded at all to the spirit of his platoon and has made himself unpopular with his instructors and fellow students.⁶²⁸

Although brought up on disciplinary charges for his behaviour, these were subsequently withdrawn and Telfer only suffered dismissal from the course and was returned to his battalion in an effort to save his career.⁶²⁹

Prior to becoming officer cadets at OCTUs while on active service overseas, candidates were generally required to attend 'Pre-OCTU Courses.' These usually comprised four weeks of intense instruction where the purpose was to weed out those who were not up to the required standard.⁶³⁰ British, Australian, Canadian and New Zealand 'Other Ranks' who were considered officer material were sent to these courses, based in the United Kingdom and in the Middle East, that were administered by the British Army.⁶³¹ However, for a period 2NZEF held its own pre-entry courses at the New Zealand School of Instruction in Egypt.⁶³² A specific number of positions were allocated to the forces of each dominion based on the size of their establishment, with the 2nd New Zealand Division having a maximum of 34 candidate positions each month; including 15 from the infantry, 6 from the artillery, 3 from the armoured brigade and 2 from the engineers.⁶³³

The demand for replacement of trained officers in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force and the Territorial Force in New Zealand directly led to the short-term establishment of a staff college in the Dominion. After an appeal from the New Zealand government stating a need to establish such a training facility, in August 1941 General Sir Archibald Wavell (General Officer in Command, India) sent his most senior staff officer from 'Training Northern Command, India' to act as director of the establishment.⁶³⁴ On his arrival he found that there had been no preliminary arrangements made for the college, although the first suggested location for it at

⁶²⁸ Confidential Memoranda, 2NZEF – Officers, 1942-1946, WA II 1, 7, ANZ

⁶²⁹ Ibid.

⁶³⁰ Memorandum Re: OCTU – 2 NZEF, New Zealand Officer Cadet Training Unit, Officers for Indian Army, WA II -75, DA 21-1/9/G1/6, ANZ

⁶³¹ Ibid.

⁶³² Ibid.

⁶³³ Ibid.

⁶³⁴ 'The Story of the Staff College, New Zealand,' MS Papers 5070, ATL

Waiouru was considered unsuitable by the Imperial officer.⁶³⁵ Brigadier Weir then suggested Massey College, near Palmerston North, as a suitable venue and it was here that the facility was established.⁶³⁶ All of the five original senior directory staff had seen active service in the Greek and Crete campaigns, with Lieutenant-Colonel Brooke and Majors Brooke-White and Davis being regular officers. Between them they formulated a syllabus for a four-month course that was 'nearly to the standard of Quetta and Camberley,' where they were expected to train civilians of Territorial units to a second grade officer standard.⁶³⁷ The college also ran senior staff courses of seven weeks duration for commanding officers and those selected for promotion to those positions.

The first course that commenced in January 1942 caused some tension between the director and Army Headquarters in Wellington regarding the ages of some of the attendants; the average age of the 50 students was over 40 years old, with the oldest aged 54.⁶³⁸ Few had any military training at all and over fifty percent were not recommended for staff appointments within the Territorial Force due to their age. The college argued that younger officers were more receptive to, and able to absorb, modern ideas of warfare. Subsequently, the composition of future courses consisted of students of an average age of 30.⁶³⁹ Lieutenant-General Puttick wrote in his annual report in August 1943 that 300 students from six courses had passed out of the college that year and that there had been special emphasis in the training relating to the requirements of the Pacific theatre; the majority of the graduates from the college eventually saw service in the Pacific.⁶⁴⁰ At this time New Zealand regular force officer cadets were still being enrolled and attending courses at the Royal Australian Military College, with nine graduating that year and another 18 still in attendance.⁶⁴¹

However, by early 1944 the reduced demand for combat officer training in the 3rd NZ Division and within the military forces in New Zealand led to the closure of the Staff College. Brigadier William Gentry, a veteran of the 2nd NZ Division who had returned to New Zealand to serve as Deputy Chief of General Staff, wrote a report in February of that year stating that the college was conducting the first of two tactical

⁶³⁵ Ibid.

⁶³⁶ Ibid.

⁶³⁷ Ibid.

⁶³⁸ Ibid.

⁶³⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁰ Report of the General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1943, Vol. 3, H-19, p. 1

⁶⁴¹ Ibid.

courses at company commander level; the first course had a strength of 22 officers, but the second would only have half that number.⁶⁴² His report makes it clear why the short-lived college was closed.

There is no longer any demand from 3 Div for the training of staff officers and the local demand has ceased. In these circumstances, there is no scope that one can foresee for the Staff College in its normal role. A limited amount of tactical instruction will still be necessary from time to time and it therefore proposed that when the staff college is closed down, the Tactical Wing of the Army School at Trentham should be expanded slightly to enable it to deal with company and unit commander courses.⁶⁴³

Self –Motivated Officers

Some officers were self-motivated and took the initiative to study military theory and practices beyond the set army curriculum, not only during the inter-war years and leading up to embarkation, but also on active service. The most obvious example was Howard Kippenberger. A lawyer by profession, Kippenberger took his role as an officer in the Territorials seriously and was passionate to the point of obsession in improving his knowledge of military history, theory and command and leadership. According to one of his biographers, Glyn Harper, he devoted most of his spare time and money to the study of military history which gave him the understanding of the importance of good, competent leadership while appreciating the crucial significance of morale in obtaining victory.⁶⁴⁴ Kippenberger was convinced New Zealand would find itself at war again in the years following the Great War and was dedicated to preparing himself for such an event as he progressed through the officer ranks during the 1920s and 1930s.⁶⁴⁵ An examination of some of his personal collection in the library at KMARL shows his determination in educating himself to be an effective commander in modern warfare (refer to page 35). Of significance is the

⁶⁴² Brigadier W. Gentry, Report on Reduction in Training Establishments, 7 February 1944, AD1 1131, 210/23/1, ANZ

⁶⁴³ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁴ Glyn Harper, 'Major-General Howard Kippenberger: The Education of a Commander,' in *Born to Lead? Portraits of New Zealand Commander*, eds. Glyn Harper & Joel Hayward (Auckland, 2003), p. 122

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid.

collection that related to contemporary military theory and tactics which ensured Kippenberger was well educated in the tactics of modern warfare. Volumes such as Captain Basil Liddell Hart's *The Remaking of Modern Armies*, Albert Muller's *Germany's War Machine*, A. Hilliard Atteridge's *The German Army at War*, and D.G. Brown's *The Tank in Action* ensured that he was not only familiar with the workings of the British Army but also that of his expected enemy, Germany.

Harper argues that from such study Kippenberger learned much about military command and operations that made him an outstanding commander who focused on competent leadership and morale.⁶⁴⁶ Harper also states Kippenberger was heavily influenced by Liddell Hart's military theories of modern warfare, which were considered controversial by some traditional military theorists at the time. Kippenberger seemed to agree with Liddell Hart's theories from the pencilled notes he wrote in the margin of his book, *The Real War 1914-1918*, revealing that he felt it was the best work written so far on the Great War.⁶⁴⁷ Liddell Hart's main theory was that the indirect route was the best approach when attacking; a tactic that the New Zealand Division successfully and repeatedly used in the defeat of Rommel's forces in North Africa.

Major-General Lindsay Inglis was another such senior combat commander who was well-read on contemporary military history, strategy and tactics. Interestingly, for years Inglis had been Kippenberger's regimental commanding officer, and later Brigadier, in the Territorials; Kippenberger claimed, 'I had learned more of soldiering from him than from anyone else with whom I had served.'⁶⁴⁸ Inglis took his role in the Territorials seriously and was passionate in his own study of modern warfare, as well as in ensuring his subordinate officers maintained a certain level of military education through providing lectures on current tactics and military history. Not only did he read extensively himself, but he also encouraged his junior officers to do so as well. An example of this was the lecture he gave in 1924, while a major in the Canterbury Infantry Regiment, titled, 'Reading as Part of an Officer's Military Education.'⁶⁴⁹

Although it could be expected that senior officers within the regular and Territorial Forces were well-read in military matters, many company officers also took

⁶⁴⁶ Harper, *Kippenberger: An Inspired New Zealand Commander*, p. 51

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 53

⁶⁴⁸ Kippenberger, *Infantry Brigadier*, p. 6

⁶⁴⁹ Major Lindsay Inglis, 'Reading as Part of an Officer's Military Education,' July 1924, *Inglis Papers*, MS 0421, Folder 64, ATL

some personal responsibility in improving their knowledge of army regulations and protocols, weaponry, tactics, command and leadership relevant to their level of command, albeit, at varying degrees of enthusiasm. This was especially so for the majority of officers with the 2NZEF who had only seen Territorial service prior to embarking for active service overseas. Battalion-size training exercises had been non-existent leading up to the formation of the expeditionary force, ensuring that the company officers of the new battalions within the 1st Echelon had only limited experience to compare with the theoretical and practical instruction they received. According to Kippenberger, those of the 20th Battalion were restricted to a week-long training camp at Cave, as previously mentioned, and a week of exercises at Tai Tapu, near Christchurch, where the battalion was divided into companies that either attacked or held the township.⁶⁵⁰ Officers from within the technical and support units, such as the artillery and engineers, were more fortunate in that most were very familiar with their specific trades through pre-war training and were only lacking in experience of co-ordinating with large infantry formations.

As with their fellow officers from the Great War, company officers of 2NZEF were also exposed to drills, physical training and lectures on military history, strategy, tactics and administration based on the British Army curriculum during their voyages overseas.⁶⁵¹ When Sandy Thomas embarked with the 23rd Battalion of the 2nd Echelon in May 1940 he described himself as ‘a very raw second-lieutenant of twenty years’ who had been put in charge of 15 Platoon of C Company of the battalion.⁶⁵² He only had four months training with the unit in New Zealand prior to embarkation, and due to his inexperience he attempted to study for his new role as much as he could while in transit and while the battalion was stationed in Britain.⁶⁵³ Haddon Donald was aged 24 and held the same rank as Thomas when he travelled with the 22nd Battalion, also in the 2nd Echelon, to Britain and then later on to Egypt after the threat of invasion of the British Isles had passed. In his autobiography he noted that while in England the battalion trained in performing night attacks, which was new to the training syllabus but was later to become a tactic that the 2nd New Zealand Division mastered and became renowned for.⁶⁵⁴ Donald was a practised marksman and for his efforts he was selected

⁶⁵⁰ Kippenberger, p. 4

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 9

⁶⁵² W.B. ‘Sandy’ Thomas, *Dare To Be Free* (Hororata, 2001), p. 15

⁶⁵³ Thomas, Interview, 6 June 2010

⁶⁵⁴ Donald, *In Peace & War*, p. 16

to attend a ‘Snipers and Intelligence’ course at Bisley during the period his unit was still stationed in England. He graduated second from the course while another New Zealander took the top honour.⁶⁵⁵ Donald argues that the determination and self-motivated work ethic of most Kiwi officers and other ranks in training were obvious when attending courses ‘where they were competing with Brits, Aussies, Canadians, South Africans & others, and we nearly always topped the list.’⁶⁵⁶

Another example of the initiative some of the young officers took in improving their military knowledge in the period before the 2nd NZ Division saw combat was provided by Donald in his book when writing of the journey from England to join the 1st Echelon in Egypt:

Life on board ship was fairly monotonous but Colin Armstrong [another junior officer in his battalion] and I were given the task of studying the one and only Tommy Gun which had been issued to the 22nd just prior to embarkation. There was no information with it so our first job was to produce a handbook. I had some knowledge of technical engineering terms and could draw up and describe the parts and Colin was good at putting it all together. We had some ammunition and learned the intricacies of how to handle it effectively. Then we gave courses to all the NCOs so they could instruct their sections after the guns were finally issued to us in Egypt.⁶⁵⁷

The 3rd New Zealand Division in the Pacific

Officer training for those commissioned in the 3rd New Zealand Division serving in the Pacific theatre varied from those serving in the Middle East. Whereas officers of the 2nd NZ Division were trained for open mobile warfare in the desert, those of the 3rd NZ Division needed to be proficient in amphibious landings and jungle combat. The 3rd NZ Division originated from a brigade group known as B Force that was formed from units sent to defend Fiji and Tonga in mid-1940. The officer in command of the brigade, Brigadier William Cunningham, had recommended that the officers and men posted to the formation should receive at least three months training in New Zealand before being sent to the islands.⁶⁵⁸ When reporting on the second relief

⁶⁵⁵ Donald, Letter to author, 20 June 2010

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁷ Donald, *In Peace & War*, p. 17

⁶⁵⁸ Brigadier William Cunningham, Report to Army Headquarters, 5 February 1941, EA 81/4/3-3, ANZ

force that arrived in Fiji in August 1941, Cunningham voiced serious concerns regarding the quality and inexperience of the officers that had recently arrived, stating that apart from some senior officers, the Brigade was again made up of new personnel with limited training, with new officers, mostly second-lieutenants, having only recently graduated from OCTUs in New Zealand.⁶⁵⁹ Another concern was that the posting of ten captains back to New Zealand had resulted in subalterns now acting as company commanders.⁶⁶⁰

As a result of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, the United States took on the major role in the defence of the islands in the South Pacific. By August 1942 the two brigades of New Zealand troops in Fiji and Tonga had been posted back to the Dominion to form the nucleus of the newly formed 3rd NZ Division. The American High Command who had control of all Allied operations in the South Pacific had indicated that this formation was to be used as garrison troops for territory recaptured from the Japanese and could be used in minor 'mopping up' operations.⁶⁶¹ Major-General Harold Barrowclough, a combat-experienced brigade commander from 2nd NZ Division, was appointed to lead this force on 12 August 1942 and it was his determination and administrative skills that ensured the officers and other ranks within this force received appropriate training.

Barrowclough was disconcerted by the unsuitability of many officers initially attached to the Division when he first took command. In a report to Army Head Quarters in Wellington in late August 1942 he recorded that only a few of the senior officers on his Divisional staff had combat experience in the desert, such as Colonel J. Brooke-White and Brigadier C. Duff, while many of the other officers were Great War veterans, some physically unfit and most lacking in recent combat experience.⁶⁶² It was also evident to him that those who had served in Fiji had received little or no training in exercises larger than battalion level.⁶⁶³ To address this Barrowclough immediately purged the division of unfit, inadequate or elderly officers, while promoting more energetic younger men, which Reginald Newell argues in his recent PhD thesis, proved

⁶⁵⁹ Cunningham, Report on Fijian Defence Force, 17 August 1941, WA II, 1, DAZ 121/9/83/1, ANZ

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁶¹ Communiqué of Commander-in-Chief, South Pacific, WA II, 1, DAZ 121/1/23, ANZ,

⁶⁶² Major-General H. Barrowclough, Report to Army Headquarter, 27 August 1942, AD 12, 28/15/1, ANZ

⁶⁶³ Ibid.

greatly beneficial to morale.⁶⁶⁴ Barrowclough was determined that his officers and men would be combat-ready in the eventuality that the division would be used in that role.

The nature of the island warfare fought in the unfamiliar terrain of tropical jungles led to a new approach to training, with special emphasis placed on combat experiences of Australian and American troops currently campaigning against the Japanese. Barrowclough took personal responsibility for determining the training of his officers and men by devising and leading exercises in both New Zealand and later in New Caledonia. Prior to leaving the Dominion he oversaw an exercise in the Kaimai Ranges near Auckland where he attempted to replicate the experience, terrain and tactics used by Australian forces in defending the Kokoda Track in Papua New Guinea.⁶⁶⁵ The exercise involved one brigade of infantry and supporting units attacking while another had a defensive role.⁶⁶⁶ This and further exercises conducted when the Division transferred to the tropics ensured that both seasoned and inexperienced officers and NCOs had the opportunity to learn lessons in air-ground co-operation, logistics and engineering that would prove beneficial on active service. Training for all ranks and units of the division was continuous in New Caledonia and New Hebrides in early and mid-1943 where they were trained in jungle warfare, which had previously never been part of the New Zealand forces training curriculum prior to this conflict, together with exercises in amphibious landings, river crossings, mountain warfare and route marches over difficult terrain.⁶⁶⁷ Exercises were also multi-dimensional for officers of all levels, with senior officers partaking in 'Training Exercises Without Troops' (TEWT) at brigade and divisional level, while battalion and company officers trained with their troops as battalion combat teams that involved individual infantry battalions operating as a self-contained force with the close support of artillery units and sections of engineers, field ambulance and Army Service Corps.⁶⁶⁸ Such training for these combat teams also included exercises on Guadalcanal with 3 NZ Division Tank Squadron in attack and defensive operations.⁶⁶⁹ In his official history of the Division in the Pacific, Oliver Gillespie argues that 'New Zealanders of 3 Division, for

⁶⁶⁴ Reginald Newell, 'New Zealand's Forgotten Warriors: 3 NZ Division in the South Pacific in World War II,' PhD Thesis, Massey University, 2008, p. 76

⁶⁶⁵ Report on Kaimai Exercise, WA II 1, 305/1/67, ANZ

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁷ Narrative of 2 NZEF, IP, December 1938-October 1944, WA II, DAZ 121/1/1/2, ANZ

⁶⁶⁸ Newell, p. 89

⁶⁶⁹ Jeffrey Plowman, *Rampant Dragons: New Zealanders in Armour in World War II* (Christchurch, 2002), pp. 42-43

the first time in history preparing for jungle and island warfare, were practically writing their own text books as their training progressed.⁶⁷⁰ It is clear that Barrowclough took the formal training of his officers and other ranks very seriously and could not rely on the traditional British Army curriculum to prepare them for the challenges of amphibious and jungle warfare. It was through his diligence and leadership that the officers and men of 3 NZ Division were as prepared as possible, considering their lack of fighting experience in such terrain, for the rigours of warfare in the Pacific. Contrary to some beliefs at the time, such training and experience also placed those officers of the Division in good stead who were later transferred to 2 NZ Division as part of the 10th Reinforcements in June 1944.⁶⁷¹

Training Manuals

There was an implied expectation that officers would take personal responsibility for ensuring they remained proficient in their role and knowledgeable and up-to-date in current military practices and tactics of their corps. To assist them in this the War Office in London provided the New Zealand and other Commonwealth governments with a plethora of text books, manuals, pamphlets and other military-related publications for distribution among their officer corps. As to be expected, some publications dated back to the Great War and were outdated for the mobile warfare of the Second World War. Others were of significant value, focusing on the skills and practices required for good military leadership at all levels, which never date. One such example was *The Officer and Fighting Efficiency* (Extracted from Army Training Memoranda), 1940, that was reprinted under licence for the Chief of General Staff, NZ Military Forces in 1941. This pocket-size booklet was distributed to every officer and officer cadet of the New Zealand military forces during the Second World War and became the ‘bible’ for officers to refer to and reflect on while training and on active service. It was a concise but informative reference for newly commissioned officers, which proved an essential item for the majority of the young New Zealand citizen-soldier officers who had little or no experience of military life. The booklet was specifically designed to give the new officer ‘direct and practical assistance in his day

⁶⁷⁰ Oliver A. Gillespie, *The Pacific*, The Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-1945, Historical Publications Branch (Wellington, 1952), p. 101

⁶⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 200

to day work of training and administration.⁶⁷² Chapters covered care of the men, *Esprit de Corps*, the fighting spirit and leadership, self-testing of relevant knowledge and administrative duties. Included in those chapters procedures and suggestions for discipline and punishments, maintaining morale, dress standards, drill and physical fitness, effects of new weapons, duties and practices specific to various corps, how to conduct inspections and points to which a platoon or troop commander should pay attention to before, during and after a move.⁶⁷³ Newly commissioned officers were expected to study this and similar publications when not on active duty and could use them as aide-memoirs when in the field.

Another such official publication produced by the War Office and issued to officers of the New Zealand Forces was *The Officer and his Job: Morale and Fighting Efficiency*, which was another pocket-size booklet that could be easily carried on campaign but provided more in-depth instructions that catered for all levels of command for commissioned officers. This too was an extract from the British Army Training Memoranda and covered more specific duties required of officers in the field such as duties of a piquet commander, duties of a commander of an outpost company, reconnaissance during a battle, and principles of mounting an attack and defence.⁶⁷⁴

There were some similarities and contrasts in the ability of the New Zealand military hierarchy to provide a sufficient number of highly trained officers at all levels of command for the expeditionary forces formed in both the First and Second World Wars. The main contrast concerning the Second World War was that the military establishment had to contend with limited government funding due to continual economic recession and anti-war sentiment as a result of the unprecedented casualties sustained in the Great War. This had a dramatic effect on the training available for officers and NCOs of both the regular and Territorial forces between the wars. The main similarity was that when both expeditionary forces were formed, there was a core of enthusiastic, determined and experienced citizen-soldier officers from within the Territorial Force on whom the government could rely to train and lead the Dominion's newly formed military formations. Diaries, letters and memoirs of junior and senior

⁶⁷² General Staff, *The Officer and Fighting Efficiency* (Extracted from Army Training Memoranda), (The War Officer, 1940), Reprinted under authority of HM Stationary Office for the Chief of General Staff, NZ Military Forces, July 1941, p. 1

⁶⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. i-ii

⁶⁷⁴ General Staff, *The Officer and his Job: Morale and Fighting Efficiency* (The War Office, 1940), pp. 110-133

combat officers serving and training with both expeditionary forces in Egypt in 1914-1916 and between 1940 and 1941, such as William Malone, Herbert Hart, Denver Fountaine, Haddon Donald, Sandy Thomas and Howard Kippenberger, show that many officers were conscientious and keen to learn their new profession; studying publications in their free time that supplemented their formal training to engrain the military practices and theories that they would need for the basis of becoming proficient and effective leaders of men into battle. However, the prevailing evidence from the recorded recollections of their experiences show that they believed that as citizen-soldiers, despite months and years of peace-time training to make them proficient officers, they really only learned their new profession and honed their leadership skills from the harsh experiences of combat. It was the lessons learned from defeat in Greece and Crete, as well as the hard-fought victories in the early North African campaigns that ensured the officers of combat units within the 2nd NZ Division became effective leaders of an elite fighting force.

Chapter 7

Command and Leadership: Battalion and Regimental Commanders

Infantry battalions provided the foundation of New Zealand expeditionary forces in the First and Second World Wars. The Mounted Rifle regiments of the First World War were equally important; used as infantry during the Gallipoli campaign and later providing the role of mobile mounted infantry in Egypt and Palestine. It was these formations, along with the field artillery regiments, that provided the principal combat arms of the Dominion's military forces overseas. How these battalions and regiments performed in battle was crucial in establishing the reputation of both expeditionary forces as determined and effective fighting formations. The fighting efficiency of each unit throughout these wars fluctuated and was primarily determined by the leadership provided by their officers. Arguably, the most important officers to provide such technical leadership were the battalion and regimental commanders. Although effective leadership at company, battery, squadron, troop and platoon level was also critical to success in battle, it was the battalion and regiment commanders' responsibility to prepare the company and platoon commanders, non-commissioned officers and other ranks within their units for combat, and it was to them that junior officers looked for leadership and confidence in the heat of battle.

To date, the historiography surrounding the colonels, lieutenant-colonels and majors who led the combat arms of the New Zealand expeditionary forces has been limited to a small selection of autobiographies, biographies, articles and books relating to specific officers, such as William Malone and Herbert Hart in the First World War, and W.B. 'Sandy' Thomas, Howard Kippenberger, Jim Burrows and George Clifton in the Second World War. Further, historians Roger McElwain and Monty Soutar have provided two informative essays on the battalion commanders of 2NZEF and the commanders of the 28th (Maori) Battalion, respectively. While all these works provide an insight into New Zealand infantry battalion commanders in the Second World War, there remains no similar work for the NZEF in the First World War. This chapter attempts to remedy this by comparing the experiences of the battalion and regiment

commanders in both wars, focusing on their social background, education, selection process, training and combat leadership roles in an attempt to obtain a greater understanding of the part such men played in forging the fighting reputation of the two expeditionary forces.

The Attributes of Commanders

To assess the effectiveness of battalion and regimental commanders within the two New Zealand expeditionary forces we must first identify the basic attributes of a successful commander. The research from this study makes it clear that paramount amongst these attributes is having and maintaining the respect of subordinate officers and other ranks for him as a person, as a capable and knowledgeable professional, and as a commander who could be relied on in battle. In the New Zealand context, such attributes had pre-war settings, such as social and professional position in civilian life, along with experience and proven authority and leadership while serving in the Territorial Force. This was followed by pre-campaign settings where battalion and regimental field officers established and supervised effective training and morale building regimes for their inexperienced and newly formed units. The final settings arose out of a commander's behaviour and aptitude in combat that had a direct effect on the fighting spirit of the troops they led.

The role of the battalion commander, or regiment commander in the case of mounted infantry and field artillery, remained crucial in determining the combat effectiveness of these formations. Garth Pratten states in his book *Australian Battalion Commanders of the Second World War*, that battalion commanders were responsible for the conduct of their units both in and out of battle and that it was also their responsibility to establish and maintain standards, through training and discipline that were essential for ensuring success on the battlefield.⁶⁷⁵ He argues that through timely employment of the battalion's sub-units and support elements during combat these commanding officers were often seen by subordinates as fatherly figures overseeing the welfare of the battalion and regiment, with many being commonly referred to as the

⁶⁷⁵ Garth Pratten, *Australian Battalion Commanders of the Second World War* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 5

‘old man.’⁶⁷⁶ This was also the case in New Zealand units throughout both wars. Colonel Denver Fountaine who commanded 26 Battalion, 2NZEF at the battle of El Alamein and throughout the Tunisian and Italian campaigns stated in an interview just prior to his death in 1993 that he was humbled at being promoted to command the battalion and thought it funny that his troops referred to him as the ‘Old Man’ even though he was only 28.⁶⁷⁷ Such benevolent authority conformed to the practicalities of leading men in war and the use of nicknames helped to establish the comradeship of officers and men. The familiarity also conformed to the egalitarian ethos of New Zealand society and perhaps this fostered among the other ranks an imagined sense of equality that did not really exist.

Battalion command was more personal in nature than higher command. It was the highest level of command where the commander could maintain personal knowledge of his men. This was in contrast to brigade commanders whose higher level of command was focussed on providing the necessary administrative and combat leadership of a number of battalions, thus generally removing them from regular personal contact with their fighting troops. Conversely, battalion commanders remained in daily contact with their subordinates, both officers and other ranks alike, as all facets of the battalion remained their responsibility. This aspect reflected not just the experience in the New Zealand expeditionary forces. Australian Fred Chilton, who commanded 2/2 Battalion of the Australian Imperial Force during the Second World War and later held command of the 18th Brigade, stated in his experience the battalion commander was ‘everything’ to the battalion, but once he was elevated to command a brigade he lost touch with his men.⁶⁷⁸ Gary Sheffield argues in his book on officer – rank and file relations, that the ideal battalion commander was a benevolent paternal figure.⁶⁷⁹ He states how one British soldier recorded that he would do anything for his colonel, describing him as a real gentleman and a leader of men who was liked by all ranks.⁶⁸⁰

During both wars many soldiers wrote of the loss they felt when a popular battalion commander was either killed or gravely wounded. An example of this was

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁷ Amber Jo Illsley, ‘Col. Fountaine remembers El Alamein,’ *The Westport News*, 22 October 1992, p. 5

⁶⁷⁸ Pratten, p. 5

⁶⁷⁹ G.D. Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches: Officer-man Relations, Morale and Discipline in the British Army in the Era of the First World War* (Basingstoke & London, 2000), p. 95

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid.

provided in the writings of Major Fred Waite who served at Gallipoli and later compiled a book from his diary that he kept during the campaign. When writing of the deaths of Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Bauchop, who commanded the Otago Mounted Rifles, and Lieutenant-Colonel William Malone of the Wellington Infantry Regiment, he claimed that their loss had a detrimental effect on the morale of their troops.⁶⁸¹ Supporting evidence of Bauchop's loss and the effect he had on his troops comes from the diary of Trooper Arthur Cargill, written shortly after he heard of his colonel's death:

We get more men and good men, but can we get as good a colonel again? He set a fine example in action and out of it. Over in the trenches he was cheerful and amiable and interested in all that was going on. He had a reckless disregard for bullets. Davidson told me that one day he was standing up in the trench talking to them and not troubling to keep his head down, while the bullets were flying close. One man said, 'Look out, sir! They are sniping there.' 'Oh, are they,' said the colonel with the bullets pipping after him. He did get a slight wound one day but refused to go to hospital with it. Some might consider this recklessness a fault, but it gave the men confidence in him as a leader and encouraged the same spirit in them, which is of great importance over there [Gallipoli].⁶⁸²

Likewise, in the Second World War, Roger McElwain mentions that the men of 18 Battalion felt an enormous sense of loss when their old battalion commander, Brigadier Gray, was killed in July 1942, with many claiming something irreplaceable had gone from their unit.⁶⁸³

However, Garth Pratten argues that at the battalion level 'leadership' alone does not identify good commanders. In his opinion the ability to 'command' is of greater importance, with decision-making and the ability to direct the formation in difficult operations and activities being essential qualities.⁶⁸⁴ He further argues that leadership is only one facet of command, but that ideally such officers should provide good leadership in carrying out all their functions of command.⁶⁸⁵ He states that effective officers at all levels need the personal skills to get the best out of their men, which is leadership, but that they also need to have the decision-making ability to effectively

⁶⁸¹ Major Fred Waite, *The New Zealanders at Gallipoli*, MS Papers 1629, ATL, p. xiii

⁶⁸² Arthur W. Cargill, Diary, 18 August 1915, MS Papers 0636/002, ATL

⁶⁸³ Roger McElwain, 'Commanding Officers of the Infantry Battalions of 2nd New Zealand Division,' in *Born to Lead? Portraits of New Zealand Commanders*, eds. Glyn Harper & Joel Hayward (Auckland, 2003), pp. 181-182

⁶⁸⁴ Pratten, p. 20

⁶⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21

direct complex activities or operations at the level of their command.⁶⁸⁶ The soldiers of the New Zealand expeditionary forces of both world wars were fortunate enough, for the most part, to have officers commanding them who largely fulfilled these roles of leadership and command.

Choosing Commanders

The role of the combat battalion and regiment commanders was universal in both conflicts. It was imperative that such officers held the respect and trust of their subordinates to ensure the formation could be forged into an effective fighting unit. Those commanders who gained the confidence of their troops did so through having previous military experience, by showing tactical knowledge, by building or strengthening an *esprit de corps* within the battalion or regiment, and by caring for the welfare of those under their command. When Godley formed the New Zealand Expeditionary Force August 1914, he ensured that all the infantry and mounted rifles regiments, along with the field artillery, were commanded by experienced regular and Territorial officers capable of leading such formations. With only a limited number of New Zealand Staff Corps officers available to command at this level, Godley was initially reliant on those Territorial officers who had experience in commanding Territorial regiments, to lead the newly formed NZEF regiments. Although such men were not professional officers, this did not prevent them from moulding their units of mostly inexperienced citizen-soldiers into trained and confident fighters.

In fact, Godley took care to make the best use of the experience and talent available to him. When overseeing the new military scheme based on the measures introduced in the 1909 Defence Act, he was determined that there would be emphasis on the professional development of both his regular and Territorial officers. It was his philosophy that Territorial units would be commanded and trained by officers within the same unit, supported by Staff Corps and Permanent Staff personnel.⁶⁸⁷ It is obvious from reading his 1911 Annual Report that he understood the importance of establishing a strong bond between unit commanders and the soldiers within the formation to enhance performance. When writing in regard to Territorial regiments he stated that

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁷ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Military Forces, 1911, *AJHR*, H-19, pp. 1-3

every commanding officer would have plenty of professional soldiers 'to help him and to relieve him of administrative duties, but no one to interfere between him and his regiment.'⁶⁸⁸ He followed this idea through to the formation of the expeditionary force in 1914, when he predominantly appointed these same experienced Territorial commanders to lead the newly formed infantry and mounted rifle regiments.

The selection of officers has been covered in a previous chapter, but there is clear evidence that there were trends in the selection of battalion commanders in the expeditionary forces of New Zealand, Australia and Canada in both major conflicts. All three dominions had small regular staff corps at the outbreak of both wars and were heavily reliant on experienced volunteer officers to provide leadership in the newly formed combat formations, especially the infantry battalions.⁶⁸⁹ Both Godley in the First World War, and Freyberg in the Second World War, had the responsibility to appoint the right men to lead their enthusiastic, but inexperienced battalions and regiments. Both were also aware that there were only a limited number of senior Territorial officers with the necessary personal qualities capable of filling these vacancies, and it is to their credit that in most cases those chosen when the expeditionary forces were formed generally proved to be effective combat leaders.

Godley's selection policy was firmly based on suitability rather than seniority. When war broke out in early August 1914, his preference was to appoint Territorial officers who had been trained under the new establishment as unit commanders over regular officers, Boer War veterans or officers from the old Volunteer system who had not progressed through the Territorials.⁶⁹⁰ However, Godley did not hesitate to appoint such experienced officers as regiment commanders when he believed there were no suitable candidates from within the Territorials. An example of this includes the appointment of Major Thomas McDonald of the New Zealand Staff Corps to command the Otago Infantry Regiment of the NZEF, mentioned in detail later in the chapter.

Freyberg had the same philosophy when making his appointments for 2NZEF. In contrast to Godley in 1914, in 1939 and 1940 Freyberg was able to select battalion and regimental commanders who had experience in fighting a modern war against European armies. Of the eleven original infantry battalion commanders of 2NZEF

⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 27

⁶⁸⁹ Tim Cook, *At the Sharp End: Canadians Fighting the Great War, 1914-1916*, Vol. 1 (Toronto, 2007), p. 36; Craig Stockings, *Bardia: Myth, Reality and the Heirs of Anzac* (Sydney, 2009), pp. 375-381

⁶⁹⁰ Major-General Alexander Godley, Letter, 29 August 1914, Allen 1, M1/15, ANZ

(including 27 (Machine Gun) Battalion and 28 (Maori) Battalion), eight were veterans of the Great War, including two who were regular officers in 1939.⁶⁹¹ Some had been appointed prior to Freyberg taking command. Seven of the eleven officers were selected from the Territorial Force, and the remaining four were regular force officers.⁶⁹² In comparison, of the four infantry and four mounted rifles regiment commanders of the Main Body of NZEF in 1914, six were Territorial officers and only two of the eight had any combat experience; both Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Bauchop of the Otago Mounted Rifles and Lieutenant-Colonel John Findlay, commander of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles, had served in South Africa during the Second Anglo-Boer War.⁶⁹³

When compared to the original selection of unit commanders for NZEF in the First World War, Freyberg had followed Godley's selection policy to a lesser extent, preferring a greater balance of experience and professionalism when making his appointments. The selection of battalion commanders for the 1st Echelon had been made prior to Freyberg being given command, but he later stated that he had full confidence in those officers appointed to the positions. However, he requested in November 1939 that he be consulted over the appointment of commanders of battalions in the 2nd and 3rd Echelons.⁶⁹⁴ Of the eight unit commanders of these later formations, four appointees were professional soldiers, of whom two, Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie Andrew of 22 Battalion and Lieutenant-Colonel George Dittmer of 28 (Maori) Battalion had served as officers in the First World War.⁶⁹⁵ Clearly, Freyberg was determined to select and appoint the most suitable officers available, irrespective of whether they were regular or Territorial soldiers.

As the 1914 NZEF units were established based on provincial Territorial districts, newly appointed commanders such as Malone of the Wellington Infantry Regiment, MacBean Stewart of the Canterbury Infantry Regiment, Charles 'German

⁶⁹¹ Roger McElwain, 'Table of Commanding Officers, NZ Infantry Battalions, 2NZ Div', collated from the 'Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War, 1939-1945,' in *Born to Lead?*, eds. Glyn Harper and Joel Hayward (Auckland, 2003), pp. 193-197; Monty Soutar, 'Maori Commanders of the 28 Maori Battalion,' in *Born to Lead?*, pp. 198-208; Cenotaph Database, Auckland War Memorial Museum; 2nd NZEF Gradation List, 15 November 1940, NZ Defence Force Library

⁶⁹² Ibid.

⁶⁹³ Christopher Pugsley, *Gallipoli: The New Zealand Story*, Penguin Edition (Auckland, 2008) pp. 49-51; Cenotaph Database, Auckland War Memorial Museum; Gradation List, New Zealand Expeditionary Force, 1914, NZ Defence Force Library

⁶⁹⁴ 'The New Zealand Military Liaison Officer (London) to the Chief of the General Staff (Wellington),' 29 November 1939, *Documents Relating to New Zealand's participation in the Second World War, 1939-1945*, Vol. 1, War History Branch, Department of Internal Affairs (Wellington, 1949), p. 47

⁶⁹⁵ 'Leslie Andrew' and 'George Dittmer', Cenotaph Database, Auckland War Memorial Museum

Joe' (later 'Old Joe') Mackesy of the Auckland Mounted Rifles and William 'Bill' Meldrum of the Wellington Mounted Rifles were known to many of the junior officers and troops under their command. Likewise, when the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force was formed in September 1939, most of the original infantry battalion commanders were also experienced officers selected from Territorial regiments. Examples include Lieutenant-Colonel Howard Kippenberger who was in command of the Canterbury Regiment of the Territorial Force when he was chosen to lead what was to become 20 Battalion at the outbreak of war, while Lieutenant-Colonel Lindsay Inglis had been a Territorial regimental and brigade commander during the 1920s and 1930s before he was given command of 27 (Machine Gun) Battalion. Inglis had been Kippenberger's Territorial brigade commander in the 1930s and they knew each other well.⁶⁹⁶

As the majority of officers and other ranks with the Main Body of NZEF in the First World War, as well as those of the 1st Echelon of the 2nd NZEF in the Second World War, were volunteers from Territorial units, the battalion and regiment commanders had already established relationships with a number of the junior officers within the newly formed units. Not only did they know these men through service in the Territorial regiments, but many were also known through social and vocational spheres. The previous knowledge the commanding officers had of their junior officers and experienced non-commissioned officers meant that they could allocate positions and responsibilities within the unit based on the experience and perceived strengths and weaknesses of individuals. A number of the original battalion officers believed that it was the relationships formed within the Territorial Force before the formation of the two expeditionary forces that contributed to the cohesion of the newly formed units, especially when they were training in Egypt before their first campaigns. An example of this can be found in a diary of William Malone who wrote that he was 'very pleased to find Major [Herbert] Hart my 2nd in command' when his battalion was being formed at Awapuni, near Palmerston North in August 1914.⁶⁹⁷ Even though Hart was not from Malone's own Territorial regiment, the 11th (Taranaki Rifles) Infantry Regiment, he knew him well from their years of attending annual camps together and was a barrister like Malone. According to Malone's entries, both he and Hart were dissatisfied with

⁶⁹⁶ Major-General Sir Howard Kippenberger, *Infantry Brigadier* (London, 1949), p. 6

⁶⁹⁷ W.G. Malone, *Diary*, 6 August 1914 – 10 November 1914, MSX – 2541, ATL, p. 19

the adjutant, Lieutenant Robinson, who had been appointed without their consultation and according to Malone lacked experience and knowledge.⁶⁹⁸ Malone subsequently had him replaced with his adjutant from his old Territorial regiment, which he wrote was ‘to my pleasure.’⁶⁹⁹

Such relationships within the expeditionary forces were not unique to New Zealand. The Australian Imperial Forces of both world wars were formed on a similar basis, being heavily reliant on volunteers from militia units. Charles Bean recorded in his official history of Australia in the First World War that the majority of those few permanent Australian and Imperial officers then serving in Australia fit for service overseas when the 1st Australian Division was being formed in late 1914 were appointed as staff officers.⁷⁰⁰ He argues that there were hardly any regular officers left available to act as brigadiers or battalion commanders and that such positions were filled by senior militia officers and a selection of past and present British Army officers living or serving in Australia at the time. Of the three original infantry brigade commanders of the Australian Imperial Force, two were militia officers, while the third was a British Army officer on exchange.⁷⁰¹ The brigadiers were given the freedom to choose their battalion commanders, while the battalion commanders then had the discretion to select their own company officers.⁷⁰² According to Peter Pedersen, two-thirds of the 631 officers of the 1st Division had served in the old militia system.⁷⁰³ With the Australian infantry battalions and light horse regiments being recruited and formed on a district basis similar to the NZEF, and, as in New Zealand, with only a small pool of suitable officers, it is clear that the relationships formed in the Citizen Military Force also affected the formation of the Australian Imperial Forces.

The Australians had a similar policy at the beginning of World War Two. Like New Zealand, the Australian military forces had only a limited number of regular officers when war erupted in late 1939. However, there were underlying issues between senior officers of the Australian Staff Corps and those of the Citizen Military Force (similar to the New Zealand Territorial Force) when the Australian Imperial Force was being formed. The professional officers, such as George Vasey, had had little

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 20

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁰ C.E.W. Bean, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*, Vol. 1, 1981 Edition (St. Lucia, Queensland, 1981), p. 49

⁷⁰¹ Peter Pedersen, *The Anzacs: Gallipoli to the Western Front* (Camberwell, Victoria, 2007), p. 21

⁷⁰² Ibid., p. 22

⁷⁰³ Ibid.

opportunity for advancement during the inter-war years. Historian David Horner argues that these officers were highly trained, knew each other's strengths and weaknesses, and were determined to seize their chances in the developing war.⁷⁰⁴ The senior militia officers were also seeking such roles. They considered themselves more suitable to command the newly formed infantry battalions due to their experience in commanding these formations in the militia, compared to the Staff Corps officers who had been limited to administrative and training roles during the inter-war years.⁷⁰⁵ Squabbling occurred among these two groups of officers for senior positions, especially for vacancies as battalion commanders, which Vasey described as 'a mass of petty arrogances and jealousies.'⁷⁰⁶ While regular officers such as Vasey and Sydney Rowell were appointed brigadiers, the officer commanding the AIF, Major-General Thomas Blamey, a militia officer himself, mostly selected experienced militia officers to command the newly formed infantry battalions.⁷⁰⁷ Like the original battalion commanders of 2NZEF, those who were chosen to lead the Australian battalions were First World War veterans.

Social Settings

There is clear evidence that the battalion and regiment commanders of the original main bodies of both New Zealand expeditionary forces were from the affluent and educated sectors of society. This characteristic was not unique and was typical of the officer corps of most modern military forces in the early twentieth century. Understandably in that period, relative wealth was required to receive a high level of education. Leading up to the First World War, primary education in New Zealand was compulsory and free, while secondary education was free only to those who had attained government funded scholarships, known as 'Free Places' by passing national examinations.⁷⁰⁸ Secondary and tertiary education was available to those who could afford to pay for it. This generally limited higher education to those children from middle-class families, and education and wealth had a direct correlation to employment

⁷⁰⁴ David Horner, *Blamey: The Commander-in-Chief* (St. Leonards, New South Wales, 1998), p. 161

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁶ War Diary, HQ 6 Division, G Branch, MS-52 1/5/12, Australian War Memorial

⁷⁰⁷ Horner, p. 131

⁷⁰⁸ Colin McGeorge, Interview, 19 November 2010

opportunities. This further influenced social status within society, which was reflected in the Territorial regiments through the Dominion.

The original battalion and regiments commanders of both expeditionary forces were highly educated for that time and from the social elite. Unlike Britain, there was no established aristocracy in the colonial societies of the Empire. However, there were, to a lesser extent, significant social inequalities based on land, wealth, occupation and education. In late nineteenth century New Zealand, pastoral land was often the preserve of a few wealthy run-holding families. Many of these large estates, however, were eventually reduced in size due to the policies of Liberal governments at the turn of the twentieth century. This ensured more land was available for smaller holdings, equating to a more equal distribution of land among the population of the colony and provided greater opportunity for acquiring wealth through agriculture, even though the Dominion's population was increasingly becoming urbanised. The rise of the service professionals from the 1890s created a new, mainly urban, middle-class elite that gained social status and influence equal to the old pastoral elite. In New Zealand prior to the First World War, occupation opportunities had a direct correlation with wealth and education. In Erik Olssen's words:

Education became the key to social mobility...Those with some secondary education had the best chance of obtaining white-collar and semi-professional jobs, while the prerequisite for admission to the professions was a university education. Prior to 1890, few occupations required school skills beyond literacy and basic arithmetic. Secondary education, although supported by public endowments, was largely the preserve of the wealthy.⁷⁰⁹

In 1901 less than 3 per cent of youth aged between 12 and 18 attended public secondary schools. By 1921 almost 13 per cent of the same group attended secondary school, and by 1939 this had increased to 25 per cent.⁷¹⁰ This demand for higher education was driven by public perception that education was the key to social mobility in New Zealand. The increasing number of state-funded secondary schools that were established, especially in provincial areas post-First World War, provided educational opportunities to children of less affluent families who previously could not afford

⁷⁰⁹ Erik Olssen, 'Towards a New Society', in *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Second Edition, ed. Geoffrey W. Rice (Auckland, 1992), p. 276

⁷¹⁰ Ibid.

secondary education. This trend provided greater opportunities for commissions and promotion for those serving in the Second World War compared to those in the NZEF.

It was generally those Territorial officers from relatively wealthy families who had received secondary education or higher, and who had professional backgrounds, who were considered suitable to command battalions and regiments when both expeditionary forces were formed. It seems that those who held positions of social authority, such as lawyers, teachers, business owners and company managers, had proven administrative and managerial competence, that was expected in these professions, but most importantly they had experience in use of authority; qualities that were considered essential in commanding battalions and regiments.⁷¹¹ However, these civilian social and professional ‘qualifications’ dwindled in importance as the conflicts progressed, especially during the Second World War where commanders were increasingly drawn from those who had proved themselves as capable leaders in the lower ranks.

A prime example of this early selection criteria was that of William Malone. He was a barrister and solicitor by profession, as well as being a substantial land owner in Taranaki. This provided him with a social position in the province and increased his opportunity to achieve high rank in his Territorial regiment in the pre-war years. There is no doubt that Malone was a keen student of military history and had a profound sense of duty in the defence of ‘King and Country,’ but it is unlikely that he would have risen to such a position in peacetime without such social standing. Other such examples from the Main Body of the NZEF in the First World War include; D. MacBean Stewart, the son of a doctor, who was an accountant in civilian life prior to commanding the Canterbury Infantry Regiment;⁷¹² William Meldrum, who like Malone was a farmer and barrister in civilian life before commanding the Wellington Mounted Rifles;⁷¹³ and Arthur Plugge who was the Headmaster of Dilworth School when he was appointed to command the Auckland Infantry Battalion in 1914.⁷¹⁴ Such men would have required a high standard of education and relative wealth to gain such occupations and the

⁷¹¹ Pratten. p. 16

⁷¹² ‘Douglas MacBean Stewart,’ Cenotaph Database, Auckland War Memorial Museum; www.muse.aucklandmuseum.com

⁷¹³ Terry Kinloch, *Echoes of Gallipoli: In the Words of New Zealand's Mounted Riflemen* (Auckland, 2055), p. 34

⁷¹⁴ ‘Arthur Plugge,’ Cenotaph Database, Auckland War Memorial Museum; www.muse.aucklandmuseum.com

authority that went with them; something that was not available to the majority of working-class New Zealanders at that time.

This was also the case for those New Zealand Staff Corps officers who were appointed to command battalions and regiments throughout the Great War. Imperial officers who served in the NZEF at this level, such as Harry Fulton and Napier Johnston came from middle-class English society and had sufficient higher education and wealth to gain entry to the Royal Military Colleges at Sandhurst and Woolwich, or in Johnston's case, Kingston, Canada. Cadets at these establishments were generally selected from candidates who had emerged from the British Public School system based on privately-funded schools, which was the preserve of the upper-classes and emerging middle classes of society. Prior to 1915 it was usual for potential officers joining the British Army to be required to possess Officer Training Corps certificates from either public school or university OCTs.⁷¹⁵ This ensured very few, if any, working-class applicants possessed the necessary such qualifications. This was different from the New Zealand experience, where New Zealand Staff Corps officers who were appointed to command infantry battalions and artillery units during the Great War had received formal military training through the British Army curriculum, either through attending courses in New Zealand, courses at the military colleges in Britain and India, secondment to British regiments overseas, or through graduating from the Royal Military College of Australia at Duntroon.

An unusual example of a New Zealand Staff Corps officer who rose from a humble background to later command an infantry battalion before going on to command a brigade on the Western Front is provided by Charles Brown. Prior to 1911 Brown had served in the Volunteers, where he was elected as a captain, and later in the Territorials while employed as a coalminer in Denniston and Greymouth where he rose to become a mine manager.⁷¹⁶ However, in that year he was one of a number of candidates from the Territorial Force offered a commission in the Staff Corps that was being expanded under Godley's direction.⁷¹⁷ Once a regular officer, Brown's military training would have exceeded more than he could have expected as a Territorial officer, which most certainly would have increased his professional knowledge and been

⁷¹⁵ Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches*, p. 30

⁷¹⁶ Charles Henry Jeffries Brown, *Personnel Service Record*, ANZ

⁷¹⁷ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Military Force, 1911, *AJHR*, H-19, pp. 1-3, 7-10

influential in his rapid promotion during the First World War. Brown was appointed as a captain when the Main Body of NZEF was formed in 1914 and initially served as a staff officer at Divisional Headquarters in Egypt and during the Gallipoli landings, after being promoted to major.⁷¹⁸ By May 1915 he had been promoted to lieutenant-colonel and placed in command of the Canterbury Infantry Battalion, which he led in the doomed attack on Krithia by the New Zealand Infantry Brigade at Cape Helles.⁷¹⁹ He later went on to command the 2nd battalion of the Auckland Infantry Regiment on the Western Front where he confirmed a reputation as an effective battalion commander. He eventually rose to the temporary rank of brigadier-general and was killed while leading the 1st Brigade of the New Zealand Division at Messines in June 1917.⁷²⁰ It was his professionalism and proven leadership as a battalion commander that marked Brown out for higher command. Originally coming from a working-class occupation in civilian life, it is unthinkable that he would have had the same opportunities of command had he sought a commission in the British Army.

Enhanced secondary education opportunities in New Zealand during the inter-war years led to the appointment of battalion and regiment commanders from a broader spectrum of society in the Second World War than in the First World War. The increase in the number of government-funded secondary schools throughout the Dominion, especially in relatively isolated provincial areas such as Westland and Buller in the South Island, and Northland and the East Coast in the North Island, provided a greater opportunity for working class children to receive secondary education; something that had previously been limited to those provincial families who could afford to send their children to boarding schools predominantly in the main urban centres. Denver Fountaine was one such example of a 2NZEF battalion commander who came from a working-class family but was fortunate enough to attend Westport Technical College after it had been established in 1923.⁷²¹ This resulted in him obtaining a clerical position upon leaving school and eventually led to him being commissioned in his local Territorial regiment before the outbreak of war in 1939.⁷²²

⁷¹⁸ Captain David Ferguson, *The History of the Canterbury Regiment, N.Z.E.F., 1914-1919* (Christchurch, 1921), p. 37

⁷¹⁹ Ibid.

⁷²⁰ Major-General Sir Alexander Godley, Letter to Major-General Sir Alfred Robin, 21 June 1917, AD 12/ 21, ANZ

⁷²¹ Bruce Macdonald, *Westport: Struggle For Survival* (Westport, 1973), p. 66

⁷²² Illsley, 'Col. Fountaine remembers El Alamein,' *The Westport News*, 22 October 1992, p. 5

Another Second World War battalion commander from a humble background, who eventually became a brigadier, was Jim Burrows. Coming from the small North Canterbury farming village of Waiau, he considered himself very fortunate that his family made a significant financial sacrifice to send him to attend Christchurch Boys High School in 1918. As he states in his autobiography *Pathway Among Men*: 'It was not by any means the customary thing in my day to go to secondary school and boys normally left primary school to go straight to local employment.'⁷²³ Burrows only expected to remain at the school for six months due to the financial burden this would place on his parents. During the school holidays he earned a 'man's' wage working on a local farm to help pay for his school fees, but after four years at secondary school his parents could no longer afford the boarding fees.⁷²⁴ Fortunately for Burrows, the school principal paid his fees for his final year, stating that completing his secondary education would make a difference for his future prospects.⁷²⁵ Burrows went on to become a teacher at the school and was commander of the school cadets in 1939; thanks to this position, and his experience in officer training, he received a captain's commission and was made a company commander in 20 Battalion when it was being formed in September of that year.⁷²⁶

Cultivating Professionalism

As with the expeditionary forces raised by Australia and Canada at the beginning of both world wars, the original commanders of the battalions and regiments of the New Zealand expeditionary forces were chosen from those who had proved themselves as accomplished officers in pre-war military forces. Their challenge, in the first instance, was to bring their battalions and regiments to combat readiness. The most obvious question that needs to be asked when making an evaluation of such officers is how successful were they in providing the necessary training and building the morale of their units. The British Army, on which these dominion forces based their training syllabus, was not well prepared on the whole for the demands of trench warfare in the

⁷²³ J.T. Burrows, *Pathway Among Men* (Christchurch, 1974), p. 13

⁷²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 23-25

⁷²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.23-25

⁷²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 74-75

First World War, or the *blitzkrieg* and desert warfare in the Second World War. The initial campaigns that both New Zealand expeditionary forces were involved in identified the serious limitations of the training that had been provided. Yet the battalions and regiments did not break under severe pressure, which says much for the basic cohesion and preparedness that proved invaluable at the time when the troops lacked combat experience. Battalion-building was an on-going process, where incoming officers and men had to be absorbed and integrated into the units, recuperation from battle had to be organised and replacement officers appointed. Along with this, battalion and regimental commanders also had the responsibility of ‘out of battle’ morale building to maintain confidence and an *esprit de corps* within their units, as well as the New Zealand brigades and divisions as a whole. However, until now, little was known about how this was achieved. What is clear is that it could not have been achieved without the cultivation of a certain level of professionalism in leadership primarily led by unit commanders.

When the First World War broke out in August 1914 Godley had been making preparations for the creation of a New Zealand expeditionary force for the previous two years and had been assessing suitable unit commanders in that time. As early as August 1912, he had sought approval from the government to work out details for such a force, which was originally to be part of an Australasian division of 17,000 men all ranks.⁷²⁷ However, after discussions with General Sir John French and others at the War Office in London, it was decided that a separate New Zealand expeditionary force was more practicable.⁷²⁸ At the time the combat field forces of the Territorial Force consisted of four mounted rifle brigades, four field artillery brigades, four infantry brigades and supporting units of field engineers and field ambulances to defend the Dominion.⁷²⁹ It was from this force that Godley had to select his senior commanders for the expeditionary force, while also ensuring there were sufficient experienced senior officers remaining in New Zealand to command the home forces.

Not all Territorial unit commanders were suitable to serve overseas and those that were had been identified as early as 1912 and 1913. An examination of the register of confidential annual reports of Territorial units from those years indicates the varying

⁷²⁷ *Defence Scheme – Expeditionary Action by Territorial Force: August 1912-June 1913*, AD 10/7 16/6, ANZ

⁷²⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷²⁹ *Ibid.*

quality of the unit commanders available for selection. Many of the lieutenant-colonels had reached their rank through the old volunteer militia where officers had been elected by the men. Some had retained their rank in the newly established Territorial Force but were considered too old to serve on campaign. An example was that of Lieutenant-Colonel E. Richardson of the 13th (North Canterbury & Westland) Regiment, who in 1913 was aged 54 and not considered by Godley.⁷³⁰ Even some officers who were second-in-command of Territorial units were not considered suitable for promotion to lead units of the expeditionary force. An example is that of Major Searle of the 10th (North Otago Rifles) Regiment who was described in a report of the unit in April 1913 as being, ‘very poor at his work...hopeless in dress and discipline and of no help to his O/C [Officer-in-Command].’⁷³¹ Another senior officer to suffer such criticism was 44-year-old Major A. Leech of the 11th (Taranaki Rifles) Regiment who was reported in May 1913 as being indifferent and lacking in military intelligence.⁷³²

In contrast, the inspection reports identified numerous senior and junior officers who were to prove capable and effective officers and battalion commanders during the Great War. Leech’s commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel William Malone was described as being ‘fit for the position’ in the report of his unit in May 1913 and his leadership of the Wellington Infantry Regiment while training in Egypt and on campaign at Gallipoli confirmed this.⁷³³ Another such senior Territorial officer was Major Arthur Plugge of the 3rd (Auckland) Regiment, who was reported as being an excellent officer who was keen and energetic.⁷³⁴ Plugge was subsequently chosen by Godley to command the Auckland Infantry Regiment of the Main Body of the NZEF in 1914. An examination of the reports concerning the Mounted Rifle regiments show similarity to the infantry units. One such officer who was considered ‘excellent’ in 1913 was Major William Meldrum of the 6th (Manawatu) Mounted Rifles, and such a report may have been instrumental in Meldrum being given command of the Wellington Mounted Rifles of the NZEF the following year.⁷³⁵

There were also a number of junior officers from this time who were identified as being promising and who subsequently went on to command battalions or regiments

⁷³⁰ *Confidential Reports on Territorial Units: May 1912 – May 1913*, AD 37 21/26, ANZ, p. 168

⁷³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 225

⁷³² *Ibid.*, p. 353

⁷³³ *Ibid.*

⁷³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50

⁷³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 293

within the NZEF by the end of the conflict. In June 1912, 35-year-old Captain D. MacBean Stewart of the 1st (Canterbury) Regiment was reported as being ‘very excellent’ and that he got ‘good work out of his men.’⁷³⁶ Stewart was given command of the Canterbury Infantry Regiment when the Main Body for the NZEF was established, and like Malone, gained a reputation as an effective battalion commander while training his battalion hard in Egypt.⁷³⁷ In March 1912, Edward Puttick was a second-lieutenant in the 15th (North Auckland) Regiment where it was noted that he was a ‘Good officer- very keen in his work’ and that he had arranged the transport of the men of his unit to their annual camp with ‘great completeness to detail.’⁷³⁸ The following year Puttick had transferred to the 5th (Wellington Rifles) Regiment where he had been promoted to lieutenant and was reported as being, ‘A most efficient and promising officer - worthy of promotion.’⁷³⁹ He volunteered to serve in the NZEF from August 1914 and by October 1917 had been promoted to lieutenant-colonel in command of a battalion of the New Zealand Rifle Brigade serving on the Western Front.⁷⁴⁰ Another junior officer to receive earlier recognition in these reports was 29-year-old Captain N.S. Falla of B (Howitzer) Battery of the New Zealand Field Artillery, who was described in April 1913 as being, ‘A good officer - well up to his work.’⁷⁴¹ Falla volunteered to serve in the field artillery of the NZEF in November 1914 where he retained his Territorial rank. However, due to his distinguished service in commanding a battery during the Gallipoli campaign, by May 1916 he had risen to the rank of lieutenant-colonel, which he held until the end of the war.⁷⁴² On the Western Front, Falla went on to command the 2nd, 3rd and 4th New Zealand Field Artillery Brigades and forged a reputation as an effective and reliable combat artillery commander, being mentioned in dispatches four times.⁷⁴³

There were no formal criteria for the selection of battalion and regiment commanders when the New Zealand Expeditionary Force was formed in the First World War. As already stated, Godley, with only a few officers of his small staff corps

⁷³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 143

⁷³⁷ Pugsley, *Gallipoli*, p. 73

⁷³⁸ *Confidential Reports on Volunteer Units: May 1912 – May 1913*, AD 37 21/26, ANZ, p. 65

⁷³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 383

⁷⁴⁰ Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Puttick, ‘Report on and Assessment of New Zealand Soldiers and Equipment During World War 1, *Puttick Papers 2 -I*, ANZ

⁷⁴¹ *Confidential Reports on Volunteer Units: May 1912 – May 1913*, AD 37 21/26, ANZ, p. 223

⁷⁴² Studholme, p. 112

⁷⁴³ Major-General Alexander Godley, Letter to Major-General Sir Alfred Robin, 23 June 1915, AD 12 21, ANZ; J.R. Byrne, *New Zealand Artillery in the Field, 1914-18* (Auckland, 1922), p. 313

experienced enough for these appointments, and with the units being formed on a provincial basis, was obliged to select senior officers from within the Territorial Force. Professional soldiers, such as Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Bauchop, who was appointed to command the Otago Mounted Rifle Regiment, Major Thomas McDonald, who was promoted to lieutenant-colonel as the original commander of the Otago Infantry Battalion, and Major Harry Fulton, an Imperial officer on secondment, who was promoted to command a battalion in the Samoan Advance Party, were some of the few staff officers available to Godley. He was fortunate in having at his disposal Major G. Napier Johnston of the Royal Artillery, also on secondment and promoted to lieutenant-colonel, who proved exceptional in commanding the New Zealand Field Artillery throughout the war.

Godley was concerned at the inexperience of many of the Territorial regimental commanders, but had no alternative and was forced to rely on these volunteer citizen-soldiers. However, he displayed no obligation to existing regimental commanders in making his selections if he thought they were not of the required standard or experience. An example was his refusal to appoint either Lieutenant-Colonel John McClymont or Lieutenant-Colonel John Moir, both Territorial regiment commanders from the Otago military district, to command the Otago infantry Regiment. Instead, Godley appointed a New Zealand Staff Corps officer, Major Thomas W. McDonald, as lieutenant-colonel of the newly formed Otago Infantry Regiment, while both McClymont and Moir accepted reductions in rank to major in the battalion; McClymont as second-in-command of the unit and Moir as a company commander.⁷⁴⁴ By the end of the war McClymont had reached the rank of lieutenant-colonel and was in command of the 3rd Otago Infantry Battalion, while Moir returned to New Zealand in mid-1916 as a major after he had served a period as second-in-command of the battalion.⁷⁴⁵

Evidence that Godley had little or no confidence in these two senior Territorial officers to command a battalion, at least in the early stage of the war, was that he subsequently replaced McDonald with Captain A. Moore, DSO, an Imperial officer on secondment to the New Zealand Staff Corps. Prior to Moore being promoted to lieutenant-colonel he had initially been appointed as assistant-adjutant of the battalion

⁷⁴⁴ A.E. Byrne, *Official History of the Otago Regiment, NZEF, in the Great War, 1914-1918*, second edition (Dunedin, 1921), p. 7

⁷⁴⁵ Studholme, pp. 192 & 218

and junior in rank to both McClymont and Moir.⁷⁴⁶ This indicates that Godley was more concerned with appointing those he deemed fit to command battalions and regiments, rather than appoint commanders to lead such formations merely because they already commanded Territorial units. He explained this in his correspondence with James Allen, Minister of Defence (who was later knighted in 1917 for his work in that role):

I have seen McClymont and explained that though he was appointed second-in-command of the Battalion, I do not think he has sufficient experience, or is sufficiently qualified to command it on active service, and he is very nice about it, and quite content, and says that he will be very glad to take second in command under Smyth or Moore, whichever it may be.⁷⁴⁷

Godley's increasing lack of faith in McClymont as a suitable battalion commander in the early stage of the war was further evident when he wrote to Allen from Egypt stating that although unsuitable for that level of command, circumstance dictated he would have to retain him:

I am sure that, as I cabled you, the trouble about McClymont and Henderson is only slackness and carelessness, and I have cabled you in the hope that it may be possible only to send one of them home. Henderson can best be spared, especially as he has already left us, but, under the circumstances of McDonald having gone sick, it is very hard to let McClymont go, and it also is, I think, very hard on him.⁷⁴⁸

Fortunately for McClymont, he was retained, and after experiencing and learning from four years of combat leadership, he ended the war with a reputation as a competent battalion commander.

The training the first and later battalion and regimental commanders received prior to the formation of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force was limited compared to those of the Great War. The military forces of the Dominion had paid heavily due to the cuts in government spending resulting from the Depression, particularly in regard to the suspension of compulsory military training. Burrows' experience as a school cadets officer paints a clear picture as to the state of affairs at the outbreak of the Second World War:

⁷⁴⁶ A.E. Byrne, p. 7

⁷⁴⁷ Allen Papers, Godley to Allen, 16 December 1914, Ministerial Files -Correspondence with Godley, Allen 1, 1 M1/15 Part 1, ANZ

⁷⁴⁸ Allen Papers, Godley to Allen, 26 December 1914, Ministerial Files -Correspondence with Godley, Allen 1, 1 M1/15 Part 1, ANZ

School teachers who held officer commissions had little or no contact with Territorial battalions. Separate courses were held each year and these were reasonably supported by South Island teachers until they were affected by the general deterioration which had set in everywhere. The courses may have varied a little according to the enthusiasm of the Regular Force but on the whole they were good. They had no troops to work with and battle exercises lacked any kind of realism but no one could say the courses were a waste of time. At the same time, there was no incentive for anyone to work harder unless he proposed to sit promotion examinations at the end of the year. Sometimes a teacher would find he had to take over the cadet unit of his school and was expected to step up his rank. In these circumstances he would take the annual training course more seriously, knowing he had to sit the same examination as Territorial officers and that passes were not granted lightly. Had it been possible to foresee the future at that stage, courses in staff training would have paid a good dividend.⁷⁴⁹

Burrows further argued that in 1939 others like him were ‘a long way from being highly trained soldiers,’ and that ‘any likeness between them and the officers of Hitler’s army could only be coincidental.’⁷⁵⁰

The Importance of Experience

Experience provided the best form of training for unit commanders. In the case of the battalion and regiment leaders of both New Zealand expeditionary forces, this included experience prior to and during overseas service. Experience as leaders and managers in civilian society provided some with valuable skills and knowledge in administration, employment and man-management that served them well as military commanders. Compulsory military service in the years leading up to and during the Great War certainly had a positive influence in the training and efficiency of New Zealand units serving in the Middle East and on the Western Front. The previous service of both the battalion and regimental officers, along with the other ranks, reduced the time it took for these citizen-soldiers to adjust to army life and the rigours of campaigning. It also assisted the commanding officers in their duty in forming their units into disciplined combat commands. In contrast, the suspension of compulsory military training in the 1930s and the continual reduction in military expenditure during

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 74

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid.

the inter-war years certainly had a detrimental effect on the training and resources available to the New Zealand military forces leading up to the Second World War. However, the limited training that was received, especially by those officers who were to lead units throughout the conflict, did prove beneficial in forging the 2nd New Zealand Division into an effective fighting formation.

Battalion and regiment commanders from both expeditionary forces were responsible for preparing themselves and their men for combat and recognised that previous military service was a key factor in achieving this. Lieutenant-Colonel Claude Weston who held command of the 2nd and 3rd battalions of the Wellington Infantry Regiment on the Western Front from 1917 acknowledged this in his autobiography, *Three Years with the New Zealanders*. His first military experience was that of a cadet at Christ's College in Christchurch, followed by service in the Volunteers where he had been appointed as a captain prior to retiring to the Officer Reserve list shortly before the introduction of compulsory military service.⁷⁵¹ With a shortage of experienced officers to serve overseas at the outbreak of war in 1914, Weston volunteered and trained with the 6th Reinforcements at Trentham prior to joining his regiment at Gallipoli. It was his view that previous military training was essential in preparing the New Zealanders for combat:

It must be admitted now, as experience has proved beyond doubt, that a man who has some previous military training more easily absorbs the military atmosphere than his fellow citizen with none. People were prone to discount the value of the earlier training [Volunteer Corps], but it stood many of us in good stead. It was difficult enough to adapt oneself to the new life, but it would have been infinitely harder, and taken longer, had one had no volunteer experience. The values of Compulsory Training in this war has justified its existence.⁷⁵²

Like many other infantry company commanders who served at Gallipoli and who would later serve as battalion commanders on the Western Front, Weston learned to appreciate the difficulties in maintaining the fighting effectiveness and *esprit de corps* of frontline units. In France, battalion commanders had to ensure their officers and men continually received comprehensive training in trench warfare when out of the frontline, balanced with the need for periods of rest prior to returning to the trenches. Weston was of the view that fighting at Gallipoli had not prepared the New Zealanders

⁷⁵¹ C.H. Weston, *Three Years with the New Zealanders* (London, n.d.), pp. 8-9

⁷⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 10

for the rigours of trench warfare in Flanders, where the mud, filthy water and rats were inescapable.⁷⁵³ As a company commander, and later battalion commander, he realised that it was the unit leader's responsibility to ensure the command was prepared for battle, both physically and emotionally, to ensure success. This proved difficult to achieve when sustaining high casualties in battle:

A company on active service is like the shifting sands on the seashore; the officers and non-commissioned officers, in common with the remainder, come and go, here today, there tomorrow. Fortunate is the company that retains an officer for any length of time; because with the officers and men strange to each other, its efficiency is impaired and often the men's happiness endangered. Justice is easier when the superior knows the idiosyncrasies and characteristics of his subordinates, and, moreover, there is lacking that relationship sometimes stronger than blood-tie, which is born between officers and men who have been through a great deal together.⁷⁵⁴

The efficiency and morale of infantry battalions was fluid within the expeditionary forces of both conflicts and was a constant concern for battalion commanders. The original battalion commanders of the Main Body of the NZEF in Egypt in early 1915 and those of the first three echelons of 2NZEF who trained in Egypt and England leading up to the Greek Campaign in 1941, were fortunate enough to have months of training with their units where they had the opportunity to get to know their subordinate officers and other ranks. These battalions were formed with volunteers who generally had years of some form of military experience, either through serving in previous conflicts such as the Boer War and the First World War, or through service in the Volunteers or Territorials. The periods of training prior to their first campaigns provided the opportunity for the formations to achieve a certain level of military efficiency, leading to a collective sense of pride among the soldiers in their unit and a certain *élan* within battalions. This was the same for the artillery units and Mounted Rifle regiments. Commanders such as Malone, Stewart, Meldrum and Napier Johnston, who commanded the NZ Field Artillery in the First World, and Kippenberger and George Dittmer, who was the original commander of 28 (Maori) Battalion, understood well how increased efficiency would lead to increased confidence and morale. Malone recorded his philosophy on how he needed to achieve this with his newly-formed battalion when training in Egypt in early 1914:

⁷⁵³ Ibid., p. 79

⁷⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 88

We start battalion training today. The Brigadier [F.E. Johnston] is in a hurry to rush us along at schemes and the top of the work. I am determined to begin at the bottom. He has been used to troops, who before they go to their regiments after enlisting have had 6 solid months recruit training, a very different thing to ours, where the men have only been 4 months together and 2 of them at sea on a transport with no room to work.⁷⁵⁵

Malone made it clear to Johnston that, as the battalion commander, it was his duty and responsibility to ensure the efficiency of his men and that he knew better than the brigadier what weaknesses needed to be eliminated within the unit when preparing them for combat. Johnston had questioned the amount of time Malone had spent on musketry training compared to other battalions, but Malone remained steadfast in his approach, telling Johnston that, ‘That it was all very well training nice tactical schemes and manoeuvres but that if the fire control was bad, not to mention the actual shooting, it was no good...I wanted my Regiment to do something more than manoeuvre.’⁷⁵⁶

As the wars progressed high casualty rates ensured that reinforcements among the junior officers and other ranks needed to be trained to a level of combat efficiency. There were periods of inactivity for the New Zealand troops where unit commanders could implement such training, especially when the forces were numerically weakened from sustaining casualties such as on the Western Front after the battle of the Somme in 1916 and Passchendaele in 1917, and during the Second World War when 2 NZ Division was withdrawn from the frontline after the battle of Crete and Operation Crusader in North Africa in 1941. Such periods of rest and recovery were essential to ensure the formations regained their nominal strength and fighting efficiency, with most unit commanders proving conscientious in taking an active role in rebuilding their battered battalions.

During the Gallipoli campaign there was little opportunity for the leaders of New Zealand combat units to train and rest their troops out of the frontline. Even when in reserve out of the forward trenches, the troops were exposed to artillery and sniper fire, and together with the difficult steep terrain of Anzac Cove, made battalion and regiment training almost impossible. It was only on the few occasions when the

⁷⁵⁵ W.G. Malone, Diary, 4 January 1915, MSX 2543, ATL

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid.

formations where withdrawn to the neighbouring island of Lemnos that any form of formal unit training could be conducted, but even then this proved difficult due to the exhausted state of the troops. It is clear from reading the diaries of Lieutenant-Colonel Malone that officers adapted to the difficult conditions by adopting a practical approach to at least maintain the morale of their units after suffering heavy casualties, even if they could not provide formal training for their reinforcements. He managed to do this by keeping his men busy, focusing on manual work in improving the defences at Courtney's and Quinn's Posts: 'Went over and took over Courtney's Post, a very haggled piggedly show. People all over the place... There is a lot of work to do remodelling, but we will get it done soon. His men are keen.'⁷⁵⁷

Regiment and battalion commanders had greater opportunities to maintain the effectiveness and fighting strength of their troops on the Western Front later in the Great War and almost continuously when not in the frontline during the Second World War. As a result of fighting in the battle of Passchendaele in October 1917, Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Puttick's battalion of the NZ Rifle Brigade had suffered heavy casualties and was left in a 'dispirited condition with little fighting value.'⁷⁵⁸ To remedy this once the unit had been withdrawn from the frontline and had received reinforcements, Puttick implemented a course of training to restore the combat efficiency and morale of the formation. He reported that he was able to achieve this through a combination of sufficient rest together with a regime of daily physical training, military drill and musketry.⁷⁵⁹ He claimed that he used physical training to 'secure good team work, discipline and for transforming a civilian into a soldier,' while drills in bayonet training were 'particularly necessary to work up a blood lust in our troops and to give them confidence in the attack.'⁷⁶⁰ He also concentrated on providing training for signallers, observers, scouts and snipers who played an essential part in trench warfare, stating: 'When well trained, these men were of the greatest value in both trench and open warfare.'⁷⁶¹ Puttick recorded that by providing three hours of training and two hours of sport on a daily basis, that within a week his troops were regaining their former morale and alertness.⁷⁶²

⁷⁵⁷ Malone, Diary, 1 June 1915, MSX 2546, ATL

⁷⁵⁸ Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Puttick, Report on and Assessment of New Zealand Soldiers and Equipment During World War 1, Puttick 2/1, ANZ

⁷⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁶¹ Ibid.

⁷⁶² Ibid.

Unfortunately, due to the ebb and flow of casualties and reinforcements, especially within the infantry who generally sustained the greatest losses of the combat arms, unit commanders were repeatedly required to rebuild their battalions. Brigadier Jim Burrows provides an example of this in his autobiography, *Pathway Among Men*, where he describes how 20 Battalion had to be rebuilt after the battle of Crete, where he temporarily held command of it, and again after Operation Crusader, where the unit had been overrun at Sidi Rezegh. It was after this battle that Burrows was permanently appointed to command the unit and was then responsible for getting the battalion back to fighting fitness.⁷⁶³ Like all formation commanders, Burrows could not do this effectively without the support of his subordinate headquarters staff and company commanders. He claims he was fortunate in having experienced officers to assist him who had 'proved themselves a dozen times over in Crete,' which included Captain Charles Upham, VC, and that he could place absolute reliance on them.⁷⁶⁴ Burrows highlights the pressure and urgency facing battalion commanders of the New Zealand expeditionary forces during both conflicts to maintain the fighting efficiency of their battalions and the need for a team approach to achieve this when describing his experience after the battle of Crete:

I arrived at Baggush to find the strength of the battalion was only ten officers and 127 other ranks. This was disaster of the worst kind. The losses in Greece and Crete had been bad enough, when 400 reinforcements had been needed to bring the battalion up to strength. Even so, five months had been available to get them ready for battle. Now the whole process had to be repeated but this time with only a handful of experienced NCOs to carry the main burden of training and much uncertainty as to how long we would have before the division would be called on again. This, then, was not the time or place for the steady training routine which the old soldier would normally expect. The need now was for a special programme with emphasis on battle training, and with such a sense of urgency injected into it that everyone in the battalion would realise how desperate the situation was and would respond accordingly.⁷⁶⁵

While battalion and regiment commanders initially became prepared to command at such level through experience and training as platoon and company commanders, as well as through periods of acting as unit commanders in the absence of their superiors, training was also provided through numerous formal courses. These

⁷⁶³ Burrows, pp. 134-136

⁷⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁵ Ibid.

were specific in the training in the command and leadership at battalion and regimental level, based on the model formulated within the British Army. An example in the NZEF in the First World War is that of Claude Weston, who had attended an officers' refresher course based on a condensed syllabus of Kitchener's training regime for his new armies, prior to serving overseas.⁷⁶⁶ While serving as captain in the Wellington Infantry Regiment at Gallipoli he was made a temporary major due to the shortage of senior officers and was later appointed temporary commander of the 2nd Battalion, Wellington Regiment, at the same rank.⁷⁶⁷ When the senior officers of the regiment returned to serve again with the unit in France after being invalided to the United Kingdom, Weston reverted back to his rank of captain, although he gained his permanent rank of major prior to the battle of the Somme in September 1916.⁷⁶⁸

The senior infantry officers' course that Weston attended at Aldershot in England in January 1917 was typical of the formal training received by prospective battalion commanders of the British Army, including officers from British dominions. According to Weston there were positives and negatives in attending the course, with the object primarily to train battalion commanders.⁷⁶⁹ Weston was a major when he attended the 10-week course and the 200 officers who attended were allowed to invite the wives to attend as well, with Weston stating, 'I fancy the objects of the Army Council comprised not only instruction, but rest for officers.'⁷⁷⁰ He also claimed that it was only at such schools on instruction that the New Zealand officers had a chance to meet officers from other countries; in Weston's syndicate there were eight Englishmen, one Scot, two Canadians, three Australians and himself, as well as Irish, Welsh, South Africans and New Foundlanders in other syndicates.⁷⁷¹ Although the course included a variety of exercises and lectures in military command at battalion level, Weston was critical that at the course there was no serious attempt to keep up-to-date with military research and changes in tactics as the war progressed. In his opinion there were more efforts made in field training with battalions in France to address the lessons learned at the front, than what was taught at officer courses in England.⁷⁷²

⁷⁶⁶ Weston, p. 9

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 62

⁷⁶⁸ W.H Cunningham, C.A.L. Treadwell & J.S. Hanna, *The Wellington Regiment, N.Z.E.F., 1914-1919*, p. 119

⁷⁶⁹ Weston, p. 130

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷⁷² Ibid.

Such periods of temporary command of battalions by majors, and at times captains when the senior battalion officers became casualties during battle, were also common in 2NZEF. As a 27-year-old recently promoted major in 20 Battalion in Egypt in early 1942, Denver Fountaine was temporarily promoted to lieutenant-colonel in command of the unit during the battle of El Alamein.⁷⁷³ In a letter to his fiancée he recognised that his position was only temporary but that he had confidence in himself to do the job, stating, ‘my education with Kip [Brigadier Howard Kippenberger] and Jim Burrows will stand me in good stead.’⁷⁷⁴ He reverted back to his old rank as second-in-command of the battalion later that month as he predicted. However, by October of that year Fountaine had been given a permanent promotion to lieutenant-colonel and appointed to command 26 Battalion during the later stages of the battle for Egypt.⁷⁷⁵ Haddon Donald had a similar experience before he was promoted to command 22 Battalion during the Italian campaign in May 1944. He had been an officer in the unit since it was formed in 1940 and was second-in-command of the battalion when the appointment was made. In his autobiography, *In Peace & War: A Civilian Soldier’s Story*, Donald was of the opinion that his experience got him the promotion:

As it was only seven weeks since my 26th birthday, no doubt I was rather young but, after a long apprenticeship, I felt confident enough. It was customary for appointments to be made temporary initially, but it later became substantive.⁷⁷⁶

As with other officers like Fountaine and Donald, the periods of temporary command of combat units not only provided experience for officers at that level of command, but it also gave their superiors an opportunity to assess their abilities in those roles.

Leadership in Battle

The attributes required of effective combat battalion commanders were universal within both New Zealand expeditionary forces and the other British Imperial and Commonwealth fighting formations. While styles of command varied due to the

⁷⁷³ Denver Fountaine, Letter to Phyll, 4 August, 1942

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁵ Fountaine, Letter to Phyll, 29 October, 1942

⁷⁷⁶ Haddon Donald, *In Peace & War: A Civilian Soldier’s Story* (Masterton, 2005), p. 109

individual personality of each battalion commander, there were certain characteristics that inspired others to follow these officers into the cauldron of battle. Confidence, aggression, moral and physical courage, tactical knowledge and loyalty to their men were traits that typified those officers who gained reputations as being effective leaders of battalions in both the First and Second World War. Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Bauchop was certainly one regiment commander who had such characteristics which were appreciated by his subordinates. An unnamed soldier who served under Bauchop, who was mortally wounded leading the Otago Mounted Rifles in the battle for Chunuk Bair in August 1915, wrote in a letter to his family that was published in *The Press* in September of the same year:

About half-way up the spur we were joined by a small party of the Otago Mounted Rifles, under Colonel Bauchop himself, and we continued to clear out the enemy's trenches until we reached the top... Colonel Bauchop was the life and soul of us that night. He was here, there, and everywhere where danger threatened most. He took great risks, and exposed himself continuously, walking about the plateau. He asked for a volunteer to hold a place a little down a spur, and I said I would go. He asked my name and remembered me... He shifted me about a good bit that night.⁷⁷⁷

From this letter it is clear that Bauchop, a regular staff officer and experienced veteran of the Second Anglo-Boer War in South Africa, motivated his men during this action through his personal leadership, providing confidence to his troops through his actions and inspiring them to move forward in an attack over difficult terrain under enemy fire.

Lieutenant-Colonel William Malone displayed the same attributes and has become the most well-known New Zealand battalion commander to emerge from the Gallipoli campaign. However, his reputation as an effective commanding officer of the Wellington Infantry Battalion has only relatively recently been recognised by historians Robert Rhodes James⁷⁷⁸ and Christopher Pugsley. Pugsley argues that Malone:

confirmed a reputation that had grown around him during the hard days of training in Egypt. He had the drive, determination and sense of organisation to excel in defence. Under him, the left flank of Walker's Ridge and Russell's Top was secured during the savage senseless fighting of the first week. It would never again be seriously threatened by the Turk. He would perform the same service in early June at the critical centre of the Anzac line... Under his leadership and practical common-sense, stinking pits

⁷⁷⁷ Unnamed Soldier, Letter to Family, 17 August 1915, in *Letters from Gallipoli: New Zealand Soldiers Write Home*, ed. Glyn Harper (Auckland, 2011), pp. 249-250

⁷⁷⁸ Robert Rhodes James, *Gallipoli*, Papermac Edition (London, 1989), p.285

held by frightened men dominated by superior Turkish fire and bombing would be transformed into impregnable positions. Malone established standards of organisation of defences, covered shelters, sanitation and hygiene which became models for other battalions and Anzac to aspire to.⁷⁷⁹

Malone became known among the survivors of his battalion for his combat leadership and command during the capture and defence of the vital heights of Chunuk Bair on 7-8 August 1915. However, he was posthumously criticised by his superiors, Major-General Alexander Godley and Brigadier-General Francis Earl Johnston, both professional staff officers, for his positioning of his men on the reverse slopes of the hill during its defence. They argued that he should have dug in on the crest of the hill to provide better observation of the enemy rather than digging in on the reverse and forward slopes which they considered weakening the defence of the position by limiting the defenders opportunity to fire on the advancing Turks.⁷⁸⁰ Prior to this action Malone had questioned a number of orders directed from Brigade headquarters which made him unpopular with Johnston and the brigade-major, Major Arthur Temperley, who considered Malone merely an amateur soldier and held little trust in him.⁷⁸¹ Temperley drafted the official report of the battle which was heavily critical of Malone's defensive positioning after Temperley had previously told Malone not to employ the tactic of defending the reverse slope:

this particular battle was being fought above all to get commanding ground and observation and that it would be madness having gained the crest of Sari Bair, to dig in below it and allow the Turks to concentrate for counter-attack and push us off again....Knowing as I did the obstinacy of the man, I was profoundly uneasy because I felt sure that whatever he said to me, he would be found digging in on the reverse slope when the time comes.⁷⁸²

Temperley further argued that Malone had wasted two crucial hours digging reverse slope defences and that he had thrown away the advantages of holding the height stating, 'The cost in blood was not light: the ultimate cost to the Empire and the cause for which the Allies fought no-one can measure.'⁷⁸³

⁷⁷⁹ Pugsley, *Gallipoli*, p. 18

⁷⁸⁰ Major A.C. Temperley, 'A Personal Narrative of the Battle of Chunuk Bair, August 6th-10th, 1915,' MS-0017, KMARL, p. 13

⁷⁸¹ Ibid.

⁷⁸² Ibid. pp. 13-15

⁷⁸³ Ibid., p. 15

However, both James and Pugsley provide convincing arguments in defence of Malone. James used previously unpublished written accounts from survivors of the Wellington Battalion on Chunuk Bair to claim that Malone was unable to sufficiently entrench the summit of the position as ‘Time had been too short, and the ground too hard for the new trenches on the crest and forward slopes to be completed, and before long the Wellingtons were driven off the summit,’ but left holding on to the reverse slope.⁷⁸⁴ Pugsley argues that it was directly from Temperley’s report that the Anzac myth surrounding Malone’s defence of Chunuk Bair emerged, perpetuated through the writing of Australian historian, Charles Bean.⁷⁸⁵ Temperley was an experienced Imperial officer and his report of the action was accepted without question by Johnston, Godley and General Sir Ian Hamilton, the British commander of the Gallipoli campaign. Contrary to Temperley’s perception of him as merely a Territorial officer lacking in campaign experience, Malone was extremely well-read on military strategy, tactics, military history and British Army Regulations, and had proven himself to be as competent battalion commander during the fighting at Gallipoli.⁷⁸⁶ Due to being killed leading the defence of Chunuk Bair, Malone was never able to report his version of events or defend himself against any criticism. It was not until Pugsley and James later exposed this myth that the virtues of Malone’s ability as an effective battalion commander were fully appreciated.

Since, the story of the capture of Chunuk Bair has become the most celebrated event of the Gallipoli campaign for New Zealanders and is now central in the nation’s military history, Malone has become the most well-known battalion or regiment commander to emerge from the First World War. His style of leadership, seen as practical and leading by example, was exactly what was required to lead and inspire inexperienced citizen-soldiers in a campaign fought over difficult terrain and directed by generals inexperienced in fighting against modern armies. Frontal assaults made on entrenched enemy positions that were supported by machine guns and field artillery caused unprecedented casualties, resulted in a level of mistrust of the high command developing within the rank and file. Generally, there was little such feeling held towards battalion or regiment commanders. The lieutenant-colonels and majors who held

⁷⁸⁴ Rhodes, p. 285

⁷⁸⁵ Pugsley, *Gallipoli*, p. 288

⁷⁸⁶ John Crawford (ed), *No Better Death: The Great War Diaries and Letters of William G. Malone* (Auckland, 2005), p. 35

command of such formations actively served with their troops, both in and out of the front line during both conflicts, shared the rigours of battle and campaigning, and were exposed to the risk of becoming a casualty just like their men when they advanced across ‘no-man’s land’ or were subjected to enemy artillery bombardment.

Not all those who held temporary command of battalions proved to be suitable for permanent command at this level. Some officers had proven ability as company commanders but, in the opinion of their superiors, lacked certain skills required to command at a higher level. One example of this was temporary Lieutenant-Colonel Kingi Areta (Reta) Keiha MC who took over command of 28 (Maori) Battalion in April 1943 after the battalion commander, Lieutenant-Colonel (later Sir Charles) Bennett, had been seriously wounded at Takrouna during the Tunisian campaign. Keiha had served as a platoon commander in Greece and on Crete and had risen to the rank of major and second-in-command of the battalion by early 1943. Keiha led the battalion from April through to September 1943 when he was evacuated to hospital.⁷⁸⁷ However, Freyberg made it clear in a confidential cable in February 1944 that he did not want Keiha to resume command of the unit once he was fit again as he did not consider him up to the task:

Keiha proved himself [an] excellent and brave company commander. When Bennett was wounded he commanded [the] battalion as temporary Lieutenant-Colonel. It was then found over [a] period that he was weak in administration and in maintaining discipline and he cannot therefore be recommended for permanent command of the Maori Battalion. As [a] company commander we would be glad to accept him back.⁷⁸⁸

In contrast, there were officers who had been identified as having the required qualities to command battalions but never had the opportunity to do so. An example was Major W.F. Titchener who had volunteered as an enlisted soldier in 1939 and embarked with the 1st Echelon. He served as an NCO until he was commissioned in 1941 and saw extensive combat service through until the end of the Second World War, being awarded the MC and Bar.⁷⁸⁹ Brigadier Bill Gentry thought very highly of him

⁷⁸⁷ Monty Soutar, ‘Maori Commanders of the 28 Maori Battalion,’ in *Born to lead ?Portraits of New Zealand Commanders*, eds. Glyn Harper & Joel Hayward (Auckland, 2003), p. 201

⁷⁸⁸ Lieutenant-General Bernard Freyberg, Confidential Cable, 9 February 1944, 2NZEF Confidential Memoranda - Officers, 1942-146, WAI 1/7, ANZ

⁷⁸⁹ Brigadier W. Gentry, Personal Reference for Major W.F. Titchener, 2NZEF Confidential Memoranda – Officers, 1942-1946, WAI 1/7, ANZ

and indicated in a post-war personal reference that he was of the right material to command a battalion:

He is recognised as one of the very best of our field officers, and but for the end of the war would shortly have received command of a battalion. He has a sturdiness of character which makes him an excellent leader of men. As has been indicated above, his educational qualifications are above the average.⁷⁹⁰

Throughout the Second World War senior battalion officers within 2NZEAF had the same opportunities to attend similar courses at British Army officer training schools in England, Egypt and Palestine as their predecessors in the First World War. However, it appears that compared to such courses held during the Great War, those of the Second World War were better in addressing the advances in military tactics, in the latter case those fostered by the developments in armoured and aerial warfare. In the First World War the Allied commanders were unprepared for trench warfare and slow to learn, especially on the Western Front where they had to work out how to overcome the enemy who possessed advantages in defence. Both sides had similar firepower, but the Germans directed theirs from lines of fortified bunkers and entrenchments on high ground which exposed the Allied forces to costly attacks. The Germans also gave the Allied commanders a lesson in how to adjust tactics to succeed in attacking, as proven in the early stages of the 'Michael' offensive in March 1918. During the Second World War greater emphasis was placed on adjusting tactics early on to deal with the Germans. This was particularly important to combat commanders of the 2nd NZ Division whose units were exposed to the *blitzkrieg* tactics of coordinated attacks by mobile armoured columns with aerial support by German forces in Greece and North Africa. Major-General Keith Stewart stated in a letter after the war that Freyberg and his senior officers, mostly veterans of the First World War, were inexperienced in the armoured tactics used by the enemy and that they were surprised by the speed at which the Germans could advance, especially over difficult terrain.⁷⁹¹ Lessons learned during this campaign, as well as operations in North Africa, influenced the formal training syllabus provided by the British Army to senior New Zealand combat officers, as well as those of other Commonwealth forces.

⁷⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁹¹ Major-General Keith Stewart, Letter to Ian Wards, 27 November 1951, Campaign in Greece, HQ NZ Division Correspondence, WAI 3/1*1, ANZ

However, it was experience in battle where battalion and regimental commanders learned the most and it was where they proved themselves worthy to hold such positions, or not. Command and leadership styles varied due to the personalities of individual unit commanders, and this was particularly so among the unit commanders of the New Zealand expeditionary forces which primarily consisted of officer corps of civilian soldiers. The level of professionalism was never that of the regular British Army; however, it was perhaps because of this that the New Zealand combat units worked together as a team and generally performed so well during both wars. Leadership at battalion and regimental level was crucial to success in battle, with the unit commander's role being the most pivotal, seeing themselves as team captains who shared the dangers of battle with their men, but did not necessarily need to lead directly from the front. The stance taken by many New Zealand infantry battalion commanders in the Second World War can be summed up in the comments of Lieutenant-Colonel Fred Baker, who had been an accountant in civilian life, and who led 28 (Maori) Battalion during the battle of El Alamein in 1942:

Both as a company commander and as a battalion commander I realised that that my correct position was somewhat in the rear. However, in practice I found that I tended to gravitate towards the leading platoon or company respectively. In justification of this I put forward the argument that with the emergencies which arise in modern warfare, where infantry are likely to run into AFVs [armoured fighting vehicles] or other anticipated hazards, it is necessary for a commander to keep sufficiently well forward until he is satisfied that these dangers have been avoided or eliminated before taking up his position at the HQ [headquarters] in the rear. At all stages satisfactory facilities for communicating with his sub units is necessary.⁷⁹²

Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie Andrew, VC, who led 22 Battalion in the fateful defence of Maleme Airfield during the battle of Crete, was of the same opinion. He wrote in a survey conducted of senior 2NZEF officers after the Second World War, that there were dangers in battalion commanders being too far forward with the troops, stating that when they were forward they must not try or take over command of the junior formation in the local battle and risk obtaining the too small and too narrow view of the fight.⁷⁹³

⁷⁹² Lieutenant-Colonel Frederick Baker, Report to Rehabilitation Department, 17 August 1948, IA 77, Box 7- Item 38, ANZ

⁷⁹³ Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie Andrew, Report to Rehabilitation Department, IA 7, Box 77- Item 38, ANZ

In combat battalion commanders required up-to-date information and intelligence regarding their sector of operations so that they could make informed decisions concerning the offensive or defensive placement of their troops. In the heat of battle communications with forward elements of battalions and regiments could diminish, leading to many New Zealand commanders moving closer to the action to get a greater and accurate appreciation of the situation; especially during the mobile operations of World War Two. Charles Upham wrote after the war that intelligent appreciation of the situation and getting information back to battalion or brigade headquarters was one of the most important duties of combat officers and that there always seemed to be a lost link somewhere during a battle.⁷⁹⁴ It was for this reason that there was a tendency for unit commanders to place themselves close to the action to gain better knowledge of how the battle was progressing in their area of control and to provide confidence to their troops through their presence. It was much easier for battalion commanders to achieve this during the First World War where trench warfare restricted the frontage an infantry battalion was allocated to defend, and where battalion headquarters were generally situated within 50-100 yards in the rear of the forward trenches.⁷⁹⁵ By being so close to the fighting the battalion commanders could provide inspiration and confidence to the men under their command, but it also increased risks to their personal safety.

Evidence that battalion and regimental commanders from both New Zealand expeditionary forces shared the dangers of battle with their troops and led from the front is provided in the casualty lists from both conflicts. In the First World War Lieutenant-Colonels Douglas MacBean Stewart and William Malone (of the Canterbury and Wellington regiments respectively) were killed leading their battalions at Gallipoli, while Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Bauchop died of wounds he sustained leading the Otago Mounted Rifles on the peninsula (see Table 8).⁷⁹⁶ Two other original battalion commanders of the New Zealand Infantry Brigade, Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Plugge of the Auckland Regiment and Lieutenant-Colonel A. Moore of the Otago Regiment, also became casualties during the campaign.⁷⁹⁷ On the Western Front in France and Belgium, there were three battalion commanders of the New Zealand Division killed in

⁷⁹⁴ Charles Upham, VC, Report to Rehabilitation Department, IA 77, Box 7, Item 38, ANZ

⁷⁹⁵ Frederick Stuart Varnham, War Diaries, 7 June 1917, MS Papers 4303-2, ATL

⁷⁹⁶ *The Great War, 1914-1918: New Zealand Expeditionary Force- Roll of Honour* (Wellington, 1924), pp. 18, 195 & 280

⁷⁹⁷ Pugsley, *Gallipoli*, p. 387

action; Lieutenant-Colonel George King, killed while commanding the 1st Battalion of the Canterbury Regiment at Passchendaele, Lieutenant-Colonel Alfred Winter-Evans of the New Zealand Rifle Brigade, and Lieutenant-Colonel William Pennycook of the Otago Infantry Regiment.⁷⁹⁸ Although not casualties of combat, it is worth noting that three other commanders of New Zealand combat units died of disease during the Great War, proving that those of high rank were also exposed to the same diseases associated with war as their troops.⁷⁹⁹ A survey of information obtained from the Cenotaph database of the Auckland War Memorial Museum relating to a number of battalion commanders of the Auckland, Wellington, Canterbury and Otago Infantry Regiments, along with those of the New Zealand Rifle Brigade and the New Zealand Pioneer Battalion shows that the majority were wounded at some point, with some being wounded multiple times. Of the seven lieutenant-colonels surveyed from the Auckland Infantry Regiment, six were wounded, while a seventh, Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Brown was killed on the Western Front when serving as a temporary brigadier-general. Of the five officers surveyed from the Wellington Infantry Regiment, two sustained wounds, one was killed in action (Malone) and one died of disease.⁸⁰⁰

There was a similar trend with casualties of combat unit commanders within the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force in the Second World War. Of the nearly eighty battalion commanders that served overseas during the conflict, five were killed in action (J.M. Allen, S.F. Allen, A.W. Greville, Tiwi Love and John Russell, son of Major-General Sir Andrew Russell), while another three (R.J. Lynch, Jan Peart and Reg Romans) died of wounds received in battle.⁸⁰¹ Roger McElwain argues that more than one third of the infantry battalion commanders within the 2nd New Zealand Division became casualties, with a number being wounded multiple times.⁸⁰² Haddon Donald, who led 22 Battalion in the latter stages of the Italian campaign, is one such example, being wounded four times during the war, although he did not sustain all the injuries while he was commanding his unit.⁸⁰³

⁷⁹⁸ *The Great War, 1914-1918*, pp. 160, 233 & 321

⁷⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 60, 261 & 280

⁸⁰⁰ Cenotaph database, Auckland War Memorial Museum

⁸⁰¹ Roger McElwain, 'Commanding Officers of the Infantry Battalions of 2nd New Zealand Division,' in *Born to Lead? Portraits of New Zealand Commanders*, eds. Glyn Harper and Joel Hayward (Auckland, 2003), pp. 177-191

⁸⁰² *Ibid.*

⁸⁰³ Donald, pp. 107-108

Replacements

The length of time individual unit commanders held their position was determined by a number of factors. Combat and sickness attributed to the replacement of battalion and regimental commanders in the expeditionary forces throughout both world wars, although there was a greater turnover in these positions in the Second World War. The rigours of the eight-month Gallipoli campaign saw the original four infantry regiment commanders becoming casualties and replaced by competent and younger officers, such as Robert Young who was given command of the Auckland Regiment and Jack Hughes who took over the Canterbury Regiment. These young officers impressed Godley with their leadership, but they also became casualties as the war progressed and were replaced in turn. Fighting on the Western Front accounted for high casualties among the senior officers, with three battalion commanders becoming casualties during the battle of Messines in 1917.⁸⁰⁴ The stress of command at this level attributed to battle fatigue also played a part in the constant need to identify suitable replacements, although Freyberg was more attuned to this than Godley and Russell.

The high turnover of battalion commanders in the 2nd New Zealand Division during the Second World War contributed to its combat efficiency and durability. The fighting in Greece and on Crete exposed a number of the original battalion commanders as being unfit for the rigours of modern warfare, such as Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie Andrew of 22 Battalion. He was an example of a Great War veteran who struggled with the *blitzkrieg* tactics employed by the Germans in the early campaigns in the Second World War, and who Sandy Thomas describes as being too slow in reacting to the changing situations regarding the defence of Maleme airfield on Crete.⁸⁰⁵ However, as the war progressed Freyberg appointed younger men to such positions, who had not only gained valuable experience in fighting the rapid-moving German armoured columns in Greece and North Africa, but who also had youthful mental and physical strength to sustain them in combat. Men such as Sandy Thomas, Haddon Donald and Denver Fountaine were in their mid or late twenties when they were appointed as permanent battalion commanders; ages that would have been considered far too young to lead a battalion at the beginning of both wars. However, such men and others like

⁸⁰⁴ Major-General Sir Alexander Godley, Letter to Major-General Sir Alfred Robin, 21 June 1917, AD 12 / 21, ANZ

⁸⁰⁵ W.B 'Sandy' Thomas, Interview, 6 June 2010

them were seasoned combat officers by the time they were appointed, having served as platoon commanders from the formation of their battalions. Fountaine led 26 Battalion for over eighteen months from the battle of El Alamein in late 1942 until the battle for Florence in 1944, although this length of command was unusual.⁸⁰⁶ McElwain states that the period of commands in the 2nd New Zealand Division ranged from several weeks through to two years, calculating the average period being 9 months.⁸⁰⁷

The performance of unit commanders within both expeditionary forces was generally of a high standard, with some proving exceptional. There were a small number who suffered some criticism, such as Arthur Plugge at Gallipoli, who Malone believed was slack in the leading the Auckland Battalion.⁸⁰⁸ During the Second World War the most controversial New Zealand battalion commander was Leslie Andrew for his withdrawal from Maleme airfield in the defence of Crete. However, most other battalion commanders remained relatively unknown other than within the divisions. Major-General Kippenberger attempted to address this in several newspaper articles published in Britain in 1945, where he wanted to acknowledge the input these officers had in the success of the New Zealand military forces serving overseas:

I should like to see the names of the battalion commanders in the New Zealand Division better known to our people at home. They are men who have served New Zealand very well. They have, in many cases, risen during the war from the rank of subaltern, and they have had the responsibility, during training and in battle, of commanding thousands of men. They have stuck to their work solidly, through the heat and burden of the day, and they have maintained their zest and zeal without a sign of flagging. In fact, to a senior officer, one of the most astonishing things has been the way in which these officers upon whom one has to rely so much, have retained their thrust, their enthusiasm and their devotion. They are good men and they deserve well of their country.⁸⁰⁹

⁸⁰⁶ Amber Jo Illsley, 'Col. Fountaine remembers El Alamein,' *The Westport News*, 22 October 1992, p. 5

⁸⁰⁷ McElwain, pp. 177-191

⁸⁰⁸ Malone, Diary, 16 May 1915, MS Papers 4130, ATL

⁸⁰⁹ Major-General Howard Kippenberger, 'The Names of These Soldiers Should Be Better Known: Battalion Commanders of New Zealand Division Have Outstanding Records,' WAI 1/ 291, ANZ

Table 8: Campaign Fatal Casualties of Lieutenant-Colonels – New Zealand Expeditionary Force in the First World War

Name	Unit	Cause of Death	Location	Date
Stewart, D. MacB.	Canterbury Infantry Regiment	KIA	Gallipoli	25/4/1915
Malone, W.G	Wellington Infantry Regiment	KIA	Gallipoli	8/8/1915
Bauchop, A	Otago Mounted Rifles	DOW	Gallipoli	10/8/1915
Batchelor, F.C.	NZ Medical Corps	DOD	Gallipoli	31/8/1915
Thomas, C.E	NZ Medical Corps	KIA	Gallipoli	28/8/1915
Stewart, G.H.	Canterbury Mounted Rifles	DOD	Gallipoli	20/11/1915
Winter-Evans, A.	NZ Rifle Brigade	KIA	France	12/10/1917
King, G.A.	Canterbury Infantry Regiment/ NZ Pioneer Battalion	KIA	France	12/10/1917
Cook, C. F.	Wellington Infantry Regiment	DOD	England	2/5/1918
Pennycook, W.S.	Otago Infantry Regiment	KIA	France	24/8/1918
Saxby, C.G.	NZ Pioneer Battalion	DOD	France	27/11/1918

Key: KIA – Killed in Action
DOW – Died of Wounds
DOD – Died of Disease

Sources: Nominal Rolls, NZEF; New Zealand Expeditionary Force Roll of Honour, 1914-1918; Cenotaph Database, Auckland War Memorial Museum

Although Kippenberger wrote this to describe the battalion commanders of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force, his description could well sum up those who commanded New Zealand battalions and regiments in the First World War.

In citizen armies social leadership required to be moulded into military leadership, though as the conflicts went on those with military capability revealed themselves and rose to higher rank. The great weakness of the 'amateur tradition' of soldiering was that professional standards were at first well below par and were acquired only slowly through training and experience. The great strength of the New Zealand 'amateur tradition' was that it was derived from a society where social class and other divisions were not as pronounced as elsewhere; that fairness, equality, practicality, coupled with traditional bonds of mateship and team efforts were prominent in the social ethos, and that the units had strong communal roots. Successful officers, in the first instance, had a good understanding of the sort of society to which they and their men belonged. They also had the required professional motivation and personal qualities needed to lead men into battle.

Undoubtedly, the fighting effectiveness of the New Zealand expeditionary forces in both major conflicts relied heavily on the abilities of those who commanded the combat units. The Dominion was well served by the calibre of its battalion and regiment commanders, which was reflected in the fighting spirit of the New Zealand divisions both in defeat and victory. Those who had the key ingredients of military experience, respect from their subordinates based on practical military knowledge and shared experience, confidence, aggression, together with physical and moral courage, were able to successfully lead and inspire the troops in defensive and offensive actions through years of war. What makes this more remarkable is that the majority of such leaders were citizen-soldiers who, through experience and devotion to duty, had become highly efficient and effective combat commanders who were able to maintain a sense of *esprit de corps* within their commands. It was such officers who ultimately were responsible in forging the New Zealand expeditionary forces into highly trained and effective fighting formations.

Chapter 8

Command and Leadership: Company Officers

There has been no comprehensive study of the junior officers of the New Zealand expeditionary forces who physically led their men into battle during the First and Second World Wars. Historians writing on the New Zealand military experience during these two conflicts have traditionally focused on either the senior commanders who were responsible for the planning and directing of major operations, or analysis of the numerous campaigns and battles that the New Zealanders were involved in. Until now almost no research has been conducted on the role and experience of company, platoon, troop, squadron and battery officers, whom we know very little about, and yet who, more than any others, shared the frontline fighting with the rank and file. Their role was crucial for success as it was left to young and less experienced junior officers within the battalions and supporting units to lead their men from the front into the extremes of combat. It was these men who continually inspired others to follow them into situations that were likely to end in individuals receiving serious wounds, disfigurement and possible death in an effort to achieve tactical victory over the enemy. It was through the leadership efforts of these men that the New Zealand divisions of the expeditionary forces of both major conflicts eventually forged reputations as elite fighting formations; with Winston Churchill describing the 2nd New Zealand Division as one of the finest divisions of all time, comparing its deeds to those of the famous British Light Division of the Napoleonic Wars.⁸¹⁰ The status junior officers received once commissioned provided them with certain privileges above the Other Ranks; not only in keeping with British Army tradition, but also with every modern army of the era. However, with such status also came responsibility for the welfare of their subordinates while balancing the need to follow orders from superiors, some of which would lead to certain death. The purpose of this chapter is to shed some light on the

⁸¹⁰ Freyberg to Fraser, 13 May 1943, *Documents Relating to New Zealand's Participation in the Second World War*, Vol. 2, War History Branch, Department of Internal Affairs (Wellington, 1951), pp. 200-201

experiences of junior officers within the expeditionary forces and to examine how they dealt with responsibility of leadership and their performance within a citizen army.

The service and sacrifice of such men is even more inspiring when considering that the majority of these officers were civilian volunteers and conscripts who had only limited military service before being thrust into the cauldron of modern warfare. The burden of responsibility for their men was high and the expectations of service and duty placed on them by themselves and their superiors is hard to comprehend for those living in twenty-first century New Zealand. This makes a study of such men important, not only to provide a greater understanding of the nation's military history and achievements in an international context, but also to provide a greater appreciation of the egalitarian values of New Zealand society that were evident in the country's military forces in the first half of the twentieth century.

The historiography regarding the battalion and company grade officers for both major conflicts is limited. John McLeod was the first to consider competency of the officers of 2NZEF in the Second World War and their relationships with their men.⁸¹¹ As previously mentioned, Harper and Hayward's book *Born to Lead?*⁸¹² focuses on senior New Zealand commanders, although there are chapters in the work that cover battalion commanders of the 2nd New Zealand Division in the Second World War, including a whole chapter on the 28th (Maori) Battalion. This work has made a major contribution to the historiography of New Zealand military commanders by identifying and reflecting on the individuals who led New Zealand troops during campaigns of both world wars. In regard to the battalion commanders, it has also provided a comprehensive list of officers who led the rifle battalions, noting officers' previous occupations and dates when commanding the units, from which further study can be made.

However, to gain a broad understanding and analysis of the experiences of the battalion, squadron and battery officers who actually led their companies, platoons, troops and guns sections in combat, students of military history are reliant on anecdotal evidence provided in autobiographies, biographies, official reports, personal letters, diaries and recorded interviews with officers, as well as those who served under them.

⁸¹¹ John McLeod, *Myth and Reality: The New Zealand Soldier in World War II* (Auckland, 1986), pp. 156-169

⁸¹² Glyn Harper & Joel Hayward (eds.), *Born to Lead? Portraits of New Zealand Commanders* (Auckland, 2003)

Autobiographies such as those by W.B (Sandy) Thomas⁸¹³ and Haddon Donald⁸¹⁴ are important works in that they provide an insight by junior officers who were commissioned at the outbreak of the Second World War and who served throughout the conflict. Both became battalion commanders. Likewise, the diaries of Herbert Hart, edited by John Crawford,⁸¹⁵ and those of William Malone⁸¹⁶ are equally important in not only providing a record of the experiences of officers who served during the Great War, but also evidence of the attitudes and beliefs of New Zealand society at the time, helping to understand what inspired these men to volunteer for military service overseas.

Many officers and men from the ranks wrote of their personal experiences in war after the conflicts in an effort to provide a record of their service and to help their families understand how experiencing war could change individuals. Others also wrote as a healing process, with the war-time memoirs providing an outlet for emotions that had to be suppressed while on active service. Many such memoirs were self-published, with only limited copies being produced; however, the historical value of such publications is now being appreciated due to the increased public interest in the nation's military past. With New Zealanders now appreciating that the nation's military history is important in helping to understand the development of the country in an international context, the demand for publications recording our military exploits and experiences is increasing. Many families of veterans are discovering and publishing diaries and letters. It is by studying these records of officers and men who experienced the rigours of modern war that military historians can gain a clear picture of how New Zealanders were led in the front line in the two major wars that proved defining periods in the history of New Zealand. This chapter relies heavily on the personal recordings of such men.

⁸¹³ W.B. 'Sandy' Thomas, *Pathways to Adventure: An Extraordinary Life of W.B. 'Sandy' Thomas*, compiled by Denis McLean (Hororata, 2004)

⁸¹⁴ Donald, *In Peace & War* (Masterton, 2005)

⁸¹⁵ John Crawford (ed.), *The Devil's Own War: The First World War Diary of Brigadier-General Herbert Hart* (Auckland, 2008)

⁸¹⁶ W.G. Malone, *Diaries and Letters of W.G. Malone*, MSX 2546, ATL

Status as Officers

Status was a crucial element of being an officer. Officers within the New Zealand expeditionary forces, as well as those from Britain and other Commonwealth forces, received their status directly from the king when they received their commission. A commission gave them formal authority over their subordinates, yet also made them responsible for their welfare which included providing adept leadership in battle. The British Army, which both New Zealand expeditionary forces were part of, was protective of officer status; identified through higher pay, providing separate officers' messes, special accommodation out of the frontline, and numerous other privileges that were deemed appropriate for the social classes that officers were traditionally commissioned from. This status even extended to special treatment from the enemy when officers were captured, as distinctions between commissioned officers and the rank and file were observed in every modern army fighting in both world conflicts.

An unwritten 'Code of Conduct' operated for officers, emphasising their special status. Incompetent officers were moved on to non-combat roles and relatively few, compared to the Other Ranks, were brought before Courts Martial. Instead informal means were used to deal with those who failed in their duty. However, within the New Zealand expeditionary forces there was also a 'counter-culture' of mateship and comradeship that was implicit at platoon and company level, especially in the Second World War. Although Charles Upham's well-known dislike of the accessories and trappings of rank and his close identification with his men was an extreme example of this, there is evidence to show that many officers held similar feelings. This was more so towards the end of both wars when the practice of commissioning men from the ranks was prevalent and which reduced the divide, even if the newly commissioned officers were posted away from their original units.

The junior officers played a significant part in ensuring the orders and tasks determined by their unit commanders were carried out. Their role initially was to prepare and train the troops under their command for the rigours of campaigning, while ensuring that they themselves were fully prepared for such tasks. British military historian, Christopher Moore-Bick, has recently pointed out that the part played by the captains and lieutenants of the British Army during the First World War has been

relatively ignored by historians.⁸¹⁷ John Lewis-Stempel is another who has attempted to tackle the marginalization of junior officers in the British Army. Moore-Bick, in particular, argues that there has been a tendency for historians to see the experience of the man in the ranks as the ‘true’ experience of the two great conflicts, contrasting with the perceived privileges of the junior officers whose lifestyle in the trenches was portrayed as being different from the common soldiers’.⁸¹⁸ To some extent, this has been the case with New Zealand military historiography, with only the most celebrated officers, such as Freyberg, Kippenberger, Upham and Malone receiving recognition from historians.

Obviously, the British social class system has played a significant role in the contrasting historical perceptions of the experiences of the officers and other ranks in the British Army during this period, but such perceptions are also relevant to the New Zealand experience. This was especially during the First World War where elements of British class structure were evident in the young dominion. By 1914 middle-class society was well established in New Zealand, where the sons of wealthy large estate owners, professionals and merchants had the privilege of higher education which led on to greater vocational and social opportunities. Evidence of this can be seen in the number of young junior officers who were selected for commissions and whose attestation papers recorded that they had attended prestigious private schools. Social and professional networks also proved influential in officer selection within the provincial Territorial regiments, as well as those selected as officer cadets for the Staff Corps. Such networks still existed in 1939 when the second expeditionary force was being formed, but the greater opportunities for higher education for working-class New Zealanders at that time meant that the officer corps within the New Zealand Army was more socially homogenised compared to that of the British Army, promoting a more inclusive perception of shared experiences of war (see Appendices 5-7).

⁸¹⁷ Christopher Moore-Bick, *Playing the Game: The British Junior Infantry Officer on the Western Front, 1914-18* (Solihull, West Midlands, 2011), pp. 11-12

⁸¹⁸ *Ibid.*

The Inequality of Discipline

Officers were treated differently from enlisted men in regard to discipline during both major conflicts. The most serious offences committed by officers and other ranks were usually dealt with through Courts Martial. However, very few officers of the New Zealand expeditionary forces were ever prosecuted in such a way, especially in the Second World War. During the Great War, of the 26 New Zealand enlisted soldiers who were sentenced to death by Court Martial for desertion in the face of the enemy, only five of the sentences were actually carried out. It would be naïve to think that of the hundreds of officers who served overseas in the expeditionary forces, that none of them succumbed to the temptation to desert their posts in the face of an enemy onslaught in an effort at self-preservation. Any reported incidents of such were either dealt with within the confines of the battalion mess where the offending officer was offered a transfer to a non-combat unit, given the opportunity to resign or was cashiered from the army.⁸¹⁹ Serious offences committed by enlisted men could be dealt with by up to 28 days detention or field punishment determined by the battalion commander, while certain offences required a district Court Martial established under the Army Act that was heard before a panel of officers acting as judges. These proceedings were limited in their power of punishment, with only General Courts Martial being able to award punishments of penal servitude and death. Unlike the other ranks, officers could only be tried in General Court Martial, although while on active service overseas all offences could be heard by a Field Court Martial presided over by a panel of senior field officers. Any officer charged with an offence would be defended by another officer who had some legal experience prior to military service.⁸²⁰

Very few officers ever faced a Court Martial. Pugsley indicates that while the NZEF was stationed in Egypt some officers proved deficient, but that none were ever court-martialled.⁸²¹ Instead, a number of young platoon commanders were allowed or 'invited' to resign their commissions and so forestall formal disciplinary action.⁸²² Such a stance by the military hierarchy was beneficial to all concerned as it limited the embarrassment not only to the individual officers, but also to the reputation of the

⁸¹⁹ Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell*, p. 27

⁸²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73

⁸²¹ *Ibid.*

⁸²² *Ibid.*

officer corps, as well as the expeditionary forces in general. At least one battalion commander and several company commanders were sent back to New Zealand on 'medical grounds' during the Great War; a term that was sometimes used as a euphemism for the removal of incompetent officers. Pugsley further argues that an unsatisfactory officer was more likely to be removed from command rather than face a Court Martial, even if there was sufficient evidence of an offence.⁸²³ Those few officers who did face a General Court Martial appeared before a panel of five officers, including a colonel or brigadier who acted as the president of the proceedings. There was also a judge advocate present, usually a qualified barrister or solicitor, to offer legal guidance to the court and ensure that such proceedings were strictly conducted in accordance with the Rules of Procedure stipulated in the *Manual of Military Law*.⁸²⁴

Officers of the New Zealand expeditionary forces were more likely to be court-martialled in the Great War than in the Second World War. In all, 53 Courts Martial were conducted for offences committed by officers on the Western Front, with only seven officers found not guilty.⁸²⁵ Officers were treated more fairly than enlisted men in such proceedings, with officers receiving legal advice while enlisted men received very little, if any, through the Field General Courts Martial procedure.⁸²⁶ The most common offence for which officers were charged was that of drunkenness, with seventeen officers of the New Zealand Division in France facing such prosecution, resulting in seven being dismissed from the service in ignominy.⁸²⁷ The remainder lost seniority in rank and were reprimanded. There was a various range of other offences, from 'scandalous conduct' to acts that were 'to the prejudice of good order and military discipline.'⁸²⁸ Two cases included the officers being in possession of cameras and taking photographs, for which both lost seniority and were reprimanded. Curiously, Denver Fountaine purchased a camera in Cairo in 1940 that he openly carried throughout the early North African campaigns, including taking it on a sightseeing excursion to Palestine with Colonel Kippenberger and Major Jim Burrows, until he lost his kit.⁸²⁹ Although the use of personal cameras was still officially prohibited, such

⁸²³ Ibid.

⁸²⁴ Ibid., p. 63

⁸²⁵ Ibid., p. 72

⁸²⁶ Ibid. p. 73

⁸²⁷ Ibid.

⁸²⁸ Ibid.

⁸²⁹ Fountaine, Letter to fiancée, 27 March 1940

offending seemed to be ignored within the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force during the Second World War, at least for officers.

In general, it was unlikely that New Zealand officers in both expeditionary forces would face court martial proceedings. Whereas five enlisted men from the Division in the Great War were executed, four for desertion and one for mutiny, no officer suffered the same penalty. But there was at least one example of an officer who displayed similar behaviour. In 1918 an officer of the 2nd Auckland Infantry Battalion was reported on by his commanding officer for cowardice after he had left his company during the attack on Grevillers in August of that year.⁸³⁰ He had done this on a number of occasions. His battalion commander, Lieutenant-Colonel S.S. Allen, pushed for the officer to be dealt with by way of court martial as an example to his troops, stating that the officer was physically and temperamentally unsuited for any command in the field.⁸³¹ Russell was initially against any prosecution and fortunately for the officer, who had been invalided to England, the matter was dropped with the signing of the armistice and he was invited to resign his commission.⁸³² Both Sandy Thomas and Haddon Donald served as junior platoon commanders in 2NZEF and both progressed to command their battalion, Thomas with 23 Battalion and Donald with 22 Battalion. These men served in the 2nd NZ Division from 1940 through to the end of the conflict and both agreed that the court martial of New Zealand officers was almost unheard of in the Second World War. Thomas recalled that from his experience, the discipline of officers within the battalion was dealt with in the officers' mess, with only very serious offences ever being officially brought to the attention of the battalion commander.⁸³³ Donald agreed, stating that any issues were generally dealt with by private conversation in the mess, with some help from brigade headquarters if an officer could not cope and it was decided that he needed to be sent back to base.⁸³⁴ He further stated that there was an unwritten code of good conduct understood and expected of officers, both in and out of the front line, and that the code was usually enforced privately by the second-in-command of the unit in the mess.⁸³⁵ Both Thomas and Donald argue that this system

⁸³⁰ Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell*, p. 73

⁸³¹ *Ibid.*

⁸³² *Ibid.*

⁸³³ Thomas, Interview, 31 August 2010

⁸³⁴ Haddon Donald, Letter to author, 13 July 2010

⁸³⁵ *Ibid.*

proved very effective and that a quiet word to the offending officer was usually sufficient to remedy any issues, ensuring that any formal prosecutions were rare.⁸³⁶

Privileges of Officers

British Empire army officers, including those of the New Zealand expeditionary forces, had traditional privileges that went with their rank. These generally concerned quality of accommodation, quality of food, higher pay and leave entitlements, and opportunities that were not extended to enlisted men. Although some of the rank and file within the New Zealand forces complained of inequality in their letters and diaries, the majority accepted that such privileges went with the responsibilities of the rank the officers held. Clearly, a captain in command of a company of over one hundred men could not be expected to be paid the same as a sergeant in charge of twenty men; likewise, the responsibilities of a captain were greater than that of a sergeant, although a sergeant's responsibilities were no less important in ensuring the efficiency of the company. With the organisation of the New Zealand military forces modelled on that of the British Army, the privileges that officers received followed the practices of all modern armies at the time and generally had little effect on the relationships between the officers and their men.

The better quality food and accommodation that officers received out of the front line caused the greatest amount of grumbling from the New Zealand enlisted volunteers and conscripts in both expeditionary forces.⁸³⁷ Officers ate at their own mess when in camp and while in transit from New Zealand to their theatres of operation. Senior officers usually travelled in First Class accommodation, having cabins of their own on ships, while company grade officers usually had to share quarters with one or more officers of the same rank.⁸³⁸ However, depending on the quality of ship the troops were being transported in, some enlisted NCOs were also accommodated in shared cabins, while the majority of the rank and file slept in the cramped holds of the ships that had poor ventilation and where sanitation was limited.⁸³⁹ This led to many rank and

⁸³⁶ Ibid.

⁸³⁷ McLeod, pp. 163-165

⁸³⁸ Lieutenant H.M. Clark, Diary, 26 August 1915 to May 1916, MS- 1993-1000, p. 5, KMARL

⁸³⁹ Ibid.

file sleeping on the decks of the ships when the weather allowed. Some battalions of the Main Body of the NZEF and of the first three echelons of 2NZEF travelled on ocean liners where both the officers and other ranks received the same quality menu in their messes that had been provided to civilian passengers in the pre-war years.⁸⁴⁰ This meant that some of the enlisted men received the same food as the officers, with many receiving a better diet than they had in civilian life.⁸⁴¹ However, this was not the case for everybody, where on some ships even the officers complained of the poor quality food they received.⁸⁴²

Commissioned officers continued to lead a privileged life, compared to enlisted soldiers, when not serving at the front, although there was more equality between the officers and the other ranks once on active service. Officers still ate from their own messes, but these were supplied from the same sources as the messes of the rank and file, ensuring there was little difference in food quality. However, when off duty and on leave, officers generally had greater financial freedom to eat at finer dining establishments in Cairo, London, Paris, Venice and Rome, while enlisted men could generally only afford to eat at more humble establishments. Haddon Donald states that he had a privileged life as a young officer in 22 Battalion when it was part of the Second Echelon stationed in Britain in 1940. He received more leave than enlisted men of the battalion, with entertainment for officers in London being provided by such organisations as the Victoria League: a group of friendly ladies within English society who put themselves out to provide entertainment for overseas officers far from home.⁸⁴³ After receiving a week's pass, the League even arranged for Donald to travel to Dunninald Castle, near Montrose in Scotland, where shooting parties were arranged for officers to hunt deer and grouse.⁸⁴⁴ Officers were similarly catered for by high society in Egypt during both wars. As a major in the Wellington Infantry Battalion in the NZEF, Herbert Hart described in his diary taking part in shooting parties along the Nile, playing golf and attending formal dinners and balls at the Grand Continental Hotel prior to embarking for the Gallipoli campaign.⁸⁴⁵ Even as a junior lieutenant in 20 Battalion during the Second World War, Denver Fountaine found himself invited for meals at the

⁸⁴⁰ Donald, *In Peace & War*, p. 10

⁸⁴¹ Private Edward Millar, Letter to Father, 4 August 1917, Tim Clyne Collection.

⁸⁴² Lieutenant Iver Griffiths, Diary, 3 November 1918, MS -1993.973, KMARL

⁸⁴³ Donald, *In Peace & War*, p. 12

⁸⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁵ Crawford, *The Devil's Own War*, pp. 36-48

homes of prominent British officials, and enjoying golf, swimming and tennis during his leisure time at the Gezira Sports Club in Cairo.⁸⁴⁶ Such pursuits were not generally available to the other ranks.

There was also a perception that officers received better treatment from the enemy when captured. When Sapper Roy Natusch MM of the 6th Field Company, and later an All Black trialist, was captured in Greece in 1941 he gave his rank as captain.⁸⁴⁷ He explained his reasons in a post-war interview: 'Rank held great clout in Europe, and we reckoned that we'd have a better chance with one of us as an officer.' He further stated that his new rank did allow him privileges but that he was still always scared of being found out.⁸⁴⁸ Captured officers were certainly held in higher regard to enlisted men, with both the Germans and Italians providing separate prisoner of war camps for them. However, when initially captured the officers suffered the same deprivations as their men, with lack of food, poor sanitation and limited medical supplies. Denver Fountaine claimed that he received no medical attention from the enemy, along with the others from his battalion, after he was shot in the leg at Bel Hamed and taken prisoner while at an aid station at Waidi Schimar during Operation Crusader in November 1941.⁸⁴⁹

Officers imprisoned in Italy recorded receiving mixed treatment, depending on the character of the camp commander. Poppi (Campo 38), a former convent in the Apennine Mountains, was established especially to accommodate 100 New Zealand officers, while New Zealanders were also imprisoned at Padua (Campo 35), an ancient monastery, and at Modena (Campo 47), which was a military barracks. More senior Allied officers, such as Brigadiers Hargest and Miles, were housed in a modern country villa near Florence, known as 'Campo 12.'⁸⁵⁰ Officers who proved to be difficult for their captors were sent to the punishment fortress of Gavi (Campo 5). On the face of it, New Zealand officers appear to have been treated better than the enlisted prisoners. Those officers who were sent to Modena claimed they were well fed, had comfortable accommodation, space to exercise, resources to provide their own entertainment and

⁸⁴⁶ Fountaine, Letter to fiancée, 23 August 1940

⁸⁴⁷ Roy Natusch, Obituary – "World War II escape artist was 'scared as a rabbit,' *The Dominion Post*, Thursday, 23 April 2009, p. B3

⁸⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁹ Amber Jo Illsley, 'Col. Fountaine remembers El Alamein,' *The News*, Westport, 22 October, 1992, p. 5

⁸⁵⁰ Brigadier James Hargest, *Farewell Campo 12* (Wellington, 1946), p. 32

were well supplied with wine. They even received regular lectures on various topics, including learning to speak Italian.

It was a different experience for those sent to German POW camps. The Germans were extremely respectful of rank and generally ensured that the Allied officers were given all the privileges accorded to them under the provisions of the Geneva Convention. Commissioned officers were separated from the other ranks and held in camps or facilities known as ‘Oflags.’ On the other hand, however, like the enlisted prisoners, the officers also suffered from over-crowded accommodation, poor sanitation, limited medical treatment and poor food. Bruce Robertson, who had sailed with the 1st Echelon as a private in 1940 and was subsequently commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant in February 1942, was captured during the first battle of El Alamein in July 1942 and eventually sent to the Oflag POW camp in Weinsberg, Germany. He recalled that he and fellow officers were transported from Italy to Germany in an overcrowded railway cattle truck with almost no food, little water or sanitation, and on arrival at the camp were initially issued with only one blanket each to keep them warm in winter.⁸⁵¹ In contrast, officers held in the infamous Colditz Castle had access to a library, theatre and an orchestra.⁸⁵² If the prisoners committed any breaches, like the other ranks, they also suffered punishment, such as solitary confinement and stoppage of Red Cross parcels.⁸⁵³ Officers who proved resourceful and repeatedly attempted to escape, such as Upham, were sent to high security prisons, such as Colditz Castle, where they remained under heavy surveillance from hostile guards. This indicates that, in general, officers who were prisoners of the Germans fared little better than the enlisted men.

Officers appear to have suffered greater psychological effects at being captured. This was especially the case for battalion and brigade commanders who felt they had let their men down in organising the defence of their positions. An example was a comment from Brigadier James Hargest, when he described how he felt after he had been captured when his brigade headquarters was overrun at Sidi Aziz during the relief of Tobruk in late 1941. He stated that at the time he realized what the catastrophe meant to him, with a sense of defeat, loss, grief and the depressing prospect of months, or perhaps years in prison.⁸⁵⁴ He claimed that so great was his misery at the time that he

⁸⁵¹ Rosanne Robertson (ed.), *For the Duration: 2 NZEF Officer Bruce Robertson on Active Duty and 'in the Bag,'* (Wellington, 2010), pp. 161-162

⁸⁵² Sandford, p.249

⁸⁵³ Robertson, p. 163

⁸⁵⁴ Hargest, p. 24

envied his friend and subordinate, Major Arthur Grigg, who was lying mortally wounded and unconscious near him.⁸⁵⁵ Hargest's feelings seem typical of how other officers described being captured:

The fact of being captured is so overwhelming a disaster that for a little while one's mind fails to grasp the significance. It seems quite impossible that one's command, one's freedom, one's right to think for oneself, have been taken away, and that hence forth one must obey the dictates of those representing all one hates most in the world. Like every soldier who enters battle I had foreseen the possibilities of death, and incapacity from wounds; but I had never for one moment thought of capture.⁸⁵⁶

It was this unforgettable sense of defeat, utter hopelessness and perceived failure in letting their men down that inspired many commissioned officers, such as Hargest, Upham and Sandy Thomas, to attempt to escape to fight again.⁸⁵⁷

Expectations of Duty

As chapters three to five showed, it remained the responsibility and duty of every officer to keep himself fully conversant with the up-to-date procedures, directives and professional knowledge and standards required for the positions they held in their particular corps.⁸⁵⁸ This requirement was necessary for every officer, from an inexperienced platoon commander through to a lieutenant-colonel in command of a battalion. Not all officers were able to achieve this, although the majority took the burden of leadership and responsibility for their men seriously, ensuring that the rank and file of the New Zealand expeditionary forces during both conflicts were generally led by competent and effective officers.

The fundamental duties of junior officers primarily remained the same for both wars and the only variance occurred due to specific tasks determined by the corps the officers belonged to. Such duties related to the care of the men serving under them and the carrying out of orders determined by their superiors.⁸⁵⁹ This chain of command was

⁸⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 25

⁸⁵⁷ Thomas, Interview, 6 June 2010

⁸⁵⁸ Stephen Bull (ed.), *An Officer's Manual of the Western Front 1914-1918*, Army Printing and Stationary Service (London, 2008), pp. 4-5

⁸⁵⁹ Brown, p. 7

essential for the formations to perform effectively and efficiently under the stress of combat, where the leadership determined success or failure and life or death. As the majority of New Zealand officers in both expeditionary forces were civilian volunteers or conscripts whose military experience before serving overseas was limited to service in the Territorial Force or basic training and an officer cadet training course prior to embarkation, competency only came with extensive training and experience.⁸⁶⁰ In general, the junior officers of the main bodies of the expeditionary forces in 1914 and 1939 only knew the rudimentary duties and responsibilities of command.⁸⁶¹ Although both sets had months of training with their troops in Egypt prior to going into combat, it was only through the experience of campaigning that they were able to hone their leadership skills. Sandy Thomas recalls that even though he had been a platoon commander in 23 Battalion since its formation in early 1940, and that the officers and men of the battalion had trained extensively as a military formation until embarking from Egypt for Greece in March 1941, he believed his men never really saw him as an officer until he had led them in combat.⁸⁶² This was also the experience for replacement officers and soldiers commissioned from the ranks during both conflicts who became proficient only through enduring the rigours of war.

Perhaps the reason for this can be explained by the views of the men who served under them. Jack Collins was a private who served in C Company of 26 Battalion in North Africa and Italy during the conflict. As a 92 year old veteran, he recalled that the soldiers looked to their platoon commanders, whether commissioned officers or, on occasions, non-commissioned officers not only to provide leadership in combat, but also to look to the general welfare of their men. He claims that once the officer had proven himself in these areas, he would gain the trust and loyalty of the whole platoon.⁸⁶³ He further stated that without the support of the men, the officer could not function effectively in his role and was a liability to the unit.⁸⁶⁴ As the New Zealand divisions in both conflicts primarily consisted of infantry battalions, along with mounted rifles in the Great War, the majority of New Zealand officers served in the infantry where they were required physically to lead their men into battle from the front. Knowledge of the duties required of them provides the basis for an analysis of how they

⁸⁶⁰ Brigadier J. T. Burrows, 'Response to Survey- Marshall Critique,' IA 77, Box 7, Item 38, ANZ

⁸⁶¹ Leonard Thornton, 'Response to Survey- Marshall Critique,' IA 77, Item 38, ANZ

⁸⁶² W.B. (Sandy) Thomas, Interview, 6 June 2010

⁸⁶³ Jack Collins, Interview, 14 April 2010

⁸⁶⁴ Ibid.

performed in their roles and provides a comparison with officers serving in the same roles from allied nations.

The duties of a platoon commander during both conflicts were vast and varied, but fundamentally remain the same in the twenty-first century. Training and preparing the platoon for combat, as well as effectively leading the men into battle were the core responsibilities of subalterns of infantry battalions in both expeditionary forces. The training provided to junior officers has been explored in a previous chapters but the general comments provided in the Instructions for the *Training of Platoons for Offensive Action* issued by the British General Staff to all officers within the British Empire forces in 1917 provides a précis of actions to be taken by platoon commanders to provide the leadership necessary for success. The document was produced to assist junior officers who lacked experience in the training and fighting of their units and was based on experience gained in the early years of the Great War.⁸⁶⁵ As pointed out in the pamphlet, it was not possible to provide a correct line of action for all circumstances that might occur in combat, but it was designed to assist officers to act correctly in any situation:

A Platoon Commander will have gone a long way towards having a well-trained platoon if he has gained the confidence of his N.C.O.s and the men and has established a high soldierly spirit in all ranks.

The confidence of his men can be gained by:-

- (a) Being the best man at arms in the platoon, or trying to be so
- (b) Being quick to act, taking real command on all occasions, issuing clear orders, and not forgetting to see them carried out
- (c) Example, being himself well turned out, punctual, and cheery, even under adverse circumstances
- (d) Enforcing strict discipline at all times. This must be a willing discipline, not a sulky one. Be just, but do not be soft – men despise softness
- (e) Recognising a good effort, even if it is not really successful. A word of praise when deserved produces better results than incessant fault-finding
- (f) Looking after his men's comfort before his own and never sparing himself
- (g) Demanding a high standard on all occasions, and never resting content with what he takes over, be it on the battlefield or in billets. Everything is capable of improvement from information on the battlefield down to latrines and washing places in billets.

⁸⁶⁵ Stephen Bull (ed.), *An Officer's Manual of the Western Front, 1914-1918* (London, 2008), p. 117

- (h) Being blood-thirsty, and for ever thinking how to kill the enemy, and helping his men to do so

The Platoon Commander should be the proudest man in the Army. He is the Commander of *the* unit in the attack. He is the only commander who can know intimately the character and capabilities of each man under him. He can, if he is so disposed, establish an esprit de platoon which will be hard to equal in any other formation.⁸⁶⁶

Although it is unrealistic to think that every platoon commander within the New Zealand expeditionary forces of both wars was able to fulfil all the points provided in these guidelines, taking into consideration varying personal attributes, strengths and character, those who did follow them proved effective and efficient leaders who could inspire their subordinates to follow them into battle.

The Value of Combat Experience

While some 2NZEF officers, such as Denver Fountaine, wrote of their frustration at the continual training and lack of opportunity for action throughout 1940, a limited number of New Zealand officers gained early combat experience through secondment to the newly formed 'No. 1 Long Range Patrol Unit' that eventually became known as Long Range Desert Group. Conceived by Major Ralph Bagnold, a signals officer of the British Army and pre-war geographer and desert explorer, this unit was established to operate in the desert behind enemy lines for weeks at a time, reconnoitring and gaining intelligence about enemy garrisons and movements. It was formed in Egypt in June 1940 but at the time Bagnold found it hard to find personnel who were required to be self-reliant, hardy and accustomed to desert conditions, as well as specialists in weapons, signalling, navigation, driving and mechanical repairs.⁸⁶⁷ The 2nd NZEF was eventually approached to supply volunteers as the force had been training in desert conditions for the previous six months and the officers and men were considered to have the practical temperament which was considered suitable for such work.

⁸⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 126

⁸⁶⁷ Brendan O'Carroll, *The Kiwi Scorpions: The Story of the New Zealanders in the Long Range Desert Group* (Honiton, Devon, 2000), pp. 1-3

Initially volunteers from the NZ Divisional Cavalry, 27th (Machine Gun) Battalion and gunners from the 34th Anti-Tank Battery were attached to the unit. This included three officers; Lieutenant L.B. Ballantyne of the NZ Divisional Cavalry who was appointed adjutant and quarter-master, Second-Lieutenant D.G. Steele of the 27th (Machine Gun) Battalion who became a patrol commander and Lieutenant F.B. Edmundson of the NZ Medical Corps who became the medical officer of the unit.⁸⁶⁸ Eventually, General Headquarters, Middle East, requested that 2NZEF provide a total of five officers and 85 other ranks as a regular secondment strength to the group.⁸⁶⁹ At first the New Zealander officers were not expected to lead fighting patrols until they had become more familiar with the desert, but Brendan O'Carroll, an authority on the LRDG, argues that it was not long before Ballantyne and Steele proved themselves to be capable fighting commanders.⁸⁷⁰

Although he could see tactical value in such patrols, Freyberg was concerned that the continual secondment of personnel from 2NZEF was affecting the efficiency of the Division.⁸⁷¹ This issue was eventually resolved in February 1941 when the New Zealand government formalised conditions with regard to the loan of personnel to the LRDG, with the secondment strength being restricted to four officers and 54 other ranks until Tripoli was captured.⁸⁷² The period of volunteer service was also restricted to six months, but this was not strictly adhered to as some returned to their units only after a few months, while some officers and men remained with the elite unit until 1945.⁸⁷³ Even Freyberg's son, Paul, was attached to the unit as a young second-lieutenant in December 1941 in an effort to gain more field experience until he was wounded in an attack and had to be evacuated.⁸⁷⁴ Ultimately, the training value to officers serving in the unit was beneficial in that it not only provided them with the opportunity to gain experience in active fighting when the majority of the Division was still in reserve in Egypt, but it also exposed them to the harsh realities of desert warfare where the essential knowledge and skills gained, especially in navigation, would put them in good stead for the hard-fought campaigns to come.

⁸⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 4

⁸⁷¹ Freyberg to Major-General Arthur Smith, General Headquarters, Middle East, 13 October 1940, *Documents, Vol. 1, Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War, 1935-45* (Wellington, 1949), pp. 233-234

⁸⁷² O'Carroll, p. 6

⁸⁷³ Ibid.

⁸⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 109

The Importance of Proficiency

The proficiency of an officer promoted trust and confidence which was more effective in providing sound leadership than displays of personal bravery. An example of this was provided by Sandy Thomas who states that the men of his platoon never really considered him an officer until they were in combat for the first time during the Greek campaign in March 1941.⁸⁷⁵ When war was declared in September 1939, Thomas was a 20-year old junior bank clerk and a corporal serving in the Territorials. He had only limited officer training before he took command of 15 Platoon, C Company, 23 Battalion at Burnham Camp in early 1940. Like the civilian volunteers under his command, he was determined to do his utmost to make his platoon into a professional and efficient fighting unit: ‘To a man they were eager to get to grips with their new life. We all knuckled down, officers and men, to an almost frantic routine. Soon enough we gained a fitness, discipline, pride and confidence in ourselves. We were transformed from civilians into fighting soldiers.’⁸⁷⁶ However, in an interview with Thomas in 2010 he stated that it was not until the rigours of campaigning that his leadership capabilities were tested.⁸⁷⁷ Although lacking combat experience he proved himself as an effective platoon commander when commanding the rear guard of the battalion during its withdrawal from its defensive position near Mount Olympus.⁸⁷⁸ He led by example during the fighting on Crete, firstly in leading his platoon in helping to deal with isolated groups of German paratroops who had landed in his battalion’s sector during the first day of the invasion, followed by leading his men forward during the failed counter-attack on Maleme airfield.⁸⁷⁹ Several days later, together with Lieutenant Rex King, Thomas led the now famous successful counter-attack on Galatas on 25 May, resulting in him being wounded and later captured.⁸⁸⁰

⁸⁷⁵ W.B. ‘Sandy’ Thomas, Interview, 6 June 2010

⁸⁷⁶ W.B. ‘Sandy’ Thomas, *Pathways To Adventure: An Extraordinary Life*, compiled by Denis McLean (Christchurch, 2004), p. 18

⁸⁷⁷ Thomas, Interview, 6 June 2010

⁸⁷⁸ Lieutenant-Colonel Angus Ross, *23 Battalion*, part of *The Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-1945* (Wellington, 1959), p. 41: www.nzetc.victoria.ac.nz

⁸⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 65-70

⁸⁸⁰ David Filer, *Crete: Death From The Skies –New Zealand’s Role in the Loss of Crete* (Auckland, 2010), pp. 104-108

A comprehensive study of diaries, letters, unit histories and interviews with surviving veterans has provided substantial anecdotal evidence that the soldiers of both New Zealand expeditionary forces were exceptionally well led by their battalion and regimental officers. There are a number of factors that ensured this occurred, some of which related to the unique nature of New Zealand society at the time. The introduction of compulsory military training in the Dominion prior to the Great War certainly helped prepare many Territorial officers and NCOs for the rigours of overseas service. Although Malone complained in his diaries that a number of young junior officers initially lacked aptitude in their military studies while being shipped to the Middle East, the thought of active service and combat soon inspired them to perform to the expected levels of professionalism required of their rank.⁸⁸¹

In the case of the Main Body of NZEF and the first three echelons of 2NZEF, the officers were all volunteers, some from within the small NZ Staff Corps, but mostly from the Territorials. Their enthusiasm to do their duty, combined with a determination to rise to the professional standards of regular officers to ensure their men were well led were critical factors in the overall performance of the expeditionary forces. This was further enhanced by the expectations of excellence from the divisional and brigade commanders. Both Godley and Russell expected high standards from their subordinate officers, especially Russell who continually blamed any failures within the Division on poor leadership. He was particularly ruthless in removing officers whom he considered inept or lacking the required ability to be an effective commander. One high profile example was that of Lieutenant-Colonel John Duigan of the New Zealand Staff Corps; he was one of two staff officers that Russell had sent back to New Zealand from France in 1917.⁸⁸² Ironically, Duigan later became Major-General Sir John Duigan and the General Officer Commanding of the New Zealand Military Forces in the late 1930s.⁸⁸³ Such transfers were not uncommon within the Division on the Western Front as Russell strived to forge the New Zealand formation into an elite fighting unit.

Freyberg proved less ruthless in his approach during the Second World War. Some critics have argued that his affable personality made it difficult for him to remove and replace officers whom he considered were not up to the required standard. This was

⁸⁸¹ W.G. Malone, *Diaries and Letters of W.G. Malone*, Diary 1- 6 August 1914 to 10 November 1914, MSX 2541, ATL, p. 36

⁸⁸² Jock Vennell, *The Forgotten General: New Zealand's World War 1 Commander Major-General Sir Andrew Russell* (Auckland, 2011), p. 248

⁸⁸³ Report of General Officer Commanding New Zealand Forces, *AJHR*, 1937-1938, Vol. 3, H-19

certainly the case after the disaster on Crete where questionable decision making by some disloyal senior officers, such as Hargest and Puttick, whom many considered too old for active overseas service, certainly warranted some remedial action to be taken. Hargest remained a brigade commander until he was captured during Operation Crusader, while Puttick eventually returned to New Zealand in late 1941 where he was promoted on Freyberg's recommendation.⁸⁸⁴ Sandy Thomas stated that company officers of combat units who failed to meet the required standards and lacked effective leadership skills, whom he described as 'bad officers', instead of being demoted, were often transferred to duties as liaison officers on troopships and bases away from the front line.⁸⁸⁵

Issues relating to poor performance of battalion and regimental officers were usually dealt with from within the units during both wars. Regiment and battalion commanders had the discretion to appoint officers to certain positions relevant to their rank and experience within their own units. Those who were identified as not being up to the job assigned to them were usually transferred to positions more suited to their abilities. An early example of this was the removal of the adjutant of the Wellington Infantry Regiment in mid-August 1914, prior to the embarkation of the Main Body, after Lieutenant-Colonel Malone complained that the officer's lack of experience and knowledge made him of no real use and he was 'quite satisfied that he must go.'⁸⁸⁶ Battalion commanders and their subordinate officers jealously guarded the fighting reputation of their unit, especially when it came to the quality of junior officers leading men into battle. Some platoon commanders who proved efficient in training their men and preparing them out of the front line buckled under the pressure of combat.⁸⁸⁷ Conversely, some who struggled with the minutiae of military life out of the trenches excelled in leadership when engaging the enemy. Upham was one such example of this; not one to lead by example in following military protocol in dress standards and saluting, he inspired his men to follow him through his fighting abilities.

Platoon commanders who showed limited leadership abilities or potential were quickly weeded out. Private Jack Collins of C Company, 26 Battalion, 2NZEF claims

⁸⁸⁴ Peter Fraser (Cairo) to Walter Nash, 9 June 1941, *Documents Relating to New Zealand's Participation in the Second World War*, Vol. 2, War History Branch, Department of Internal Affairs (Wellington, 1951), pp. 11-12

⁸⁸⁵ W.B. 'Sandy' Thomas, Interview, 31 August 2010

⁸⁸⁶ W.G. Malone, *Diary*, Vol. 1, 6 August 1914 – 10 November 1914, MSX-2541, ATL, p. 20

⁸⁸⁷ Thomas, Interview, 31 August 2010

that most platoon commanders whom he served under were competent and ensured the general wellbeing of their men.⁸⁸⁸ However, he recalls one young replacement officer who lacked experience and refused to heed the advice of his sergeant, and who unnecessarily exposed his men to withering enemy fire, resulting in a number of casualties, including several soldiers killed. Collins claims that had this been an isolated incident then the officer would have been forgiven by his men, but by repeatedly taking this stance this officer became a liability to his platoon and was eventually transferred from the battalion to a non-combat role.⁸⁸⁹ Those inexperienced replacement junior officers who failed to listen to advice from seasoned soldiers, perhaps through arrogance, often paid the ultimate price. Sergeant Alfred Morris served with the Canterbury Infantry Battalion at Gallipoli and wrote of one such occasion:

At this time we had with us a young officer who had arrived with a batch of reinforcements and who often rather over-exposed his body over the trench. During the day I heard one of my mates telling him that he would get a bullet if he wasn't more careful. In reply to which he said: 'When I want your advice I will ask for it.' Late that same night the young officer standing high up in the trench not far from where I was, received several bullets from a Turkish machine gun, in the head. He certainly required no more advice. No, it was a burial party the following day.⁸⁹⁰

In contrast to these examples, Haddon Donald recalls how, as an immature and inexperienced platoon commander in 22 Battalion, he got his platoon lost while leading it during the retreat from Mount Olympus. At the time one of his more knowledgeable NCOs took over, with Donald claiming that he learned a valuable lesson from the experience to always listen to what the troops had to say.⁸⁹¹ According to Sandy Thomas, while he was a company and battalion commander in 23 Battalion his way of dealing with incompetent officers was to have them transferred to Division headquarters where they could not do any damage.⁸⁹² Such methods quickly came to the attention of his superiors, with him claiming that at one stage the Military Secretary got quite cross with him over it. However, General Freyberg took him aside and laughed, saying that he used to do exactly the same thing in the Great War.⁸⁹³

⁸⁸⁸ Collins, Interview, 14 April 2010

⁸⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁰ Sergeant Alfred Morris, Diary, p. 12, Pugsley Collection

⁸⁹¹ Haddon Donald, *In Peace & War: A Civilian Soldier's Story* (Masterton, 2005), p. 22

⁸⁹² Thomas, Interview, 6 June 2010

⁸⁹³ Thomas, Interview, 31 August 2010

If senior officers could not spot a poor junior officer, then the soldier serving under them certainly could. Reginald De Grave served in the 5th Field Park Company of the New Zealand Engineers during the campaigns in North Africa during World War Two and was disparaging toward the lieutenant whom he served under, stating that ‘The pansy lieutenant who leaves his troops ... on their own on the battlefield is despised.’⁸⁹⁴ He described this particular officer as a bungling comic figure who was ‘as silly as a snake and quite harmless,’ and who tried to assert his authority without much success.⁸⁹⁵ According to De Grave the soldiers within the unit could never understand how he could have attained his rank but unfortunately for them they were ‘stuck with the skunk.’⁸⁹⁶ This officer was so disliked by his subordinates that they referred to him as ‘Napoleon’ due to his ‘know it all’ attitude.⁸⁹⁷

C.J. Burt was another soldier who complained about the quality of officers he served under. He was an enlisted soldier serving in the War Graves Enquiry and Registration Unit in North Africa in 1942 and made numerous entries in his diary regarding the officers’ incompetence, lack of interest in their subordinates’ welfare and being more interested in acquiring souvenirs than attending to their given tasks, stating: ‘it is sickening the way this unit does so little, might just as well be home. Too many officers with good jobs, having the time of their lives.’⁸⁹⁸ When one of the second-lieutenants in command of his section was transferred he recorded his relief: ‘About time the useless sod was got rid of. Still, he’ll still be a lieutenant. Gawd, what a system.’⁸⁹⁹ Unfortunately for the likes of De Grave and Burt, the few officers who proved unfit to lead in combat were usually either transferred to serve in non-combat supporting units or were returned to New Zealand in administrative and training roles. Such policies ensured the efficiency of the frontline units by maintaining the morale of the troops and reducing the risk of unnecessary casualties.

Social factors also determined the performance of the battalion grade officers. With the relatively small population of New Zealand of just over one million people in the first half of the twentieth century, the provincial social networks meant that the degrees of social separation were less than those of large countries such as Britain,

⁸⁹⁴ Reginald Arthur De Grave, ‘The Breakout of Sidi Rezegh,’ in *War Reminiscences: Tales of Long Ago*, MS 99/67, Auckland War Memorial Museum, p. 21

⁸⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁸ C.J. Burt, Diary, 14 November 1942, MS- 1993.1630, KMARL

⁸⁹⁹ Ibid, 19 March 1942

Canada and Australia. Both rural and urban communities had strong social ties, either through family, vocational, class or sporting connections that permeated New Zealand society. The Territorial Force was a reflection of these ties, with the officer corps of the pre-Great War Territorial regiments being the domain of the middle classes. The prime example was the officer corps of the Canterbury Yeomanry Cavalry which exclusively consisted of highly educated professionals, such as lawyers, accountants, school masters, and owners and sons of holders of large landed estates. A study of the list of original officers to embark with the Canterbury Mounted Rifles in 1914 confirms this, with prominent South Island landed gentry families such as the Deans, Birdlings and Chaytors amongst them.⁹⁰⁰ Such families were held in high esteem. The actions and behaviour of their men during overseas service reflected not only on the reputation of the officers themselves on their return to New Zealand, but also on the longstanding reputation of their families. During the Great War such men were expected to act according to accepted Edwardian standards of officers and gentlemen, which included displays of courage and leadership in the face of the enemy. Any incidents of failure to adhere to these standards would quickly become common knowledge in provincial New Zealand and could affect any future vocational, social, marital or business prospects of the individual on his return home.⁹⁰¹ This was also the case for enlisted men, with an example being those who were sent back to New Zealand prior to the Gallipoli campaign and discharged from the army as medically unfit due to contracting a venereal disease in the brothels of Cairo.⁹⁰² Pugsley states that prior to the Gallipoli campaign the worst punishment that officers and enlisted men feared was to be sent home to small-town New Zealand in disgrace; even if the reasons were not published, the community would find out through letters from other locals serving overseas.⁹⁰³ However, the stigma had less effect once the troops had experienced combat, where being sent home was seen as a blessing for some.

The dismissal of four officers of the Maori Contingent in 1916 was the most famous and controversial example of alleged failure in war affecting personal reputations at home. As at the beginning of the Second World War, the Maori

⁹⁰⁰ *New Zealand Expeditionary Force Staff and Regimental Lists of Officers, October 1915* (Wellington, 1916), Defence Force Library, Wellington, p. 4

⁹⁰¹ Christopher Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell: New Zealanders and Military Discipline in the First World War* (Auckland, 1991), p. 27

⁹⁰² *Ibid.*

⁹⁰³ *Ibid.*

Contingent that left New Zealand in 1915 was commanded by an experienced non-Maori officer. The relationship between this officer, Major A.H. Herbert and the senior Maori officers quickly became strained, possibly due to Herbert's lack of cultural understanding of the troops under his control, as well as a perceived casual approach to accepted military protocol by the subordinate Maori officers. Wira Gardiner argues that the problem stemmed from Herbert's inability to communicate with his Maori-speaking troops, while some of his officers sometimes deliberately misinterpreted his orders.⁹⁰⁴ This eventually resulted in the officers, Captain W.T. Pitt, and Lieutenants R. Dansy, T. Hiroti and T. Hetet being sent back to New Zealand in disgrace. Pitt and Dansey had previously served as officers in the Territorials, while Hiroti and Hetet had been commissioned from the ranks.⁹⁰⁵ Godley sided with Herbert, stating that two of the company commanders were useless and did not lead their men well in combat; they were ignorant of military matters, lacking in experience and having no sense of responsibility, while he described one as being unsuitable to command in the field since he was disloyal and obstructed Herbert.⁹⁰⁶ This caused a great loss of *mana* (personal honour) not only to the individual officers and their unit, but also the families and the Maori leaders who had so strongly pushed for the Contingent to be allowed to serve overseas.⁹⁰⁷ Ironically, according to Chris Pugsley, Dansy had shown outstanding bravery during the August offensive at Gallipoli and did so again when he, along with Hiroti and Hetet, were reappointed to the Pioneer Battalion in France in 1916 as a result of political pressure from Maori leaders in New Zealand.⁹⁰⁸

Leadership in Battle: Leading by Example

The success of all the military operations of the expeditionary forces of both wars relied on the leadership of platoon and troop commanders. With the support of their non-commissioned officers, it was they who personally led their men in combat. The duties of such officers were varied, but ultimately it was their display of personal

⁹⁰⁴ Wira Gardiner, *Te Mura O Te Ahi: The Story of the Maori Battalion* (Auckland, 1992), pp. 21-22

⁹⁰⁵ 'Officers for Maori Contingents, NZEF, 1914-1915, AD1, 707, 9/32/8, ANZ

⁹⁰⁶ Gardiner, *Te Mura O Te Ahi: The Story of the Maori Battalion*, pp. 21-22

⁹⁰⁷ Sir James Allen, Letter to Godley, 6 March 1916, Allen 1, 1 M1/15, ANZ

⁹⁰⁸ Christopher Pugsley, *Te Hokowhitu A Tu: The Maori Pioneer Battalion in the First World War* (Auckland, 1995), p. 44

courage and aptitude under fire that inspired their men to follow them. Platoon officers could study all the tactical manuals available to them, but they could only be effective by controlling their fear for their personal safety and leading by example. In interviews conducted for this study with Second World War veterans, both commissioned officers and enlisted men, every soldier admitted experiencing fear at some stage while serving overseas. The same emerges from autobiographies, biographies, diaries, letters and recordings of other veterans. In a post-World War Two survey of officers conducted by Major-General Kippenberger in 1948, Captain R. Boord, who had served as a platoon and company commander in C Company of 24 Battalion claimed that courage was not instinctive: ‘Courage is the control and subordination of fear by the logical part of the brain with the help of certain emotions.’⁹⁰⁹ There were many examples of New Zealand platoon and company commanders, during both conflicts, who had the ability to overcome, control or hide their fear in an effort to provide the necessary leadership to their men in combat situations. Most went unrecognised by the high command for simply being the expected behaviour of an officer, with only the exceptional cases receiving official recognition.

Platoon commanders had a duty to lead and direct their troops from the front in both conflicts. This almost certainly accounts for the high casualty rate of company officers during both wars compared to those of other ranks from combat formations. The ability of junior officers to provide effective leadership in battle was fundamental to the efficiency and success of any army. As Christopher Moore-Bick argues, the upper classes of the British Army from which the majority of officers came, were taught that they had an inherent responsibility to provide leadership and to believe in the virtue of sacrificing themselves for the right cause.⁹¹⁰

This was also the case for the officers of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force during the Great War, who initially came from the Dominion’s middle classes and had been indoctrinated with stories of British imperial martial glory resulting in the creation of the British Empire.⁹¹¹ As with other British dominions, British history was an important facet of the education curriculum in Edwardian New Zealand, especially at secondary level where only the middle classes and some prosperous working-class

⁹⁰⁹ R. Boord, ‘Response to Survey- Marshall Critique,’ IA 77, Box 7, Item 38, ANZ

⁹¹⁰ Moore-Bick, p. 35

⁹¹¹ Pugsley, *Gallipoli*, p. 30

people could afford to send their children.⁹¹² The stories of duty and sacrifice for ‘Queen and Country’ in times of war, such as Gordon’s defence of Khartoum in the Sudan, the gallant defences during the sieges of Mafeking and Ladysmith during the Second Anglo-Boer war and the defence of Rorke’s Drift during the Zulu War in January 1879, were all celebrated through history lessons and books, fostering British imperialism and nationalism throughout the white populations of the empire. The names of those officers involved in such incidents became well-known and their actions inspired many youth of the Dominion to aspire to such noble duty.⁹¹³ The introduction of compulsory military service in 1909 also ensured that youths of military service age prior to the outbreak of war in 1914 were exposed to the duties required of junior officers, where leading by example was considered the ultimate attribute. An example of one such officer who took such duties seriously is that of Captain Bruce Hay of the New Zealand Staff Corps, a Boer War veteran who was killed at Gallipoli while serving as a major in the Otago Mounted Rifles:

Captain Hay [only recently promoted to major] also being killed is a great loss to the boys at the front. A man they would follow anywhere. He was full of original ideas for improving the trenches, etc, and was always knocking about helping the men. He had just led his men to a certain position and had written out a dispatch to report they were there when he fell shot through the heart. One day at Zeitoun when speaking about the war, he told me that he would never go back to New Zealand again because he said, an officer of his rank, who was worth his salt, was bound to get hit sooner or later. Strangely enough he fell having just carried out an order that should have been carried out half an hour sooner by a senior officer who considered the fire too hot to advance his men, so retired them again.⁹¹⁴

Acts of gallantry have traditionally been used to mark soldiers above their peers and evidence suggests that most combat officers of the expeditionary forces showed a degree of gallantry when facing the enemy. However, as this was the expected behaviour of officers, most received little official recognition. This was especially the case in the Great War where platoon and company commanders were usually the first over the parapets of the trenches during attacks on the enemy. Official casualty returns from the Gallipoli campaign clearly indicate that of all regimental officers serving in combat, it was the lieutenants and 2nd lieutenants who were more likely to be killed or

⁹¹² Ibid.

⁹¹³ Ibid.

⁹¹⁴ Arthur W. Cargill, Diary, 18 August 1915, MS Papers 0636/002, ATL

wounded. Obviously there were more junior officers within battalions than senior officers, but it was the young junior officers who were expected to, and did, lead their troops from the front in attacks where they were generally more exposed to enemy machine gun and rifle fire than their superiors. An example of evidence of this comes from the war diary of the Canterbury Infantry Regiment that recorded that the battalion sustained six officer casualties in the failed sortie from Quinn's Post on the German Officers Trench on the morning of 5 June 1915; four of the officers being lieutenants.⁹¹⁵ Officers and NCOs were the prime targets of enemy snipers, in both wars, as an attack or defence was likely to falter without effective leadership to rally and encourage the troops. It is hard to imagine the amount of personal strength and courage required of such men to display a sense of calmness leading their troops 'over the top' in attacks that had to overcome unfavourable muddy and bogging ground, sometimes impenetrable barbed wire and enemy machine gun and artillery fire before they could succeed. Such attacks almost always resulted in high casualties, especially among the officers, and had limited chances of success.

Such gallantry and leadership were certainly recognised and appreciated by those being led. Frank Twistleton was an officer in the Otago Mounted Rifles serving at Gallipoli and at one stage was directed to defend a small feature that had previously proved difficult to secure. At the time he was placed in command of the Maori Contingent who had previously only been used in manual work in the trenches. Defending the area proved difficult, resulting in high casualties, but he had high praise for the two Maori officers, Lieutenants Ferris and Walker, who helped repulse repeated enemy attacks, stating that they were first rate officers who led their men with a joke and a smile, proving to be 'ideal warriors.'⁹¹⁶ Their deeds were typical of the majority of World War 1 New Zealand frontline officers whose actions were only recognised by those who served with them. Another example that gives a clear picture of how many officers stoically met their deaths and maintained the admiration of the troops leading their men on the Western Front is from a letter by Leonard Hart describing the death of Second-Lieutenant George Knight of the Otago Infantry Regiment who was killed in action at Passchendaele on 12 October 1917:

⁹¹⁵ War Diary, Canterbury Infantry Battalion, 5 June 1915, Australian Imperial Force Unit War Diaries 1914-18 War, New Zealand Units, Item 35/19/3, Australian War Memorial 4

⁹¹⁶ F.M. Twistleton, *Letters from the Front: World War 1* (Gisborne, 2009), p. 45

We had gone over the top and had advanced a distance of about 250 yards towards the German positions on the ridge – Mr Knight, our company commander, being at this point slightly ahead of me. A road, known as the Ypres-Roulers Road, ran right through the German barbed wire entanglements and pill-boxes and this road was swept by German machine-gun and rifle fire from both sides. It was up this road and on both sides of it that Mr Knight's company advanced. By the time we had gone the 250 yards before mentioned we had had at least three parts of our men killed and wounded.

He still continued to lead the remains of his company fearlessly and determinedly and had just reached the German wire entanglement (they were 50 yards in depth and so thick that it was practically impossible for anyone to penetrate far into them) on the road when he was shot through the chest. He fell immediately without a word or a sound and did not speak again. Two of us were endeavouring to bind up his wound when another bullet pierced his throat and he immediately breathed his last...so died as popular and brave as ever honoured the uniform he wore. I am quite sure the company never had a more popular or worthy commander...Previous to going over the top he seemed cool and collected as he was up to the time of his death. It was a German sniper that got him on both occasions. They held a line of concrete machine-gun and rifle emplacements behind their formidable barbed-wire entanglements and they simply mowed us down as we came at them up the slope of the ridge. Practically all those who actually penetrated the wire became entangled in it and shot before their surviving comrades' eyes. From the time we got within twenty yards of the German wire we all knew that we were practically going to our deaths, and no one must have known it better than Mr Knight, but he never hesitated and like the hero that he was, met his end.⁹¹⁷

The criteria for such high gallantry awards had changed from 1920, making it harder for recommendations to be accepted. Harper and Richardson argue that the raised criteria for VCs (Victoria Crosses), along with the introduction of other categories for gallantry led to a reduction in the number awarded in the Second World War.⁹¹⁸ In that conflict only 182 VCs were awarded, less than a third of the 663 awarded in the Great War, even though the Second World War lasted two years longer.⁹¹⁹ This ensured that the acts of gallantry that were witnessed and recorded in the Second World War that would have resulted in the awarding of a VC in the Great War, more commonly resulted in the awarding of a lesser honour in the Second World War. There was a higher number of posthumous VCs awarded in the Second World War than in the first and it has been argued that only heroic actions that carried with them a high chance of death would qualify for the medal.⁹²⁰

⁹¹⁷ Leonard Hart, Letter to Miss Lee, 3 February 1918, MS Papers 2157-7, ATL

⁹¹⁸ Harper & Richardson, p. 195

⁹¹⁹ Ibid.

⁹²⁰ Ibid.

The most obvious example of an officer to satisfy the criteria for a VC is Charles Upham, VC and Bar, who remains the most celebrated battalion officer to have served in the New Zealand military forces during either war. However, Upham was not typical of most New Zealand company combat officers; he was the only combatant soldier within the British Army and Commonwealth Forces to be awarded the Victoria Cross twice in the Second World War and his reputation for bravery is legendary.⁹²¹ He has become the model to which many young New Zealand soldiers aspire through his bravery, determination and perceived lack of concern for his own safety in an effort to protect his men. At the time of the German airborne invasion of Crete in late May 1940, Upham was a second-lieutenant in command of 15 Platoon, C Company, 20 Battalion when he earned his first such award.⁹²² During the ill-fated night counter-attack on Maleme airfield in the early of the morning of 22 May, Upham demonstrated his abilities as a combat leader and his personal courage when he single-handedly destroyed an enemy machine gun position in his first real combat action. He had been leading his platoon in an advance across an open field when his men suddenly came under machine gun fire from the Germans.⁹²³ A number of his men became casualties and he immediately ordered the rest of his unit to remain prone and under cover while he directed them to crawl slowly forward towards the German position giving him covering fire while he also crawled forward and outflanked the enemy. Once close enough, Upham lobbed three grenades at the enemy and ran towards them firing his pistol killing all eight Germans holding the position.⁹²⁴ A few minutes later he repeated a similar style personal attack when he ordered his men to give him covering fire as he outflanked an enemy-held farm house, again using grenades to take the position.⁹²⁵ When the company advanced into the village of Pírgos, Upham continued to demonstrate his courage by personally leading the house clearing, then knocking out an enemy-held position where the Germans had been operating a captured Bofor gun.⁹²⁶ Most of these actions were within the view of his company commander, Captain Denver

⁹²¹ Chris Pugsley (ed.), *Scars on the Heart: Two Centuries of New Zealanders at War* (Auckland, 1996), p. 198

⁹²² Kenneth Sandford, *The Mark of the Lion: The Story of Charles Upham V.C. and Bar*, Penguin Ed. (Auckland, 2003), pp. 70-82

⁹²³ Ibid.

⁹²⁴ Ibid.

⁹²⁵ Ibid.

⁹²⁶ Ibid.

Fontaine, and his battalion commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Jim Burrows, and it was their recommendations that led to Upham receiving his first Victoria Cross.

Upham's award was significant in that he was the first New Zealand officer to receive the Victoria Cross since the New Zealand Wars of the 1860s. Unlike Major-General Sir Andrew Russell in the Great War, Freyberg was happy enough to recommend deserving officers for gallantry awards and without doubt Upham's actions were worthy. When reading Captain Fontaine's statement used to support Upham's commendation, it is clear the honour was not awarded for a single action, but for a number of actions throughout the brief Cretan campaign:

During the whole of the operations on Crete Mr Upham showed a total disregard for his own safety, very seldom used cover as he was always moving around his platoon cheering them on and his coolness, leadership and unremitting attention to his men were an inspiration not only to his men but to the whole company and with everyone with whom he came in contact. For a man in good physical condition the 10 days operations in Crete were strenuous. Mr Upham had diarrhoea from the time we left Servia Pass in Greece on April 18 until we arrived back in Egypt but he remained on duty throughout.⁹²⁷

Upham's reluctant reaction to receiving the award was also indicative of his 'no-nonsense' approach to leadership which found favour with his troops. When General Claude Auckinleck presented Upham with his VC ribbon in November 1941 he congratulated him and stated that New Zealand would be very proud that he had won the decoration; Upham responded, 'I didn't win it, sir.'⁹²⁸ Humbled by the attention and embarrassed on receiving the award, Upham maintained that his actions were only ever those expected of a platoon commander in defeating the enemy and leading his men from the front in combat. Upham never enjoyed or got used to the attention he received from being awarded this high honour, only wearing the medal ribbon on his battledress after being ordered to do so by Brigadier Kippenberger.⁹²⁹ He stated to his biographer, Kenneth Sandford, that he considered that he had done nothing to deserve the award, that he only did his duty as an officer in leading and urging his men onward, that it was

⁹²⁷ Captain D.J. Fontaine, Statement, WAI 1, DA 409.2/2, Citations for Awards, Vol. 10 Tro-Z, ANZ

⁹²⁸ Sandford, p. 112

⁹²⁹ Glyn Harper & Colin Richardson, *In the Face of the Enemy: The Complete History of the Victoria Cross and New Zealand* (Auckland, 2007), p. 231

his men who deserved such recognition for the fighting and that he felt humiliated in receiving the medal which had been rightfully won by his men.⁹³⁰

Receiving a second Victoria Cross only caused more embarrassment for Upham. Again he was recommended for a bar to his VC not for a single incident but for numerous actions of bravery during the breakout at Minqar Qaim on the night of 27 June 1942, where the New Zealand Division successfully fought a desperate battle to escape encirclement by the Africa Korps, and at Ruweisat Ridge on the El Alamein line in mid-July the same year where he personally conducted a dangerous reconnaissance behind enemy lines and, as the captain in command of C Company, 20 Battalion, he led a successful bayonet charge across open ground and captured a strategic German strongpoint, even though he had suffered a serious wound to his arm from machine gun fire. It was while defending the position that he suffered a serious wound to his leg and was later captured while being tended to at a regimental aid post.⁹³¹ Upham remained a prisoner of war until the end of the conflict in 1945, but remained defiant of the enemy by attempting to escape from internment camps on numerous occasions which resulted in him finally being sent to Colditz Castle, notorious for housing Allied officers who repeatedly attempted to escape.⁹³² Although the bar to his medal was not awarded until after Upham had returned to New Zealand once the war had ended, this second honour, together with his publicised exploits as a prisoner of war, had turned this reluctant and humble officer into a living legend with the New Zealand public; recognition which he never sought or wanted.⁹³³

Such bravery in an officer did not necessarily justify higher promotion. Sandy Thomas argues that personal courage was only one of the important characteristics required of an effective officer. He claims to have been a life-long friend of Upham after the war, who he states was one of the best soldiers he knew⁹³⁴ (However, Glyn Harper questions this as he believes Upham had no close friends and would have seen very little of Thomas after the war). Thomas states that in his opinion Upham would not have been a suitable battalion commander because he found it hard to delegate:

⁹³⁰ Kenneth Sandford, *Mark of the Lion: The Story of Charles Upham V.C. and Bar*, Paperback Edition (Auckland, 2003), p. 107

⁹³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 165-173

⁹³² *Ibid.*, p. 242

⁹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 264

⁹³⁴ Thomas, Interview, 31 August 2010

Charlie was a man who would not ask his men to take risks he would not take himself. That was why he constantly exposed himself to enemy fire. He would rather risk his own life than those of his men. That's fine for a platoon commander, but it is irresponsible for a battalion CO to do that. While a platoon commander leads from the front, a battalion commander is required to direct his company commanders from a vantage point behind the forward companies. I don't think Charlie could have done that.⁹³⁵

The only other officer of the 2nd New Zealand Division to receive a Victoria Cross was also a platoon commander. Second-Lieutenant Moana-nui-a-Kiwa Ngarimu upheld his warrior tribal heritage when he was posthumously awarded the honour as a result of his actions leading his platoon at Tebaga Gap in Libya on 26 March 1943. Aged only 24 when he was killed, Ngarimu had enlisted as a private in 1940 but received a commission in April 1942 after he had displayed leadership qualities while serving in the ranks.⁹³⁶ While initially serving as the intelligence officer in 28 (Maori) Battalion he came to the attention of the battalion commander, Lieutenant-Colonel (later Sir Charles) Bennett whose description of Ngarimu summed up the typical qualities required of an infantry platoon subaltern:

He had qualities which indicated to me that here you have a chap who was solid, who can be relied upon and a man of good intelligence who was disciplined, a bit of an introvert, rather than an extrovert. He was in control of his situation all the time. And he was the kind of fellow I felt where, if you give him a job to do, you can be sure he will do it.⁹³⁷

The circumstances surrounding Ngarimu's actions at Tebaga Gap went beyond the level of duty expected of a junior officer in combat. This is clear from reading the official citation for his Victoria Cross as well as eye-witness accounts of his bravery that ultimately led to his death. At the time he was the officer in command of 14 Platoon, C Company, who were directed to make a flanking attack on a prominent enemy-held high point known as Point 209 that dominated one side of the gap.⁹³⁸ The attack commenced in daylight with Ngarimu leading his platoon from the front up a steep rocky slope onto an under-feature that extended in front of the higher position of Point

⁹³⁵ Ibid.

⁹³⁶ Harper & Richardson, *In the Face of the Enemy* (Auckland, 2007), pp. 263

⁹³⁷ Sir Charles Bennett, quoted in *Ngarimu VC: A Maori Hero*, documentary directed by and produced by Pere Maitiia, presented by Wira Gardiner, 1993, quoted in Harper & Richardson, *In the Face of the Enemy*, p. 263

⁹³⁸ Harper & Richardson, pp. 262-268

209. It was only after Ngarimu had personally destroyed two machine gun posts during the attack, that he became the first to reach the crest of the hill where a brief but violent skirmish led to him capturing the position.⁹³⁹ He did not realise that it was only the small high point that he had captured until after he had consolidated the position and had been reinforced by 13 Platoon.⁹⁴⁰ Eventually the Germans launched a series of aggressive counterattacks throughout the night that resulted in heavy casualties to the Maori defenders, including Ngarimu.

It was Ngarimu's grim determination and leadership that ensured the Maori held the exposed position at the end of the battle. The defenders had suffered heavily from exposure to enemy mortar fire, which was followed by a German bayonet charge and it was at this point that Ngarimu yelled at his men to stand up and fight the enemy in hand-to-hand combat.⁹⁴¹ This had been the traditional style of combat of the defenders' ancestors and this action provided one of the few chances in the desert campaign for the men to engage their enemy at close quarters. Ngarimu was shot in the shoulder during this incident but continued to fight and inspire the outnumbered defenders, causing the Germans to withdraw.⁹⁴² In a following attack the Germans managed to penetrate the Maori position but Ngarimu stemmed their advance by rushing to the spot and shot two of the attackers, firing his sub-machine gun from the hip.⁹⁴³ When another German counterattack forced the defenders off the crest of the feature, Ngarimu, described as being in a 'majestic fighting mood' rallied his men and led a successful attack that led to the recapture of the position.⁹⁴⁴ It was at this time that he received a second wound to his leg. He refused an order to report to an aid post, stating that he wished to remain with his men throughout the night.⁹⁴⁵ When dawn broke Ngarimu and twelve remaining defenders still held the outcrop, only two of whom had not been wounded.⁹⁴⁶ At this time the Germans launched their final attack that threatened to overrun the position. Remaining defiant, Ngarimu led a counter-charge firing his machine gun as he led his men forward before finally being killed.⁹⁴⁷ Reinforcements from the battalion reached the position at the same time and prevented its capture.

⁹³⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁹⁴¹ Ibid.

⁹⁴² Ibid.

⁹⁴³ Ibid.

⁹⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁴⁷ Ibid.

Without doubt, Ngarimu's bravery was exceptional during the operation, but it was also his leadership that inspired his men to vigorously defend the exposed position for so long. Had a less determined officer been in command, the heavy losses sustained by the platoons involved may have been in vain.

Although Upham and Ngarimu were the only two officers from the New Zealand expeditionary forces of both world wars to receive Victoria Crosses, acts of gallantry in combat by officers and non-commissioned officers were a common occurrence, with most receiving no official recognition. As Glyn Harper and Colin Richardson argue, many deserving officers and men missed being recommended for the award because of lack of witnesses, inadequate written testimony, or in the case of New Zealand officers during the Great War, 'the sheer bloody-mindedness of some senior military officers,' who blocked such recommendations.⁹⁴⁸ However, other military awards, such as the Military Cross (MC) and Distinguished Service Order (DSO), Military Medal (MM) and the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) had been created to acknowledge the gallantry and exemplary leadership and service of officers and other ranks while on campaign. The Military Cross and the Distinguished Service Order were reserved for officers, while the Military Medal and the Distinguished Conduct Medal were created for enlisted men. The DSO was awarded for meritorious or distinguished service by officers during wartime, and usually for actions in combat, to ranks of major and above. But it was also awarded to some junior officers who had displayed exceptional valour but had been declined recommendations to receive a VC.⁹⁴⁹ The Military Cross was awarded in recognition of 'an act or acts of exemplary gallantry during active operations against the enemy on land,' and was awarded to officers from the rank of captain and below, as well as to warrant officers.⁹⁵⁰ From 1931 it was also determined that the award could be presented to majors. During both wars some officers also received foreign military awards, such as the French *Legion d'Honneur*, which reflected the theatres of combat in which they served. A total of 252 such awards were presented to New Zealand officers, with 93 receiving the French *Legion d'Honneur* and 95 receiving the Belgian equivalent.⁹⁵¹ Another British military

⁹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 20

⁹⁴⁹ 'British Commonwealth Gallantry, Meritorious and Distinguished Service Awards,' www.medals.nzdf.mil.nz

⁹⁵⁰ *London Gazette* (Supplement) No. 56693, p. 11146, 17 October 2002

⁹⁵¹ Lt. Col. John Studholme, *Some Records of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force: Unofficial but compiled from Official Records* (Wellington, 1928), p. 480

award that officially recognised gallantry was ‘Mentioned in Despatches.’ This award was given to both officers and other ranks whose names appeared in official reports written by superior officers and sent to the high command, in which was described the soldier’s gallant or meritorious action or actions in the face of the enemy.⁹⁵² The award provided some official recognition of gallantry that was not considered deserving of a higher award, but nevertheless worthy of some form of commendation. Recipients received no medal for such an award but their names were published in the *London Gazette* and a decoration of a metal oak leaf spray was presented for them to wear on the ribbons of their campaign service medals.⁹⁵³ Many officers and soldiers received such recognition multiple times and it was one of the few honours that could be awarded posthumously.

The number of such awards granted to New Zealand officers from the expeditionary forces as a result of combat actions during both world wars is an indication of the level of personal bravery displayed by those who led the nation’s troops. During the First World War there were eleven Victoria Crosses awarded to New Zealand soldiers, all of whom were from the ranks when they won the award.⁹⁵⁴ The policy at that time was to commission the recipients, with six becoming lieutenants, while the other five had been killed in action before a commission could be bestowed.⁹⁵⁵ One of the promoted men, Second-Lieutenant R.S. Judson of the Auckland Infantry Regiment, had already been awarded the DCM and MM prior to winning a VC.⁹⁵⁶ Throughout the Great War 141 New Zealand officers received a Distinguished Service Order, with eight receiving bars to this medal.⁹⁵⁷ A further 530 New Zealanders received the Military Cross, along with 25 of these men receiving bars to their award.⁹⁵⁸ This is a significant number of awards for gallantry and distinguished service for a force that was only of divisional strength.

It is clear from studying numerous letters and diaries of officers and other ranks that there was some cynicism towards the end of the war over the large number of medals presented not only within the New Zealand Division, but throughout the whole British Army serving on the Western Front. One of the reasons for such large numbers

⁹⁵² Peter Duckers, *British Gallantry Awards, 1855-2000* (Oxford, 2010), p. 54

⁹⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵⁴ Studholme, p. 385

⁹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 480

⁹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

being awarded may well have been to boost morale among the troops after suffering years of misery fighting in the trenches. Such honours were generally not easily won and there was still a standard of gallantry for individuals to have displayed before such awards were bestowed. It is almost certain that Victoria Crosses would have been won by New Zealand officers during the conflict had General Russell not taken such a hard-line approach towards the gallantry displayed by his subordinates. An obvious example was that of Colonel William Malone on Chunuk Bair at Gallipoli, whose gallantry in leading and holding the position under extreme adverse conditions should have resulted in him receiving a posthumous high honour when comparing his actions to those who were later to receive VCs and MCs. The subsequent loss of the position which was partially blamed on Malone and his fractured relationship with his brigade commander, Brigadier-General Johnston, was the most likely reasons Malone did not receive the official recognition he deserved.

Although Godley and Russell did not consider it appropriate for their officers to be worthy of receiving Victoria Crosses, some of their other ranks certainly did. William Anderson, who served in the Otago Infantry Battalion at Gallipoli, wrote that the actions of one officer in his unit during the attack on Chunuk Bair were most deserving:

Presently a move was made up the hill when there was a flurry of rifle fire. The column approaching from another quarter got there just before us and already had the Turks surrounded and their rifles discarded in a heap. After that Major Statham took the lead and we followed him over exceedingly broken country...Major Statham called for 10th Company to follow him. I was thankful I belonged to 8th for I knew we were destined to be casualties to a man. At any time as he led the column there was the expectancy of sudden fire from a concealed position when the leader of the column would be the first to fall. I was hanging back for all I was worth but still finding myself in front. Major Statham continued on till the inevitable contact ended his sacrificial leadership. He earned and should have been awarded the Victoria Cross.⁹⁵⁹

The level of gallantry shown by the officers of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force in World War Two paralleled that of their predecessors in the Great War. This is borne out in personal diaries and letters, as well as the histories of the combat formations that were produced after the conflicts that relied not only on official reports but also written and verbal evidence provided by officers and men who

⁹⁵⁹ William Anderson, Diary – Gallipoli, 6 August 1915, Pugsley Collection

fought in the actions. A comparison of the honours and awards given to those officers who served in the Great War compared to those of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force of the Second World War is not a true reflection of equal gallantry. In World War One 141 DSOs were awarded to New Zealand officers, with eight receiving bars to their medals, while 530 received the Military Cross.⁹⁶⁰ In comparison, during the Second World War up to 31 May 1945 only 87 officers of 2NZEF received DSOs, with fifteen being awarded bars, while only 214 officers received Military Crosses, along with eleven receiving bars.⁹⁶¹ Similarly, there was a large variation in the number of DCMs and MMs awarded to other ranks in both conflicts, with many of the recipients later being commissioned.⁹⁶² In the First World War there were 393 DCMs, including four bars, and 2,066 MMs, including 62 bars, awarded to members of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force.⁹⁶³ In comparison, during the Second World War there were only 95 DCMs, including only one bar, and 488 MMs awarded to soldiers within the ranks of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force.⁹⁶⁴

There are several reasons for the variation in these numbers. The tactics used by the adversaries in both conflicts were significantly different. In the Great War static trench warfare on the Western Front and Gallipoli, dominated by the use of machine guns and artillery, ensured that commanders were limited to a war of attrition where large-scale infantry assaults and probing small-scale patrols into ‘No Man’s Land’ remained the general tactics for almost four years of fighting. Officers and NCOs were expected to lead their troops in advances across open ground under heavy enemy fire with almost impossible chances of success. This led to unprecedented casualties on both sides, resulting in the average service of junior officers of the British Army in the trenches at the height of the war on the Western Front being limited to only six weeks before they were killed or wounded.⁹⁶⁵ Platoon commanders, known as subalterns, were also expected to be the first ‘over the top’ and to lead their men out of the trenches to advance in the face of the enemy. These expectations seem suicidal, but the extensive and well-defended trench systems left almost no ability for any outflanking movements,

⁹⁶⁰ Studholme, p. 480

⁹⁶¹ Annual Report of the General Officer Commanding, New Zealand Military Forces, 16 July 1945, *AJHR*, H 19, Vol. 1, 1945, p. 3

⁹⁶² *Ibid*; Studholme, p. 480

⁹⁶³ Studholme, p. 480

⁹⁶⁴ Annual Report of the General Officer Commanding, New Zealand Military Forces, 16 July 1945, *AJHR*, 1945, Vol. 1, H 19, p. 3

⁹⁶⁵ Moore-Bick, p. 11

ensuring costly frontal assaults remained the standard offensive tactic.⁹⁶⁶ The bravery and stoicism shown by such officers and their troops needed to be acknowledged, resulting in the extensive number of medals awarded. As the Great War progressed more such awards were presented than earlier in the conflict in an effort to boost morale for the troops as well as the civilian populations who were questioning the human cost of the war.

Experiencing some degree of fear was a natural emotion of all soldiers. Few New Zealand officers who served in the Great War ever wrote of such feelings in their letters home or in their diaries. Many wanted to spare their families any worry and at that time it was certainly considered unbecoming of an officer to express such fear in any way. However, officers of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force in the post-war years were more candid about their experiences. In 1986, William Brown conducted a survey of twenty one veteran World War Two officers. The range of officers included lieutenants through to brigadiers, with all the officers surveyed agreeing that they had experienced some fear prior to battle, and to a lesser extent during combat.⁹⁶⁷ Charles Caldwell stated: 'I am sure we all experienced fear at some stage during battle. The greatest amount was probably before and when moving into action. When we became involved one was often too busy to have such thoughts. When one had time to think then fears could recur.'⁹⁶⁸ Ian Burrows was an officer with the 3rd New Zealand Division who saw action fighting against the Japanese in the Solomon Islands. He was of the opinion that everyone experienced fear, but that the question was to what degree the officers and men were able to conceal it.⁹⁶⁹ Lieutenant-General Sir Leonard Thornton was a captain of the New Zealand Staff Corps when war was declared in 1939 and fought with the 2nd New Zealand Division in the Mediterranean throughout the whole conflict. He believed that the great majority of officers and other ranks could manage to master their fear if they were well led.⁹⁷⁰ He argued that a very few became so stimulated by anger that for a time they completely disregarded the question whether they would survive.⁹⁷¹ Upham and Ngarimu are classic cases that support such an argument; Upham stated that he became angry when he saw his men

⁹⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁶⁷ W.F. Brown, 'Going to War and Battle Experience: Views of 21 Officers of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force,' MA Thesis, University of Canterbury, 1986, p. 38

⁹⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁹⁷¹ Ibid.

mown down by enemy machine gun fire during the counterattack on Maleme airfield, while Ngarimu showed a similar attitude with the loss of so many of his platoon while defending his exposed position at Tebaga Gap.⁹⁷²

Anger also played a part in the behaviour of other officers of the 28th (Maori) Battalion. Arapeta Awatere was the commander of C Company at Tebaga Gap where he won a Military Cross. His brother Tom also served in the battalion and was killed after some Germans used a ruse of a white surrender flag to lure him from cover. Hearing this, Awatere led an immediate frontal attack on the enemy position and personally shot dead the German soldier who had killed his brother, while ordering his men to shoot the rest of the defenders.⁹⁷³ In this incident any sense of self-preservation was superseded by a greater need and responsibility for *utu*: revenge for the death of his brother by a dishonourable enemy.⁹⁷⁴ Another such example is that of Sir Fred Allen, later All Black captain and the most successful selector-coach of the All Blacks to date. After being promoted in the field, as a young lieutenant leading a platoon in 30 Battalion of the 3rd NZ Division during the Nissan Island operations he led a rescue mission to support a besieged unit commanded by his friend, Baldy Hewitson, that was surrounded and was short on ammunition.⁹⁷⁵ While his superiors were frustratingly procrastinating in deciding what action to take, Allen realised immediate action was required and led a section of his men through a mile of dense, Japanese invested jungle to reach the beleaguered force. When questioned about his motivation for such action in later years, Allen stated, ‘Well, Baldy Hewitson was a friend of mine,’ and that he was not going to sit around and wait to hear that he had been killed.⁹⁷⁶

Ability to Maintain Psychological and Morale Strength

The ability for combat officers to maintain psychological and morale strength under extreme circumstances was crucial in leading their men into battle, especially at platoon, troop and company level. How the junior officers of the New Zealand

⁹⁷² Sandford, pp. 73-75

⁹⁷³ Hinemoa Ruataupare (ed), *Awatere: A Soldier's Story* (Wellington, 2003), p. 6

⁹⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁵ Alan Sayers & Les Watkins, *Fred the Needle: The Untold Story of Sir Fred Allen* (Auckland, 2011), p. 26

⁹⁷⁶ Ibid.

expeditionary forces attempted to do this was not unique. The steps they took, whether consciously or subconsciously, were most likely universal for officers and other ranks throughout all the military forces involved in the two world wars, including the enemy. The conditions these soldiers served under were not only physically taxing but also psychologically and emotionally taxing as well. Major James McCarroll of the Auckland Mounted Rifles, who had been wounded at Gallipoli and evacuated to hospital in England, wrote of what happened to those officers who proved psychologically unfit for combat:

I have seen most of the patients aboard [the ship heading to England], also the hellish side of war. Fine strong men maimed for life while the rest are being made fit again to have another go. They take their misfortunes splendidly. Several officers are aboard, although not wounded are quite broken up and had to be sent home.⁹⁷⁷

The ways in which the New Zealand officers coped with the stresses of overseas service varied through individual choice, but there were certain trends that showed commonality in both conflicts. Personal letters and diaries provide the greatest source of evidence of how the combat officers and their men coped with the stresses of trench warfare and continued to carry out their duties in the face of imminent death after months and years of campaigning. Lieutenant Cecil McClure, MC and Bar, who had been studying to be a Presbyterian minister in 1914, served in the Otago Infantry Regiment and fought and survived the major actions at Ypres, Passchendaele, Rossignol Wood and Bapaume on the Western Front, after he had already served as an enlisted medical orderly at Gallipoli. His letters home prove that the experiences of war had changed him as a person as he reflected:

Where or when could any human being see his men hit with explosive shells and yet deliberately march on with the remainder, leaving the wounded to their fate? What kind of man would pass wounded men crying for water ignoring them apparently as if it were no concern of his? How can men walk deliberately into a hail of bullets and showers of shrapnel seeking only the lives of others? Why do men choose such hell as battle? Yet all these things have been my experience. To anyone, except those who have been in battle, they have no meaning, no matter how vivid the imagination.⁹⁷⁸

⁹⁷⁷ Lieutenant-Colonel James McCarroll, *Diary: May 1915 – July 1916, Part 2*, entry 26 June 1915, MS - 2005/381/2/3, KMARL

⁹⁷⁸ Patrick McClure, *Act Justly: The Life of Cecil McClure, MC & Bar* (Sydney, 2002), p. 26

The officers and men certainly had weeks and months of inaction and boredom during the winter months on the Western Front to contemplate their fate. Harold Bell was a lieutenant in the New Zealand Rifle Brigade in 1917 after enlisting as a rifleman in 1915. He described how the toll of serving at the front and of probable death led to a change in personality, even though he remained determined to do his duty:

This experience has been almost too much for me as it has proved overwhelming for many poor fellows. Never, I suppose, has there been such sudden revolutions in men's natures as under the holocaust here. I have lost buoyancy and joy and lightness, I feel hardened always, a sadness and seriousness has entered my soul that I have never known before. I feel now that I shall never lose this repression, this sombreness, the funereal tint, it shall follow me to life's end, a shadow and weariness.⁹⁷⁹

Other officers argued that the only way to deal with the stresses was to take a fatalistic approach. This acceptance of imminent death took away the expectation of surviving the war and enabled the officers to continue to carry out their duties. They no longer had to worry about death, leaving it to fate as to when and where it would happen. Some argue that it was fatalism that inspired some officers, NCOs and other ranks to take aggressive actions in combat that they might not necessarily have done if they were trying to survive the conflict. This sense of fatalism, that appears to be prevalent towards the end of the Great War, was especially strong among those who had served at Gallipoli and during the early campaigns of the war, and who had experienced many friends and comrades being killed beside them.

This sense of fatalism was also prevalent within the 2nd Expeditionary Force during World War Two. Watty McEwan, who was Freyberg's personal radio operator during the battle of El Alamein through to the Axis defeat in Tunisia, believed that most soldiers accepted that when they put on their country's uniform that they handed over their lives, stating that '...the easiest way to accept death is to acknowledge to yourself that you will die. If any proof of this statement is required, my recommendation is to spend time with an infantry unit that has seen action and is about to see some more.'⁹⁸⁰ The same attitude was expressed by Denver Fountaine when he wrote after hearing of the death of an acquaintance: 'I'm afraid death doesn't mean or convey as much to us

⁹⁷⁹ Michael Burton (ed.), *Your Soldier Boy: The Letters of Harold Bell, 1915-1918* (Bath, 1995), p. 87

⁹⁸⁰ Watty McEwan, *The Salamander's Brood* (Masterton, 2007), p. 220

as it did before the war, and although one regrets the passing of anyone we know well it doesn't affect us to the same extent.⁹⁸¹

For some officers, smoking remained the simple coping mechanism that got them through while at the front: 'Nerves all ajar, a restless, jumpy brain, a philosophy gone bankrupt – all are healed and comforted and soothed by the gentle lady (Nicotine).'⁹⁸² Denver Fountaine stated in a letter to his future wife that on Crete he had been without his pipe and that when he returned to Egypt he swore he would never be without one again.⁹⁸³ However, in the same letter he complained that when he next went into battle in North Africa that he bit the stem of his pipe during a particularly 'rough ride' and was forced to smoke cigarettes for three weeks.⁹⁸⁴ Alcohol also seemed to be a sought after commodity by all ranks when out of the frontline, with Fountaine going as far as describing in his letters the brands and amount of alcoholic drinks he and his fellow officers regularly consumed in the officers mess and hotels, as well as regularly getting together with his enlisted mates from his home town for drinks.⁹⁸⁵

Comparison of Experiences: WW1 and WW2

The military strategies of the Second World War were determined by the advances in mechanical warfare, leading to less costly tactics. The German tactic of *Blitzkrieg* (Lightning War), first used in the invasion of Poland in September 1939, was the first major example of the combined use of mobile armoured formations, backed with infantry support and aerial bombing provided by the *Luftwaffe*, to isolate and quickly overrun enemy positions. Such revolutionary tactics were in contrast to those used in the First World War, providing opportunities for outflanking operations and less reliance on costly frontal infantry attacks. Platoon officers were still expected to lead from the front, but they found themselves more likely to be exposed to heavy aerial and artillery bombardments rather than leading unsupported bayonet charges. However, these still occurred, with the most famous involving the 2nd New Zealand Division in

⁹⁸¹ Fountaine, Letter to fiancée, 19 November 1942

⁹⁸² Burton, p. 86

⁹⁸³ Fountaine, Letter to fiancée, 16 December 1941

⁹⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁸⁵ Fountaine, Letter to fiancée, 23 January 1941

the counter-attack at Galatas on Crete on 25 May 1941 and at Ruweisat Ridge at El Alamein on 16 July 1942.

The improved training in leadership for the New Zealand commissioned officers and NCOs during the Second World War was reflected in how they led their men into battle compared to those in the Great War. Captain Boord of 24 Battalion wrote in his 1948 survey response that the psychological approach to training and battle was entirely different from the First World War, being more logical and sensible.⁹⁸⁶ He argued that New Zealand officers were told in the Second World War that it was not their job to die a hero for their country but to live and continue to be effective leaders.⁹⁸⁷ He believed this was achieved by officers having a full knowledge of their own and the enemy's methods, tactics, weapons and supporting arms, as well as focussing on team work.⁹⁸⁸ According to Boord, emphasis was placed on both the officers and other ranks not to let their mates down and that everybody had to learn their own job in the team.⁹⁸⁹ Colonel Bill Thornton's view in response to the same survey was that it was only through proper training and experience in combat that the officers and their NCOs were able to gain the confidence and maintain the morale of their men to work effectively as a team.⁹⁹⁰ All those surveyed agreed that it took a good officer who knew his job and responsibilities within his unit to make a good team, and that it was the philosophy of promoting teamwork that was influential in the successes the New Zealand divisions achieved during that war.

The officers and troops of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force also had fewer combat opportunities than their predecessors in the Great War. In the First World War the New Zealand troops entered their first major campaign, Gallipoli, only eight months after the force was created. In comparison, 2NZEF did not see action until the Greek campaign in March 1941, eighteen months after its formation. On the Western Front the New Zealand Division was used as part of a rotation system for infantry divisions that saw the New Zealand troops stationed at the front line about a third of the time from April 1916 until the end of the war in November 1918. When not at the front the Division was either held in reserve or sent to rest and training areas in the rear.⁹⁹¹

⁹⁸⁶ R. Boord, "Response to Survey- Marshall Critique , ' IA 77, Box 7, Item 38, ANZ

⁹⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁹⁰ Colonel William Thornton, "Response to Survey- Marshall Critique , ' IA 77, Box 7, Item 38, ANZ

⁹⁹¹ *The Russell Family Saga*, Vol. 3, World War 1, 1914-1919, 12-13 October 1916 Diary entry, ed. Reginald Frank Gambrill, MS Papers 0822, ATL

The New Zealand Mounted Rifle Brigade was also at the forefront of the campaigns to capture the Sinai and Palestine, where the troops were rotated in and out of the front line similarly to those serving in France, although not as regularly.⁹⁹²

Senior commanders, especially in the latter stages of the conflict, were fully aware that the rotation system was essential in attempting to maintain the morale and fighting fitness of their troops. Corporal Jim McMillan, a Gallipoli veteran in the Canterbury Mounted Rifles, wrote in his memoirs after the war that, 'had it not been for these periodical brief spells, it is doubtful that many of the troops could have been able to carry on.'⁹⁹³ Terry Kinloch argues that by mid-1918 the Anzac troops in Chaytor's division were near exhaustion and in a similar condition to the troops at the end of the Gallipoli campaign. He states that by this time the cumulative strain of two years of continuous campaigning in desert conditions with a few short rest periods was not enough to maintain health and morale.⁹⁹⁴ In theory, the New Zealand troops were only expected to serve periods of about one month at a time on the front line in the Jordan Valley in 1918 before being rotated out to rest camps; however, operational requirements ensured that they only received two rest periods of a fortnight each in June and August.⁹⁹⁵ By this time many of the Main Body veterans, including officers, were near their limits of their endurance, leading to an increase in the sick rate.⁹⁹⁶

In contrast, during the Second World War the two New Zealand divisions had more rest periods away from the front line. After the operations in Greece and on Crete, the 2nd New Zealand Division was a spent force and needed an extended period of months to rebuild as an effective fighting force. Replacement battalion officers were required to fill the vacancies left by those killed, captured or wounded in the previous campaigns, as well as reinforcements for other ranks to bring the units up to operational strength. This meant that the division did not see action again until November 1941 when it took part in 'Operation Crusader' in the relief of Tobruk. Although this operation was successful, it proved somewhat ill-fated for the 2nd New Zealand Division in that it suffered more than 30 per cent of the total British casualties in this operation,

⁹⁹² HQ NZ Mounted Rifle Brigade, War Diary, WA 40/1, ANZ

⁹⁹³ Jim McMillan, 'Forty Thousand Horsemen: being the Memoirs of 7/1322 Corporal Jim McMillan, Canterbury Mounted Rifles, First NZEF, on Service in Gallipoli and Palestine, WW1,' unpublished manuscript, property of C.B. McMillan and family, p. 254, quoted in Terry Kinloch, *Devils on Horses* (Auckland, 2007) p. 297

⁹⁹⁴ Kinloch, *Devils on Horses*, p. 297

⁹⁹⁵ HQ NZ Mounted Rifle Brigade, Unregistered Files, WA 40/1, ANZ

⁹⁹⁶ HQ NZ Mounted Rifle Brigade, Unregistered Files, WA 40/4, ANZ

which included 879 killed, 1,699 wounded and 2,042 missing.⁹⁹⁷ Glyn Harper argues that the losses were more than any other division within the Eighth Army, being 1,000 more than the losses on Crete, twice the numbers lost in Greece and three times more than sustained in the Cassino battles.⁹⁹⁸ Again the Division had to be withdrawn from the front for seven months to rebuild and train before being built up to operational strength. Those officers of the short-lived 3rd New Zealand Division in the Pacific had even fewer opportunities to excel in combat, with operations limited to the capture of the island of Villa Lavella in September and October 1943, and an amphibious landing operation in the capture of the Treasury Islands of the northern Solomon Islands later in October the same year.

The number of honours and awards issued to officers of the New Zealand expeditionary forces was also dictated by their superior commanders. As previously mentioned, during the Great War Major-General Sir Andrew Russell refused to endorse any recommendations for Victoria Crosses for any New Zealand officer no matter how deserving the officer's actions may have been. In contrast, Brigadier-General Herbert Hart fully supported those officers and men whom he thought should receive recognition for actions above and beyond the call of duty. As a battalion commander on the Somme in September 1916, after the successful but costly capture of the Flers trench system, he recommended six out of 25 officers in his battalion for honours; two being mentioned in despatches and three recommended for the Military Cross.⁹⁹⁹ During this action ten officers of Hart's Wellington battalion became casualties; six were killed, including a major, a captain and four lieutenants, while four others were wounded, including three lieutenants.¹⁰⁰⁰ The high percentage of casualties sustained by the junior officers of this unit is comparative to casualties suffered by other infantry battalions of both the New Zealand Division in the First World War and the 2nd New Zealand Division in the Second World War. At Passchendaele in October 1917, 13 of the 25 officers (52 per cent) of the 1st Battalion of the Otago Infantry Regiment became casualties, including seven killed; of the 13 officers, nine of them were second

⁹⁹⁷ Glyn Harper, *Kippenberger: An Inspired New Zealand Commander*, Paperback Edition (Auckland, 2005), p. 129

⁹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹⁹ John Crawford (ed.), *The Devil's Own War: The First World War Diary of Brigadier-General Herbert Hart* (Auckland, 2008), p. 143

¹⁰⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

lieutenants.¹⁰⁰¹ In some instances the casualty rates were even higher; an example being 20 Battalion during the fighting in Greece and Crete, where 22 of the 25 officers of the battalion had become casualties.¹⁰⁰² All four previous company commanders had become casualties or prisoners of war as a result of the two operations.¹⁰⁰³ Kippenberger states that, when his battalion was reorganised, of his four company commanders only Captain Denver Fontaine had served in Greece and Crete, where he had initially been a platoon commander.¹⁰⁰⁴ It was Fontaine who recommended Second Lieutenant Charles Upham for both his VCs as a result of his actions on Crete and at Minqar Qaim and Ruweisat Ridge.¹⁰⁰⁵

It was how the New Zealand citizen-soldier junior officers performed in the extremes of battle, as well as preparing their troops during the long periods of inactivity, that ultimately determined the overall performance of the expeditionary forces during both major conflicts. What has also become clear through this study is that there was a somewhat unique and preferred style of leadership, at least at platoon and company level, that developed within the New Zealand expeditionary forces, compared to that of the British Army and other larger forces within the Empire and Commonwealth, where a sense of professional and determined leadership was combined with the national tradition of achievement through a team effort. It was this style of command and leadership, especially in the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force during the Second World War, that many experienced officers argue proved most successful in leading New Zealand troops in war.¹⁰⁰⁶ The neighbourliness and community spirit, along with the team or ‘crew’ ethos that were important features of colonial New Zealand society, were reflected in the relationships forged between officers and other ranks within the expeditionary forces. The shared experiences in war, especially in combat, not only confirmed, but strengthened these older social values, and it is a legacy that has permeated throughout our society since that time.

¹⁰⁰¹ Lieutenant A.E. Byrne, *Official History of the Otago Regiment, NZEF in the Great War, 1914-1918*, 2nd ed. (Dunedin, n.d.), p. 225

¹⁰⁰² W.A. Glue & D.J.C. Pringle, *20 Battalion and Armoured Regiment*, Historical Publications Branch, Department of Internal Affairs (Wellington, 1957), p. 147

¹⁰⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰⁴ Major-General Sir Howard Kippenberger, *Infantry Brigadier* (London, 1949), p. 79

¹⁰⁰⁵ Harper & Richardson, pp. 201 & 230

¹⁰⁰⁶ W.F. Brown, ‘Going to War and Battle Experience: Views of 21 Officers of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force,’ MA Thesis, University of Canterbury, 1986

Chapter 9

Officers and Other Ranks: A New Zealand Comradeship

Little has been written by historians regarding the relationships between the officers and the enlisted men of the New Zealand military forces during the First and Second World Wars. From the reading and research conducted for this thesis it appears the New Zealand combat soldiers who served in the Great War, including the officers, generally wrote little in their diaries and letters that indicate a familiarity between the ranks unless they were related or friends in civilian life. The evidence suggests that during the First World War the traditional military boundaries of rank within the British Army remained evident in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, more so than in the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force of the Second World War. However, it is generally accepted that, in the last years of both conflicts, these boundaries became less defined due to the increased number of men commissioned from the ranks. John McLeod created some heated debate among World War Two veterans when he challenged some of the perceptions about the egalitarianism pervading 2NZEF. His argument was that, although he accepted that there were closer relationships between the ranks than in the Great War, there was never the level of familiarity and equal comradeship that the soldiers believed or wished there to be.¹⁰⁰⁷ He argued that a military organisation structured on the principles of egalitarianism and democracy simply could not function effectively.¹⁰⁰⁸ This chapter builds on McLeod's work by contending that a strength of the New Zealand forces was to maintain a formal military hierarchy while developing a degree of close comradeship between officers and men, more so than in other, larger military forces of the British Empire and Commonwealth.

¹⁰⁰⁷ John McLeod, *Myth and Reality: The New Zealand Soldier in World War Two* (Auckland, 1986), p.p. 165-169

¹⁰⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

Close Comradeship

There was a perception of a limited egalitarian ethos within the New Zealand expeditionary forces compared to the British Army, especially in 2NZEF during the latter part of the Italian campaign in the Second World War. This ensured that most soldiers, no matter what their rank, were generally treated well. An example occurred early in the Great War when both officers and enlisted New Zealand soldiers ate at Shepherds Hotel in Cairo, which remained affordable due to the New Zealand rank and file receiving a higher rate of pay than their British compatriots. Although during the Second World War, Freyberg, in an effort to maintain military protocol and discipline, argued that it was inappropriate for officers and enlisted men to eat and drink together at the same table, at times this did occur due to the close relationships of many within the expeditionary force, where brothers, cousins, school friends and newly commissioned other ranks took the chance to socialize together when off duty. He was especially concerned that drunkenness among young junior officers would have a detrimental effect on discipline within units.¹⁰⁰⁹ However, Freyberg was also insistent that all his men had a place where they could afford a decent meal, resulting in New Zealand Clubs being established in all the main cities where the 2nd New Zealand Division had a presence. These clubs were mostly established in hotels that also provided accommodation for all ranks, although the officers had preference for the better rooms, while the enlisted men generally had to share their rooms with a number of others.¹⁰¹⁰

The most obvious privilege provided to commissioned officers was the appointment of a soldier-servant, known in the Second World War as a 'batman.' As in the British Army, New Zealand officers either were allocated or selected a private from within their battalion or regiment to act as a personal servant to attend to their needs. Their duties included acting as a valet to maintain the officer's uniform and personal equipment, attending to the officer's horse or driving his vehicle if he had one, acting as a 'runner' in conveying orders, acting as a personal body guard to the officer in combat and other miscellaneous tasks that the officer determined.¹⁰¹¹ However, unlike

¹⁰⁰⁹ Freyberg, 'Address to Officers of 2 NZ Division Concerning Training and Function of 2 NZ Division,' 7 July 1943, WAI 1/290, ANZ

¹⁰¹⁰ Jack Collins, Interview, 14 April 2010

¹⁰¹¹ W.B. 'Sandy' Thomas, Interview, 6 June 2010

the British Army where it was not uncommon for batmen to become domestic servants for their aristocratic officers after their military service, New Zealand enlisted men tended to return to their previous civilian occupations if they could. Officers placed great trust in their batmen who fought beside them in combat where often strong lasting relationships were formed if they both survived the war. Many batmen were killed alongside their officers, especially in the First World War, with an example being that of the batman to Lieutenant Ray Lawry of the Canterbury battalion who was killed beside his officer while Lawry was directing the defence of a trench at Quinn's Post at Gallipoli on 1 June 1915.¹⁰¹²

Most of the volunteer New Zealand officers tended to select batmen whom they had known from civilian life. When 20 Battalion was forming at Burnham camp in October 1939 Denver Fountaine chose Private Hugh Hawes, a local from Fountaine's home town of Westport, to be his batman.¹⁰¹³ In February 1941 Fountaine selected another Westport man, Private Russell "Rusty" Roberts as his batman, who served him until he was subsequently captured.¹⁰¹⁴ Fountaine and Roberts knew each other before the war and remained firm friends after the conflict, despite the differences in rank, when they returned to civilian life in Westport and where they remained friends until their deaths in later life. This indicates that their relationship was based on mutual respect rather than subserviency.

The relationships between the officers and other ranks within the New Zealand expeditionary forces were generally less formal than those in the British Army. The emerging perception of New Zealand as a more egalitarian society than Britain, that had developed throughout the colonial era of the late nineteenth century and grew in the first half of the twentieth century, was reflected in the military forces that served overseas during the two great conflicts. Leading up to the Great War New Zealanders saw themselves as being 'Better British' and the colony as a 'working man's paradise,' free from aristocratic dominance and Britain's urban squalor, and where reasonable wages and land could be acquired by the lower classes.¹⁰¹⁵ The small population and the regional-based formation of the infantry battalions, as well as the mounted rifle

¹⁰¹² Bill Leadley, *Shrapnel and Semaphore: A Signaller's Diary From Gallipoli*, compiled by Jan Chamberlain (Auckland, 2008), p. 46

¹⁰¹³ Fountaine, Letter to fiancée, 14 October 1939

¹⁰¹⁴ Fountaine, Letter to fiancée, 2 February 1941

¹⁰¹⁵ W.J. Gardner, 'A Colonial Economy,' in *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Second Edition, ed. Geoffrey W. Rice (Auckland, 1992), pp. 57-86

regiments in the Great War, ensured that many officers and other ranks had volunteered or were conscripted from the same towns and districts, and either knew each other well in civilian life or had mutual acquaintances. In some cases fathers, sons, brothers, cousins, brothers-in-law, close friends, school mates and sporting team mates either enlisted or served together. Examples of this are many and varied, including some high profile officers, as well as lesser known platoon commanders. In the Great War Lieutenant-Colonel Charles ‘German Joe’ Mackesy who commanded the Auckland Mounted Rifles had three sons who served under him in the same unit, along with a number of other close relatives, resulting in the squadron which included the North Auckland Mounted Rifles contingent of the regiment being known as ‘Nearly All Mackesy’s Relations.’¹⁰¹⁶ Lieutenant-Colonel William Malone who commanded the Wellington Infantry Battalion in 1915 also had two sons who initially served in the ranks of the unit.¹⁰¹⁷ In the Second World War, General Freyberg’s son, Paul, served as an enlisted man in 23 Battalion before later being commissioned, even though his father commanded the whole expeditionary force.¹⁰¹⁸ Harold Todd recalls serving in the same company as Paul Freyberg when the battalion was training in Egypt, stating that he certainly was not treated any differently from the other enlisted volunteers.¹⁰¹⁹ Another example is that of Denver Fountaine, who entered Burnham Camp in late 1939 with his friend and fiancée’s brother, Sid Wood.¹⁰²⁰ Both were commissioned when 20 Battalion was originally formed, while Fountaine’s brother, Ray, initially served as an enlisted man in 26 Battalion, another South Island battalion, before being commissioned when serving overseas.¹⁰²¹ It was not unusual for brothers to command brothers within platoons or companies, especially during the First World War. The Morpeth brothers of Waihi were such an example with six brothers serving in the Auckland Infantry Regiment during the Great War. Three of them enlisted and served together at Gallipoli, with Nick Morpeth being the platoon commander of his older

¹⁰¹⁶ D. Green, ‘Mackesy, Charles Ernest Randolph 1861-1925’, Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, updated 16 December 2003. URL: <http://www.dnzdb.govt.nz/>

¹⁰¹⁷ W.H. Cunningham, & C.A.L. Treadwell, *The Wellington Regiment, N.Z.E.F., 1914-1919* (Wellington, 1928), p. 377

¹⁰¹⁸ Harold Todd, Interview, 16 August 2011

¹⁰¹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰²⁰ Fountaine, Letter to fiancée, 6 October 1939

¹⁰²¹ Ray Fountaine, *My Army Life* (Unpublished autobiography and sketches), p. 4

brother, Gerald, who served as a private.¹⁰²² Ironically, from the letters of Gerald Morpeth, it appears his younger brother was determined to show no favouritism to his older sibling in regard to discipline, even though they had a close relationship.¹⁰²³ Likewise, Gerald had a great respect for the rank his brother held and was determined not to take advantage of him.¹⁰²⁴

One important primary source that provides key evidence of the close relationships between commissioned officers and enlisted men within the province or regional-recruited battalions and regiments of the New Zealand expeditionary forces is the *Southland Soldiers and their Next of Kin Roll of Honour*, compiled by Robert Troup in 1920. By comparing the recorded names and addresses of soldiers' next of kin to men with the same surname it is possible to establish that many officers either commanded brothers and/ or cousins in the same unit, or served in other units that fought alongside each other. One noted example is that of Lieutenant James Hargest (later Brigadier Hargest of 2NZEF) who originally served in the Otago Mounted Rifles during the Great War but later transferred to the Otago Infantry Regiment on the Western Front where his brother served as a private in the same regiment.¹⁰²⁵ Another example is that of the Domigan brothers from Gore in Southland; William Domigan embarked with the 5th Reinforcements as a captain in the Otago Infantry Battalion, while his brother Arthur left New Zealand with the Main Body as a sergeant in the same battalion.¹⁰²⁶ There are other examples of brothers embarking together but in different units, such as Second-Lieutenant John Hewat and Bombardier Ralph Hewat of Invercargill who both embarked with the 5th Reinforcements; John in the Canterbury Infantry Battalion and Ralph in the New Zealand Field Artillery.¹⁰²⁷ A notable example of cousins serving together in the same corps is that of Captain William Cuthbert McCaw and Private William Armstrong McCaw of Invercargill, who both served in the New Zealand Medical Corps.¹⁰²⁸ What such evidence indicates is that many commissioned officers within the New Zealand expeditionary forces had strong established relationships with brothers and extended family members who served in the

¹⁰²² Allan Morpeth, *The Waiheathens at Gallipoli: Diary and Letters of a Waihi Soldier, Gerald (Tad) Morpeth – One of the six Morpeth brother from Waihi who served in World War I* (Whangamata, 2008)

¹⁰²³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰²⁵ Robert Troup, *Southland Soldiers and their Next of Kin Roll of Honour* (Invercargill, 1920), p. 25

¹⁰²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 22

¹⁰²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 26

¹⁰²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 28

ranks, and that such relationships had an effect on the style of command and leadership the New Zealanders developed throughout both wars.

It was the close relationship between the officers and the troops, based on mutual respect and trust, which fostered the eventual fighting abilities of the New Zealand divisions. The local provenance of the infantry battalions that made up the bulk of both expeditionary forces certainly helped in fostering these relationships. The majority of the officers of these battalions came from the same communities as the enlisted men and they shared great pride in their units. Both Sandy Thomas and Haddon Donald state that, as in the British Army, the loyalty of officers and other ranks was to their battalion or regiment first.¹⁰²⁹ Donald's loyalty to 22 Battalion was so strong that he only accepted promotion if it meant that he could remain with the unit.¹⁰³⁰ Although both he and Thomas were able to remain with their battalions throughout the war, with both going on to command them by 1945, others reluctantly accepted promotion into other battalions. Denver Fountaine was typical of most experienced officers promoted to command battalions in that they were required to fill vacancies in other battalions. In August 1942 he was a major and second in command of 20 Battalion, but by October the same year he was promoted to lieutenant-colonel of 26 Battalion, which he commanded at El Alamein through to the end of 1944. Fountaine described a sense of loss at having to transfer from the battalion in which he had fought and served throughout Greece, Crete and the early North African campaign, with the only compensation being that he was now to command another South Island unit that included many men he knew from his home town.¹⁰³¹

Identities of Place and Race

Patriotism and a sense of duty were qualities exhibited by all those officers who volunteered for the Main Bodies of both World Wars. Loyalty and support for the British Empire was strong in New Zealand throughout the first half of the twentieth century and especially in 1914, during a period when Pugsley argues New Zealanders

¹⁰²⁹ Thomas, Interview, 6 June 2010 & Haddon Donald, Letter to author, 20 June 2010

¹⁰³⁰ Donald, *In Peace & War*, p. 108

¹⁰³¹ Amber Jo Illsley, 'Col. Fountaine remembers El Alamein,' *The News*, Westport, 22 October 1992, p. 6

proudly called themselves ‘sons and daughters of the Empire’.¹⁰³² This was evident by the vast majority of those enlisting during the First World War who wrote their nationality as ‘British’ on their attestation papers.¹⁰³³

However, the attestation papers from those serving in the Second World War also provide evidence of a significant change in social perception of identity. The sense of duty of the officers, and those who were to become officers later in the war, was still obvious through their volunteering to defend the Empire. But almost all recorded their nationality as ‘New Zealander’ instead of British.¹⁰³⁴ John McLeod makes the point: ‘There can be little doubt that war has played a significant role in the evolution of New Zealand society and values as well as its quest for both national identity and status’.¹⁰³⁵ It is now accepted by most historians that it was through the experience of extensive active service overseas as part of a homogenous British Army that a strong sense of New Zealand identity was forged where many soldiers from the small dominion realised that as a whole they had unique social behaviours and attitudes that set them apart from troops from Britain.

This New Zealand nationalism was further enhanced by the increasing anti-British attitude of the New Zealand soldiery, and within other British dominion forces, from the failure of the Gallipoli campaign in 1915. Glyn Harper, argues that after the campaign most New Zealand soldiers lost faith in their commander, Major-General Godley, who was seen as being severe, incompetent and foreign, ‘a true-blue British officer in command of a division that by 1917 was largely anti-British’.¹⁰³⁶ Such attitudes were further fostered by exposure to the British class system that many soldiers themselves, or their parents or grandparents, had immigrated to New Zealand to escape from, as well as the perceived failure of military strategy on the Western Front that led to unprecedented casualties blamed to some extent on the British High Command.¹⁰³⁷

¹⁰³² Christopher Pugsley (et.al), *Scars on the Heart: Two Centuries of New Zealand at War*, Auckland, 1996, p. 46

¹⁰³³ New Zealand Defence Force Personnel Records, Archway Digitised Records, Archives New Zealand, Wellington

¹⁰³⁴ Personnel Files, New Zealand Defence Force Archives, Trentham

¹⁰³⁵ John McLeod, *Myth & Reality – The New Zealand Soldier in World War II* (Auckland, 1986), p. 8

¹⁰³⁶ Glyn Harper, *Dark Journey: Three Key New Zealand Battles of the Western Front* (Auckland, 2007), p. 116

¹⁰³⁷ Ian McGibbon (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Military History* (Auckland, 2000), p. 175

Loyalty and camaraderie was generally strongest within specific companies within infantry battalions, where the officers and their men had been recruited from the same locality. This fostered a sense of identity similar to that of the ‘Pal Battalions’ of Kitchener’s British volunteer army of the First World War. An example of this were the C companies of 20, 23 and 26 Battalions that comprised South Island men, mainly from Buller, Westland and North Canterbury. Most were of Irish Catholic or Protestant Scots lineage, while many were coal miners, sawmillers, farmers, bushmen, shearers, stockmen and labourers who prided themselves on having a rugged durability to cope with the rigours of life, including war. They were men who often worked in gangs or crews and who valued mateship and ‘team’ priorities. In the army this ethic was easily translated into loyalty to one’s comrades, mates, their officers and their company first, then to the battalion. Denver Fountaine, a West Coaster himself, was a second-lieutenant in C Company when the battalion was first formed. He described with pride how several Buller and Westland enlisted men from the company had written their own ‘West Coast National Anthem,’ (a variant of the *Anzac Army* which had been composed and sung by Australian soldiers in the First World War) which the whole company, including officers, sung on route marches:

‘The West Coast Infantry’

We are Mick Savage’s soldiers,
The West Coast Infantry -
We cannot fight and will not drill.
So what Bloody use are we?

We’ll fight for King and Country,
And the girls we used to know,
And all the other Bastards,
Who haven’t got the guts to go.

And when we get to Berlin,
Herr Hitler he will say:
Oh, Ich Mein Gott
You’re a Bloody Fine Lot,
The West Coast Infantry.

And when the war is over,
 We'll come home safe and well,
 The boys will go with the girls they know,
 And the rest can go to Hell.

We'll drink our beer in schooners,
 And have a damned good spree.
 Oh, Ich Mein Gott,
 What a Bloody Fine Lot,
 The West Coast Infantry.¹⁰³⁸

Prior to the Greek campaign Charles Upham eventually accepted a commission and took great pride in leading a platoon from C Company of 20 Battalion, whose ruggedness and determination matched his own.¹⁰³⁹ Kippenberger, who was the commanding officer of 20 Battalion at the time, recognised that Upham's 'innocent indifference to many of the traditions and formalities of military life' matched the attitude of the 'Coasters,' making him the ideal officer to lead them.¹⁰⁴⁰ Upham eventually commanded the whole company until he was wounded and captured at Ruweisat Ridge in 1942. Another highly decorated veteran of C Company of 23 Battalion, Sergeant Eric Batchelor, who was awarded the DCM twice in Italy, stated in a post-war interview that he refused a commission simply because he wanted to stay with his West Coast mates in C Company.¹⁰⁴¹

The unique relationship between the officers and other ranks within 28 (Maori) Battalion is another obvious example. The companies of this battalion were recruited within specific tribal areas, dominated by the largest tribes: A Company from Nga Puhī and Aupouri in Northland, B Company from Te Arawa in the Bay of Plenty, C Company from Ngati Porou on the East Coast of the North Island and D Company from Ngati Toa and Ngati Kahungunu from the lower North Island and Ngai Tahu from the South Island.¹⁰⁴² Initially, the company grade officers from this battalion were nominated from the traditional chiefly families within each tribe, with many such

¹⁰³⁸ Fountaine, Letter to fiancée, 23 October 1939

¹⁰³⁹ Sandford, pp. 48-49

¹⁰⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 113

¹⁰⁴¹ Eric Batchelor, Interview, *New Zealand At War* (Auckland, Communicado Productions, 1995)

¹⁰⁴² Wira Gardiner, *Te Mura O Te Ahi: The Story of the Maori Battalion* (Auckland, 1992), p. 30

officers being closely related to enlisted men within their company and platoons.¹⁰⁴³ As a warrior race, young Maori men who volunteered for overseas military service were given an opportunity to attain *mana* (honour) through combat. The *mana* they gained also reflected on their *iwi* (tribe), giving them greater incentive to fight well in battle.¹⁰⁴⁴ Officers were expected to lead by example and those who proved to be aggressive leaders in battle gained the respect of their fellow tribesmen who followed such leaders without question.¹⁰⁴⁵ Unlike their comrades in the infantry battalions raised from within the four military districts (Auckland, Wellington, Canterbury and Otago) that were predominantly recruited from men of European descent, both the officers and other ranks within the separate companies of the 'Maori Battalion' had a greater incentive to successfully perform in war to collectively maintain the honour of their *whanau* (family) and tribe, which each company jealously guarded.¹⁰⁴⁶ It was this ethos that led to the battalion quickly gaining a reputation, especially with the enemy, as fearsome and determined.

The relationships between the officers and other ranks within the Maori Contingent of the First World War and 28 (Maori) Battalion of the Second World War were even stronger than those of other New Zealand combat units. Monty Soutar argues that this was certainly the case for members of C Company of 28 (Maori) Battalion, which he asserts came about through the shared ancestral links and inter-marriage between tribes within the Tairāwhiti region on the east coast of the North Island.¹⁰⁴⁷ The responsibility of deciding the composition of the battalion in 1939 was mostly left to MP Sir Apirana Ngata and former Prime Minister Gordon Coates. They decided that forming the rifle companies along tribal lines would allow platoon officers to lead their own kinsmen, while company commanders would lead men from within their own tribes. This followed the view of tribal leaders who believed that officers who led their own kinsmen into battle would be less likely to risk their lives unnecessarily.¹⁰⁴⁸ However, the attempt to influence the selection of officers within the battalion by tribal elders through Ngata's political influence frustrated the original battalion commander, Great War veteran, Lieutenant-Colonel George Dittmer, with his superior complaining

¹⁰⁴³ Ibid., p23

¹⁰⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 9

¹⁰⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 8

¹⁰⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 29

¹⁰⁴⁷ Monty Soutar, *Nga Tama Toa: The Price of Citizenship – C Company 28 (Maori) Battalion 1939-1945* (Auckland, 2008), p. 16

¹⁰⁴⁸ Sir Apirana Ngata, Letter to Turi Carroll, 27 September 1939, MS Papers 6919-0347, ATL

to the Minister of Defence that, ‘It is impossible for Lt. Col. Dittmer to carry out his duties efficiently if this constant interference by Sir Apirana Ngata goes on.’¹⁰⁴⁹ When the battalion was being formed in November 1939 Dittmer assessed that only one of the original nominated Maori officers was competent and experienced enough to command a company and that it was essential for battalion efficiency that experienced officers, whether Maori or *Pakeha* (New Zealanders of European descent), be initially enlisted to command companies.¹⁰⁵⁰ However, Maori elders maintained political pressure to ensure the battalion companies and platoons were led by Maori officers despite Dittmer’s continued frustration.

The relationships between the Maori officers and other ranks within the 28 (Maori) Battalion, as well as those of the Maori Contingent and the NZ (Maori) Pioneer battalion during the First World War, proved pivotal in the efficiency of the units. The most obvious benefit was that the officers could speak Maori, which was the first language of the majority of the soldiers, and that they could understand Maori attitudes, beliefs and the traditional ways things were done, which at times was in contrast to the traditional British Army protocol. An example of this was provided in a letter from Henry Ngata, a junior officer within 28 (Maori) Battalion and son of Sir Apirana Ngata, regarding some disciplinary problems within C Company while the unit was stationed in Britain in November 1940:

We’ve been having a spot of bother with the chaps lately, for they have been inclined to play up a little more than usual. Captain Scott had spoken to them, but it wasn’t till Arnold [Lieutenant Arnold Reedy] spoke to them in Maori, that we had the response we wanted. It isn’t merely that Arnold spoke to them in Maori, it was mainly because he expressed conceptions like ‘discipline’ in a Maori way and quoted old Maori ideas on the subject.¹⁰⁵¹

The responsibility and expectations on Maori officers towards their men also differed to some extent from the officers within the provincial rifle battalions. Family and tribal links, together with traditional warrior protocols meant that some officers acted differently and beyond the duties expected of officers within the British Army. In combat Maori company and platoon officers tended to lead their men from the front as

¹⁰⁴⁹ Major-General John Duigan, Letter to Minister of Defence, 1 March 1940, AD1 300/1/2, ANZ

¹⁰⁵⁰ Lieutenant Colonel George Dittmer, Letter to Army Headquarters, 21 November 1939, AD1 300/1/2, Vol. 1, ANZ

¹⁰⁵¹ Henry Ngata, Letter to Lorna Ngata, 30 November 1940, MS Papers 6919 – 0785, ATL

tradition dictated, and it was this act of personal courage that was thought essential in inspiring their men to follow. Although this led to high casualty rates among the officers, this tendency for Maori to engage in close-quarter fighting, where they excelled, helped to forge a reputation of the whole 28 (Maori) Battalion as tenacious and ferocious fighters. Some Maori officers also fought under the traditional Maori concept of *utu* (revenge) for the loss of family or tribal members. Pita Awatere, who rose from the ranks to eventually command the battalion in 1945, wrote after the war that he personally led a bayonet charge on an attack on Sollum Barracks during Operation Crusader in November 1941 specifically to seek *utu* for the death of his brother, Tom:

...with my pistol I shot the fellow who fired the gun. I then ordered my lot to shoot. The prisoners were mowed down like ninepins...I went over, saw my brother's body and swore that until the end of the war I will kill every man of the enemy that opposed me anywhere at any time as *utu* or *Ngaki mate* for my brother mainly and then the rest [of his slain men]. I turned cold and ruthless until the end of the war...¹⁰⁵²

However, Awatere was not typical of all Maori officers. Monty Soutar argues that he had an unorthodox approach to discipline and was known by his men in D Company as 'the Muktar,' often challenging his subordinates in the ranks to a fight as a way of maintaining discipline and boosting morale based on traditional warrior values.¹⁰⁵³

Such responsibilities on Maori officers also extended to the retrieval of kinsmen killed in battle. An example of this was the retrieval by Lieutenant Hone Green and others of C Company of the body of their company commander, Captain Tureia, from 'no man's land' after he had been killed leading an attack at Sollum. These men were from the same *pa* (village) as Tureia, and as his kinsmen it was their responsibility to put their elder and leader to rest if they could. In essence, the responsibilities and expectations placed on Maori officers leading their tribesmen in combat in the expeditionary forces of both world wars can be compared to a comment made in a letter by a soldier to his parents in 1943 regarding the responsibility placed on the commanding officers of the 28 (Maori) Battalion:

¹⁰⁵² Pita Awatere, 'Death of My Brother,' MS Papers 6735-01, ATL

¹⁰⁵³ Soutar, *Nga Tama Toa: The Price of Citizenship*, p. 215

As one officer...put it, when you take charge of the Maori Battalion you have a duty to your race; your life is not your own and you now belong to the Maori people.¹⁰⁵⁴

Influence of Shared Experiences

Officers of the New Zealand expeditionary forces, especially platoon and company commanders, generally established and maintained the mutual trust and respect of the other ranks through shared experiences. During both major conflicts the junior officers accompanied the enlisted men in the trenches, dugouts and fox holes, suffered the terror of receiving artillery bombardments, shared the discomforts of serving in the front line, shared the chance of being killed or seriously wounded, while having to witness others being killed beside them. However, the officers, some much younger than the soldiers they led, were burdened with the responsibility of leading their men by example. Those officers who proved proficient and showed genuine concern for the welfare of their men by not wasting their lives unnecessarily gained reputations as good officers whom their men would follow even though there was likelihood they would be killed. This could be expected of professional regular soldiers, but it does leave a question as to why volunteer or conscripted citizen-soldiers, such as those of the New Zealand divisions, would follow their officers into combat.

A survey of fifty prominent New Zealand officers conducted by Major- General Kippenberger in 1948 has helped to answer this question. The survey was in response to the publication of a book by an American military historian, Colonel S.L.A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire*, that tackled the American experience of combat leadership. In his reply, Charles Upham argued that in his experience no person could make another fight, but that men would follow a leader and do as he ordered, only because they seemed to want to do so.¹⁰⁵⁵ Brigadier George Dittmer, MC & DSO, a Great War veteran who originally served in the ranks at Gallipoli before being commissioned in the field, who became a regular Staff Corps officer during the inter-war years and who later commanded the 28th (Maori) Battalion in the Second World War, argued that it was the training of the officers and men that produced the positive results: 'We in New Zealand train our soldiers to fight by making them really efficient

¹⁰⁵⁴ F.R. Logan, Letter to Parents, 10 November 1943, MS Papers 6919 – 0343, ATL

¹⁰⁵⁵ Charles Upham, 'Response to Survey,' IA 77, Box 7, Item 38, ANZ

in the use of their arms. This creates confidence and the desire to get on with it. If a soldier has confidence in himself and his leaders he will fight.’¹⁰⁵⁶ He further stated that there were examples of New Zealand officers who lacked discipline and a sense of responsibility that affected the efficiency of their units, which he blamed on faulty training.¹⁰⁵⁷ Several of the surveyed officers argued that such ill-discipline was demonstrated by battalion officers by either turning a ‘blind eye’ or actively partaking in the pillaging and looting that the 2nd New Zealand Division became notorious for during the campaigns in Italy, especially after the defeat at Cassino.¹⁰⁵⁸

The consensus of those surveyed was that the examples of poor discipline by officers only related to behaviour out of the front line and not when in combat. Lieutenant-Colonel Fred Baker of 28 (Maori) Battalion stated that such behaviour included too much drinking of alcohol, gambling, avoidance of parades and training, and lack of attention to assigned duties.¹⁰⁵⁹ From comments in the survey it also appears that most agreed that there was not a constant state of discipline amongst battalion officers throughout the Second World War. Brigadier Monty Fairbrother identified three distinct periods; he claimed that up to the end of the Crete campaign some hastily selected officers showed poor discipline and had to be weeded out or retrained; post-Crete and up to the battle of Cassino the discipline was good throughout, but that after Cassino there was a steady drop in discipline owing to poor selection, insufficiently vigorous OCTUs (Officer Cadet Training Units), the absorption of untried officers from New Zealand, and the commissioning of NCOs in the field who were left with their units, leading to a free and easy approach towards the enlisted men in an effort to maintain popularity.¹⁰⁶⁰

Ultimately, it was combat experience that created effective and efficient leadership from officers and NCOs within battalions, regiments and batteries of both expeditionary forces. That experience convinced many front line New Zealand officers, both within the high command and at lower levels, that they could only achieve their military goals through effective team work. Such practice was not foreign to the New Zealanders where many had been raised in rural areas that relied on communal input to

¹⁰⁵⁶ Brigadier George Dittmer, ‘Response to Survey- Marshall Critique,’ IA 77, Box 7, Item 38, ANZ

¹⁰⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵⁸ McLeod, pp. 133-134

¹⁰⁵⁹ Lieutenant-Colonel Fred Baker, ‘Response to Survey- Marshall Critique,’ IA 77, Box 7, Item 38, ANZ

¹⁰⁶⁰ Monty Fairbrother, ‘Response to Survey,’ IA 77, Box 7, Item 38, ANZ

maintain prosperity and handle adversities. Helping one's neighbour in their hour of need had become an expected duty in colonial New Zealand society where individuals within communities often rallied together for the common good.¹⁰⁶¹ James Belich argues that led to a 'crew' mentality among male-dominated industries such as mining, sawmilling, farming and construction, where men knew their workmates and sub-cultures developed because they shared the same experiences, manners, customs, slang, prejudices, dress, leisure habits, virtues and vices.¹⁰⁶² These crews were prefabricated communities which were constantly reshuffling and into which new members were quickly indoctrinated and encouraged or pressured into conformity for the greater good and effectiveness of the work crew or team.¹⁰⁶³ This ethos of team work permeated civilian society, especially within industry and sport. The New Zealand citizen-soldiers accepted that every industry needed a boss and every sports team a captain.

In the military context platoon and company commanders were seen by some as team captains. Sandy Thomas and Haddon Donald both agree that it was because of this unique sense of individual responsibility and team work that most experienced NCOs were comfortable and competent to take over command of their platoon when their officers had become casualties. Colonel Bill Thornton was of the view that combat experience gave officers and NCOs a great advantage as the enlisted men had greater confidence in them and would follow them:

The seasoning effect of battle is of benefit to all since it increases self and mutual confidence and develops the team spirit...Experience and confidence are thus the essentials of good units and good soldiers...Generally, the feeling of nervousness will be reduced if officers are in firm control of their units, and if clear and definite orders have been issued, whether in attack or in defence.¹⁰⁶⁴

It was his opinion that those competent officers with whom he served under and above were disciplined, had a clear sense of purpose, were self-confident, but also had confidence in their superiors and subordinates, conscious of being a member of a fighting team and determined not to let the team down in any circumstances.¹⁰⁶⁵ It was

¹⁰⁶¹ Erik Olssen, 'Towards a New Society,' in *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Second Edition, ed. Geoffrey W. Rice (Auckland, 1992), pp. 254-284

¹⁰⁶² James Belich, *Making Peoples: A History of the New Zealanders From Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century* (Auckland, 1996), p. 428

¹⁰⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶⁴ Bill Thornton "Response to Survey," IA 77, Box 7, Item 38, ANZ

¹⁰⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

the battalion officers who displayed these attributes that helped forge the reputation of the New Zealand divisions as elite fighting formations.

Compared to British and Canadian officers, it appears New Zealand platoon commanders generally allowed less formal relationships to develop with the enlisted men while at the front. This was certainly the case during the Second World War, but to a lesser extent in the Great War. Haddon Donald states that from his experience the Australian officers were similar to the New Zealanders in having close working relationships with their men, while the British and Canadians were a bit more remote.¹⁰⁶⁶ In response to Kippenberger's 1948 survey of 2NZEF officers, Major Colin Armstrong went as far as to say that he thought the New Zealand officers were probably closer to their men than any other division that he had observed during the Second World War, stating that they still managed to keep the respect of the other ranks through a high degree of self-discipline.¹⁰⁶⁷ He further argued that the bonds forged in war, including those between officers and other ranks occurred because; 'life never seems so desirable as when you are about to lose it. Undoubtedly the experience of facing a common danger produces friendships which cannot be made in civilian life.'¹⁰⁶⁸

When reading the diaries and letters of those who served in the Great War, almost all of the writers referred to their officers in their entries either by their rank or used the title 'Mr.' In contrast, many Second World War servicemen referred to their officers by their first names or nicknames. However, this is to be expected when considering that many platoon and company commanders were leading enlisted men whom they had known well in civilian life. It also reflects the changing attitudes of New Zealand society during the inter-war years, with the growing perception of egalitarianism fostered by the growth of trade unions that led to the first elected Labour government in 1935, and which encouraged a sense of equal worth amongst citizens.¹⁰⁶⁹

However, egalitarian New Zealand was more of a myth than reality. Colonial, and later, domestic political rhetoric emphasised opportunity and egalitarian ideals that were absorbed into the mindset of New Zealand society. Belich argues that New Zealand egalitarianism emphasised equality before the law, 'the proud birthright of (adult male) Britons'; it disliked very overt or oppressive class distinctions; it demanded

¹⁰⁶⁶ Donald, Letter to author, 13 July 2010

¹⁰⁶⁷ Major Colin Armstrong, "Response to Survey," IA 77, Box 7, Item 38, ANZ

¹⁰⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Erik Olssen, 'Towards a New Society,' in *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, 2nd ed., edited by Geoffrey W. Rice (Auckland, 1992), pp. 283-284

abundant, though not equal opportunity for promotion across class lines and rejected class antagonism, while insisting on harmony between classes.¹⁰⁷⁰ This represented a social ideal in which bosses did not exploit their workers, that every man had the opportunity to own his own home, and that the poor, sick and elderly were looked after. The social policies introduced by the Liberal governments prior to the First World War, and those of the first Labour government from 1935, came about from these ideals and reinforced the perception of an egalitarian society compared to Britain, even if the realities of social difference and achievement were considerably bleaker than believed. It was these egalitarian values that New Zealand soldiers took with them when serving overseas and which inevitably was conceived as part of their ‘New Zealandness,’ especially when they compared themselves to British Army soldiers. This sense of egalitarianism, shared over all levels of New Zealand society, was certainly reflected in the relationships between officers and other ranks in the expeditionary forces.¹⁰⁷¹

The use of non-offensive nicknames for New Zealand officers was generally considered by all as a sign of respect and acceptance of the individual by fellow officers and the enlisted men within units. This was a reflection of New Zealand society at the time and it is a legacy that has continued to the present. Haddon Donald recalled that both the men in his platoon, when he was a platoon commander, and his subordinate officers, when he held higher rank, ‘Generally... called me boss, sometimes my initials, H.V, rarely ‘Sir’, and who knows what when out of ear-shot.’¹⁰⁷² Denver Fountaine explained in an interview with his local newspaper in 1992 that his fellow officers referred to him as ‘Spout’ because of his surname, while the enlisted men called him ‘The Old Man,’ a common term used to describe commanding officers and also due to his youthful age when he became a lieutenant-colonel.¹⁰⁷³ In the letters that he sent to his fiancée, it is clear that both the commissioned officers and enlisted men he knew from Westport simply referred to him as ‘Den’ during their many informal social gatherings in Egypt. Bob Bonisch, a train driver in the NZ Engineers recalled to his sons how Fountaine, then a lieutenant-colonel in command of 26 Battalion, arranged for a number of his enlisted mates from Westport to gather in a side room of the New Zealand Club in Cairo so that they could have a few beers together where rank was

¹⁰⁷⁰ Belich, *Making Peoples*, p. 321-322,

¹⁰⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷² Donald, Letter to author, 13 July 2010

¹⁰⁷³ Amber Jo Illsley, ‘Col. Fountaine remembers El Alamein,’ *The News*, Westport, 22 October 1992, p. 6

ignored and everyone was addressed by their Christian names or nicknames.¹⁰⁷⁴ Another example of such socialising between mixed ranks during the Second World War is provided in an undated letter by Private Arthur Kerrison of C Company, 25 Battalion. He recorded that before his platoon commander, a Lieutenant Mace, was shipped back to New Zealand, the platoon, together with the officer, had a 'send off' that involved the lieutenant supplying the whiskey for his men.¹⁰⁷⁵ Kerrison further stated that Mace was highly thought of by his men and that they were disappointed he was leaving.¹⁰⁷⁶

Sandy Thomas argued that some officers struggled with getting used to being an officer and having the troops call them 'Sir' or by their rank, especially those who had been commissioned from the ranks. He believed that a hierarchy needed to be maintained to gain respect of the men and to make the unit effective.¹⁰⁷⁷ Charles Upham was a classic example of a rugged civilian soldier who struggled with the traditional British Army protocols that the New Zealand forces attempted to follow. When he was commissioned from the ranks, he openly encouraged his men in his platoon, especially his batman, Le Gros, to call him 'Boss' instead of 'Sir' when on active service and only demanded they use a more formal title when on parade or in the presence of more senior officers.¹⁰⁷⁸

The bond between officers and their men was forged in combat. This first occurred at Gallipoli where they shared the experiences of modern trench warfare. Both the battalion officers and those in the ranks quickly realised that civilian class boundaries meant nothing while suffering the horrors of war and that every man had to play his part to achieve success. The conditions at Gallipoli meant that very quickly strict military dress, barrack room standards and protocol were abandoned; officers and ordinary soldiers could now adjust their attire to suit the harsh climate, while saluting in the trenches was abandoned as it brought the attention of Turkish snipers. The officers and enlisted men also shared the same living conditions. Major Dr Percival Fenwick claimed that the fleas at Gallipoli had no respect for rank and that with the amount of shrapnel to which all were exposed that one never knew who was going to

¹⁰⁷⁴ Michael Bonisch, Interview, 18 January 2012

¹⁰⁷⁵ Arthur Kerrison, Letter to female work mate, undated, MS-1992.2292, KMARL

¹⁰⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷⁷ Thomas, Interview, 6 June 2010

¹⁰⁷⁸ Sandford, pp. 47-50

be next.¹⁰⁷⁹ Fenwick also described how poor the sanitary conditions of trench life were for all by recording the comments of a young lieutenant who stated in a conversation with him:

We are all getting shockingly callous. I was in the trenches and invited to share some food. A few feet from me was a corpse torn to bits. The ground was simply blood and mud; I ate the food with real gusto and could not get any feelings of horror in my mind.¹⁰⁸⁰

Another interesting comment Fenwick made in his diaries was that at Gallipoli the New Zealand battalion officers joined the enlisted men in digging the dugouts and caves into the hillsides, as well as filling up sand bags.¹⁰⁸¹ This sharing of manual work would have been a foreign concept to professional officers, especially British ones, but this example provides evidence of the shared responsibility and team work that emerged as a character of colonial New Zealand society that was reflected in the expeditionary forces.

The New Zealanders displayed the same behaviour in adjusting to combat life during the Second World War. Jack Collins stated that in his experience as an enlisted soldier in C Company, 26 Battalion, officers actively discouraged enlisted men saluting them anywhere that the enemy could see them as it was a sure way of attracting unwanted attention. During the fighting at Cassino his platoon was led by Lieutenant Bruce Hay MC who encouraged his men to address him by his name when senior officers were not present.¹⁰⁸² This seemed natural to the troops as Hay was of a similar age to his men and knew some of them from civilian life. Collins stated that Hay was the best combat officer that he ever served under and that the men in his platoon had no hesitation in following him during repeated attacks into the rubble of the town, even after the battalion had suffered heavy casualties.¹⁰⁸³ He believes that it was Hay's ability to inspire his men through leading by example, displaying confidence in himself and his troops that he was able to build and maintain a sense of shared responsibility within the platoon that resulted in a more determined approach to fighting.¹⁰⁸⁴ Collins had

¹⁰⁷⁹ Lieutenant-Colonel Dr Percival Fenwick, *Gallipoli Diary: 24 April to 27 June 1915* (Auckland War Memorial, Auckland, n.d.), p. 14

¹⁰⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 29

¹⁰⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 30

¹⁰⁸² Collins, Interview, 14 April 2010

¹⁰⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

served under platoon commanders who had adopted a more formal style of leadership that only tended to alienate the officers from their men.¹⁰⁸⁵

This common sense approach to front line life and behaviour attracted some criticism from British officers who saw this as disrespectful to officers and as a break down in military discipline. Watty McEwan recalled an incident that he witnessed during the North African campaign when the 2nd New Zealand Division was playing a critical part in driving the Afrika Korps back into Tunisia; on this occasion the Division was moving towards Tripoli and passing Freyberg and his British Corps commander, Sir Oliver Leese. When the tanks of the Scots Greys passed the two generals standing on the roadside, Leese acknowledged the salute of the tank commanders. When the New Zealand troops followed, instead of saluting, McEwan claims they gave Freyberg a fine reception with waves and shouts of 'G'day Tiny.'¹⁰⁸⁶ When Leese exclaimed that the New Zealand troops did not salute very much, Freyberg replied that if he waved at them they would wave back.¹⁰⁸⁷ The rank and file from both New Zealand expeditionary forces were notorious for not saluting officers when not on parade or in the field. British officers, more used to the regimented behaviour of British troops, saw this behaviour as a lack of respect and ill-discipline on the part of the Kiwis.

However, this was not the case and the New Zealand officers generally took a different perspective. Apart from the few regular officers of the New Zealand Staff Corps and enlisted men from the Permanent Force, the New Zealand expeditionary forces comprised volunteers and conscripts who would only be in the army for the duration of the wars, after which they would resume their civilian lives. They were there to do a job as members of a large team and there was a sense of mutual respect between the company officers and the other ranks, even if there was some envy over the privileges officers received. As previously mentioned, many junior officers felt uncomfortable about enlisted men whom they were either related to or friends with in civilian life having to salute them, with some actively discouraging it. The familiarity that developed between the platoon officers and their men through training and combat generally proved more beneficial to the combat efficiency of the unit. Platoons, companies and battalions became families to the troops. Sandy Thomas claimed that for him and his men the 23rd Battalion became the absolute centre of existence, and the

¹⁰⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸⁶ McEwan, p. 182

¹⁰⁸⁷ Ibid.

focus for everything to do with living, training and fighting.¹⁰⁸⁸ Comradeship remained important to those who returned from the conflicts, especially the Second World War veterans, with battalion reunions remaining a focal point of post-war life for decades afterwards.

The difference in leadership style of New Zealand officers was apparent early in the Great War. When compared to officers of the British Army who generally came from universities and public schools, and who maintained a certain distance from their enlisted men, the New Zealander officers were perceived by their subordinates as generally showing more care for their troops than their British counterparts. An example of this is provided by Private Gordon Cunningham of the Otago Infantry Regiment who recounted after the war an incident in February 1915 when he was operating a ferry across the Suez Canal prior to the Gallipoli campaign:

Colonial officers treated us well and would yarn while we were running up or down the canal. Most of the British staff were more reserved, a few being offensively so. On one happy occasion we were tied up at the opposite wharf waiting arrival of a staff officer. The wharf was quite ten feet above our decking, and as no ladder was available, the passage down was somewhat difficult. Presently our man arrived, a three-starred red-tabbed man of the general staff. Boots and uniform were spotless and an eye glass gleamed in one eye. Standing on the wharf edge he plaintively asked how he was to get down to our deck. I offered suggestions about placing the right foot on one tie beam, the left on a projection, but it was no use, he balked. Finally one of the crew, Bill Wilson, called out to him, 'Jump into the bloody ditch and I'll fish you out with the boathook.' Commanding me to place Bill under arrest, our wart managed to clamber down until he was about a yard above the deck. With an effort he placed one immaculate hoof on the boat edge. With his weight on this he began to loosen his hand hold. The boat naturally swung away from the wharf, further and further and stretched him, until with a mighty splash he fell into the canal. Bill, as promised, secured him with the hook and we dragged the blighter over the bow and left him to drain while we ran the launch over to our jetty. Without a word he walked ashore, presently to return with our captain. The latter, an old friend of my father's, called us to attention, then proceeded to give us a hell of a dressing down. At the height of his peroration he winked, which let us know that all was but words...The sequel came when late that night Captain Smith called us to his tent, where he handed me a bottle of beer as reward for 'Keeping cool under fire.'¹⁰⁸⁹

This extract provides evidence that New Zealand other ranks had a low opinion of British officers even prior to the Gallipoli campaign, primarily due to their attitude and

¹⁰⁸⁸ Thomas, *Pathways To Adventure*, p.19

¹⁰⁸⁹ Gordon H. Cunningham, *Account of World War 1 Experiences*, MS Papers 3950, Folder 2, ATL, pp. 87-88

behaviour towards the colonial troops; and that close social connections and limited class distinction within New Zealand society helped the Dominion's officers to have a greater understanding and respect for those serving under them than their British counterparts. This perception of the other ranks from within the expeditionary force regarding British officers went some way in reinforcing an egalitarian ethos of New Zealand society after the conflict. An example of this was provided in a letter written by Private Edward (Ted) Millar of Papanui, Christchurch, to his father in August 1917 while he was training at Sling Camp in England before being sent as a reinforcement to the 2nd Battalion, Auckland Infantry Regiment:

The tucker here is real good, far better than we got in NZ, the Tommies in the camps close to us get rotten stuff though, they are treated just like dogs, rotten tucker and pay and rotten officers too. The Tommy officers have got absolutely no time for us colonials because we don't salute them, they would give us hell if they could get us under them.¹⁰⁹⁰

The superior attitude of British officers towards colonial soldiers could also extend to officers. Major James McCarroll, an Irish immigrant serving in the Auckland Mounted Rifles, wrote of an experience he had while recovering in London from wounds he had received at Gallipoli:

I went to the War Office to enquire re my kit and after a lot of trouble found an officer that accepted some responsibility. He was very haughty, so I told him what I thought of him. He was a bit surprised and he agreed to look after it. Some of these fellows put a halo around themselves but that does not go down well with the colonial.¹⁰⁹¹

It is possible that the attitude of the British officer toward McCarroll, who was clearly superior in rank, may also have been due to his Irish accent. However, what is clear is that McCarroll considered himself a colonial and of having the characteristics and beliefs of such, even though he had been born and bred in Belfast.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Private Edward Millar, Letter to Father, 4 August 1917 (Tim Clyne Collection)

¹⁰⁹¹ Lieutenant-Colonel James McCarroll, Diary, May 1915-July 1916, entry 6 July 1915, MS-2005/381/2/3, KMARL

Arguably, it was personal qualities and the style of leadership, together with the relationships battalion officers formed with those under their command that had the greatest influence on the fighting effectiveness of their units. Gary Sheffield argues that a British officer's relationship with his men was not determined by his social class, or by his previous service in the ranks, but rather by his leadership skills, competence, courage and paternalism.¹⁰⁹² This was also the case in the military forces of the British dominions. The New Zealand citizen-soldiers of both expeditionary forces were trained to a proficient level before entering combat, but it was how those men were led in battle that determined the morale and fighting effectiveness of the New Zealand forces. Those platoon and company commanders who inspired their men to fight alongside them during desperate offensive and defensive actions during both wars helped to forge an international military reputation of efficiency and determination in war. Evidence shows that not all officers were of the same calibre. However, the most effective officers were those who genuinely cared for the welfare of their men, who had the ability to relate to their subordinates through shared experiences, and who led by example. War proved that although the New Zealanders shared some characteristics of others of British stock, especially the Australians, the New Zealand soldiers, whether commissioned or enlisted, quickly concluded that they had unique attributes as soldiers compared to those from Britain. This was summed up in the extract 'The Mounted Riflemen' published in the Anzac Magazine, *The Kia Ora Coo-ee*, in August 1918:

Resemblance and difference in appearance can be seen most clearly on a full dress parade, or in Cairo. His island climate and colonial life made the New Zealander a bigger edition of the Home Stock, with an added resource and self-reliance that are inbred in the present generation. Quiet and self-contained, and a little self-conscious, he is quick to resent any apparent injustice to himself and others. Care for his mate precedes care for himself; care for his horse and abiding respect for, and instant obedience to, proven leaders, an every-ready intelligent initiative, cool, determined valour, and the practice of sound team play go to the make up of no mean soldier.¹⁰⁹³

Those New Zealand battalion and regimental officers of both expeditionary forces who understood such national characteristics in themselves and their men were able to

¹⁰⁹² Gary Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches: Officer-man Relations, Morale and Discipline in the British Army in the Era of the First World War* (Basingstoke & London, 2000), p. 114

¹⁰⁹³ 'The Mounted Riflemen,' *The Kia Ora Coo-ee: The Official Magazine of the Australian and New Zealand Forces in Egypt, Palestine, Salonika & Mesopotamia*, Second series, No. 2, Cairo (Egypt), August 15th, 1918, p. 16, New Zealand Electronic Text Centre, Victoria University, Wellington

provide the necessary strong leadership, within the boundaries of the British Army, in both victory and defeat. It was the relationships based on mutual respect, forged through shared experiences, that many officers of the expeditionary forces had with their men throughout both conflicts that helped to foster the egalitarian ideal within New Zealand society in the first half of the twentieth century. More importantly, such relationships played a crucial role in maintaining morale and fighting spirit within the combat battalions and regiments of both New Zealand expeditionary forces throughout years of overseas military service.

Conclusion

The subject of this thesis is most worthy of analysis, something which is overdue. In the writing of New Zealand military history, over many years most interest has focused on generalship, which has led to the publication of numerous biographies and memoirs of senior officers. This interest has continued with Harper's and Hayward's book, *Born to Lead?* and the recent biography of Major-General Sir Andrew Russell. Such recent writings are examples of an interest in the history of New Zealand's military operations that began with the writing of regimental histories after the First World War, followed by the Government-funded Official War Histories that were produced after the Second World War. Even so, it is interesting to note that until recently most work of this kind has focused on Gallipoli and the 'Desert War' of 1940-1943. It is only in the last twenty years that battles and campaigns involving New Zealanders in Egypt and Palestine and the battles on the Western Front in the First World, and the Italian campaign and experience of the 3rd NZ Division in the Pacific during the Second World War are starting to receive close attention.

As a country, New Zealand has developed a great pride in its military reputation. This reputation initially emerged from the Dominion's volunteer contingents that served in the Second Anglo-Boer War, but was cemented through the combat service of the New Zealand expeditionary forces that served overseas during the First and Second World Wars. A key question to consider when analysing this reputation is how did these forces, which in affect were citizen armies, achieve this, since the reputation seems well-deserved and acknowledged by allies and foes alike. This thesis attempts to provide part of the explanation by studying the battalion and regimental officers who physically led the New Zealand citizen-soldiers into battle.

From the 1960s there was a historiographical shift in the study of military history. Historians began a new focus of study towards 'war and society' and 'army and society' to gain a greater understanding of the mass civilian-soldier armies that were used in the First and Second World Wars. More attention was given to the study of the 'home fronts' in the age of total war, where all sectors of society were affected by these major conflicts. Such studies include the examination of the volunteer and conscript citizen-armies that nations raised to defend their interests. Another related question in such a study must be to ask how these 'amateur' forces maintained their cohesion and

efficiency when suffering terrible ordeals. This is particularly relevant to the experiences of the New Zealand expeditionary forces during both world wars, were they suffered significant defeats in their first campaigns; Gallipoli in 1915 and Greece and Crete in 1941.

Leadership was crucial in the New Zealand expeditionary forces for maintaining cohesion and efficiency, and this makes the study of the officers of these citizen-armies a worthy and useful project. The rank and file of volunteer and conscript armies are representative of the whole population of a country, but the officers of such forces in a real sense have to be 'made.' The prosopographical method of analysis of statistically significant samples employed in this study enabled the establishment of definitive 'social types' that officers could be identified with. An interesting point that this thesis makes is that as the wars went on and promotion from the ranks increasingly occurred, the officer corps became more 'democratised' in the sense of better representing the under-society of New Zealand, beyond the educated, professional classes. This was especially true in 2NZEF during the Second World War. Although the expeditionary forces suffered substantial reversals in the first years of both wars, they recovered relatively quickly. This provides good evidence that these formations were well-organised and well-led, especially in the rebuilding phases, where effective training and the selection and promotion of officers by generals and other senior officers proved crucial to future success.

Also crucial to the ultimate success of the expeditionary forces was the relationships between the officers and the other ranks. This can be seen in the 'culture' that developed within the New Zealand divisions and brigades during the years of active service overseas. This culture was based on the identities, relationships and values of the wider society of the Dominion and involves consideration of such matters as its New Zealandness, its relative classlessness and the importance of mateship and 'the team.' The close comradeship of officers and their men was drawn out of the colonial society originally, but was further strengthened by the shared experience of battle and by the democratisation which led from the eventual opportunity of promotion on merit, regardless of previous civilian social status. It was this culture that helped to give the New Zealand citizen-soldiers a sense of identity while serving as elements within the British Army.

One aspect that became apparent in researching this work is that of the external political and economic influences that directly affected the performance of the New

Zealand officer corps in both major conflicts. British imperialism and nationalism played a significant role in promoting the expansion of the volunteer forces in the Dominion prior to the Great War, which directly led to the increase in training provided to the Territorial Force. This ensured that the majority of medically fit men of military age in New Zealand from 1910 until after the Great War received some form of military training. Compulsory military training helped to partially prepare the 100,000 citizen-soldiers of the Dominion who served in the First World War for military life, including over 5,000 who were to serve as commissioned officers.¹⁰⁹⁴ It was compulsory military training that proved essential in preparing them for life in the army.

Continual training proved crucial to success. The training received by the officers and other ranks of the expeditionary forces, as well as those of the Dominion's Territorial Force, primarily followed the British Army curriculum. The introduction of compulsory military training was integral to the reforms that came about through the 1909 Defence Act. This directly led to the establishment of a more effective and structured training regime for New Zealand's military forces, which replaced the antiquated volunteer militia system. This was in keeping with measures introduced in Britain, as well as Australia and Canada. The War Office in London had determined that all the forces within the British Empire would receive the same training, weapons and equipment to provide for a large homogenised force when the need arose to defend the empire. Such training and systems meant that regular officer cadets would receive the same training and sit the same examinations at the Royal Military Colleges in Australia and Canada as those at Sandhurst and Woolwich. Likewise, officers and officer candidates within the New Zealand Territorial Force were exposed to the same training syllabus and sat the same promotional examinations as Territorial officers in Britain. Such measures increased the proficiency and professionalism both in the staff corps and the Territorial regiments, ensuring that when the expeditionary forces were formed there was a core of proficient battalion and regimental officers from which trained combat formations could be created.

Although such pre-war training provided the basic foundations for overseas military service for the Dominion's citizen-soldier officers, both in the First and Second World Wars, the expeditionary forces were unprepared for the type of warfare they

¹⁰⁹⁴ Lt. Col. John Studholme, *Some Records of the New Zealand Expeditionary: Record of Personal Services During the War of Officers, Nurses, and First-Class Warrant Officers* (Wellington, 1928)

were initially exposed to. The four months of training the officers and other ranks of NZEF received in Egypt prior to the Gallipoli campaign was beneficial in building cohesion within units and hardening the men to the rigours of army life. However, the continuous route marches and mock bayonet charges in the desert did not prepare them for the terrain and fighting tactics they were exposed to at Gallipoli. Likewise, apart from a focus on musketry, the pre-war training provided by the British Army curriculum did not prepare citizen-soldiers throughout the empire for trench warfare.

The fiscal constraints and anti-war feelings that dominated the inter-war years had a dramatic effect on the training provided to New Zealand's military forces leading up to the Second World War. Defence budgets were continually reduced throughout the 1920s and early 1930s that led to limited opportunities for staff corps officers to attend courses overseas, while the number of officer cadets sent to the Royal Military College at Duntroon declined to a point where no candidates were sent for a number of years. Limited opportunities for professional development and promotion within the staff corps led to resignations of experienced Great War veteran officers and a reduction in the number of young regular officers needed to administer and train the Territorial Force. The limited funding available directly led to the end of compulsory military training in 1931, with the Territorial Force training restricted to paper exercises for officers and NCOs; measures that had a detrimental effect on the ability to provide sufficient experienced trained junior officers when 2NZEF was being formed in 1939. Such fiscal constraints also occurred in Britain, Australia and Canada, with similar outcomes; although unlike the others, Britain had a sizeable professional army to draw upon for defence.

In contrast to the experience at the beginning of the First World War, the New Zealand military forces were totally unprepared at the outbreak of the Second World War. Although the Defence budget had dramatically increased as war seemed imminent, the drastic reduction in training provided to regular and Territorial officers and other ranks during the inter-wars ensured that the newly formed expeditionary force would require eighteen months of intensive training before Freyberg agreed his troops were ready for combat. Even then, much of the tactical training received was based on the First World War experience of trench warfare, leaving them totally unprepared for the mobile warfare of *Blitzkrieg*. Likewise, the British Army training curriculum did not prepare the officers and men of the short-lived 3rd NZ Division for their combat role in the Pacific. Jungle and amphibious warfare had not been considered as essential pre-

war training as New Zealand troops were expected to be fighting in Europe or the Mediterranean in any future war. However, Barrowclough was determined that his force was to have an active combat role, and to that end he introduced a training regime based on the experiences of the United States Marines at Guadalcanal and the Australian forces in New Guinea to ensure his officers and men became proficient in jungle and amphibious warfare.

The drive for such competent leadership at all levels of combat command initially came from the top. New Zealand was generally well-served by competent divisional and brigade commanders, whose professionalism and leadership proved essential in attaining a certain level of proficiency of the expeditionary forces prior to going into battle. Generals Godley, Russell, Chaytor, Freyberg and Barrowclough all heavily influenced the officer selection and training policies and initiatives for the formations they led. They also knew that the development of effective leadership and the fostering of officer-man relationships was, and is, crucial in any combat force, especially those based on volunteer or conscripted citizen-soldiers. Such relationships are determined by effective leadership, especially in combat units. Battalion and regiment commanders and their subordinate officers were responsible for developing a military culture where none really existed in the newly formed civilian armies, such as the expeditionary forces of Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

The leadership styles of the New Zealand divisional commanders proved examples for battalion and regiment commanders to follow, although their varying personalities determined they had different strengths and styles of command. In the First World War Godley proved an outstanding administrator and his preparation of the New Zealand military forces prior to the outbreak of war in 1914 has remained overshadowed by his perceived lack of empathy for his troops and his mediocre performance as a combat commander at Gallipoli. Russell's drive for excellence in leading the New Zealand Division on the Western Front directly led to the formation being forged into a numerically strong elite fighting force, although his expectation of perfection and perceived lack of empathy for the plight of his subordinate officers did not endear him to them. Chaytor, on the other hand, was a regular officer who had received his professional training under the rigid and formal system promoted by the British Army, but whose personality and understanding of the strengths and limitations of his colonial civilian-soldiers led to a more relaxed style of command in Egypt and Palestine, which was well received by those who served under him.

The New Zealand divisions of the Second World War were also well led. Freyberg displayed the same approach as Chaytor when he commanded the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force in the Second World War. Although serving as a regular officer in the British Army during the inter-war years, the New Zealanders considered him one of their own and, in comparison to Blamey, the Australian commanding general, he remained a popular and inspiring leader throughout the conflict.¹⁰⁹⁵ His dedication to maintaining the 2nd New Zealand Division as an independent national fighting force within a British Commonwealth army ensured that the New Zealand government and Freyberg kept a certain level of autonomy over their troops by invoking a government charter, similar to that provided to Australian Imperial Force during the Second World War. And although the Division suffered heavy casualties while serving in the early campaigns of the war, Freyberg was able to ensure such losses were limited through his ability to withdraw the force from high risk operations. In contrast to Blamey, he proved capable of building and maintaining working relationships with his superior and subordinate officers, even with those few who proved disloyal to him after the battle of Crete. Freyberg showed great faith in the officers under his command, although at times the flexibility he allowed them had negative results on the battlefield. He led by example and shared the rigours and dangers of battle with his troops, while his steadfast concern with their welfare made him a popular commander. Likewise, Major-General Sir Harold Barrowclough led the 3rd New Zealand Division with distinction in the Pacific theatre. Although frustrated at the lack of resources and available manpower, as well as the limited combat opportunities for his force, he ensured that his officers and troops received essential jungle and amphibious warfare training to prepare them for the roles they were allocated. It is due to the limited role that the 3rd New Zealand Division had in the Pacific that the leadership skills of Barrowclough and the service of his officers and enlisted men have remained relatively unknown or forgotten by the general public of New Zealand.

The influences and experiences of the combat officers within the New Zealand expeditionary forces were similar to those of the Australian and Canadian expeditionary forces. The officer corps within the two expeditionary forces in these two major conflicts was a reflection of New Zealand society at the time. Unlike Britain, there was no significant pre-existing professional military culture of any consequence. This

¹⁰⁹⁵ David Horner, *Blamey: The Commander-in-Chief* (St. Leonards, New South Wales, 1998), p. xv;

ensured that the New Zealand expeditionary forces were relatively free of the bias shown towards Territorial officers by regular officers that prevailed in the British Army throughout the period.¹⁰⁹⁶ With only a cadre of a professional army, the expeditionary forces were recruited from the civilian population, with most officers generally having had some form of prior military training. However, it was in combat that their martial leadership skills were honed. After considerable training these citizen-soldier officers achieved a sufficient level of professionalism in their various corps that allowed them to carry out the expected duties and leadership required of platoon, company, troop and battery commanders. However, it was only after they had experienced combat that they gained the level of confidence and proficiency required of effective frontline officers. Gallipoli had been the baptism of fire for the inexperienced New Zealander and Australian civilian-soldiers, with those who survived the rigours of the failed campaign gaining combat knowledge that proved beneficial in establishing fighting efficiency of the divisions of the two dominions on the Western Front.

Not all officers reached the required standard. Generally, most proved able once they had gained experience, but some lacked the personal discipline or moral and physical courage expected of commissioned officers. Those who proved unable to improve their performance or who broke down under the mental strain of combat were weeded out, ranging from platoon commanders through to brigade commanders. There were examples of this in both expeditionary forces, where Russell and Freyberg were aware that the level of responsibility placed on officers, especially battalion commanders, over an extended period was a strain on themselves and their subordinates, and that the removal of those who showed signs of suffering under such pressure was beneficial to the fighting efficiency of their commands.

Such men were a liability to the fighting effectiveness of the New Zealand battalions, brigades and supporting frontline units. Most were transferred to non-combat units or sent back to New Zealand to perform administrative roles. Very few officers were ever court-martialled, especially in the Second World War. In the New Zealand Expeditionary Force during the First World War the most common charge laid against battalion officers was that of being drunk on duty. For this and other minor offending, these men were either demoted or cashiered from the army. It was considered that the shame attached to these punitive measures was sufficient for officers. However,

¹⁰⁹⁶ Ian. F.W. Beckett, *The Amateur Military Tradition, 1558-1945* (Manchester, 1991), p. 234

there certainly was a double standard approach in dealing with such offending, with enlisted men receiving more severe punishment.

The official officer selection process was in keeping with policies promoted in the British Army, as well as the Australian and Canadian military forces. By examining the attestation papers of over 600 junior officers covering both expeditionary forces, along with personal details obtained from embarkation rolls, an analysis of the officer selection policy was made. Certain patterns were repeated when the expeditionary forces were formed in 1914 and 1939. With less than 100 Staff Corps officers available to lead the force, the majority of the original officers of the main bodies were Territorial officers who had volunteered for overseas service. Most had a high level of education relative to the time, came from middle-class or prosperous working-class backgrounds and had some form of military experience, predominantly in the Territorial Force or School Cadets.

The nature of the New Zealand society and its expeditionary forces meant that such selection criteria used at the beginning of both conflicts were unsustainable. Unlike Britain, Canada and Australia, the small dominion lacked a sizable middle-class population from which officer candidates were traditionally selected. As the wars progressed and casualties increased, commissioned officer vacancies were increasingly filled from the enlisted ranks, although not entirely. Both Godley and Freyberg had outlined when the expeditionary forces were being formed that they intended to promote suitable candidates from the ranks to fill commissioned officer vacancies as they occurred and once such candidates had gained experience and had shown leadership ability. The limited pool of available highly-educated Territorial officers from New Zealand could not continue to provide the required number of replacements, especially during the Great War. Those experienced non-commissioned officers from within the expeditionary forces who had proven leadership in combat became the main source of replacement officer candidates, although this was to a lesser extent in the First World War where only approximately fifty percent of replacement junior officers came from the ranks. In comparison, Freyberg made it a policy as the Second World War progressed to promote combat experienced non-commissioned officers within the 2nd New Zealand Division in preference to untested reinforcement officers sent from the Dominion. By 1945 almost all replacement junior officers of combat units were promoted from the ranks. Although there has been some debate as to whether the promotion of enlisted men reduced the overall discipline of the forces, especially during

the Italian campaign in the last year of the Second World War, experienced soldiers who were commissioned from the ranks generally proved proficient officers and combat leaders.

A myth emerged in post-Second World War New Zealand society that the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force was an egalitarian reflection of the Dominion.¹⁰⁹⁷ True egalitarianism could never be achieved in the formal structure required of a military force, but there was a strong sense of equality, based on opportunity through merit, especially within the officer corps of the both New Zealand expeditionary forces. As John McLeod has pointed out, in contrast to larger allied armies, the officers and non-commissioned officers of the New Zealand divisions focused on the individual skills and attributes of their men, which promoted efficiency and encouraged a feeling that everyone had their part to play in achieving success in combat.¹⁰⁹⁸ In comparison to the British Army of both major conflicts, there was no significant social divide between ranks within the New Zealand forces, especially in the final years of both wars, which perhaps encouraged greater communication within the combat units and fostered strong feelings of shared experiences which remained in the memories of the surviving veterans when they returned home.

Perceived opportunities for promotion, especially for non-commissioned officers to commissioned rank within the New Zealand expeditionary forces in the later years of both wars, could have also influenced the myth. As within the British, Australian and Canadian forces, the education levels of prospective officers played a significant part in determining their suitability for a commission. Those with a tertiary education and qualifications were more likely to be selected as candidates due to their proven ability to absorb, analyse and report information to a high level. Equally, those who had received an education to such levels, especially during the First World War, were more likely to have come from the same level of society as their superior officers, having similar attitudes and aspirations. However, unlike the Canadian selection policy of the Second World War, the selection of officer candidates was not solely based on education, nor was it ever intended to be.

Combat experience and proven ability to lead became the most crucial aspects in determining the selection and promotion of officers within the New Zealand overseas

¹⁰⁹⁷ McLeod, *Myth and Reality: The New Zealand Soldier in World War II* (Auckland, 1986), pp. 8-10

¹⁰⁹⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 186-187

forces as the wars progressed. Promotion at all levels was based on merit; some men who had enlisted as privates became platoon, company, and even battalion commanders, while a number who had been commissioned as lieutenants when war broke out in 1914 and 1939 were serving as brigadiers-generals when peace was declared in 1918 and 1945. Arguably, many of those commissioned from the ranks during the First World War were educated men from the middle-classes of New Zealand society who would have been considered suitable for a commission on enlistment in numerically larger armies, but were required to serve in the ranks due to the relatively small size of the expeditionary force. This had a positive affect in that those enlisted men who were later commissioned had empathy with those serving in the ranks, generally leading to a greater sense of duty and responsibility of officers towards their men, making them better combat leaders. This signified that once on active service, the performance and leadership of an individual determined his opportunity for promotion rather than his social status or previous occupation in civilian life. For some officers commissioned from the ranks, service in the expeditionary forces provided them with opportunities that they would not necessarily have had in civilian life. Perhaps for this reason it can be argued that the army proved more egalitarian than New Zealand society in the first half of the twentieth century.

The relationships that developed between the platoon, company, troop and squadron commanders with the enlisted men who served under them proved fundamental in the performance of the New Zealand battalions and regiments. The small population of the Dominion, along with the regional-based recruitment of infantry battalions, and the mounted rifle regiments in the Great War, ensured that there was a certain familiarity between the officers and ranks generally found in civilian-volunteer based forces of that era, such as the Australian and Canadian expeditionary forces, but much less so in the British Army. The senior and junior volunteer and conscript officers were home-town people, many from small country communities, who were often closely related to those serving under them. It was common for officers to have been neighbours or school, church, sporting or work mates with enlisted men from their units. This was in contrast to the class separateness of the British Army where the middle-class officers were less likely to have associated with the working-class population. Some New Zealand officers led their brothers, sons, cousins and brothers-in-law into battle. This promoted a strong sense of duty and responsibility towards their troops, with many officers feeling personally responsible in limiting the casualties

amongst their men. The fear of failing them and then returning to face their communities at the end of the conflicts made most officers determined to succeed in leadership while ensuring the welfare of their men.

The strong sense of local and national belonging was not unique to the New Zealanders, but they did help to foster a team ethos which was a main characteristic of the New Zealand expeditionary forces in the two wars. Both Freyberg and Barrowclough were aware of this and promoted it through sporting competitions within their divisions and against British, Canadian, Australian and South African forces. This team ethos, which had its foundations in New Zealand colonial society, began at platoon level and it was those officers who embraced the team approach to combat who proved the most effective. Every member of the team had a responsibility to each other, while the officer was seen as the team captain.

The team ethos proved successful and was in keeping with the leadership style preferred by New Zealanders. During the First and Second World Wars Kiwi soldiers performed at their best when commanded by combat officers who led by example with personal and moral courage; who displayed a professional and practical approach; who shared the hardships of campaigning; who knew and cared for the welfare of the men, and did not waste their lives unnecessarily. As in any large organisation, not all officers had these attributes. However, the majority who did ensured that the New Zealand expeditionary forces were able to initially endure defeat, especially in the early campaigns of the Second World War, learn lessons from them, and implement those lessons and new combat tactics required to defeat the enemy in battle. It was the collective ability to achieve this that led to the New Zealand expeditionary forces being forged into elite veteran fighting formations.

The experience of leadership within the New Zealand expeditionary forces was not unique. There were many similarities to the Australian and Canadian expeditionary forces, and to the British Army to some extent. Officers of all these forces were trained under the curriculum provided within the British Army, and as Lord Beaverbrook argues in his history of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in the First World War, the Canadians, Australians and the New Zealanders were almost entirely led by semi-trained volunteer officers whose initial lack of professionalism was compensated by

examples of courage, steadiness and co-ordinated discipline.¹⁰⁹⁹ His description of the strengths he perceived that made effective colonial volunteer officers, ‘training and discipline combined with intense patriotism, high physical courage and endurance bred of past times,’ might be seen simply as British imperial rhetoric during a time of war. However, there is a strong element of truth in this. The population of all three young dominions generally wanted to play their part in defending Britain and the Empire, through a sense of duty fostered by an engrained British tradition of reliance on auxiliary forces for national defence, while the rigours of colonial life had gone some way in helping them endure modern warfare.¹¹⁰⁰ Another similarity is that by the end of both conflicts there was a tendency for the experienced senior regular officers to be placed in command of brigades, as opposed to the Territorial or militia officers preferred when the expeditionary forces were being formed.

The most significant difference between the New Zealand expeditionary forces and those of Australia and Canada was their size. Apart from the establishment of the temporary and under-strength 3rd New Zealand Division during the Second World War, the New Zealand expeditionary forces serving overseas during both conflicts primarily comprised of a single large division. An exception to this was the Mounted Rifle Brigade, which served with the Anzac Mounted Division in Egypt and Palestine from 1916 after the NZ Division was transferred to the Western Front. Unlike the forces of the other two dominions, these numerically strong single divisions, in effect, became national armies. In comparison to the much larger contingents of their allies, the New Zealand divisions were able to retain almost all of their experienced combat commanders for the duration of the conflicts. Officer casualties were replaced from within the same battalions, regiments and brigades within the divisions, ensuring an established system of promotion based on seniority, experience and merit from within the ranks through to the divisional commanders. This proved beneficial in ensuring the divisions retained their experienced and trusted senior and junior officers, in contrast to those of the Australian and Canadian forces who were transferred within various divisions serving in several different theatres of operation.

Combat experience was another important difference between the New Zealanders and Canadians. The officers and men of the 2nd New Zealand Division,

¹⁰⁹⁹ Lord Beaverbrook, *Canada in Flanders: Volume II of the Official Story Expeditionary Force* (London, 1917), pp. 9-10

¹¹⁰⁰ Beckett, p. 2

together with the Australians serving in the 6th and 9th Divisions, were fighting against the Germans and Italians from as early as 1941, while the bulk of the Canadian divisions were still being organised and trained in the United Kingdom and, except for several large scale raids, did not serve in a campaign until the invasion of Sicily in 1943. Prior to this the inexperienced and under-resourced New Zealand and Australian divisions were forced to fight the more experienced and better equipped Germans in Greece, Crete and North Africa. And although the Canadians went on to play a significant role in the liberation of Europe and had served alongside the Kiwis in Italy, in 1943 their officers were not experienced and battle-hardened veterans that the combat officers of the 2nd New Zealand Division had become.

The international military reputation of New Zealand was cast in the First and Second World Wars. The New Zealand expeditionary forces began as relatively small amateur formations but they punched above their weight when it came to determination to succeed in combat operations. Almost exclusively consisting of volunteers and conscripts, it remains incredible that these citizen-soldier forces became renowned as first-class fighting formations in such a short time. Without doubt, this can be attributed to the leadership shown at all levels of command. However, it was only through experiencing combat that an essential degree of professionalism was achieved by those officers of fighting units. It was the high standard of leadership that the officers provided at battalion, regiment, company, squadron, troop, battery and platoon level, which ensured the New Zealand divisions achieved success. One crucial aspect that attributed to this success was the effective relationships between the officers and other ranks that stemmed from engrained colonial egalitarian values of opportunity through merit, mutual respect, team work and collective responsibility, together with a proficiency forged through shared combat experiences. Cultural and racial factors also determined the styles of leadership used by officers, especially where traditional Maori martial values combined with British imperial and colonial attitudes towards valour in times of adversity. It is hoped that this study helps to provide a greater understanding of the development of combat officers within the New Zealand expeditionary forces during the two major conflicts of the twentieth century and an appreciation of the experiences and sacrifice of those who provided essential combat leadership for their country in times of war. As New Zealanders are growing more aware of their military past and experiences in war that became defining features of nationhood, it is timely

that the untold story of the men responsible for physically leading the nation's troops into battle should now be revealed and understood.

**Appendix 1: World War I Officers Sample (source- Personnel
Files -Archives New Zealand)**

PhD-database-WW1 officers-ANZ-							
Name	Attestati on Age	Enlist ed	Awar ds	Mont hs of Servi ce	Religion	Occupation	Casual ty
Abbot, GM	23			21	Pres	Bank Teller	
Abbott, HW	26			48	Pres	Mercer	
Abercrombi e, TR	22	yes		48	COE	Bank Officer	
Ackhurst, G	36	yes		22	COE	Engineer	KIA
Adams, C	21	yes		24	RC	Miner	DOW
Adams, GJ	25	yes		11	COE	Seaman	DOW
Adams, TG	19	yes		48		Labourer	
Adamson, HGK	25	yes		44	Pres	Store Keeper	
Aldridge, AG	30			8	COE	Railway Clerk	DOW
Alexander, AE	34			58	Pres	Decorator	
Algie, CS	25			23	COE	Teacher	KIA
Allan, W	27	yes		48	Pres	Farmer	
Allen, HG	21			8	Weslyan	Farmer	DOW
Allen, LH	25	yes		46	COE	Accountant	
Amohanga, Te R	22	yes		55	COE	Farmer	yes
Andrews, JW	24			30	Meth	Joiner	yes
Armitage, FL	41			47	COE	Bacteriologi st	
Armstrong, GCW	22			14	COE	Clerk	KIA
Armstrong, H	21	yes		60	COE	Farmer	yes
Austin, LR	24			34	COE	Bank Teller	
Baddeley, HS	23			8	COE	Solicitor	KIA
Bailey, AS	25			19	COE	Salesman	yes
Barclay, G	54			53	Pres	Railway Officer	
Barker, TD	26	yes		50	COE	Engineer	yes
Barker, WB	26	yes		50	COE	Station Hand	yes
Beaven, MW	22	yes		50	COE	Engineer	yes
Begg, CM	34			54	Pres	Surveyor	yes
Bell, WHD	30			3		Lawyer	
Berryman, S	24	yes		42	COE	Farmer	KIA
Biggar, JE	26	yes		50	Pres	Postal Clerk	

Biggar, WO	24	yes		50	Pres	Boilermaker	
Billows, FW	35	yes		41	COE	Jeweller	
Birkby, JS d'H	37	yes		28	COE		
Bishop, JJ	22	yes		22	Pres	Teacher	KIA
Bishop, WGA	21	NZSC	MC	58	COE	Student	yes
Black, J	25	yes		53	Pres	Miner	yes
Blomfield, EH	28		MC	58	COE	Seaman	yes
Boeufre AECHE	24	yes		45	COE	Lawyer	
Bongard, A	19	yes	MC	49	COE	Student	yes
Brunt, JW	32			32	Pres	Engineer	yes
Buchanan, RO	43			40	Pres	Teacher	yes
Buck, PH	34		DSO	52	COE	Doctor	yes
Buckeridge, EH	20			52	COE	Civil Engineer	yes
Buddle, HD	33			37	Meth	Solicitor	yes
Bush, GA	35			48	COE	Accountant	
Butler, GE	40			3	Pres	Artist	
Carpenter, DR	20			9	COE	Clerk	KIA
Chilcott, CW		yes		53	COE	Clerk	
Childs, AJ	37			21	COE	Blacksmith	KIA
Chisholm, JH	34			24	Pres	Farmer	yes
Chisholm, P	30		MBE	36	COE	Surgeon	yes
Clarke, E		yes			Meth	Builder	KIA
Cook, CFD	31		DSO	45	Meth	Barrister	DOS
Cook, HL	28	yes		36	COE	Solicitor	
Cook, PR	47			42	COE	Doctor	
Corbett, IP	26	yes		54	RC	Labourer	yes
Corbett, JM	21			6	COE	Metallurgist	KIA
Cowie, AJ	29			24	Pres	Brewer	
Crampton, JW	32			33	COE	Soldier	yes
Cunningham, A	23	yes		46	Pres	Farmer	DOW
Daniel, GE	24		MM	24	COE	Soldier	KIA
Dartnall, CA	24	yes	MM	44	Meth	Store Keeper	DOS
Dawson, TH	22	yes		27	COE	Clerk	DOW
De La Mare, FA	38	yes		47	Unitarian	Barrister	
Deans, A	25			17	Pres	Farmer	KIA
Deans, D	21	yes		61	Pres	Farmer	yes
Dee, GK	22			25	COE	Clerk	DOW

Devereux, G De B	24		MC	48	COE	Clerk	KIA
Dick-Cleland, CB	34			58	Pres	Mining Engineer	
Digby-Smith, H		yes		43	COE	Civil Servant	yes
Dodson, FH	24			8	COE	Auctioneer	KIA
Dougall, WK	24			25		Farmer	DOW
Duggan, J	28			32	RC	Teacher	yes
Fergus, T	35			54	Pres	Doctor	
Ferguson, D	29	yes	MC	50	COE	Solicitor	
Foster, HG	27	yes		49	COE	Land Agent	yes
Frater, RA	24	yes		9	Pres	Clerk	DOW
French, WA	23	yes		38	Pres	Farmer	KIA
Galloway, G	29			28	COE	Solicitor	yes
Gilmore, AF	20	yes	MM	53	COE	Telegraphist	yes
Glanfield, D	23	yes		54	Pres	Clerk	yes
Goodwin, E	35			37	COE		DOW
Grace, LW Te H	28	yes		41	COE	Solicitor	
Grant, SA	34	NZSC		12	COE	Soldier	DOW
Gray, CG	35			25	COE	Dentist	
Gray, RN	24	yes	MC, MM	46	Baptist	Clerk	yes
Greenhough, PB	42			21	COE	Clothing Manufacturer	yes
Hall, A	23	yes	MC	44	COE	Secretary	KIA
Hall, HJ	27			15	COE	Soldier	KIA
Harper, PT	44			13	COE	Doctor	
Harston, ES	21			34		Student	yes
Herrick, AD	34	yes	MC	28	COE	Farmer	KIA
Hewlett, HS	42			35	COE	Expert Maltster	yes
Hill, CC	24	yes		53	COE	Clerk	yes
Hill, RJ	28	yes	MC	40	COE	Clerk	DOW
Hodgson, FJ	27	yes	MM	57		Engineer	yes
Holdgate, EAG	41			29	Meth	Ironmongers Assistant	yes
Hopkirk, WS	21	yes		22	Pres	Clerk	KIA
Houlker, J	34			12	COE	Solicitor	DOW
Hulbert, W	28	yes		57	COE	Marine Engineer	yes
Huse, W	20	yes		48	COE	Hardware Assistant	yes

Insley, GW	34	yes	OBE	51	COE	Bricklayer	yes
Izard, AW	37			58	COE	Surgeon	yes
James, TP	29			12	COE	Accountant	DOW
Jenkins, WG	26	yes		61	COE	Wool Buyer	yes
Jennings, LS	27			25	COE	Teacher	KIA
Joll, BL	22	yes		55	COE	Clerk	yes
Joll, WT	43			22	COE	Farmer	
Jones, NW	40	yes		50	Pres	Clerk	yes
Jones, VG	35	yes		35	COE	Soldier	
Jordan, JB	20	NZSC		30	COE	Soldier	yes
Kaa, P	20	yes		26	COE	Sheep Worker	KIA
Kaipara, AP	27	yes		36	RC	Licensed Interpreter	KIA
Karauria, R	26			18	COE	Farmer	yes
Karauti, H	37			43	COE	Farmer	
Knightsbridge, TW	23	yes		49	COE	Farmer & Butcher	yes
Lang, H	24			10	COE	School Master	KIA
Little, GC	21	yes		67	COE	Farmer	yes
Lockie, CJW	29			40	COE	Bank Teller	
Loomes, V				58		Farm Hand	yes
Luxford, JA	30		CMG	69	Meth	Clergyman	yes
Lyons, MJ					RC	Grocer	
MacDonald, A	26	yes		46	COE	Civil Servant	yes
MacKenzie, J	24	yes		30	Pres	Teacher	DOW
Mackie, C	45	no		5	Pres	Accountant	
MacLean, JC	38		MC & Bar	51	COE	Farmer	yes
Marshall, A McP.	23			53	Pres	Doctor	
Martin, A	32	yes		37	COE	Warehouse man	yes
Maunsell, HB	24			26	COE	Farmer	yes
McAra, W	36			17	Pres	Surgeon	
McArthur, AD	19	yes		39	Pres	Teacher	
McClelland, CH	20	NZSC	DSO	55	COE	Soldier	yes
McKeefry, JHA	25			36	RC	Accountant	yes
McKeefry, MJA	23			26	RC	Civil Servant	KIA
McLennon, LS	23			12		Clerk	KIA
McLeod, MK	25	yes		19	Pres	Architect	DOW
McRae, PF	23			29	COE	Farmer	KIA

McRae, RCB	22			14	Pres	Doctor	
Merrington, AR	23			18	COE	Teacher	
Miller, Hugh	29	yes	MC	53	COE	Grocer	yes
Milne, MC	21			52	Pres	Stock Agent	yes
Moir, PT	21	yes	MM, DCM	48	Pres	Cleaner	yes
Molloy, CH	25	yes		31	RC	Clerk	KIA
Montgomery, HS	40	yes		57	Pres	Soldier	yes
Mooney, R	24	yes		12	RC	Soldier	KIA
Moore, S	29	yes		9		Physical Instructor	DOW
Moreton, C	27	yes		52	Atheist	Coal Miner	yes
Morgan, H	34			8	COE	Estate Agent	KIA
Munro, DA	25	yes		63	Pres	Stevedor	yes
Murphy, J	35			34	Pres	Warehouse man	yes
Napier, DG	24			24	Pres	Clerk	KIA
Natusch, GP	21	yes		28	COE	Reporter	
O'Brien, DQ	40	yes		41	RC	Coal Miner	
O'Connor, D	26	yes		28	RC	School Master	KIA
O'Connor, MB	21	yes		26	RC	School Master	KIA
O'Dowd, PJ	26			52	RC	Farmer	yes
Ongley, PA	26	yes		25	RC	Teacher	KIA
Orr, A	30	yes		40	COE	Shepherd	yes
Oxley, JV	27	yes		39	COE	Clerk	yes
Park, KR	22	yes		9	Pres	Purser	
Parkin, VG	20	yes		41	COE	Clerk	yes
Parkinson, L	36	yes		42	COE	Farmer	yes
Paterson, D	23	yes		48	Pres	Farmer	KIA
Patterson, HM	25	yes		48	COE	Mercer	yes
Pederson, H	25	yes		49	RC	Railway Porter	yes
Pickerill, HP	37			37	COE	Doctor	
Polson, C	37	yes		25	Pres	Carpenter	yes
Poppelwell, GXB	25			25	RC	Accountant	yes
Popple, GL		yes		55	COE	Surveyors Assistant	yes
Porritt, EE	46			42	COE	Doctor	
Powley, AJ	28	yes	MC	25	COE	Clerk	DOW
Preston, AH	23	yes	MC	34	COE	Station Hand	KIA

Prior, NH	33		MC	41	Meth	Doctor	yes
Pryce, JS	22	yes		45	COE	Farmer	KIA
Raynes, JJ	39			18	COE	Farmer	
Ready, WH	26	yes		31	Meth	Solicitor	yes
Reid, SGT	31	yes		9	COE	Accountant	KIA
Richards, RJ	23			20	COE	Student	yes
Richardson, HG	23			8	Congregatio nal	Importer	KIA
Ritchie, TR	27			53		Doctor	yes
Roache, JG	39		DSO	54	RC	Civil Servant	yes
Roy, JA McL	23	yes	MC	32	Pres	Farm Labourer	yes
Ruddock, S	36			33	COE	Sharebroker	
Russell, PD	33	yes		55	COE	Farmer	yes
Saunders, CW	30	yes		40		Engineer	yes
Savage, TC	41				COE	Surgeon	DOS
Screaton, TGN	22			9	COE	Book Keeper	KIA
Seed, WS	30	yes		36	Meth	Dentist	
Shepherd, NF	24	yes	DSO	61	Pres	Bank Clerk	yes
Sherrard, SC	20	yes		37	Pres	Draper	yes
Sinel, WC	33			69	COE	Shipping Clerk	yes
Sissons, TH	26	yes		51	COE	Teacher	yes
Sloane, AD	34			50		Chemist	
Somervell, EE	31			48	COE	Coach Builder	yes
Southward, J	22			30	COE	Grocer	yes
Stainton, WN	24	yes	MC	57	COE	Teacher	
Standish, IT	30	NZSC	DSO	56	COE	Soldier	
Starnes, F	26		DSO	66	Pres	Farmer	yes
Stewart, JG	24		MC	56	Pres	Student	yes
Stout, WG	32			57	Protestant	Surgeon	
Stuckey, F	35			8	COE	Teacher	DOW
Studholme, J	52		DSO	60	COE	Farmer	
Tate, CH	23	yes		50	Weslyan	Town Clerk	yes
Thompson, RJL	25	yes		56	Pres	Commercial Traveller	
Thorburn, JR	24	yes		53	Pres	Coach Builder	
Thornby, CF	22	yes		45	COE	Bushman	KIA

Turner, ARH	23			14	COE	Commercial Traveller	yes
Waitford, AV	20	yes		51	COE	Motor Car Driver	yes
Walker, JV	23			63	COE	Labourer	yes
Wallingford , JA	42		MC	31	COE	Soldier	yes
Ward, RF	22	yes		48	COE	Mill Hand	yes
Whetter, LH	32			30	COE	Doctor	yes
Wilson, FJC	22	yes		51	COE	Auctioneer	yes
Wilson, FR	29	yes		18	COE	Teacher	DOW
Winder, HE	26			12	COE	Clerk	KIA
Woodrow, TM	25	yes		48	Pres	Engineer	
Woodward, CB	26	yes		43		Draper	yes
Wright, HM	23			8	COE	Town Clerk	KIA

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