

VOL. 2, NO. 4

JANUARY 1980  
FEBRUARY

# CROSSFIRE



OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE  
MARLBOROUGH RETURNED SERVICES  
ASSOCIATION

**·BUILDERS SUPPLIES**

**·PAINT & WALLPAPER**

**·TOOLS**

**·GLASS SUPPLIES**

**·GLAZING SERVICE**

**·FISHER ALUMINIUM  
DOORS & WINDOWS**

**·TILT-A-DORS**

**·PLUMBING SPPLIES**

**Stop**

OPEN SATURDAY MORNING-9 to 12  
FOR APPROVED ITEMS ONLY. EXCEPT GLASS & PLUMBING  
DEPTS.

**HWB<sup>co</sup>**



GROVE RD. BLENHEIM. PHONE ·6329·

# EDITORIAL

The new financial year began on January 1 and our honorary treasurer, Alex Fry, is busy with the annual balance sheet and audit.

Nominations are now being called for office-bearers (president, two vice-presidents, honorary treasurer, 8 executive members and 9 clubhouse committee members). Nomination forms are available in the clubhouse or from the office. It is hoped to conduct the A.G.M. late in March so that the new committee will operate from April 1, 1980, to March 31, 1981.

Have a good look around our RSA members and give some thought to nominating those with the time and ability to steer the Association through what will be some fairly difficult times ahead. Rising costs continue as a way of life and cannot be ignored if the Association is to keep its head above water and provide the amenities and welfare assistance deserved by its members. The recent 12% increase in pay for hotel and chartered club employees is an example of how cost increases have to be passed on in the form of an increase in the price of beer.

Plans are under way for the commemoration of Anzac Day and the format will be slightly different from usual. Market Place is now difficult to negotiate with a body of troops in a march past the Rotunda, so we have suggested to the council that the Mayor and the official party form up on the balcony of the council chambers. The troops in the meantime do a short jaunt along Alfred Street, turn back at the intersection of Henry Street and then past the saluting base. It is also hoped to have a sit-down buffet lunch in the Pavilion Lounge while various forms of entertainment are provided. Any ideas or assistance in this direction would be greatly appreciated by the organising committee.

## ADVERTISERS MAKE THIS PUBLICATION POSSIBLE SUPPORT THEM

### GET YOUR CROSSFIRE REGULARLY!

For just \$2 you can have Crossfire posted to any address in New Zealand.

Have you an old RSA cobbler who has moved to another town?

It would be a nice gesture if you paid the subscription and enable him to have each issue posted to him.

See the Secretary/ Manager if you would like to take advantage of this postal service.

### EDITORIAL

The Editor is Paul Brodie and the sub-editor Allan Gardiner.

### PRINTING

Crossfire is printed by Gards Print Ltd, 14 Bomford Street, Blenheim.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Correspondence should reach the Editor by the 30th of the month preceding publication.

### PLEASE NOTE

All opinions expressed in Crossfire are those of the individual contributors and do not reflect MRSA official policy unless otherwise stated.

# President's Report . . .

Things have been generally quiet around the Clubrooms the last couple of months but with our annual meeting being tentatively set for March 23 and nominations having been called for the Executive and Clubhouse Committees, we are starting to get into gear again.

Our Christmas Draw was a great success with prizes being widely distributed. Our thanks to Alex, Paul and their helpers for a very smoothly run operation, which entailed a tremendous amount of work.

Just before Christmas the Welfare Committee delivered Christmas gifts to all our WWI veterans and widows, which were much appreciated. Although it involved a lot of time, I am sure the committee enjoyed it. Most of them were accompanied by their wives and the veterans really enjoyed a chat. It was a real eye-opener to see how well kept most of these old folks' gardens are. One place I called at the old chap was out helping his son in the shearing shed!

The ladies also held a Christmas party for the veterans which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. It is a pity some of the younger members don't spend a few minutes and attend one of these afternoons to have a chat with these elderly folk. Once again, I thank the ladies for their efforts. Thanks also to Mrs Joy McLean for supplying the music.

Our secretary has initiated a scheme whereby we supply assistance to any member or widow who requires help with lawns, hedges or gardens. If you know anybody in this category, please notify Paul.

Mrs Joe Griffiths donated two large felt toys to be raffled for our welfare funds. This netted \$57. Unfortunately, somebody stole \$30 from the jug. We can only presume that it was a visitor and not one of our members. Thanks Jean for a very generous gesture — it's a pity it was spoilt by a very despicable action. Jean is at present in hospital and we all wish her a speedy recovery.

Remember, nominations for Executive and Clubhouse Committee close on February 22.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Commendation . . .

We would like to thank the loyal member who reported to the Borough Council health inspector that our glassware was broken and dirty. Next time, however, what about making your complaint to those responsible for running the charter?

As it turned out, a snap inspection failed to reveal any breaches of the health regulations.

---

## . . . Condemnation

We would like to sympathise with the destitute person who dipped into the raffle money for the two stuffed animals at Christmas-time. We have a welfare fund if you are still short of money and you might be rewarded if you care to make an application for a loan or grant.

---

★ SUPPORT THE ADVERTISERS ★

## SHINE YOUR GONGS FOR ANZAC DAY

From official sources we present this "clean your medals the easy way" recipe:

- 1 dstspn ammonia
- 2 dstspn methylated spirits
- 2 dstspn dishwashing detergent

About ¼ cup of water

Place this solution in a dish and soak the medals in it. If medals are badly tarnished it will be necessary to replace the solution after an hour or so, as it will be getting pretty dirty. Repeat the process two or three times, depending on the condition of the medals. This solution does not harm the ribbons, so the entire assembly can be immersed.

---

## Diggers Bowls Elimination

We congratulate our Diggers team who will represent us at the annual national tournament at Tauranga. The team is Reg Dawkins, Chick Elsmore, Ray Bascand and Bruce Scott.

---

## SOME FACTS AND FIGURES FROM THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS (APRIL TO DECEMBER), COMPARED WITH THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR

CHARTER	This Period	Last Period
Bar Receipts	131273.15	122342.02
Cost of Stock Sold	73240.41	64082.00
Gross Profit	58032.74	58260.02
Cost of Sales	43897.72	37810.10
Net Profit	\$14135.02 (19.29%) Down 12.62%	\$20449.92 (31.9%)
ALL SALARIES (including cleaning)	46194.65 (Up 13.23%)	40796.79
CLEANING MATERIALS	443.52 (Down 50.2%)	891.56
REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE	4947.32 (Down 36.45%)	7785.46
BAR REPLACEMENTS	1364.91 (Up 13.42%)	1181.64
HEAT AND LIGHT	4157.65 (Up 11.81%)	3666.62
RATES, INSURANCE AND FEES	4321.32 (Up 19.94%)	3459.64
COUNTER LUNCHES	749.57 (Up 24.84%)	563.35
SPECIAL EFFORTS, Receipts	28092.87	22037.02
Cost of Sales	18458.21	15873.34
Net Profit	\$9634.66 (Up 36%)	\$6163.68
HOUSIE		
Receipts	6557.95	8228.24
Costs	171.39	486.20
Net Profit	\$6386.56 (Down 17.5%)	\$7742.04

\*\*\*\*\*

### Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir — I thought your members may like to know that we held our Diggers bowls elimination tournament on January 26-27. We had a good turnout of 16 teams. Eight qualified and last year's winners, Bob Wilton, H. Madsen, B. Craig and S. Edwards, won again. We will see the Marlborough boys at Tauranga.

—Tom Tombs, Wairarapa RSA.

## P H E W !

Russ Matthews was having a quiet lemonade in the Picton RSA when he ran into a

1st Echelon man who told him this tale. Seems that it was about the time of the introduction of the new Hurricane fighter plane and none of the diggers knew a great deal about it. They were camped a fair way from civilisation when the C.O. excitedly told the troops that "the Hurricane is due in 10 minutes." Seems the Kiwi digs completely misunderstood this statement and they spent the next few minutes frantically tightening their tent ropes and tying down anything that was not anchored to the ground. In their wisdom they presumed that an act of nature was about to strike them!

# Well Done Services

WE LEAD . . . OTHERS FOLLOW

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are pleased to advise that

— **BLenheim'S ONLY GARDENOLOGIST** —

offer the following services:

- |                      |                           |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| ★ RUBBISH REMOVAL    | ★ TREE PRUNING & SPRAYING |
| ★ LAWN CUTTING AND   | ★ HEDGE CUTTING           |
| ★ EDGE TRIMMING      | ★ TREE FELLING & TOPPING  |
| ★ ROTARY HOEING      | ★ SPOUTING CLEARED        |
| ★ INCINERATOR SUPPLY | ★ FIREWOOD SUPPLY         |
| ★ HOUSE MAINTENANCE  | ★ PROMPT ATTENTION        |
| ★ TOP SOIL SUPPLIERS | ★ ORGANIC FERTILISERS     |

TELEPHONE 81-888

## EX-MALAYAN ASSN BRANCH NEWS

*Well, another festive season has gone and I trust that you have all had an enjoyable time with not many sore heads.*

*Our next meeting is only a couple of weeks away on February 27 and we will discuss the important subject of War Service Pensions in relation to those who served in Malaya.*

*We will also discuss our picnic to be held on March 23. Make sure you are at this meeting.*

*The picnic will be held at Geoff Corbett's property at Onekoura Beach, Grove Arm. The site is about half a mile on the Picton side of Momorangi Bay. For those travelling by road the entrance will be signposted with a triangular marker and for those arriving by boat a similar marker will be sited on the jetty.*

*We intend to provide ice creams and a lolly scramble for the kids and we will spit roast a sheep to supplement whatever rations you care to bring. There will also be barbecues provided for your use.*

*Put a ring around Sunday, March 23 and give mum and the kids a day out.*

*The following letter has been received from Dominion HQ of the NZRSA:*

Please advise if you executive is aware of or currently pursuing any line of thought on how Government's stance on this matter could be varied. The soldiers who fought terrorism in Malaysia and endeavoured to stem the tide of communist advancement in that country was on active service. On remembers that New Zealand service in Malaya overlapped Korea and South Vietnam "eligible" service. Any distinction between service in the two theatres is invidious and discriminating. We await your reaction to this resolution.

As the points raised above are to be discussed by our national executive and a reply sent to NZRSA, it is important that you attend our regular meeting on February 27 and give your opinion on this important issue as it affects your future entitlement.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM of the branch will be held in the RSA meeting room on Wednesday, March 26, at 2000 hours. A full attendance of members and intending members is requested.

All positions are open for nomination and will be accepted in writing prior to the meeting and will also be taken from the floor of the meeting.

# Obituary . . .

*The Late Alan Murrell, who died suddenly on December 4, 1979, had been a resident of Blenheim for some 14 years, and for most of that time he had been a member of the Marlborough RSA.*

*Essentially a quiet but very genuine person, he was endowed with a delightful sense of humour and although Alan did not bestow his friendship lightly, those that received the accolade were indeed blessed by the warmth of his humanity and his caring concern for others marked him as one of that rare breed — one of nature's gentlemen.*

*Apart from his RSA friends and a host of other local friends and workmates from the M.O.W. who will deeply regret his passing, I would especially like (and I know he would) to mention his great friend, Bill Walker, who has an hotel at Ruawai, and his affectionate name for Alan was "Fat Boy." Another special local cobbler was Norm Lynch.*

*Alan, who was in his 59th year, went overseas with the 11th Reinforcements on the "Mooltan" and after training in Egypt joined the N.Z. Division at Bari and served throughout the rest of the Italian campaign, ending at Trieste, during part of which he served with Pat McKinley, of Nelson.*

*Alan's service was mainly with the 2nd RMT and later with 8th Transport 1st Divisional Supplies and he returned to New Zealand on the "Durban Castle."*

*Alan had always had an interest in the transport business and in 1946 he took over Te Horo Transport — with two trucks, an International and a Fargo — and built it up to a fleet operating a daily service between Otaki and Wellington.*

*He sold the business in 1964 and moved to Blenheim, near the country district of Okaramio, where his wife (nee Thora Mortimer) has been born and she in later years worked there as Postmistress. Thora pre-deceased Alan by some 10 months and my own observation is that he never fully recovered from her loss, which I know he felt very deeply.*

*Finally, on behalf of Alan's RSA friends, of whom I count it a privilege to have been one, I would like to express our deepest sympathy to his family. To his son Evan and daughter-in-law Yvonne (Hastings), daughters Josephine (Mrs Cameron Keown), Pat (Mrs Denis Jacques), Christine (Mrs Kevin Black) and Alan's eight grand-children, our sincere sympathy.*

## LEST WE FORGET — LEST WE FORGET

Mild-mannered John Smithers answered the knock at the door and there facing him across the threshold was a wild-eyed, slack-jawed individual who said in a high-pitched, breathless tone, "I'm the Boston Strangler."

Smithers eyed him for a moment, then yelled out: "Mary, it's for you!"

In Nelson she was Winnie,  
She was Margaret in the north.  
In Stratford she was Maisie,  
The sweetest thing on earth.  
In Christchurch she was Marie,  
The cutest of the bunch.  
But down in his expenses,  
She was petrol, oil and lunch.

## **BUSINESS MACHINES (Services) LTD**

**FOR REPAIRS TO ALL**

**OFFICE EQUIPMENT**

**WEIGHING SCALES**

**BATHROOM SCALES**

**Phone 5985;**

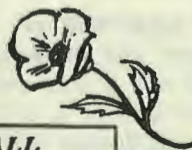
**After Hours 88-913.**



## LAST POST

43302 J. A. BLACKBOURN  
38317 A. S. SOPER  
21831 A. W. O. OLSEN  
17089 W. G. G. CUDDON  
39119 K. G. WILLOUGHBY  
7869 M. T. A. MILLER  
29432 H. G. PURCHES  
420289 A. MURRELL  
44589 J. J. McFARLANE  
45675 A. E. BURNETT  
268411 G. P. DEW

"At the going down of the sun . . .  
We will remember them."



*THEY GAVE THEIR ALL  
AS WE WHO ARE LEFT DID NOT  
FORGET THEM NEVER OR BE  
YOURSELVES FORGOT.*

## LAST POST

39119 KENNETH G. WILLOUGHBY

It is with the deepest regret that we record the sudden death of a personal friend and a valuable asset to the club. In spite of indifferent health, Ken fronted up each Monday

from 3 to 5pm for his turn at bar duty, and his always cheerful greeting will be missed by us all. Prior to getting our charter and in that period when membership participation was being sought, Ken was an avid worker and supporter for the social committee. Our deepest sympathy is extended to his family.

# WISEWAY I.G.A.

NELSON SQUARE, PICTON

WEEKLY SPECIALS

TELEPHONE 450 PICTON

OPEN SEVEN DAYS

## “Junior” — A Stowaway

There was at least one alien stowaway on the transport, “Junior,” a chameleon. The voyage was well advanced when he was located by a magazine representative, and he was inclined to doze a little in the mild sunshine. However he was persuaded to rouse himself long enough to sideswipe three flies, after which he told his life story.

“I was born in Palestine but I did not see much of my native country until I was adopted by a Kiwi soldier, and then we went to a lot of interesting places. We got on so well together that I did not require much persuading to go to Egypt with him. I was not impressed with Cairo — a smelly place. I used to go there on leave with my friend Pop, and my usual perch was on his shoulder where I could see all without being seen. Once or twice some Wog George tried to pick Pop’s pocket and wasn’t he surprised when I moved into action just beside his hand. You see, I have two eyes that can swivel to any angle and I can really look two different ways at the same time.

“The bints of Cairo used to admire me and several times Pop made interesting acquaintances through me. They would stop and speak and then they would drop some coloured cloth over me for a little while. I wondered about this, but I found out later that my family are considered to be very lucky, and if we change colour to match the covering it is a good omen. Any wish the bint then makes will come true.

“When Pop had his meals he always thought of me too, and I would be set down to wander on the white table cloth. I always attracted a crowd but I am not given to stage-fright. I just went on catching flies to my own satisfaction and their entertainment. You see, I have a tongue as long as myself — that is, four inches — and it is goodbye to any fly that comes in range. Seven or eight flies at a time is a good meal for me. Of course, I like any other insect

too, and in Palestine I worked in the orange groves to keep down the blight.

“After I had been with Pop for about 12 months there came a time when I sensed there was a big change coming and I found out that Pop was going home to New Zealand. I thought this over and decided that I was not going to be left alone, so I stowed away rather than take any chances. I could hear Pop cursing as he hunted for me, but I just stayed put. I did not give myself up for some days but then I thought I’d better warn Pop that if anything happened he would have a passenger on his lifejacket. But all Pop said when he saw me was — “You poor silly fool. I suppose you thought you might be classed as a pet, but you’re an old Dig like me.”

“Pop warned me that it was very cold in New Zealand but I think I can take it. We chameleons live for hundreds of years and in cold weather we hibernate and liven up again in the summer. I’ve enjoyed this sea trip, but it’s getting chilly now so I’ll doze off and dream of happy hunting next summer.”

---

A stranger came to church and the minister was pleased to see him come forward and sit in of the empty front seats. Afterwards he greeted the newcomer and said: “I’m glad you felt free to sit well forward, even though you are a visitor.”

“Well,” said the man, “I’m a bus driver and I just wanted to see if I could learn how you can get everyone to move to the rear all the time.”

\* \* \*

## *Executive 25 years ago*

*Present: Messrs R. T. Scott (in chair), W. A. Hood, F. R. Lightfoot, R. D. Wanden, J. R. Naysmith, R. C. Bush, L. D. Waters, F. A. Harrison, J. M. Walsh, J. A. Bell, F. O. Delaney, P. G. Tizard (secretary).*

*Branches: F. W. Parker (East Coast), A. A. Kitching (Rai), C. Harris (Awatere), P. L. Smith (Renwick), N. Jellyman (Kaikoura), T. B. Madsen and C. Beaumont-Neilson (Picton), and A. D. Gibb (Picton), observer.*

*Apology: W. J. Perkins.*

*Finance: General account receipts amounted to ©2217/5/9 and payments were ©1730/15/5, which left the association with a credit balance of ©82/15/6. Relief account receipts amounted to ©31/15/6 and payments were ©223/6/1, leaving a B.N.S.W. debit balance of ©46/0/8.*

*New Members: Ten new members were approved.*

*Bowls: The meeting agreed that Mr J. Crooks represent the association at the N.Z.R.S.A. Dominion bowling tournament at Hastings and that he endeavour to have the 1959 tournament in Blenheim (centennial year).*

*Cemetery: Flagpole at Omaka to be investigated. Rifle shooting on the range distractive during funerals. Aircraft also pose problem.*

*Anzac Day: Same format as in previous years. Sub-committee to arrange concert.*

*Seymour Square: A letter was sent to the gardener congratulating him on the standard of Seymour Square Gardens.*

*Building: Mr Scott reported no progress with the building project. He suggested an estimate be obtained for the shell of the building — member builders could then carry out interior finishings.*

*Anzac Delegation: Mr Waters had received advice that he was appointed leader of the Anzac delegation to Australia.*

*Telephones: Mr Hood reported a member had refused to pay his subscription until the RSA did something about getting their area connected to the exchange. Members stressed the considerable efforts of the Executive to have the area connected and it was decided to circularise members advising them of this.*

## *. . . and 30 years ago*

*Present: Messrs R. A. Mears (chair), W. A. Hood, F. O. Delaney, J. A. Bell, F. A. Harrison, R. D. Wanden, L. D. Waters, A. Broadley, F. W. Horton, R. K. Harvey, G. H. Stace and J. S. Bain (secretary).*

*Branches: J. Sutherland (Picton), F. G. Butt (Seddon), S. Waters, J. Thomson (Ward).*

*Apologies: A. A. Kitching, F. V. H. Robinson, F. W. Parker, A. D. Gibb.*

*Glass Washer: Messrs Gibson and Cresswell were to be asked the best method of installation.*

*Treatment of Timber (Rehab Houses): The secretary reported that F. E. Musgrove and Co. were establishing a plant for the dipping of timber.*

*Car Allocation: Letter received from the Director of Rehab advising that an application for Rev Gregory to obtain a car from the special importation was declined as the Rev Gregory was an ex-Imperial returned serviceman and thus did not qualify. Decided to inform NZRSA.*

*Billiard Table: Estimate to replace cloth and cushions, £150. Moved a second table be purchased from the Marquess of Lorne Hotel, Hokitika, for the sum of £60.*

*Farm Manager: A reply was received from Director of Rehab regarding payment of award wages to farm managers. The director reported the matter had been investigated and instructions had been given to pay dairy workers £7/11/6 per week (retrospective to June, 1949) and sheep workers £7/0/0.*

*Gold Star: Letter received from NZRSA advising that Mr R. A. Mears had been awarded NZRSA Gold Star Badge.*

*Building: Mr Horton reported the cost of alterations to the clubhouse residence would be about £100 and the cost per room for electrical and plumbing work would be £15. It was decided to complete the sunroom and verandah.*

*The janitor reported 10 minutes late for work and the boss asked, "What did they do in the Army when you were 10 minutes late in the morning?"*

*"Every time I came in late," the janitor said, "they all jumped up, saluted, and said 'Good morning, Colonel!'"*

ADVERTISERS MAKE THIS PUBLICATION POSSIBLE  
SUPPORT THEM

# Blenheim Women's Section

After a break of two months we are about to resume our social afternoons on Wednesday, February 13, at 2pm. We do hope members have thoroughly enjoyed the holiday season even though the weather was not always kind.

At our Christmas dinner, Mrs Eva Kennington welcomed members and guests from Renwick and Plcton. Mrs Kathleen Faulding gave a short thanksgiving before our meal. The evening was jolly — in good Christmas spirit — with good food and all the trimmings and excellent entertainment by our girls. The evening concluded with carol singing, best wishes and thanks from our guests and Mrs Kennington wished everyone the compliments of the season.

The veterans' Christmas Party was again a huge success and a large gathering of members and guests were welcomed by Mrs Kennington and also Mr Yealands, president of the Marlborough RSA.

A social hour preceded a delightful high tea. Songs and music were played by the Country

and Western group and an item by popular veteran Les Watson, who sang in his own inimitable way, all contributed to a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon.

Mr Watson thanked the women's section for their interest during the year. Mrs Kennington replied and wished all a happy time.

And to the veteran who every Christmas brings along a box of lavender posies — thank you Mr Coutts.

—JO ALLEN

## PAT ON THE BACK FOR NAT. PAT.

Before leaving the Middle east a considerable amount of recreation equipment, etc., was placed aboard each ship as a result of the National Patriotic Fund (money supplied by our people at home). The allocation for our ship was as follows: 1704 parcels, 24 dart sets, six sets of boxing gloves, 12 deck tennis sets, 6 medicine balls, 50 draught sets, 24 chess sets, 25 sets of Chinese checkers, 15,000 sheets of writing paper, 5000 envelopes, 144 pens and nibs, 500 Loto blocks, 5 Shun Ting sets, 400 packs of playing cards, five Bingo sets, 12 large bottles of ink, 221,000 cigarettes. The sum of £250 was also made available for the provision of afternoon tea daily.

# BLENHEIM ELECTRIC HOUSE LTD.

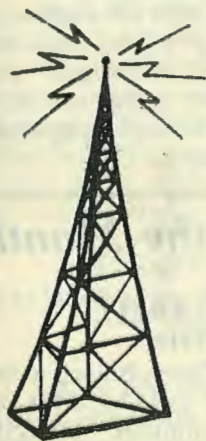
(W. R. BRUNTON)

**FOR ALL YOUR RADIO  
AND TV REPAIRS  
SEE US!**

**6 OPAWA STREET,  
BLENHEIM.**

**TELEPHONE 83-564.**

**A.H. 6812.**



# STEWART HARDWARE

1-3 KINROSS STREET, BLENHEIM.  
**POULAN** Agents For:  
**CHAINSAWS** **VICTA MOWERS**

*THE GREEN MACHINE*  
AND WE SERVICE THE REST

## Picton Branch News

The increase in the price of drinks served tends to give a false impression of the actual profit made over the past couple of months.

The graph in the secretary's office indicates a fantastic upsurge in trading, however, closer examination reveals that actual profit to the club barely keeps up with the last summer season.

On the brighter side, we have had scores of visitors to our club, each with a favourable comment about our extensions and, thanks to Gordon and Jim, the quality of the beer our loyal barpersons have poured. I am sure that every member who is not actually involved with the bar duties, will join me in saying well done and thank you to all those who give up their time for the benefit of the club and its members.

It is an unfortunate fact that the majority of our furniture is beyond what one would expect for a lounge bar, but thanks to the astuteness of one member, it is hoped that your committee could be on to a favourable deal in replacing it. More about that when we have some definite information.

Some non-RSA members are confused over the call for subs to be paid. This is as a result of the last clubhouse AGM when it was resolved to have all subs co-ordinated. Consequently, to get into line, this year's subscription has been reduced.

### Items of interest from executive meetings:

It was approved that the customary grant to widows who lost their husbands during the year be continued the same as last year.

The welfare committee visited WWI members and offered them the usual Christmas cheer.

Finance: Two meetings were held and recommendations to the executive were. loss of profit insurance to be taken out for \$20,000 over

12 months.

The ground floor toilets, etc., to be finished and the work to be completed by the end of January.

It was resolved that no meeting be held in January, unless urgent business arises.

It was resolved that the viability of an honour's board be investigated.

It was resolved that the naval relations officer be advised that members of the crew of HMAS Jervis Bay are cordially invited to use the clubrooms and amenities, provided such members are of age.

The meeting was advised that an increase in the price of glassware, i.e., jugs and glasses, is imminent, and it was resolved to double up on the last order.

It was resolved to procure plastic matting for the jugs and glass shelves.

Twenty new names were accepted for the waiting list of non-RSA membership, and the names, as drawn for priority, are displayed on the club notice board.

It was resolved that Billiards Ltd be requested to check the new table for alignment.

It was resolved that (to give Jim a break) the finance charter committee investigate and implement a system whereby senior executive members have responsibility for locking up at the close of business some nights.

---

## Personality of the Month

**F. J. (Johnny) MURRELL**

Born July 3, 1910.

Record of service with Picton Branch of the MRSA: Financial member 1953-63, 1968-80. RSA indoor bowls committee 1954-55, executive committee member 1969-79, hospital visiting and welfare 1969-80, secretary-treasurer 1970-71, vice-president 1972-73, president 1973-74-75. Johnny also served on the original charter

charter committee for 18 months and was branch delegate to MRSA for three years.

Johnny was awarded life membership in 1973 and his citation included service on the executive committee (9 years), social and indoor bowls committee (10 years).

Now in his 70th year, Johnny originally hailed from the Hutt Valley where he worked for Lever Bros at Petone for some years after the depression, before joining the Army and going overseas with the 25th Btn as a driver-mechanic in the Bren Carrier Platoon. After being chased out of Greece, he was stationed at Kantora on the Suez Canal, where he contracted cerrabo meningitis and was invalided home in 1943.

After a short period of sick leave he joined the staff of the Army School of Instruction, serving as orderly room sergeant at the mechanic's school at General Motors in Petone, a position he held till the end of hostilities, when he was discharged and went back to Lever Bros as engineer's storeman.

In 1952 Johnny married Mrs Dorothy Buckley, and with her son Gavin, they moved to the Marlborough Sounds. It was at this time that Johnny first became involved with the Picton RSA. He was a member of the hall committee, for which he was always able to supply a boat load of ferns and flowers for decorating the hall.

The family moved to Picton in 1953 and Johnny worked as a painter and decorator for 10 years before having to retire through ill-health.

Since that time Johnny has had his fair share of sickness but keeps bouncing back and it wasn't long after one such spell that he was in the champion team of bowlers who won the MRSA indoor Diggers tournament in 1976 and again in 1977.

By far the most worthy attribute of Johnny is his loyalty to those members who have been unfortunate enough to have been hospitalised over the past 14 years. Ironically, while writing this article, we find that Johnny is in the Picton Hospital. We hope that by the time this Crossfire comes out he will be back in his customary role of visiting, rather than being visited.

#### **IN TOWN FOR THE DAY?**

**Try lunch at the RSA — 12 noon to 1.30pm  
Monday to Friday.**

**On the first day of kindergarten each child arrived home with a note from the teacher. It read: "Dear Parents: If you promise not believe all your child says happens at kindy, I'll promise not to believe all he says happens at home."**

\* \* \*

## **JOINERY**

### **STAIRS AND TURNED BALUSTERS**

### **LATHE WOOD TURNING CATERED FOR**



## **BLENHEIM JOINERY CO.**

**New Renwick Road, Blenheim**

**Telephone 84-455 or 83-232**

**Member N.Z. Master Builders Federation Inc.**

20 Scott St,  
Blenheim.

# The Gallery

Telephone  
87-403

FOR EXPERT PICTURE FRAMING

★ PRESENT THIS ADVERTISEMENT FOR 15% DISCOUNT ★

Large stocks of Prints  
Miniatures

★ Photo Albums  
★ Antique Frames

## LUXURY LEAVE BOAT ON THE NILE

Some 10 days after the end of the El Alamein battle I received a small wound in my left arm and was evacuated by hospital ship from Tobruk and eventually ended up in N.Z. Base Hospital where I spent Christmas before returning to base camp at Maadi.

However, the hospital had reported that they considered I was still not fit enough to return up the "Blue" (desert) for front-line service and recommended that I be given leave.

After some inquiries I heard about a leave boat on the Nile out near the fabulous Gezira Island which pre-war was the playground of the affluent Anglo-American residents of Cairo. Pre-war, the "Puritan" and "Niagra" (now leave boats) used to take tourists up the Nile some 500 miles to Aswan and Luxor.

When I made application for leave aboard the Puritan I was not aware that each leave group was limited to 100 men for each boat, open to all members of the Allied non-commissioned forces — 25 each from Navy, Army and Air Force, plus 25 convalescents, mainly those suffering from shock.

Selection of the guests was made by personnel officers of the various services. I later found out from Nicky Naguib, much-loved manager of the Puritan, that there had been 125 applications from N.Z. troops and only five of us lucky Kiwis had been selected.

Why I had been one of those lucky five I never found out — except that I had taken part in the El Alamein battle and at that time we were treated like heroes, as Alamein was being hailed as the first great Allied victory.

During my 10 wonderful and unforgettable day aboard Puritan we were guests of the Gezira Sporting Club and accommodated in luxurious cabins with air conditioning and spotless bed linen, plus hot and cold running water. Meals were served by Sudanese waiters and were better than in most Cairo hotels. Drinks and cigarettes were available at cost in two spacious lounges kept cool by electric fans. Drinks and smokes were our only cost while on board and in a period of 15 months the Puritan entertained more than 49,000 guests at an average monthly cost to the Gezira Sporting Club of £1200. It was their unpublicised contribution to the war effort and now, 37 years later, I record my gratitude.

When I had been accepted as a guest on board Puritan I received the following letter.

*Gezira Sporting Club Houseboats,  
S.S. Puritan and Niagara.*

*Dear Guest,—*

*The members of the Gezira Sporting Club welcome you to these boats, which they have hired to make your leave a comfortable and happy one.*

*Bed, hot baths, morning and afternoon teas, and all meals are being provided to you free of charge. You can buy drinks and cigarettes on board at reasonable prices and a radio-gramophone has been installed and a stock of records supplied for your entertainment.*

*You are close beside the club grounds, where arrangements have been made for you to play games. You can kick a football around, play cricket in the nets, tennis, squash or deck tennis.*

*There are also bowling greens and croquet lawns and for anyone who is a golfer and a member of a golf club at home there are facilities for playing golf in the mornings.*

*The swimming pool is available for you in the evenings and a bathing costume can be borrowed from the houseboat manager. There is a*

changing-room with shower, baths, etc., and a buffet and tea-garden adjoining which is run for your benefit by lady members of the club.

This letter will serve to pass you into the club grounds.

Members of the club will visit you from time to time to make your personal acquaintance and see if there is any way in which they can help you to have an enjoyable leave and do what you want to do.

Before you go please sign your name and home town in our guest book so that the club may have a record of its soldier, sailor and airmen guests whom it had the honour to entertain.

Yours sincerely,  
 V. B. GRAY,  
 Lieut. Colonel,  
 Chairman General Committee,  
 Gazira Sporting Club,  
 January, 1943.

As you will observe from the above — not only did we lead the life of gentlemen or leisure but we also had at our disposal all the amenities of the world-famous Gazira Sporting Club. I played tennis, golf and swam and I will always remember with gratitude my 10 days aboard the Puritan. It gave me a wonderful break from the hell of war, with its terrible strain and filthy conditions under which we lived and fought, and in which so many died.

In contrast, life aboard Puritan was the heavenly joy of peace and tranquillity, with luxury living conditions, wonderful meals and entertainment and the time to relax.

I have just learnt from Jim Henderson that the film 'Murder on the Nile' features the leave boat Puritan.

C. M. J. WATSON

★ SUPPORT THE ADVERTISERS ★

### ASKED FOR IT

It is well-known in the army that when a messing officer asks, "Any complaints?" and does not have a glowering sergeant-major with him watching for the first move, he leaves himself wide open. And so the boys of one shipboard mess could not let the opportunity pass when the customary question was put. "Yes," exclaimed a trooper. "What about some ice-cream to spread on the rice."

Truck driver John rang his boss at 3am in the morning.

Boss, is that you. It's John your driver here.

Boss: "What do you mean by waking me up at this hour of the morning."

John: "Well Boss, you know that big mirror on the side of the truck. Well it got broke."

Boss: "How the hell did that happen?"

John: "Well, it's like this. The truck rolled on it."

\* \* \*

### CROSSWORD PUZZLE 14

P	A	R	A		O	P	E	N		C	A	D
A	M	U	R		M	I	C	E		A	P	O
C	A	N	D	L	E	N	U	T		T	A	G
			E	U	R	E		T	S	A	R	S
S	L	A	N	G			S	L	I	M		
P	I	T	T		P	O	L	E	C	A	T	S
A	N	T		A	E	D	E	S		R	E	E
S	T	A	R	T	L	E	D		M	A	L	T
		I	O	T	A			I	O	N	I	A
M	A	N	T	A		G	I	L	T			
I	M	I			C	A	N	D	L	E	M	A
T	O	N			H	A	U	L		L	E	N
E	R	G			E	R	S	E		S	W	I

# KIWI CATERING CO LTD.

FOR ALL

WEDDINGS \*\* PARTIES \*\* SOCIALS

62 MAIN STREET, BLENHEIM.

TELEPHONE 84-982.

# Happy Days, But . . .

Yes, these are happy days indeed, and one of the best days was when an E.R.S. joker sez to me, "And you, my fine fellow, what is your occupation?" "Oh," I sez, "I'm a timer. A blinkin' old timer."

Then the day we cantered up the gangway. Did I say cantered? Well, I mean struggled and it was during that long and painful struggle that I wished I had hocked some of my gear. When I eventually reached the top there was a nice man with a peaked hat and as he looked at me in an inquiring sort of way I said, "No thanks. I can carry all of this myself. I know it's not far down to the bowels of the ship. Anyway, it's all downhill. He smiled pleasantly in agreement, and I didn't hear his kind reply for I was too busy trying to balance a couple of kitbags on my shoulder and at the same time keep the rest of my odds and ends tucked under both arms. I must have looked like a one-armed paperhanger in a panic, but I made it.

How comfortable a sardine must be in his roomy home was my first thought when I saw what was to be my eating, sleeping, reading, writing and sweating quarters for the next few weeks. Later, however, I found that there were certain advantages. The joker I was sleeping alongside was dressing himself one morning and

he put his socks on my feet.

They gave us hammocks to sleep in, or I should say, sweat in, and before mine was swiped I had found a nice quiet little room all to myself to hang it in. I believe William the Conqueror once slept in this room for it had his monogram on the door. However, I was not sorry when someone swiped my hammock and I had to curl up on the table of the eat-and-sleep joint for I was continually having visitors who seemed to think my room was a library.

Later I acquired another hammock home, but someone else reckoned they had first claim on it, but I ambushed him and pointed out the rights of possession. Well, after I picked myself up, I went up on deck to sit and think, but mostly sit. There I saw a dig, tying dixies to a doorknob. "What's the big idea?" I asked.

"So's I'll be first in the munga queue in the morning," he sez.

A good idea, I thought, but I found a better door in a nice sheltered spot. I was still waiting outside it when the alarm sounded for boat drill.

## FOR MEN'S SHOES

*When comfort counts . . .*

*You can count on . . .*



# CRESSWELL'S SHOE STORE

9 MAXWELL ROAD, BLENHEIM.

TELEPHONE 89-243

How was I to know that it was the tradesmen's entrance? Anyway, I had plenty of company for a lot of jokers had automatically queued up behind me when they saw me standing there.

The meals I enjoyed, although there was one morning when we lost a dixie. Someone said they last saw the fish running away with it, but of course we didn't believe such a story. No fish, so long dead as the fish we had, could possibly do such a thing. Cornflakes I enjoyed when I caught them, for nothing is more difficult than transferring cornflakes from a plate to the masticating machinery with powerful blowers directing their streams of semi-cool air across your plate. A butterfly net would have been more useful than a spoon, but then whoever heard of butterfly nets on a boat, more or less as part of a soldier's messing equipment.

That egg. How small and lonely it looked on those big white plates. How could a cook be so callous as all that. I could see the egg was really frightened by the manner in which it raced round and round the plate.

Then there were those lovely rice dishes. How those in other sections of the ship must have envied us our tropical food when they had to put up with ice-cream and other non-filling types of munga. There was a comforting thought about that rice, for we could eat it and not speculate that we were on our way to Burma.

Long will I remember my Army days, even when I roll a fag in rice paper.

It was at the races that my interest in this voyage quickened. "A nice field of fillies," I remarked to a joker standing beside me. I was looking at the ladies out of uniform lined alongside the hatch and I heartily agreed with my Kiwi friend when he said he thought No. 3 was the best bet, though in this game one was as good as another. He reckoned a lot would depend on how she took the hurdles. If she got away to a good start then the hurdles wouldn't bother her and nothing would catch her.

"Not for me, thanks. If you think I'm going to chase someone around this ship an over hurdles in this heat, well you have another think coming," I sez, and then sloped off for a game of housie.

But then housie has lost its appeal. Gone are the good old sayings, and one has to think what number is meant when the caller shouts: "No. 2 is nothing new," "No. 4, the little bore," "No. 8 at the gate," "44, all the doors," "9 oh, top of the street," and "No. 3, the Sgt." And not even a retort from the back.

Even at the two-up school the boys are losing their touch. I goes around just to hear that familiar sales talk, what do I hear?

"I have 5/- to say the gentleman cannot do 'em."

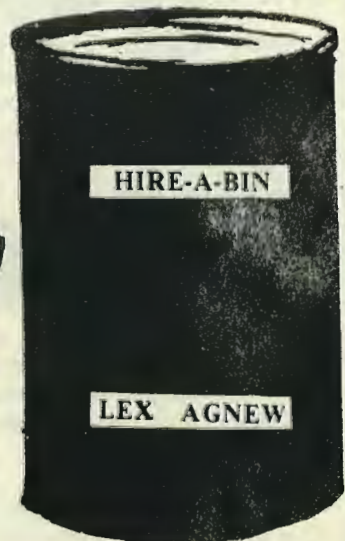
# HIRE - A - BIN

Lex Agnew

REGISTERED REFUSE COLLECTOR

Tel. 89-520

NO PETROL!  
CARLESS DAYS!



SAVE WORRY AND ENERGY!

# PICTON BUTCHERY LIMITED

HIGH STREET

FOR ALL YOUR  
MEAT  
REQUIREMENTS

PHONE 125

FREE DELIVERY

"10/- he doesn't."

"Heads are right."

Why, in the good old days I could lose the whole of my week's wages to the tune of four well-chosen words.

But for all that these are happy days. I'm counting the rice puddings and the days until I foot on that old brass rail once again.

—"HONK."

## STANDING ROOM ONLY!

Sometime ago an English lady was looking for rooms in a little village in Lortz, Switzerland, and she asked the local schoolmaster if he could recommend something suitable. He took her to several places and eventually she decided to take one of these. On her way home it occurred to her that she had not noticed a W.C., so she promptly wrote and asked if there was one near the house.

The schoolmaster, upon receiving the letter, was much troubled, for his English was very limited and he did not understand the abbreviation w.c. Eventually he asked the parish priest to help him and they decided it must mean "Wesleyan Church," so the schoolmaster replied as follows:

Your Ladyship,

I have great pleasure in informing you that the W.C. is situated about nine miles from the house in the centre of a beautiful grove of pine trees and

surrounded by beautiful scenery. It is capable of holding 250 people and is open Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday each week and there are so many visitors during the summer months I would advise you to go early although there is plenty of standing room.

It is a rather unfortunate position for you if you are in the habit of going regularly, but no doubt you will be glad to know that quite a number of people take their lunch and make a day of it, while others who cannot spare the time, travel by car and arrive just in time.

I should especially recommend your ladyship to pay a visit on Tuesday, as there is an organ accompaniment and the acoustics are excellent and even the most delicate sounds are audible. It may interest you to know my daughter was married in our W.C. and it was there she first met her husband. I remember the marriage quite well on account of the rush for seats. There were 10 people on the seat I usually occupy and it was wonderful to see the expressions on their faces.

My father has been regularly ever since the day he was christened. A wealthy resident of the district recently erected a bell in our W.C. which rings every time a member enters. A bazaar is to be held soon and the proceeds will go towards helping to furnish plush seats as the members feel it is a long-felt need.

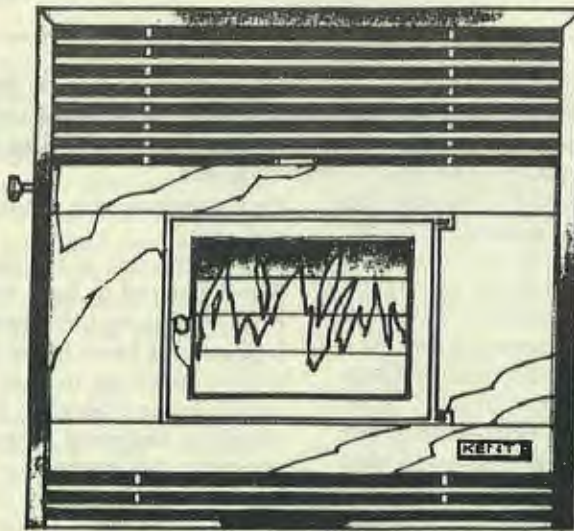
(Continued on Page 18)

# BLenheim TILE AND HEATING CENTRE

39 SCOTT STREET. TEL. 89-125.

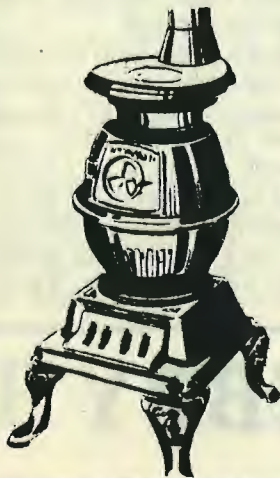
OPEN FRIDAY NIGHTS.

SAVES WOOD  
SAVES WORK  
EXTRA CLEAN  
FINGERTIP  
CONTROL



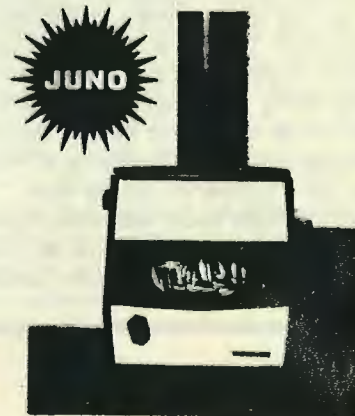
STYLISH  
DESIGN  
FAMILY SAFE  
EASY  
INSTALLATION

## KENT LOG FIRE



## PITTSBURGH

STOCKISTS OF  
JUNO  
WARMRITE  
BELMAC McKAY  
KENT LOG FIRE  
KENT VIKING  
FIRE NYMPH  
POT BELLY STOVES  
VISORS  
BLAZECOE  
THE WARMAIRE RANGE  
COAL RANGES



WE MAKE TILED OR BRICK SURROUNDS, WALL UNITS, HEARTHES.  
WE SELL, INSTALL AND SERVICE TO YOUR SATISFACTION.

Free Quotes — Trade Discounts — Discount for cash or terms arranged.

**DISCOUNT FOR RSA MEMBERS.**



Cam and Jose Keown's

## REDWOODTOWN BOOKSHOP

TELEPHONE 84-595

*Magazines — Toys — Paperbacks — Games — Giftware — Cards*  
*Soft Toys — Lending Library*

shouted out "Yes," but this time the other bloke came and took the pound out of my hand. I should have put it away, but as it wasn't my pound in the first place I didn't like to protest too strongly, especially as the poor chap who took it only had a pair of shorts to wear. There still were other chaps wanting to give their pounds away so I thought I would get one and then beat it, but after promising me one, a chap came across and demands a pound from me. I told him I didn't have one and he seemed so annoyed about it that I promised to give him one on pay day.

There were times when I had my doubts about certain chaps, for one day I heard: "Anyone like him for a dollar?" And I actually heard, "Yes, I'll take him," in three or four places.

Every now and again the M.C. or the squatting Kiwi would ask in a very quiet manner, "Now, anything for the Y.M.," and the response would be a shower of coins into the ring, usually in front of the squatter. I thought it was very kind of these chaps to make periodical collections for such a worthy institution as the Y.M.C.A.

I found out eventually that the official name for the M.C. is Ringy, and for the chap who tries to throw the pennies away, Spinner. The Ringy would say, "Only five bob to see this horse go. Right, from this gentleman here. Get set on the

side. Right, away you go." Then after he found the pennies the Spinner was trying to lose he would shout, "Heads are right," or "No, he's mucked them." What I wondered at was why he called the Spinner joker a horse, though perhaps he had in mind that form of greeting, "How are you, old horse." All the chaps around the ring were either privates or n.c.o's but I presume he was only trying to be nice to them by calling them gentlemen.

There were times when I thought the Ringy was quite rude. He would invite a chap into the ring and then say, "I want ten bob to see him go." Nobody, however, seemed to take offence, and when they did go they only went as far as the edge of the ring. This usually happened after the Ringy said, "Out the Monk," which I presume is a religious expression gathered through association with the many monks in Italy. The usual crowd of Kiwis at these group meetings did not appear to be so very pious; but I suppose the

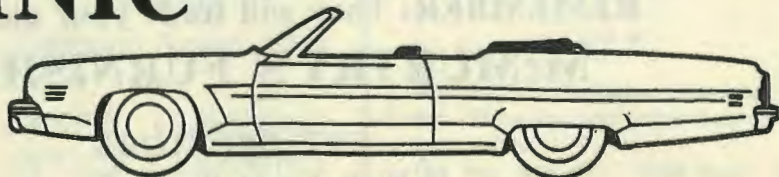
Ringy knew more about them than I.

The squatter would sometimes shout, "I want this pound covered," and I could never understand this for all he had to do was put it under the edge of the blanket with all the other money he had covered up there, though I presume this belonged to the Y.M. and he didn't want to get it mixed.

One day I noticed at the edge of the ring one

## CAR CLINIC

**SERVICE**



INHEIM

CAR REPAIRS



MAINTENANCE

of my friends who is usually well informed about money and Kiwi ways of exchange. so I approached him and asked him what he was doing.

He looked at me in a disgusted sort of way, remarked. "Everything," and then slouched away.

So there it is. Even my best friends won't tell me. — 1772! A.L.C.

A psychiatrist thought he was making progress with a patient who had a split personality. "I was optimistic," he confessed, "until the patient called and demanded to know why he'd received only one bill."

Personnel manager to applicant: "What we're after is a man of vision; a man with drive, determination, fire; a man who never quits; a man who can inspire others; a man who can pull the company's bowling team out of last place."

## Picton Women's News

We resumed our activities with a meeting on February 12 after a break during the holiday season.

During December our members attended two very enjoyable functions — the Blenheim section's Christmas party and the party put on by the Waikawa Bay Playcentre.

It is with sadness that we extend our sympathy to Ida Willoughby in the loss of her husband Ken, and also to Brian Henry on the loss of his wife Kath.

As we enter the 80s let us hope that it will prove to be a decade of calm and contentment.

—JOAN M. TAYLOR.

### *The Phantom Passionfruit Pilferer*

*As fast as the passionfruit on the vine against our building ripen, some phantom steps in and flogs the fruit. We are thinking seriously of presenting him/her with a plant to grow at home in the hope that ours will be left alone.*

### IN TOWN FOR THE DAY?

Try lunch at the RSA — 12 noon to 1.30pm

Monday to Friday.

# McMurtry's Furnishings

For all your Furnishing and Cabinet-making needs you can't go past the experts

**McMURTRY'S**

*Phone 83-199 for free quotations and the best of service.*

**REMEMBER:** They will trade your old Furniture.

**McMURTRY'S FURNISHINGS,**

**THE BIG STORE**  
in High thru to Wynen Streets.

# EXTRACTS FROM "PRELUDE TO BATTLE"

Compiled by the Official Archivist, 2 NZEF, Middle East.

## Signals

\* \* \* \* \*

THE NEW ZEALAND DIVISION HAD WITH ITS first contingent in Egypt only a proportion of its signals organisation. This comprised that part of the Divisional Signals whose function it is to operate the signal services at and between the various higher headquarters within the division, and a number of regimental signallers who form part of the fighting units and are responsible for communications mainly in the front line areas. The role of a divisional signals unit involves handling rather more specialised

technical equipment and establishing a more elaborate communication hook-up than that of regimental signallers. The New Zealand Division was fortunate in having among its officers and men a large number who had been engaged in up-to-date civil communications work in New Zealand, and whose knowledge and experience could thus be readily adapted to army needs.

Early in 1940 the British army signals in the Middle East were finding their resources taxed to the utmost to bear the ever-increasing burden of communications. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that when the entry of Italy into the war seemed imminent, the New Zealand Division was

(Continued on Page 23)

### BLENHEIM COMMERCIAL CLEANERS

P.O. BOX 290 BLENHEIM

Manager: Mr. D. GARDINER



LET US  
PUT A  
'SPARKLE'  
BACK INTO  
YOUR OFFICE

PHONE 87-075  
FOR A FREE QUOTE

We are  
Cleaning Specialists  
in:

CARPET CLEANING  
OFFICE CLEANING  
WINDOW CLEANING

REGISTERED MEMBER OF N.Z. FEDERATION OF MASTER CLEANERS

\*\*\*

George telephoned his home to talk to his wife. The phone rang and rang and finally his wife answered.

"Oh, dear," she moaned, "you got me out of the bath. Please ring back in 20 minutes. I'm dripping wet, and I didn't even have a chance to grab a towel trying to get to the phone."

George said OK and hung up. Then he hurriedly whispered some instructions to one of his pals in the office.

The pal took the phone and dialled. Again the wife — who couldn't have had time to get back to the bath — answered with a rather annoyed, "Yes."

The pal said, "Is George ho . . . Oh, look at you! And all wet, too!"

A loud scream at the other end of the line was cut off by an equally loud click.

\*\*\*

The dentist's daughter asked her boyfriend. "Have you told father that we want to get married?"

The boy was shy. "Gee Susie, every time I step into his office I get so nervous I can't talk. Today he took out another tooth."

Two loosies, two tighties  
and a fullback  
unanimously\* agree  
Lion Beer is best



*\* Well, almost unanimously.*

**Lion Beer**

If you know what's good for you



called upon to provide from its Divisional Signals the nucleus of a corps signals unit whose work it was to set up and maintain communications throughout the whole Western Desert Force. Accordingly, after a period of organising and equipping, some half-dozen officers and about 130 men left Base Camp for the site of the new force headquarters, near the oasis of Maaten Baggush. Here they absorbed into their organisation various detachments from Royal Corps of Signals and Indian Signal Corps. Under the command of a New Zealand Post Office engineer as Chief Signals Officer, Western Desert Force, this unorthodox and cosmopolitan group rapidly achieved a reputation for efficiency and resource.

For six oppressive months headquarters remained static, but the work of signals became increasingly heavy as the number of troops in the Western Desert quickly mounted and preparations for the push reached a climax. The backbone of any communication system is its lines. Existing civil telephone lines were therefore taken over, improved and adapted, multi-wire underground cables were installed at im-

portant headquarters, and a network of field cable was laid on the ground for the less important and auxiliary routes. At the same time light pole lines of a special type devised for desert conditions grew like mushrooms under the energetic and experienced technique of the Indian construction section and soon radiated east, west and south over arid miles to distant headquarters and other points of tactical importance. Telephone exchanges, telegraph channels, wireless networks, despatch rider services—all were working night and day as signal traffic mounted to figures previously unheard of in the Middle East.

For a few weeks, too, a small section of the New Zealand Divisional Signals was stationed at Daba, some fifty miles east of the main headquarters, providing a further link in the chain of signal services over the long line of communications from General Headquarters in Cairo to the forward units in the Western Desert. Small detachments of New Zealand signalmen were also employed on signal office, wireless operating, and cable construction work in the Matruh fortress, which was, in the months before the push, such a favourite target for Italian

# W. BARRATT LTD

## MERCERS

P.O. BOX 78, PICTON.

TELEPHONE 221.

STOCKISTS OF ALL

MEN'S BOYS' and LADIES WEAR

also

TRAVEL BAGS and MANCHESTER LINES

DRY CLEANING:

In by 10am

-----

Out by 2pm

bombers.

It was about 5 December 1940 when Corps Headquarters made its first move and our signals commenced their real task of providing communications under conditions of mobile desert warfare. The first stages of the advance took them away from the coast where the civil telephone line routes were. This necessitated rapid laying, and frequently just as rapid reeling up, of long stretches of field cables. Soon, however, the line of advance took Corps Headquarters on the route of the civil telephone lines. So hasty was the enemy's retreat that he made little attempt to demolish these valuable means of communication, and thereafter our New Zealand trained linesmen were in their element. From dawn till after dusk they repaired, extended and diverted the lines to conform to the ever changing system of signal communication. Wireless was also playing its part. It bridged the gaps when line communications were in the transition stages and it maintained continuous touch with armoured formations, which, on account of their extreme mobility, could not regularly be served by line. As the advance gained momentum and the enemy's retreat degen-

erated into a flight, the difficulties of the line parties in maintaining their communications were at times almost insuperable, and the importance of wireless became ever more apparent.

The Christmas season did not bring with it a holiday atmosphere, but the timely arrival of Patriotic Fund parcels for all cheered the busy signalmen who were at that time in the vicinity of Halfaya, on the escarpment above and not far from the Libyan border. Shortly afterwards Bardia fell, and then Tobruk, and Signals moved rapidly westwards via Gambut and Tobruk to Bomba. This was the end of the campaign for most of them, for after a short stay there the majority of New Zealand Signals were relieved by men of the British Royal Corps of Signals. They returned to Tobruk where their transport and equipment were handed over to the British. From there they were taken to Alexandria by sea, acting en route as escort for Italian prisoners. A small party, consisting of some officers and wireless detachments, was left at Bomba and carried on to the conclusion of the campaign. Through Derna to Benghazi and even beyond they went. On com-

---

ALL PESTS ERADICATED BY

# MARLBOROUGH-NELSON PEST CONTROL LIMITED

137 CHARLES STREET, BLENHEIM.

PHONE 6232

PHONE 7180 Greymouth

—

82-206 Nelson

CONTROL OF BORER, SPIDERS, FLEAS, ANTS, BEES, WASPS, COCKROACHES,  
SANDFLIES, MOSS, RATS, MICE, MILL MOTH, CARPET BEETLE, SILO AND  
GRAIN FUMIGATION.

COMMERCIAL AND DOMESTIC — FREE INSPECTION AND QUOTATIONS — TOWN & COUNTRY

PROPRIETOR: MR VIC CULLIS

pletion of the campaign in February 1941. they returned triumphant with all equipment to their own unit—the New Zealand Divisional Signals.

Their work won high praise in all quarters and the men were indeed proud when the Corps Commander, Lieutenant-General Sir Richard O'Connor, published on the occasion of their departure from the desert a special order of the day in which he acknowledged the service rendered by the New Zealand Signals and declared: 'I know that the Western Desert Force could not have carried out its task without their help.'

\* \* \* \* \*

Some of the world's best golf scores are made with a lead pencil.

A man walked into a pet shop and asked for 259 cockroaches. "I'm afraid we don't stock cockroaches sir," said the assistant, "but would you mind telling me what you want such an odd number for?"

"Well," said the man, "I got kicked out of my flat yesterday and the landlord said I have to leave the place exactly as I found it."

There was this country doctor who fell down a well. Serves him right — he should leave well alone and fix the sick.

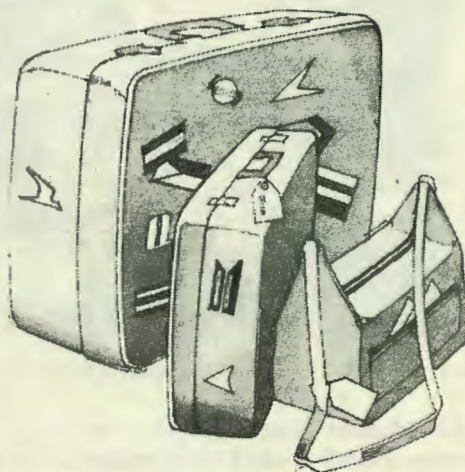
Troubles in marriage often start when a man is so busy earning his salt that he forgets his sugar.

## Engineers and Diplomats

\* \* \* \* \*

NEW ZEALAND ENGINEERS WERE THE THIRD group of specialists to take a part in the campaign. They set up field workshops and depots and, most important of all, maintained water supply points and ex-

## We'll pack up your troubles



## ANZ Travel

Getting away on holiday takes quite an amount of organizing. Particularly if you're about to embark on an overseas trip.

Let ANZ handle the details for you. We have many years of experience in the travel business. From hotel booking through to road, sea, air or rail tickets, visas and health certificate requirements — we can arrange every detail for you.

At ANZ Travel there's a big difference. We're always ready to lend an ear and answer any question. We know from experience that sorting out the small details means a smooth start to your holiday.

Enquire now at one of the ANZ Travel Centres below —

Auckland: Cnr Queen and Victoria Streets. Phone 362 300  
 South Auckland: 42 Atkinson Ave. Orakihu. Phone 63-629  
 Wellington: 57 Willis Street. Phone 722 509  
 Christchurch: 85 Hereford Street. Phone 797 505

**ANZ BANK**  
 Ready to listen-Ready to help.



ENGINEERS REBUILDING A BRIDGE AT BARCE

explored fresh sources. The units employed were the 5th Field Park Company, the 19th Army Troops Company of the New Zealand Engineers, and the 10th Light Aid Detachment of the New Zealand Ordnance Corps.

In January detachments of the 5th Field Park Company were strung out for seventy-five miles from Sollum to Tobruk. At Sollum they operated a pumping house on the quay. With the assistance of prisoners of war they re-opened pumping houses at Bardia. They salvaged Italian motor transport and by fitting tanks to lorries and trailers provided a water-carrying convoy. At Tobruk they investigated the distillation plant and power house and set up a water supply for the town. Other sections of the company destroyed and removed enemy mines, booby traps and bombs. At the beginning of February they took over from an Australian Field Park Company at Derna and maintained pumping installations at Agheila, Umm Er Rzem and Mar-

tuba. At Umm Er Rzem, a sixty-ton water tank was erected on a building twelve feet in height. The power house at Derna was supervised and electrical lines restored. Theirs was the task of restoring what the Italians, in a hasty retreat, had tried to destroy. They examined engineering stores, set workshops in motion again; and as they moved farther westward, they found evidence of the increasing speed of the Italian retreat, for the farther west they went, the better was the condition of the servicing equipment taken over. The company headquarters varied from a bivouac in the desert to a mansion at Derna.

At Barce the New Zealand engineers left a monument to their own ingenuity. To replace a concrete bridge which crossed a deep gully on the main road and had been demolished by the Italians, they built another with steel scaffolding salvaged from an enemy hangar at Tobruk, 230 miles away. The gap spanned was 140 feet wide

**ADVERTISERS MAKE THIS PUBLICATION POSSIBLE — SUPPORT THEM**

FOR  
**FRIGIDAIRE**  
*Refrigerators — Freezers — Washers*  
*Dryers and Electric Ranges*

*W. G. G. Cuddon Limited*  
 ALFRED STREET, BLENHEIM.  
 TELEPHONE 84-299

and at its highest point the bridge reached 25 feet.

Diplomatic ability as well as engineering skill was displayed by our engineers when a staff-sergeant of the 5th Field Park Company led a small advance party into the town of Appolonia, west of Derna. After the fighting troops had hurriedly passed through it and beyond, this staff-sergeant found himself stepping into the role of protector and administrator, with the duties of doctor and midwife thrown in for good measure. The townspeople, who were mostly of Italian, Turkish, Greek or French extraction, were living in fear of disorders and had established themselves in caves. When, accompanied by a lance-corporal and a sapper, he entered the town, the party were asked to help restore normal community life. So the three New Zealanders took over, patrolling the streets and helping distressed families, and by the afternoon of the second day most of the people had moved back into their homes and places of business.

Installed in the palatial house of the former governor, the New Zealanders called a meeting of citizens, at which a city council was elected by the choice of the leading member of each national group. The sergeant in turn was elected mayor, and he took over the keys of the bank, the municipal offices and the assize branch. He sent for the neighbouring Arab chieftain, who promised his co-operation in maintaining law and order. Every hour saw a further return to normal conditions. The sergeant found, however, that his mayoral responsibilities did not end with police duty, currency control and general supervision. On the third day, after dressing the shrapnel

wounds of an old woman, he was invited to join in the christening of a newly-born baby; more than that, he was asked to suggest a name for it, after some New Zealand statesman. Next day Baby Michael Joseph Ebico gave the mayor real trouble. It kept crying and would not feed, so the anxious parents again called. 'After much perspiring and hard thinking,' he acted the Plunket nurse before an audience of neighbours and won profuse thanks.

On the arrival of an Australian administrative party at Appolonia a day or two later, the New Zealanders left the town with mixed feelings, amid handshakes, kisses, salaams and cheers. The presents literally showered on them included a silk municipal flag. The 5th Field Park Company returned from Barce to Helwan towards the end of February to rejoin the New Zealand Division.

\* \* \* \* \*

## All Sorts of Service

\* \* \* \* \*

IN THE WHOLE CAMPAIGN NO NEW ZEALAND unit had experiences quite so varied as the 19th Army Troops Company. Within a few weeks certain men of this engineering company saw action ranging from intense aerial bombing to the rescue of shipwrecked prisoners. The company began its work in the Western Desert early in December 1940 with the construction of an aqueduct at Burbeita oasis. On 21



TOP-QUALITY  
**C H E E S E**

15 VARIETIES

*Available from all leading  
Grocers, Dairies & Supermarkets*

*Factory Sales:  
7.30am to 2.30pm*

- KOROMIKO HERB
- KOROMIKO ONION
- KOROMIKO COLBY
- KOROMIKO MONTEREY
- KOROMIKO PINEAPPLE
- KOROMIKO BACON
- KOROMIKO CELERY
- KOROMIKO GARLIC
- KOROMIKO MILD
- KOROMIKO SMOKED
- KOROMIKO CHIVE

December a small detachment set off from the nearby port of Mersa Matruh to assist in manning two water barges bound for Sollum. The crew of one included four members of the 19th Army Troops Company and four Australians, and the other barge had five New Zealanders on board. As well as these two self-propelled diesel-engined barges, the small convoy included a barge which had taken part in the landing at Gallipoli in 1915. This third barge contained a cargo of Christmas stores and was towed by a small tug. While they were at sea, an enemy plane flew over but apparently paid no attention to the barges, which carried no armament and could make no more than four knots. They arrived at Sollum in the afternoon of 23 December, and one barge, commanded by a New Zealander, immediately set about to take troops out to a ship a few miles off shore. Before they had been an hour at Sollum, a stick of eight bombs was dropped across the barge, but although several bombs raised spouts of water close to it, no damage was done.

Next day, Christmas Eve, while water was being pumped from the barge to the trucks of the Reserve Mechanical Transport Company on the quay, Italians again raided the port. Three bombs landed on the quay, one passed through the deck of the New Zealanders' barge, and another struck the fo'c'sle of the Gallipoli barge. There were fifty-two casualties altogether, including nineteen killed. These were mostly Cypriots and Australians, but the Reserve Mechanical Transport Company suffered five killed and five injured, and the Army Troops Company had a corporal killed. The bomb which passed through the deck of the barge did not explode and was later removed from the water tank and thrown overboard by an Australian engineer.

On Christmas Day, while the New Zealanders were listening to the King's speech on board a water-carrying vessel three miles out to sea, about fifty Italian planes came over and bombed the shipping. There was a hole through the deck of the barge, the steering gear was put out of order, the only way of signalling to the engine-room was by tapping with a hammer on the deck.

but the New Zealanders' barge continued to run between the quay at Sollum and water-carrying ships which stood a mile or two off the coast.

On Boxing Day, while the barge was tied up alongside a ship which had its decks laden with cases of benzine, fifty-four Italian planes bombed all around, but failed to hit the vulnerable target. 'Bardia Bill', the long range gun at Bardia, shelled Sollum occasionally, and once dropped a shell two yards from the barge, lifting it clean out of the water. There were numerous air-raids in the succeeding days, but the bombs usually landed about 200 yards away, wherever the target was. When the barge was at sea, the planes bombed out at sea; when the barge was in port, the planes bombed the shore.

The 19th Army Troops Company took their remaining barge to Tobruk to do similar work there. On one occasion the barge lost its propellor, and remained two hours over a minefield until it drifted off. No ship would venture close enough to take it in tow.

As well as manning water barges and supply points, the 19th Army Troops Com-

pany carted loads of landmines out of harm's way, established recovery depots, and levelled aerodromes along hundreds of miles of the coastal belt. While the British troops were in Cyrenaica, part of the work of this unit was to recover Italian vehicles from the deserted camps in which they lay abandoned, and put as many of them as possible on the road.

One day they returned to a New Zealand camp with a fleet of large, snub-nosed diesel lorries, some of them with the word 'Wop' and a serial number painted over a Fascist coat-of-arms on the cab. During their mopping up operations in the Western Desert and Libya they collected about 400 of these trucks, but that was only a small part of the huge fleet of road-worthy vehicles that the Italians left behind them.

For a while two sappers of the company led a nomadic life driving a road grader somewhere in Libya. They found a mobile home in the form of a trailer which the Italians had apparently used for the transportation of horses, and hitching it to the grader, they turned it into combined sleeping, eating and store quarters. They wandered contentedly wherever there were

**Shoe Repairs  
Shoe Repairs**

★

**Leathercrafts  
Leathercrafts**

★

*For personal and quick service, also  
all your Leathercraft requirements,  
call and see*

**BRON LUCAS  
Shoe Repairs and  
Leathercrafts,**

**ALFRED ST, BLENHEIM.  
(Opp. RSA Car Park)**

★

*For your Gifts, we have a nice range  
of Leather Handbags and Belts..*

## Robin Hood Cycle and Motorcycle Depot

72 High Street,  
Telephone 83-073.

**Ride the bike  
that suits you best...  
Yamaha**



L850 Chappy  
Fully automatic, dual ratio gearbox.

V50 Stepthru  
Three speed gearbox, automatic  
clutch over 150mpg!



roads to be repaired, getting almost as far as Derna on the heels of the fighting troops.

Several other members of the 19th Army Troops Company feature in a dramatic story of the shipwreck of a vessel which was carrying 500 Italian prisoners of war with their guards and crew. In stormy weather the vessel had grounded on the rocky reefs which run parallel to the coast near Sidi Barrani. The detachment of New Zealanders were camped at the time on the shore. In the failing light of an evening in January, they could make out the dim shape of a ship heading towards land. With their arms, the troops hastened along the coast and found that the ship was stranded on the rock ledge off the foot of a steep cliff.

A prisoner wearing a life-belt brought a light line ashore; he arrived in a state of exhaustion. A ship's fireman who swam in with a second line was hauled up the cliff by the New Zealanders with a rope made from rifle slings fastened together. A sergeant descended by the same rope to recover the body of the Italian, who died shortly after he had been pulled out of the surf. Hawsers were dragged ashore with the lines from the boat and anchored to a

heavy truck on top of the cliff; then a party of New Zealanders went down into the surf to seize the survivors as they hauled themselves in through the breakers. Walking out along the ledge as far as they could, the New Zealand rescuers were often engulfed by waves. 'We relieved them every two hours, for the sea was bitterly cold,' said an officer. 'They did a wonderful job, bringing 500 prisoners ashore in this way. Then we ferried the wounded and other survivors in on a raft which the ship carried.'

Other New Zealanders hoisted the rescued men up the cliff face to dry land. Probably a few prisoners lost their lives when they were swept from the hawsers after leaving the ship. Apart from the 500 Italian prisoners, sixty members of the crew and sixteen British officers and men were brought ashore by the company. The unrestrained joy shown by the survivors was typified by one Italian, who planted an admiring kiss on the face of a New Zealander.

**IN TOWN FOR THE DAY?**

**TRY LUNCH AT THE RSA**

**TOYS  
TOYS**

**TOYS  
TOYS**

Discount of 10% on kitset models

**BE QUICK!**

Most toys are at last year's prices.

At

**TRUSCOTT'S**

WYNEN STREET.

ALSO ALL CYCLES AND REPAIRS

TELEPHONE 88-110

**SUNSHINE  
HOUSIE  
TICKETS**

**600 DIFFERENT NUMBER  
COMBINATIONS PER BOOK**

Available only from

**GARDS PRINT LIMITED,**

14 BOMFORD STREET,  
BLENHEIM.

PHONE 83-747.

P.O. BOX 217.



STRETCHER-BEARERS ON THE ESCARPMENT NEAR SOLLUM

## Water Supplies

\* \* \* \* \*

CONCERNED WITH THE MAINTENANCE OF water plants to supply the troops advancing into Cyrenaica and the servicing of Royal Engineers' equipment, the 10th Light Aid Detachment of the New Zealand Ordnance Corps entered each town almost immediately after its capture to attend to the water installations and pumping appliances.

Before the British assumed the offensive, the 10th LAD had succeeded in drawing water from about ten feet below the surface at Burbeita and in the sandhills at Baggush. When Fort Nibeiva was attacked on 8 December, the 10th LAD were in caves in the escarpment at Charing Cross, several miles inland from Mersa Matruh. As soon as the last of the Sidi Barrani forts was captured, Major G. D. Pollock, who commanded the 10th LAD, went to Sidi Barrani to attend to the water works there. He found in perfect order a Fiat diesel pumping engine capable of 250 litres an hour and a plant for distilling salt water. The remainder of the 10th LAD entered Sidi

Barrani two days later. The Italians also left a large pumping station almost undamaged at Buqbuq, half way between Sidi Barrani and Sollum.

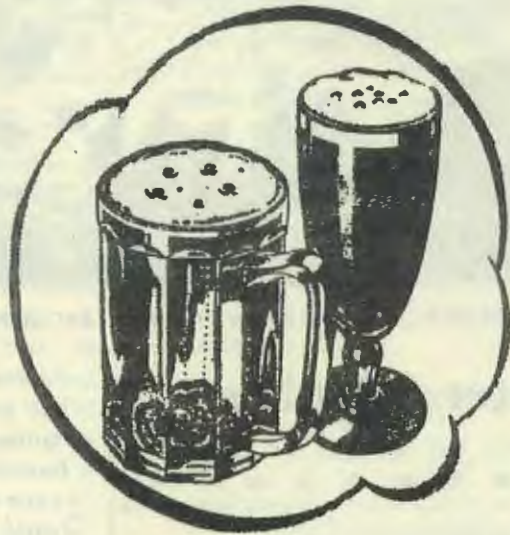
As the Australians concentrated for the battle of Bardia, the 10th LAD were filling and working water waggons for Sollum. At this stage they began to operate closely with the 5th Field Park Company, and on 10 January 1941 they moved with them to the harbour barracks at Bardia. A fortnight later they were in Tobruk at work on the large distilling plant. After the battle of Derna and the subsequent Italian withdrawal towards Benghazi, the 10th LAD were given a special job. The British command had made the decision to cut across the plateau south of Benghazi: the success of this plan depended on getting a supply of water quickly to Msus, some 500 miles south-west of Derna. It was the responsibility of the 10th LAD to have ninety-five tons of water at this point for the armoured division. This was accomplished. The operation succeeded, Benghazi fell, and the whole of Cyrenaica was subsequently occupied. In northern Cyrenaica, the water problem ceased. West of Derna lies a region of small streams, trees

*(Continued on Page 33)*

DRINK AND ENJOY 

*"Drink because you are happy,  
Never because you are miserable."*

*G. K. Chesterton.*



**DOMINION BREWERIES  
WEST COAST BRANCH**

are pleased to be associated with

**MARLBOROUGH RSA**



**TODAY'S GREAT BEER**

and green countryside decorated with fresh white buildings. When the British consolidated in this area in February 1941, the work of the 10th LAD ended and they followed the New Zealand signallers, transport drivers and engineers back to Helwan, where the New Zealand Division had taken up its station preparatory to its departure for Greece.

\* \* \* \* \*

## The LRDG Raids the Fezzan

\* \* \* \* \*

WITH THE DEFEAT OF THE ITALIAN ARMY IN Cyrenaica, the use of the Long Range Desert Group as a force based on Cairo came to an end. At about the same time the LRDG ceased to be composed purely of New Zealanders. From the beginning of December 1940, the force was increased with men from the Scots Guards, and two New Zealand patrols remained in place of three. The Guards patrol was commanded by Captain M. D. D. Crighton-Stuart.

The force thus reorganised then opened a new phase in the activities of the Group—surprise raids on the Fezzan, in south-western Libya, where the Italian garrisons had been lulled into a sense of security by the armistice with the French in West Africa. Two patrols under Captain (now Major) Clayton and Captain Crighton-Stuart left Cairo on 27 December, and for several days motored steadily over the Great Sand Sea, in the middle of which they spent New Year's Eve. It was a strange experience to have New Year's dinner on the sand sea. As far as they knew no white man had done so before. Thousands of miles from anywhere, they feasted on bully-beef rissoles which they had made, fruit salad, iced Xmas cake, and three mandarins each. This barren region suffers extremes of temperature. Often the men woke up to find frost on the ground: and at midday, except when the cold desert wind was blowing, it was as warm as a

New Zealand summer's day. They pushed on westwards into Libya, encountering all kinds of going—in particular some soft patches. One truck drove over a sand dune too fast, shot into the air at the top and crashed down the side of the dune: both rear tyres were burst and the axle bent, but nobody was hurt. Energetic repair work soon had the truck in service again. They crossed a well-patrolled road leading to Kufra, and shortly afterwards paused for a day or two while some of their trucks were taken to a pre-arranged rendezvous, where Major Clayton had arranged to meet Free French Forces from Chad.

Chad was the first place in the French Empire where General de Gaulle's standard was raised. Chad has Free France's only land front with the enemy. It is the only place in the world where Free French and Vichy French face one another across a common frontier. And above all, it is the key link in the all-Allied east-west route across Africa. By joining Nigeria to the Sudan, it offers a short route for British and American aircraft bound for the Middle East. But at that time, the chief task of the Free French in Chad province was to keep the enemy busy in southern Libya.

At Kayugi Major Clayton picked up Lieutenant-Colonel d'Ornano, two French officers, two French sergeants and five natives of the Free French forces from Tibesti. At the same time an LRDG troop carried out a reconnaissance of the Italian routes to Kufra through the Egay mountains. On 8 January 1941 the combined force set out to attack Murzuk. The distance from Cairo to Murzuk was more than 1300 miles, and during the whole journey through Italian Libya no men were seen except three natives herding camels. It was certain the Italians were unaware of the presence of the patrols.

They reached Murzuk on 11 January without being spotted, and waited in ambush while a reconnaissance of the fort took place. The road, they found, was properly formed. It was the first they had come to. They were concerned about the enemy's wireless, because it was estimated that messages were sent every two hours, and if they could get in an attack just after

a broadcast, it would give them a two hours' start before the local Italian headquarters station would be listening for Murzuk. While they were having lunch, a lookout reported that an aeroplane had taken off. It was decided to attack the aerodrome. At one o'clock, the raiders set off in line. On the way they picked up an Italian postman in order to get information from him. They left his bicycle on the side of the road and put him in one of the trucks. As the column approached the fort, the garrison, thinking it was an Italian force, turned out the guard. On they drove up the road, to within 150 yards. Then they let the fort have it. The trucks which had been detailed for the attack on the drome went straight past the fort and across the landing ground. Roughly 700 yards past the hangar they stopped, for several soldiers were running to occupy pill boxes which were scattered about. From behind a rise they opened up on the Italians. Several running soldiers were killed. A few Bofors shells crashed into the hangar. They advanced to another rise just in time to prevent some of the garrison troops entering an anti-aircraft pit. These they made prisoners. Just then, Major Clayton and Colonel d'Ornano drove up from the fort to encircle the hangar. As the truck turned a corner, a machine gun opened up at a range of only twenty yards. Major Clayton jammed on his brakes and put his truck in reverse, but Colonel d'Ornano was shot through the throat as he jumped from the truck, gun in hand, attempting, as it seemed, to lead an attack against the machine-gun post. Major Clayton and his party withdrew under cover of our fire.

By this time the fort was blazing fiercely. A trench mortar bomb had gone into it and hit a benzine drum. Back at the drome there was a terrific noise going on as rifles, machine guns and Bofors guns blazed away. Enemy snipers made things very difficult until a white flag went up near the hangar and about twenty Italians in blue uniforms surrendered. In the hangar were found three Ghibli bombers, a sending and receiving wireless set, bombs, parachutes and much valuable equipment. The planes and buildings were soaked in benzine, the wireless set smashed, and a match was set to a

trail of benzine leading to the hangar. Thick black smoke rose for a long time and the thud of exploding bombs could be heard. The fort was damaged but not captured. The purpose of the raid was achieved by destroying the drome. As the party withdrew from the fort a storm came up and covered the retreat of the raiders almost immediately.

Enemy losses were estimated at ten killed and fifteen wounded. Our losses included Colonel d'Ornano and Sergeant Hewson, a New Zealander, killed; and three wounded. One of the wounded, a Scots Guard, was in a serious condition. He had to be carried across country for nearly 700 miles to Zouar before he could be flown to Cairo. The patrol then travelled eastward, and the next day surrounded the small town of Traghen, some thirty miles from Murzuk. They demanded the surrender of the police force. After a short delay, a remarkable procession left the town, led by the headman and some notables, followed by fifty natives bearing banners and beating drums, and in the rear two sheepish-looking Italian carabinieri. The headman surrendered the town to the Allied force. The two Italians were taken away as prisoners, together with all the arms and ammunition from the fort. The population cheered as the patrols left Traghen.

From Traghen the patrols proceeded to Umm el Araneb and Gatrun, where there were police forts similar to Traghen. But these forts had been warned by wireless of the LRDG movements. 'They were certainly expecting us,' says the account of one eye witness. 'We came down the road much the same as we did at Murzuk. It was a well-spread-out fort with no cover in between. After stopping twice on our way down the slope and inspecting the place, we drove on and were just getting on to the flat leading to the fort, when machine guns and rifles opened up on us. As we could not see them and we had no armour plating, we turned to the right and headed to a rise about 200 yards away. On the way there was a soft patch in which one of our trucks became stuck. I'll bet they had an anxious time for a while. Even when they got up on the hill, bullets were still

whizzing past. In the first hail, bullets were flying all around this truck, and as we retreated to the hill, bullets were hitting the sand all around us. When we were on the hill, however, the skipper ordered the Bofors to fire a few shells each into the fort, which was done. The skipper decided that it was not worth risking lives and trucks as there was nothing to be had, even if we did capture the fort.

By this time the Italians were well aware that British ground raiders were in the district, but the atmosphere was so hazy that it would have been impossible for an aeroplane to spot them. Hence the raiders were able to cross the desert and range along palm tree-lined roads without interference. On the afternoon of 13 January they came upon a landing ground on the opposite side of which were two oblong enclosures surrounded by palm break-winds. As the raiders cautiously approached the enclosures, four Arabs came out and met the captain. They said that an aeroplane had been over that day, and after circling twice, had dropped a message that Mersa Matruh had been attacked. They also said that there were thirty soldiers in the village. Our men sent a message asking for sur-

render, but when they saw the population leaving the village, they realised that a fight was on, and they moved forward to attack. The nearest point they could reach was 1300 yards from the village. Several lumps of the village walls were blown off by the Bofors and one machine gun was silenced: but, as the day was far advanced, it was decided to break off the engagement and get well away from the fort before they camped for the night. A little later a bomber approached. After passing backwards and forwards over the scattered trucks, the pilot, probably unable to locate his target, dropped all his bombs at random about 500 yards away. Presumably he would report that he had bombed the raiders.

(To be continued in next issue)

## HELP!

We desperately need contributions from YOU, our members for this magazine. There must be many humorous incidents that you can recall — so share them with others — **HELP!**



# ALGETY TRAVEL

OFFER YOU THE COMPLETE TRAVEL SERVICE. WHETHER IT BE A FERRY TICKET ACROSS THE STRAIT TO WELLINGTON, OR A HOLIDAY AROUND THE WORLD, WE HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE TO HELP YOU.

CALL IN AND SEE:

*Ian Nightingale*

*Geoff Alexander*

*or Raewyn Ashwell at*



## ALGETY TRAVEL

77 MARKET STREET, BLENHEIM.  
P.O. BOX 142. TELEPHONE 6299.

# crossword puzzle 14

## ACROSS

1. Amazon estuary
5. Overt
9. Bounder
12. River in Asia
13. Rodents
14. Serviceman's address
15. Kind of tree
17. Child's game
18. French river
19. Former Russian rulers
21. Popular cant
24. Slender
25. English statesman
26. Skunks
30. Pismire
31. Genus of mosquitoes
32. Female ruff
33. Shocked
35. Brewer's need
36. Greek letter
37. Ancient district of Asia Minor
38. Devilfish
40. Young sow
42. Wurttemberg measure

43. February 2

48. Weight

49. Hatch

50. Siberian river

51. Work unit

52. Scottish Gaelic

53. Float

## DOWN

1. Leather moccasin
2. Chalice
3. Operate
4. Fervent
5. Hebrew measure
6. Conifer

7. French coin

8. Irritates

9. Twin-hulled vessel

10. Armadillo

11. Huskies

16. Haul

20. Thus (Lat.)

21. Resorts

22. Linen fuzz

23. Achieving

24. Winter vehicle

26. Chinese wax

27. Poem

28. Member of low Hindu caste

29. Bristle

31. Member of diplomatic staff

34. Decompose

35. Highway havens

37. Sick

38. Small arachnid

39. God of love

40. African antelopes

41. Vain

44. Swiss river

45. European gull

46. Cuckoo

47. Famous uncle

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12					13					14		
15				16						17		
			18					19	20			
21	22	23					24					
25					26	27				28	29	
30				31						32		
33			34						35			
		36						37				
38	39					40	41					
42				43	44					45	46	47
48				49					50			
51				52					53			

(Answer on Page 13)

# Mayfield Butchery

KEN AND COLLEEN THOMPSON — TEL. 6508.

AND

# Grove Road Butchery

R. BARRON, Prop. — TEL. 87-624.



Processors of  
BEEF — PORK  
AND MUTTON



BACON & HAM CURING



ALSO SMALL GOODS



FOR ALL YOUR  
M E A T  
REQUIRMENTS  
SEE US FIRST



