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**NEW ZEALAND AND THE MILITARY**  
**OCCUPATION OF JAPAN 1945-48.**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in History at Massey University.

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1994.

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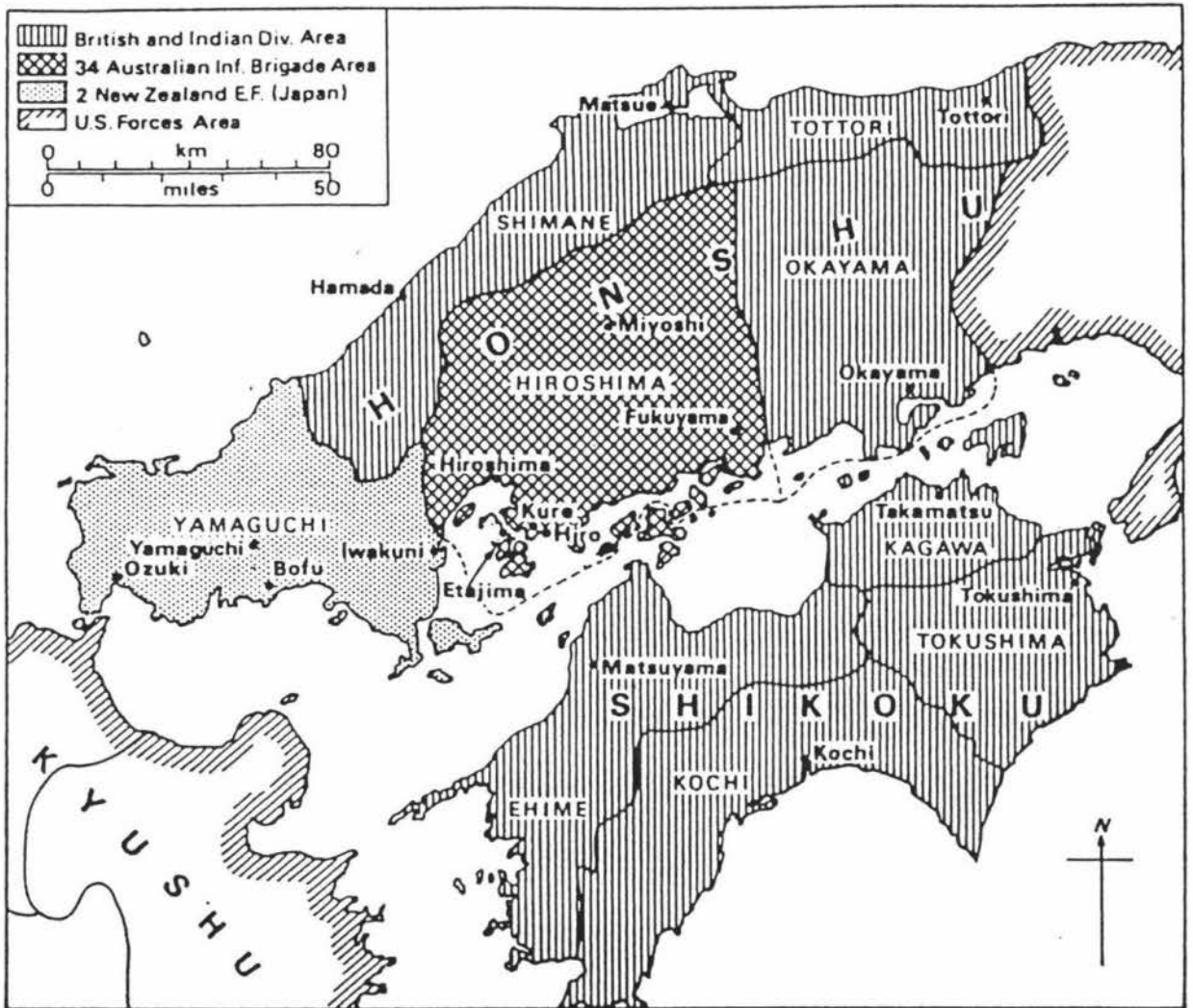
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**ABBREVIATIONS.**

<b>AA</b>	Anti Aircraft.
<b>AGH</b>	Australian General Hospital.
<b>ASC</b>	Army Service Corps/ Army Support Company.
<b>Aust</b>	Australian.
<b>AWL</b>	Absent Without Leave.
<b>BCAIR</b>	British Commonwealth Air Group.
<b>BCOF</b>	British Commonwealth Occupation Force.
<b>Bde</b>	Brigade.
<b>BIE</b>	British-Indian Element.
<b>Bn</b>	Battalion.
<b>BOD</b>	Base Ordnance Depot.
<b>BRINDIV</b>	British-Indian Division.
<b>Bty</b>	Battery.
<b>C in C</b>	Commander in Chief.
<b>CO</b>	Commanding Officer.
<b>Coy</b>	Company.
<b>CSDIC</b>	Combined Services Detailed Interrogation Centre.
<b>DDT</b>	Dichloro Diphenyl Trichloroethane.
<b>DET</b>	Detachment.
<b>Div Cav</b>	Divisional Cavalry.
<b>FPC</b>	Field Punishment Centre.
<b>FUP</b>	Forward Unit Position.
<b>HMS</b>	His Majesty's Ship.
<b>HQ</b>	Head Quarters.
<b>hrs</b>	hours.
<b>JCOSA</b>	Joint Chiefs of Staff Australia.
<b>Lt-Col</b>	Lieutenant-Colonel.
<b>NCO</b>	Non-Commissioned Officer.
<b>No</b>	Number.
<b>NZEF</b>	New Zealand Expeditionary Force.
<b>mls</b>	miles
<b>MMG</b>	Medium Machine Gun.
<b>OC</b>	Officer Commanding.
<b>OCTU</b>	Officer Cadet Training Unit.
<b>Offrs</b>	Officers.
<b>OR</b>	Other Ranks.
<b>pdr</b>	pounder.
<b>PIAT</b>	Projector, Infantry, Anti-Tank.
<b>Pln</b>	Platoon.
<b>POW</b>	Prisoner Of War.
<b>PRO</b>	Provost.
<b>RAAF</b>	Royal Australian Air Force.
<b>RAF</b>	Royal Air Force.
<b>Regt</b>	Regiment.

<b>RIAF</b>	Royal Indian Air Force.
<b>RNZAF</b>	Royal New Zealand Air Force.
<b>SCAP</b>	Supreme Commander Allied Powers.
<b>SIB</b>	Special Investigation Branch.
<b>tps</b>	troops.
<b>VD</b>	Venereal Disease.
<b>WAAC</b>	Women's Auxiliary Army Corps.
<b>WE</b>	War Establishment.
<b>YMCA</b>	Young Men's Christian Association.
<b>UNRRA</b>	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency.



British Commonwealth zone of occupation and disposition of national forces, southern Japan 1946.

*Source:* R. Singh, *Official History of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War 1939-45. Post War Occupation Forces: Japan and South-East Asia*, Kanpur, 1958.

## INTRODUCTION.

The impetus for an MA thesis on 'New Zealand and the Military Occupation of Japan 1945-48' came from discussions with individuals at Massey University, Internal Affairs Historical Branch, and the New Zealand J Force and BCOF Veterans Association. It became clear that this episode in New Zealand history had not previously been studied in depth, yet opportunities were diminishing for with the passing of time veterans' written and oral recollections and personnel papers were being lost. An ideal and somewhat urgent avenue for original historical research emerged.

New Zealand's role in the military occupation of Japan had two inter-connecting sides, political and military. This thesis will examine both, and the relationship between the political and military parts, as well as the overall relevance of this slice of New Zealand history. A central question is 'was participation in the occupation of Japan important as a political or military event, or both'?

New Zealand's relations with Japan prior to 1945 were firstly distant then intensely hostile. Between 1902-21 Britain was allied to Japan under the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, yet New Zealand had little to do with its *defacto* ally, as cultural and political contacts were virtually non-existent and commercial ties very limited. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s New Zealand, along with Australia, lobbied Britain hard for the construction of a naval base at Singapore to protect against possible Japanese aggression. Between 1941-45 the two nations were at war and Japan directly



threatened New Zealand's security for a time, nevertheless the New Zealand military focus was to remain on Europe and the Middle East as it had done prior to 1941. This changed with the surrender of Germany, and New Zealand planned to participate in an invasion of Japan with a two-brigade division and up to seventeen RNZAF squadrons. An unexpectedly quick unconditional surrender from the Japanese during the second week of August 1945 halted these plans.

Following the surrender a strong military and political focus on Japan remained. New Zealand participated in the occupation of Japan between March 1946 and November 1948, with approximately 12,000 men and women serving in either an army brigade group or an RNZAF fighter squadron. Most were based in the Yamaguchi Prefecture at the far south-western tip of the island of Honshu, a poor and rural part of Japan with approximately 1.4 million inhabitants.<sup>1</sup> The New Zealand force, commonly known as Jayforce, participated as part of a British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) that at its peak consisted of over 40,000 military personnel from Australia, Britain and India. Even so, BCOF was dwarfed by the American military forces which occupied the rest of Japan. Importantly, Jayforce was New Zealand's most significant post-war military commitment until the advent of the Korean war in 1950, and this was the first time New Zealand has been part of a multi-national peace-time military occupation force.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendices One, Two and Three for details of Jayforce shipping, deployment and commanding officers.

Published commentary on New Zealand's role mostly pertains to political factors. The most significant work, Ann Trotter's *New Zealand and Japan 1945-52. The Occupation and the Peace Treaty*, devotes one chapter to the military occupation, though the focus is on politician and diplomat activities and her end notes reflect this, being dominated by *Documents on New Zealand External Relations, 2, The Surrender and Occupation of Japan*, (Ed. Robin Kay). In turn this substantial collection has been a major primary source for this thesis. Other published works make a briefer reference, they include Ian McGibbon, *New Zealand and the Korean War, 1; New Zealand in World Affairs, 1; Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-45. Documents, 3*, (Ed. M.C. Fairbrother); and *Undiplomatic Dialogue*, (Ed. Ian McGibbon). Sir Alister McIntosh's 'Working with Peter Fraser in Wartime: Personal Reminiscences', in *The New Zealand Journal of History*, 10:1, 1976, has been useful on the enigmatic Peter Fraser.

Published literature on New Zealand's military force, Jayforce, has been more limited. Publications from the Official History series on the Second World War mostly have only a cursory post-script, though Oliver A. Gillespie's *Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-45. The Pacific*, is one notable exception. This offers an introduction into but not detail on the essential events and problems that the force encountered. The other exception is T. Duncan and M. Stout, *Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-45. War Surgery and Medicine*, which provides brief yet valuable information on venereal disease infection amongst Jayforce soldiers. W. David McIntyre, *New Zealand Prepares for War*; John McLeod *Myth and Reality. The New Zealand Soldier in World War II*; and Jock Phillips *A Man's*

*Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male*, have been useful for background on life in the New Zealand military forces. Two auto biographies complete the relevant literature, Brian Cox, *Too Young to Die*, and Frank Rennie, *Regular Soldier. A Life in the New Zealand Army*, recount their individual experiences in Jayforce as a small part of their military careers.

Unpublished material on Jayforce is abundant, with veterans having provided a substantial number of personal papers and contemporary recollections. A resource base consisting of twenty-four recorded interviews, twenty-four contemporary written recollections, and twenty-five private papers collections has been accumulated. The New Zealand J Force and BCOF Veterans Association has also provided access to written and oral records. Finally an array of files in the EA and WA sections at National Archives Wellington have been examined, they mostly relate to the army brigade.

Unpublished sources on political aspects of the occupation have been less substantial, though still decisive. The Labour Party Caucus Minutes and the McIntosh Papers have shed new light on political decision-making. An examination of the EA series at National Archives resulted in some material not covered by Kay coming forth.

It is regretted that a number of sources have not been available. This has included the RNZAF files from the Air Department list missing from National

Archives.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, financial and time restraints have meant that some potentially valuable personal papers, written and oral recollections, and overseas archival sources have not been tapped.

The central theme for this thesis will be that participation in the military occupation of Japan was a political exercise designed to maintain Britain as New Zealand's security defender. Though this was a traditional New Zealand external relations objective, the means of achievement - a military occupation force - was new. These political circumstances were to result in extraordinary problems for Jayforce, and to its general unsatisfactory nature as a military operation.

The first two chapters concern political aspects of participation, that is, why New Zealand politicians wanted to be involved in the military occupation of Japan and the causes of a five-month gap between agreement in principle and full agreement. As such they focus on Peter Fraser, not just because as Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs he was dominant, but also for the way he implanted his views on the formulation of policy. A British High Commissioner to New Zealand noted,

Mr. Fraser alone determines the policy of the New Zealand government on every question of foreign affairs. No other member of cabinet is knowledgeable about or interested in such matters. Mr. Fraser rarely consults his colleagues upon these subjects and quite frequently does

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<sup>2</sup> Published literature includes Ian Nish's article 'Britain and the Occupation of Japan - Some Personal Recollections' from *Proceeding of the British Association of Japanese Studies*; Major-General R.N.L. Hopkin's article 'History of the Australian Occupation of Japan 1946-50' from *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*; Lieutenant-Colonel F.J.C. Piggot's article 'Occupying Japan' from *Army Quarterly*; and *The British Commonwealth and the Occupation of Japan*, (Ed. Ian Nish).

not even inform them when he has taken important decisions.... Thus New Zealand's policy on international political issues is as personal as that of any dictatorship.<sup>3</sup>

Trotter concludes that "... Fraser was an idealist taking a high moral line and defining problems in black and white."<sup>4</sup> McIntosh seems to contradict this, describing Fraser as being above all else a 'realist'. He also describes him as a very skilful politician, a bully to his cabinet colleagues and as someone who liked to get his own way.<sup>5</sup>

The reasons for participation have been examined by Trotter in *New Zealand and Japan 1945-52. The Occupation and the Peace Treaty*, and she sees a desire for long-term peace in the Pacific, and British Commonwealth co-operation and solidarity, as New Zealand's motives. Chapter One, 'The Rationale', re-examines motives for participation through a further study of the source material used by Trotter and by the introduction of new material. While her reasons are agreed with as far as they go, additional motives relating to New Zealand's defence relationship with Britain are brought to the fore and new conclusions drawn. Whether or not this was a typical external relations activity for New Zealand or something new is also discussed. Chapter Two, 'Hesitation and Delay', again explores an area previously examined by Trotter, and again by using both old and new source material a greater insight into this

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<sup>3</sup> Snelling to Addison, 31 Aug 1949, PRO DO 35/3761, quoted in Ann Trotter, *New Zealand and Japan 1945-52. The Occupation and Peace Treaty*, London, 1990, p.23. Note, unless deemed absolutely necessary, spelling and grammar errors in quotations have not been adjusted or marked [sic].

<sup>4</sup> Trotter, *New Zealand and Japan*, p.23.

<sup>5</sup> Sir Alister McIntosh, 'Working with Peter Fraser in Wartime: Personal Reminiscences', *The New Zealand Journal of History*, 10:1, 1976, pp.6-7, p.9, and p.20.

issue is achieved. In this case the issue of reluctance, promoted by Trotter as being the reason for the five month period of uncertainty, is challenged.

By contrast, Chapters Three to Five are military in their focus. As a further contrast the New Zealand force in Japan has not been covered in any depth by others, and no secondary sources exist around which this work can develop. Primary sources form an almost exclusive source base.

In 1945 New Zealand's armed forces were in a state of rapid transition. After the cessation of hostilities military personnel were wanting to return to civilian life quickly, to accomplish this the military authorities obliged with a speedy demobilisation. Military equipment was also being accumulated, stored, moved, or sold. It was in this difficult environment that Jayforce was born.

Chapter Three, entitled 'Organisation', concentrates on the move to Japan and the first few months in Japan for Jayforce. It examines the organisational problems encountered, as well as exploring how good or bad organisation was. The chapter size reflects the enormity of this subject. Among the relating topics discussed are soldier's expectations of Japan, the packing and shipping of stores and equipment, command jurisdiction, soldier's attitudes, and the state of living conditions and channels of supply in Japan. Moreover, the process of improvement over time is studied.

The next two chapters separately examine the official and unofficial activities soldiers did once in Japan. In a number of respects developments were determined by

issues discussed in Chapters One and Three. Chapter Four, 'Tasks and Leisure', looks at the pre-determined military tasks arranged for Jayforce and examines how and why they very quickly came to be over-shadowed. This change in turn impacted on the development of leisure and recreation and the emergence of boredom and monotony. Chapter Four leads into Chapter Five, 'Misdemeanour and Crime', in which an examination of the prominent forms of illegal activity and an assessment of their causes among the New Zealand force is undertaken. It weighs the extent of this activity, within the context of the time and circumstances. Though once again this chapter is large, this reflects the scale of this kind of activity amongst Jayforce personnel.

Chapter Six, 'Retention or Withdrawal', studies how the tide turned against participation. Only a small number of sources have been found, and as in Chapters One and Two a re-interpretation of Trotter's work is completed by a re-examination of her source material, in conjunction with new primary information. While Trotter states that withdrawal resulted because the political reasons for the original participation no longer existed, little weight is placed on British actions. This chapter argues that they were paramount.

Conclusions on the relevance of participation in the military occupation of Japan in New Zealand's history have varied. Ann Trotter calls the occupation force "... a 'unique experiment' in Commonwealth co-operation ...", while Dean Stout

describes the period as "... an unremarkable two and a half years."<sup>6</sup> Veterans are equally disparate in their opinions, some calling it a holiday, some an ordeal, and others a forgotten episode. The following study will draw its own conclusion by tying together the various aspects of participation.

Some military unit titles referred to in the text require explanation. The official and commonly recognised titles for the New Zealand army brigade to Japan varied between 9NZ Brigade, 2NZEF (Japan), and Jayforce, though the most commonly recognised title was Jayforce and this will be the title used. It is not clear whether the term Jayforce should properly cover No. 14 RNZAF squadron as it mostly existed as a separate entity. However the experiences in Japan of the two branches were frequently the same, and in official documents they are often both referred to under the name of Jayforce. Hence it is difficult and sometimes pointless to differentiate between the two, and except where necessary the term Jayforce will refer to both contingents.

As well, a number of Jayforce units underwent name changes during 1946-48. Most significantly, 22 and 27 Battalion changed on 7 August 1947 to 2 Battalion and 3 Battalion respectively. Any reference to these military formations clearly prior to or after this date will be made to the proper designated title. Any reference pertaining to an issue that spans this date will list both titles.

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<sup>6</sup> Trotter, *New Zealand and Japan*, p. 70; Dean Stout, 'Jayforce. A Review of New Zealand's Military Involvement in Japan', *New Zealand Journal of East Asian Studies*, 1:2, 1994, p.103.