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AID TO THE CIVIL POWER:
THE NEW ZEALAND EXPERIENCE

A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfilment of
the Requirements of the Master of Arts Degree in
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ABSTRACT

This work concerns a comparatively unexplored area of New Zealand military history- Aid to the Civil Power (ACP). ACP is divided into three distinct forms. The first is Military Aid to the Civil Community (MACC) which covers areas such as disaster relief and civil defence. MACC is not examined in this thesis. The other two forms are Military Aid to the Civil Ministries (MACM) and Military Aid to the Civil Power (MACP). MACM is the use of military personnel to replace striking workers. MACP is the use of military personnel to support the police.

Three specific incidents are studied and these are the 1951 Waterfront Dispute (MACM), the Cook Strait airlifts (Operation Pluto, MACM) and the 1981 Springbok Tour (MACP). Within these incidents the following areas are explored; civil-military relations and civilian control of military operations, the law, how governments justify ACP operations, the public reaction to ACP operations and, lastly, the military response to ACP operations.

The study establishes the following hypotheses. Firstly, civilian control is the key feature of any ACP operation as it ensures that the government is seen to be governing.

Secondly, the present laws relating to ACP confer uncertain responsibilities and powers on both the police and the military. As a consequence there is a possibility of an ACP operation being conducted that contravenes the government's wishes. Additionally, the newest piece of ACP legislation, the International Terrorism (Emergency Powers) Act 1987, lacks focus and clarity and this has ensured that the act is a poor replacement for the PSCA.

Thirdly, governments have undertaken ACP operations to gain political capital. In justifying these operations various governments have portrayed

their actions as upholding the public good although their level of commitment to the public good sometimes appears questionable.

Fourthly, the public response to an ACP operation is dependent on the incident and not the principles involved in ACP. This lack of an underlying philosophical basis to the response explains the rapid shifts in public opinion that have occurred.

Fifthly, the armed forces show a great reluctance to become involved in any ACP operation that could result in conflict with the public. This shows an awareness on the part of the military of the importance of civil-military relations.

The thesis concludes with a discussion of future trends in New Zealand ACP operations. It is considered that MACM will become a less viable option as society becomes increasingly technological. This is because the armed forces can really only supply labour as modern society and the military have few skills in common. Additionally, society is less labour oriented than it was in previous decades. The prospects of MACP operations being conducted in New Zealand are considered remote given the current lack of violence in New Zealand political life and the success of the police in dealing with disorder.

PREFACE

As a Regular Force officer in the New Zealand Army I have always been acutely aware of military history. However, it has been the history of battles and campaigns- the history of wars. Wars are, however, an aberration. The more normal situation is peace. But even in peace military operations are conducted. These operations are often termed "Aid to the Civil Power".

This work is a study of Aid to the Civil Power- a comparatively unrecognised and unexplored aspect of New Zealand's military history. When a study of Aid to the Civil Power was first suggested as being a suitable topic for a history thesis I was unimpressed. Exploratory work quickly showed the area to be extremely interesting and ripe for historical research- especially since neither the armed forces nor civilian historians have undertaken any analysis of New Zealand Aid to the Civil Power operations. These operations are relatively common in New Zealand so the lack of analysis is surprising.

The completion of this work owes much to the cooperation and assistance of many people and organisations. My supervisor, David Thomson, provided continual guidance and his well directed criticism ensured that my study continued to advance. The Ministry of Defence made the completion of this work possible by granting me a study award and ensuring that all possible resources were made available. The Ministry opened its files to investigation and arranged interviews with a number of people. Where possible file references are given for all information provided by the Ministry of Defence. However, in the case of Springbok Tour, the files were not made available. Information was provided in response to questions and this is cited as "information supplied by the Ministry of Defence". Defence Public Relations provided transcripts of radio and television programmes. The following people kindly gave

interviews; Mr K Douglas, Major General J A Mace, Mr D B G McLean, Lieutenant Colonel T J McComish, Sir Robert Muldoon, Lieutenant General Sir Leonard Thornton and Major M Wicksteed. Malcolm McKinnon of Victoria University made considerable resources available from his private research collection and provided valuable comments on my work. Lastly, thanks to my fellow post-graduate students and Susan and Rebecca for their support and encouragement.

The opinions expressed in this work represent those of the author and do not represent the views or policy of the Ministry of Defence or of the individuals whom I interviewed.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACP	Aid to the Civil Power
AJHR	Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives
DPR	Defence Public Relations
FOL	Federation of Labour
HMNZS	Her Majesty's New Zealand Ship
MACC	Military Aid to the Civil Community
MACM	Military Aid to the Civil Ministries
MACP	Military Aid to the Civil Power
NZPD	New Zealand Parliamentary Debates
NZR	New Zealand Railways
NZWWU	New Zealand Waterside Workers' Union
PSCA	Public Safety Conservation Act 1932
s., ss.	section, sections
RAN	Royal Australian Navy
RNZAF	Royal New Zealand Air Force
RNZN	Royal New Zealand Navy
TUC	Trade Union Congress
USS	United States' Ship