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**‘So the end has come...
I shall see you all again’:**

**DEMOBILISING THE
New Zealand Expeditionary Force
NOVEMBER 1918 – SEPTEMBER 1919**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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in

History

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New Zealand.

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Abstract

Demobilisation as an aspect of Military History is not often mentioned. This thesis is a study of the demobilisation of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force from November 1918 until September 1919. At the time of the Armistice with Germany and the Ottoman Empire, there were over 50,000 men and a few women who needed to be repatriated to New Zealand. There was the New Zealand Division on the Western Front which was selected to form part of the occupying force in the Rhine bridgeheads until March 1919 when the final drafts were sent to Britain. The New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade in Palestine would remain there until the last drafts boarded a vessel in August 1919. The base camps in Britain are a study of administrative history as the military infrastructure that supported the NZ Division in the field had to be closed down, the equipment returned to New Zealand or disposed of and the personnel demobilised and repatriated. This study also considers the place of the Maori Pioneer Battalion; along with the NZ Tunnelling Company were the only units of the NZEF to be repatriated as a complete unit. As well as front line units, the sick, wounded, and convalescent men needed to be returned safely to New Zealand along with a selection of war trophies, POWs and non-combatants. The vast network of camps in Britain had to be closed and evacuated. The equipment from the camps needed to be sorted and disposed of or returned to New Zealand and the Imperial Ordnance. Between November 1918 and September 1919 over 50,000 men and women were repatriated to New Zealand from Britain and Egypt. This was a massive task to co-ordinate the vessels with the drafts of men waiting anxiously to go home. The fact it was completed successfully is a testament to the planning undertaken prior to the Armistices by the Empire Military Demobilisation Committee. To keep the men occupied and prepare them for life after the war, the NZEF attempted to implement an education scheme wherever New Zealand troops were camped. Despite the best of intentions, it was singularly unsuccessful; the one real disappointment of the Demobilisation Scheme. The thesis will also comprehensively discuss the presence of ill-discipline during the demobilisation period. In Britain, France, and Egypt New Zealand troops rioted, looted and engaged in murder. This was not a unique phenomenon to the NZEF. All other Dominion and British forces had major incidents of ill-discipline.

Acknowledgements

The historian's rightful task is to distil experience for future generations, not to distil it like a drug. Having fulfilled his task to the best of his ability, and honesty, he has fulfilled his purpose. He would be a rash optimist if he believed that the next generations would trouble to absorb the warning. History at least teaches the historian a lesson.

First World War historian B. H. Liddell Hart, 1930

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This thesis is dedicated to my great-uncle Trooper Alfred Smith of the 1st Machine Gun Squadron, New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade and in memory of Trooper Fraser Campbell who sadly died on the voyage home from Egypt in 1919.

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Glossary

AIF	Australian Imperial Force (equivalent of the NZEF)
ALH	Australian Light Horse (equivalent of the Mounted Rifles)
ALHR	Australian Light Horse Regiment(s)
AMR	Auckland Mounted Rifles Regiment
AMDiv	ANZAC Mounted Division (NZMRB parent unit)
AMDivHQ	ANZAC Mounted Division Headquarters
Bttn	Battalion
CMR	Canterbury Mounted Rifles Regiment
Coy	Company
CO	Commanding Officer
DivHQ	New Zealand Division Headquarters France
EEF	Egyptian Expeditionary Force
EEFHQ	Egyptian Expeditionary Force Headquarters
GHQ	General Headquarters
GOC	General Officer Commanding
HMNZT	Her Majesty's New Zealand Troopship
LOC	Line of Communications
MGBttn	Machine Gun Battalion – unit of the NZ Division
MPs	Military Police (Provost Marshals)
NCOs	Non-Commissioned Officers
NZDivTr	New Zealand Divisional Train
NZASC	New Zealand Army Service Corps
NZCH	New Zealand Convalescent Hospital (Hornchurch)
NZDA	New Zealand Divisional Artillery
NZDiv	New Zealand Division
NZDUS	New Zealand Depot Unit of Supply - France
NZE	New Zealand Engineers
NZEFHQ	New Zealand Expeditionary Force Headquarters – London
NZEFEHQ	New Zealand Expeditionary Force Headquarters – Egypt
NZFA	New Zealand Field Artillery
No. 1 NZGH	New Zealand General Hospital – No. 1 (Brockenhurst)
No. 2 NZGH	New Zealand General Hospital – No. 2 (Walton-on-Thames)
No. 3 NZGH	New Zealand General Hospital – No. 3 (Codford)
NZGRU	New Zealand Graves Registration Unit
NZHS	New Zealand Hospital Ship

NZMFA	New Zealand Mounted Field Ambulance (NZMRB)
NZMC	New Zealand Medical Corps
NZMCHQ	New Zealand Medical Corps Headquarters
NZMRB	New Zealand Mounted Rifle Brigade
NZMRBHQ	New Zealand Mounted Rifle Brigade Headquarters
NZRB	New Zealand Rifle Brigade – 3 rd Brigade of the NZ Div
NZTC	New Zealand Tunnelling Company – unit of the NZ Div
NZTUD	New Zealand Training Unit and Depot – Egypt
NZVC	New Zealand Veterinary Corps
OC	Officer Commanding
Other Ranks	Non-commissioned officers and privates
QMG	Quartermaster General
RASC	Royal Army Service Corps
RHA	Royal Horse Artillery
Sling	Main NZEF camp at Larkhill, Bulford Village, Salisbury Plain
VAD	Voluntary Aid Detachment
WMR	Wellington Mounted Rifles Regiment

NZEF Category of Fitness for Service

- A1** Fit for Active Service
- B1** Able to be made fit by medical treatment
- C1** Likely to become fit for service overseas after special training
- C2** Permanently unfit for Active Service but fit for service in New Zealand
- D** Permanently Unfit

Order of Battle in November 1918

New Zealand Division

Units	Sub Units			Weapons	Strength	Vehicles	Animals
Divisional Field Artillery	1 st 2 nd (Army) 3 rd NZFA Brigades [1]	3 Trench Mortar Batteries X,Y,Z	Divisional Ammunition Column	54 x 18-pdr guns 18 x 4.5" Howitzers 12 x 6" mortars	2880	280	2000
Divisional Engineers	No. 1,2,3, Field Companies	No. 1 & 2 Signal Companies	Divisional Salvage Company		577	80	190
1st NZ Infantry Brigade	1 st & 2 nd Bttns Auckland Regiment [2]	1 st & 2 nd Bttns Wellington Regiment		170 x Machineguns [3]	4020	25	200
2nd NZ Infantry Brigade	1 st & 2 nd Bttns Canterbury Regiment	1 st & 2 nd Bttns Otago Regiment		170 x Machineguns	4020	25	200
NZ Rifle Brigade	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th Bttns			170 x Machineguns	4020	25	200
NZ Maori Pioneer Battalion	A,B,D Companies [4]			12 x Machineguns	660		
NZ Machine Gun Battalion	A,B,C,D Companies			16 x Machineguns	206		
NZ Army Supply Corps	Divisional Train 3 Supply Companies	Motor Transport Company [5]			780	260	400 horses
NZ Medical Corps	1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd Field Ambulance	Sanitary Company			288	20	60
NZ Veterinary Corps	No. 1 Mobile Veterinary Section				150	20	140
Provost Marshals	Provosts	Traffic Control			71		

Notes:

[1] The 2nd (Army) Brigade NZFA was under the control of the 3rd Army commander. The other two brigades remained under Divisional Control. A NZFA Brigade consisted of three 6-gun 18-pounder batteries and one 6-gun howitzer battery. For example, 1st Brigade NZFA consisted of 1st, 3rd, 7th, 8th batteries.

[2] A Battalion was divided into four companies of approximately 220 men. Each company consisted of four platoons of 54 men, who were divided into four sections of ten to twelve men.

For example, the 1st Battalion of the Auckland Regiment (1st Brigade NZDiv) consisted of the 3rd Auckland Company, 6th Hauraki Company, 15th Waikato Company, and the 16th North Auckland Company.

[3] This quantity consisted of 144 Lewis (light) and sixteen Vickers (heavy) machineguns.

[4] Less the Rarotongan (Pioneer) Company retained by the NZMRB.

[5] The Motor Transport Company was equipped with 80 3-ton trucks divided into five sections.

[6] The NZ Tunnelling Company was employed at a GHQ unit. The Cyclist Battalion and the Otago Mounted Rifles employed as XXII Corps mounted troops along with the NZASC 2nd (Area) Employment Company and operated independently of the New Zealand Division therefore are not included in the order of battle. The NZ Light Railway Operating Company was under the command of the 2nd Army.

New Zealand Mounted Rifle Brigade

Units	Officers	Other Ranks	Horses[1]
Headquarters	6	43	55
Auckland Mounted Rifles Regiment[2]	24	499	616
Canterbury Mounted Rifles Regiment	24	499	616
Wellington Mounted Rifles Regiment	24	499	616
1 st Machine Gun Squadron	8	222	321
2 nd Machine Gun Squadron[3]	8	221	321
NZ Engineers Signal Troop	1	36	36
NZ Engineers Field Troop	2	50	67
NZVC No. 2 Mobile Veterinary Section	1	29	28
NZMC Mounted Field Ambulance	6	133	127
Auckland Mounted Rifles Band	1	36	-
NZASC No. 4 Company	5	119	156
RHA Battery (Somerset Territorial Battery)[4]	5	149	246
NZ Rarotongan (Pioneer) Company [5]	6	240	-
Totals	121	2775	3205

Notes:

[1] Along with the horses there were vast numbers of mules and donkeys plus a number of camels in use by the units of the NZMRB.

[2] A Mounted Rifle Regiment consisted of three squadrons made up of four troops. Each troop had four 4-man sections. For example, the Auckland Mounted Rifles regiment consisted of the 3rd Auckland, 4th Waikato, and 11th North Auckland Squadrons.

[3] Formed in 1918 from the two Camel Companies attached to the Imperial Camel Corps. The Squadron was attached to the 5th Australian Light Horse Brigade until the Armistice.

[4] Attached for mobile field artillery support until the Armistice.

[5] The Company was detached from the NZ Maori (Pioneer) Battalion when the NZ Division was formed and sent to France.

[6] The non-combat units supporting the NZMRB in the field were:

Administrative Headquarters (NZEFEHQ): Cairo – three officers, 30 other ranks

New Zealand Training Unit & Depot (NZTUD): Ismailia – 19 Officers, 79 other ranks

Sources:

Michael Cox and John Ellis, *The World War One Databook: The Essential Facts and Figures for all Combatants*, London: Aurum Press, 2001, p. 239.

Lt. Colonel C. Guy Powles, *The New Zealanders in Sinai and Palestine, Official History of New Zealand's Effort in the Great War* vol. 3, Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd., 1922.

Colonel H. Stewart, *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919: The New Zealanders in France* vol. 2, Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd., 1921.

Introduction

Although it is a cliché it bears repeating, it's easier to start a war than finish one. This is never more apt than at the conclusion of the First World War. The title for this thesis comes from a letter written by Captain George Tuck of the New Zealand Division (hereafter NZDiv) to his parents the day after the Armistice was declared. George Tuck fought in the Boer War and sailed with the Main Body in 1914. He landed on Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 and served there until evacuated. When the NZDiv was formed in 1916, he along with the Division transferred to the Western Front. George Tuck fought with the Division on the front line until the Armistice. As his battalion marched through Solesmes he wrote that "[a] message was shown to me which stated that hostilities would cease at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. So the end has come".¹

In November 1918 the New Zealand Expeditionary Force (hereafter NZEF) consisted of the NZDiv serving on the Western Front and the New Zealand Mounted Rifle Brigade (hereafter NZMRB), part of the ANZAC Mounted Division (AMDiv) serving in Palestine under command of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF). Both these combat formations were supported by a network of camps, hospitals, depots, and non-combatant volunteers located in France, Britain, and Egypt. This administrative process of demobilisation for the Allied Forces including the NZEF

¹ Chris Pugsley, 'New Zealand: "The Heroes Lie in France"', *At the Eleventh Hour: Reflections, Hopes and Anxieties at the Closing of the Great War 1918*, Hugh Cecil and Peter H Liddle (eds.), London: Leo Cooper, 1998, pp. 200-201.

began with the sudden collapse of the Central Powers in October and November 1918.

All of these men and women, their units, buildings, and the mountains of equipment would need to be demobilised, evacuated, and repatriated home as soon as possible. For the purposes of this thesis, a brief definition of the terms demobilisation and repatriation is required. Demobilisation is the administrative and practical process of removing an army from combat operations to base camps, disposal and returning military and non-military equipment, and the evacuation of camps, offices, and warehouses. Repatriation is the process of organising demobilised men and embarkation to their home country. It can also include vocational schemes that prepare the men for their life after the army.

This thesis is a study of the demobilisation process and the initial stages of repatriation between November 1918 and September 1919 focusing on the NZEF. Technically, an Armistice is a temporary ceasefire that required renewal every 30 days. The formal end to the war required a peace treaty. Germany's Armistice lasted from 11 November 1918 until 28 June 1919 with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. The Ottoman Empire's Armistice lasted from 31 October 1918 to 10 August 1920 when the Treaty of Sèvres was signed. In theory, at any time prior to the signing of the peace accords by Germany and Turkey, the NZDiv and NZMRB could have been committed to further combat actions. While not intended to be a detailed chronological

narrative, this work shall focus on key themes about the process of demobilisation worthy of explanation.

This thesis begins with an explanation of demobilisation planning prior to the Armistices. By the end of February 1918, a general demobilisation scheme had been developed by committee and the individual Dominions worked the finer details for their own forces. The real bureaucratic work did not begin until November 1918 as the NZEF faced the immense task of getting men from the battlefield to a base camp and then repatriated home to New Zealand. Priorities had to be established and enforced and the New Zealand commanders handled the challenge balancing the needs of the NZEF a force made up of a mixture of volunteers and conscripts, the commitment to Allied war policy in the post Armistice period, and the men who, it can be said, wished to leave the war and the NZEF behind them as soon as possible. The subsequent chapters will attempt to illustrate how this worked in practice.

The next three chapters follow the progress of demobilising the NZDiv. The first chapter locates the Division at the Armistice in reserve and camped in and around the 1914 battlefields. This is followed by a chapter on the march into Germany as part of the Army of Occupation under the terms of the Armistice. There is a brief history of the occupation duty. The final chapter follows the NZDiv as it is returned to Britain in March 1919 to begin the process of repatriation. Over a period of two weeks the bulk of the Division was evacuated leaving behind weeping German maidens.

The focus of the thesis now turns from the Western Front to the Middle East. The next three chapters follow the path that the NZMRB took from the Armistice to the assembly of the last of the men to be repatriated. The NZMRB had returned from the Jordan Valley in early October 1918 and had gone into reserve camp. They were resting and refitting when the Armistice was signed. This rest and refit process ran from October 1918 to March 1919. In December 1918 a selected group of men from the Canterbury Mounted Rifles returned to the birthplace of the ANZAC legend, Gallipoli. The rest of the Brigade settled into camps in southern Palestine and Egypt and the slow process of demobilisation began. This orderly process was rudely interrupted by the Egyptian revolts in that broke out in March 1919. The NZMRB was remobilised and committed to police action until June of 1919. Those still left in Egypt in June 1919 were put into camp and waited for their embarkation.

Chapter eight highlights a major unit worthy of discussion, the Maori Pioneer Battalion. There were three Pioneer Companies with the NZDiv in France and a Rarotongan Company serving with the NZMRB. The Maori Pioneers did not take part in the occupation and were demobilised in December 1918 and embarked in March 1919. The Rarotongan Company were demobilised quite rapidly and embarked in December 1918. These two units were a rare exception in the NZEF in that they were repatriated as complete units.

Chapter nine discusses demobilisation and repatriation of non-combatants, POWs and returning war trophies to New Zealand. There is also a brief section on the lethal influenza pandemic and its impact on demobilisation. There is also some detail on the special effort that the commanders made to deal with 'victims' of VD. This is followed in the next chapter by a survey of the demobilisation and management of sick and injured men. At the Armistice, there were many men lying ill or injured in hospitals in Britain and Egypt or recovering in convalescent homes. These men, along with their nurses, orderlies, dentists, and doctors would need to be shipped home safely. There were hospital ships and ambulance transports on hand for this delicate task. This could be a fraught process. For instance, one amputee soldier wounded in the last offensive did not leave Britain for New Zealand until October 1919. Along side the New Zealand Medical Corps (hereafter NZMC) the personnel from the New Zealand Veterinary Corps (hereafter NZVC) also were demobilised and repatriated. Unfortunately, their animal patients would not be repatriated to New Zealand.

Chapter eleven is a story of the closure and evacuation of the network of camps that had supported the wartime operations. This was an immense administrative task for the NZEF in Britain. Between January 1919 and September 1919 the camps were closed and evacuated. At times, this was under pressure from the War Office, impatient with the delays of the New Zealand forces. In addition, there was the surplus equipment that had to be disposed of or returned to New Zealand, and equipment for the Imperial ordnance.

Camps had to dispose of timber, corrugated iron, and a milk testing machine. This concludes the history of demobilisation and the thesis moves on to a history of ill-discipline during the demobilisation and the initial stages of repatriation.

Military discipline was easier to enforce while the NZDiv and NZMRB conducted combat operations. However, once the constant grind of combat was removed the opportunities for the men of the NZEF to become ill-disciplined increased dramatically. Examples of ill-discipline during demobilisation are recorded in all locations where NZ troops are stationed. Examples explored in this thesis include riots at Sling Camp in November 1918 and March 1919, disturbances by the Maori Pioneers in France and Britain, the riots in Ismailia in December 1918 and July 1919. There is also a short narrative of the murderous Surafend incident in Palestine carried out by men from the NZMRB in December 1918.

The final chapter discusses the allocation of shipping for repatriation and the education scheme. Shipping was critical to the smooth repatriation of the NZEF back to New Zealand and remained an issue for the whole duration of the demobilisation process for the forces of the Dominions. Vessels began to embark in November 1918 and the last vessel embarked for New Zealand in March 1920. In that seventeen month period over 50,000 men and women were repatriated home. Of equal importance was preparing the men for a return to civilian life. The NZEF conducted a range of vocational and education classes in Britain, Germany, and Egypt from November 1918. This section will

discuss the reasons why it was not as successful as the NZEF commanders expected.

There is ample published material on the mobilisation for the First World War and the negotiations on the Armistices in 1918 but demobilisation has received scant attention. Research for this thesis uncovered two journal articles on demobilisation of the British and American forces. There are official histories for the British and Dominion forces but on the whole they tend to be very dry and leave out the difficulties encountered. The AIF published a very concise and useful history of its demobilisation in 1919. However there has not been a significant piece of work that covers the process of demobilisation and the material outside the official history is fragmentary and diverse in source documents.

Demobilisation of the NZEF is an aspect of the war effort of New Zealand during the First World War that has not had any real attention within New Zealand history. The contemporary official histories published in the years after 1918 covered the demobilisation period in a very perfunctory way. Yet within each there were key pieces of information that when put together provided an overall picture of demobilisation for the individual regiments, squadrons, companies or corps that made up the NZDiv, and the NZMRB. James Cowan's comprehensive history of the Maori Pioneer Battalion published in 1926 forms the basis of the chapter covering this unit. Finally the invaluable contemporary publication for details of the demobilisation is *Some records of the NZEF or Record of Personal Services*

during the War compiled by Lt Col John Studholme and published in 1927.

Other historians have touched upon the topic as part of their work. Ashley Gould's PhD thesis on the land settlement process for returned soldiers briefly touched on demobilisation and repatriation. Russell Clarke's MA thesis on shellshock surveyed the treatment of the mentally ill soldier after the Armistice and described the repatriation of mentally ill NZEF men. Chris Pugsley's invaluable *On the Fringe of Hell* provided information on ill-discipline within the NZEF and his *The ANZAC Experience* gave some insight into the experiences of the NZEF after the Armistice. Nicolas Boyack and others published a series on the lives of New Zealand soldiers in *Behind the Lines*, *The Great Adventure*, and *In the Shadow of War*. All three books provided some useful personal anecdotes about the experience of demobilisation.

The primary documents held at Archives New Zealand were a rich vein of information and provided in some cases a cross check of secondary sources. The War Archives contained many documents that dealt with demobilisation but were not held within a series or even a single file (See Bibliography). The relevant material that was located was used as a basis for this thesis. The Kippenberger Library provided personal letters and privately published monographs that were very useful for writing on the history of the NZMRB in particular. There is still a wealth of material to be discovered and due to the limitations of the thesis programme could not be addressed.

This thesis should not be seen as a dry chronological and administrative history. In an effort to bring the human face of the demobilisation in focus, quotations from private letters, personal diaries, and official documents have been used liberally. The men's stories add colour and shape to the official history and the primary documentation. Finally, the primary goal of this been to bring all the source material into a single narrative of the history of the demobilisation process of the NZEF, and to be a corrective to the lack of a single history of this significant part of the New Zealand military experience and the conclusion of the First World War to an end.

Chapter One: Planning Demobilisation

While the Main Body was sailing for the war the Minister of Defence James Allen issued the following instruction to General Godley, GOC of the NZEF:

On conclusion of the War, you will arrange with the High Commissioner and the Army Council for the return of the Expeditionary Force to New Zealand as soon as convenient.²

The order further advised that men of the NZEF if they chose could be discharged in Britain but they would have no claim on the NZEF or New Zealand government. It also outlined the policy on the implements of war:

At the conclusion of the War, you are authorised to dispose of all horses, transport vehicles etc., which are condemned by a board of senior officers, and which it is therefore more economical to see than to transport back to New Zealand.³

For example, the strength of the NZDiv as at January 1918 was reported as 22,699 men. There were a further 2,349 men in the reinforcement camp at Etaples and 2,236 men in French hospitals and convalescent camps bringing the total in France to 27,284 men.⁴

By the Armistice there were plenty of men, equipment and machines that needed to be dealt with, far more than had ever been envisioned when Allen issued his order to Godley in the halcyon days of 1914. By 12 November 1918 92,860 men and women had embarked from New Zealand

² WA Series 1 Box 11 2/26 Equipment Camps in the United Kingdom Disposal/Demobilisation – Instructions to the General Officer Commanding NZEF from the Hon Minister of Defence dated 24/9/1914.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ WA Series 1 3 Box 18 8/6 Reconstruction Committee – Return of the NZDiv strength as at January 1918.

for Egypt and Britain.⁵ Over two thirds of the total sent overseas were volunteers.⁶ At the time of the Armistices there were 52,123 men and women of the NZEF overseas that required demobilisation and repatriation.⁷ The NZEF was dispersed in Britain and the theatres of operation as follows: NZDiv 24,115⁸ in France, 23,467 in Britain and 4541 in Egypt.⁹

The first steps towards a plan for demobilisation began in January 1915 when a report was prepared for the War Office on the practical steps that any demobilisation process would have to follow.¹⁰ In 1917 a working group began general planning for demobilisation with input from NZEFHQ.¹¹ In July 1918, the Empire Military Demobilisation Committee began its work in London. The Committee was chaired by Major-General Burnett-Hitchcock, Director-General of Mobilisation at the War Office. Every Dominion was represented alongside officers from the British forces and staff from the Directorate of Mobilisation, the Ministry of Shipping, and the Directorate of Movements. Eight meetings were held between September and December 1919 to plan the demobilisation.¹²

⁵ New Zealand Yearbook 1919, p. 255.

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 257. Of the total number of men and women mobilised for the First World War 91,941 were volunteers, and 32,270 were conscripted under the 1916 Act.

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 257.

⁸ This figure includes a draft sent from the Otago Reserve Battalion dispatched to France on 16 November. The last reinforcements received by the NZDiv were 122 men received by the Otago regiment on 5 December 1918.

⁹ New Zealand Yearbook 1919, pp. 255,257. Not included here is a 56-man Troop of Wireless Telegraphers serving in Mesopotamia with the British.

¹⁰ Denis Winter, *Death's Men: Soldiers of the Great War*, London: Penguin, 1979, p. 238.

¹¹ WA Series 1 3 Box 18 8/6 Reconstruction Committee – Letter from NZEFHQ to the War Office dated 13/12/1917.

¹² WA Series 1 67/4/14 Box 23 Mobilisation/Demobilisation Scheme 1918-1919 – Memorandum No. 37 issued 8/1/1919. See also WA Series 1 3 Box 18 8/6 Reconstruction Committee - Empire Military Demobilisation Committee Interim report issued January 1919.

One of the first points of discussion was the moving of the Dominion forces from the field. New Zealand, Australia, and Canada requested that their forces in France be repatriated home through Britain. Based on the available cross-channel shipping, this would be an enormous burden. The committee worked out an allotment scheme and set the maximum number of men per day who could cross the channel back to Britain at 1,000.¹³

Transshipping the Dominion forces through Britain raised a dilemma for the War Office staff as to where in Britain the men of the Dominion forces would be housed prior to repatriation. In February 1918 the War Office in a secret telegram advised the NZEFHQ that the Army Council had been considering where the overseas Dominion forces would be demobilised to. It was recommended that Sling Camp be the assembly centre for the New Zealand forces. The NZEFHQ was responsible for setting this camp up as soon as possible so no delays would occur once demobilisation began.¹⁴ Sling Camp was on Salisbury plain and a very bleak place. It had been used for training new recruits and for toughening convalescents before dispatch to the front.¹⁵ It was well known in the Division for its “bad food, large rats, cold huts, harsh training, and long route marches”.¹⁶

¹³ WA Series 1 67/4/14 Box 23 Mobilisation/Demobilisation Scheme 1918-1919 – Memorandum No. 37 issued 8/1/1919.

¹⁴ *ibid.* Cable from the War Office to NZEFHQ dated 19/2/1918.

¹⁵ Nicolas Boyack, *Behind the Lines: The Lives of New Zealand Soldiers in the First World War*, Wellington: Allen & Unwin, 1989, p. 102

¹⁶ Boyack, *Behind the Lines*, p. 102.

In order to test the system, two exercises were undertaken by the War Office to test all the demobilisation machinery. In February 1918, Purfleet Camp processed 600 Canadian engineers and this first exercise was fairly successful.¹⁷ A second exercise was conducted in May 1918 when 2,200 were processed through Wimbledon camp. Again the exercise went off in a satisfactory manner.¹⁸ The feedback was such that the NZEFHQ began to develop its own planning for demobilisation based on the exercises and the plans laid down by the committee and the War Office. A copy of the War Office letter and an introductory chapter to the Demobilisation Regulations was circulated to the units of the NZEF in Britain. The staffs at each camp were asked to comply with the request and digest the information and begin preparations. For example, in September 1918 the 4th Infantry Reserve Brigade HQ at Sling Camp requested a meeting of all the commanders of the infantry reserve camps to discuss Godley's suggestions on demobilisation.¹⁹

As October drew to a close Colonel Hall gave a series of lectures on demobilisation and was advised by the commanders that his talk was "greatly appreciated by the men".²⁰ In early November as the Armistice was being negotiated, the NZEFHQ sent out the draft of the demobilisation scheme to the commanders of all the units asking for comment. Security, availability of transport, the potential financial burdens, and the uncertainty of the

¹⁷ Winter, *Death's Men*, p. 239.

¹⁸ WA Series 1 3 Box 18 8/6 Reconstruction Committee.

¹⁹ WA Series 133 3 Box 10 71/4 Demobilisation General File September 1918-October 1919 – Memorandum dated 8/9/1918.

²⁰ *ibid.* Note from NZEFHQ issued in April 1919. Refers to the lectures given on demobilisation back in October 1918.

Armistice meant that the great armies in place on 11 November 1918 and 30 October 1918 could not be demobilised overnight. The New Zealand government and the NZEF needed to “confront the problem of devising some plan for the orderly demobilising”.²¹

The plan of return drafted by the committee set out the priority for repatriation of personnel:

1. Hospital patients, Category C and D personnel and men with wives and families in Britain would be returned to New Zealand as medical transports and passenger vessels became available from New Zealand's allocation of shipping.

2. Pivotal men asked for by the National Efficiency Board. Apprentices, coal miners and students who had not completed their education would be granted priority in demobilisation.

3. All other personnel in combat and rear area in order of sequence of return in the following order:

- 1914 Class
- 1915 “
- 1916 “
- 1917 “
- 1918 “

4. Within each class the following sequence of return would be observed:

- a. Married men
- b. Cases of domestic hardship
- c. Men who could show for urgent business reasons it is in the interest of the Dominion they should be repatriated early
- d. Others as far as possible in the order in which they left the dominion. Those who

²¹ Stephen Richards Graubard, 'Military Demobilisation in Great Britain Following the First World War', *The Journal of Modern History*, 19:4 (1947), p. 297.

left in December in the year would be the last of their class to return.²²

Pacific Islanders serving with the NZEF would also return home to their islands at the expense of the government. This was extended to Pacific Islanders brought to Europe and Egypt by the New Zealand government to enlist or as labourers. Men who wished to delay their repatriation would not be allowed to do so unless their services were required in France or Britain. Officers and other ranks who had applied to be repatriated in advance of their proper time needed to have very strong reasons for doing so:

[And] should realize [sic] if they are granted priority passages, it will mean delay in repatriation of other men who have probably been absent from their homes for several years, thereby causing an injustice to these men and disappointment to their relatives in the Dominion.²³

There was one part of the military machine circa 1918 that was not repatriated. Item 48 in the Demobilisation Scheme stated that “animals will not be returned to New Zealand on demobilisation”.²⁴ This required the NZMRB and the NZDiv to dispose of all their horseflesh. By the Armistice this amounted to approximately 4,000 animals.²⁵ The regulations also extended to man’s best friend. Men of the NZMRB were advised that “dogs are not being embarked

²² WA Series 133 3 Box 7 71/1 Demobilisation Instructions – NZEF Instruction No. 107 issued 7/1/1919. See also WA Series 1 5/10 Box 4 Miscellaneous Papers Relating to Demobilisation - Scheme of Demobilisation - For NZ Forces, Part 1 Troops Overseas.

²³ NZEF Routine Orders No. 767 issued 15/1/1919 - Order of Repatriation to New Zealand of the NZEF.

²⁴ WA Series 1 5/10 Box 4 Miscellaneous Papers Relating to Demobilisation - Scheme of Demobilisation. For NZ Forces, Part 1 Troops Overseas.

²⁵ Michael Cox and John Ellis, *The World War One Databook: The Essential Facts and Figures for all Combatants*, London: Aurum Press, 2001, p. 239.

from Egypt to New Zealand as they will not be allowed to land there".²⁶

Officers and other ranks who applied to be discharged in Britain would be demobilised and discharged without delay except in the case of men serving in France. Their applications would not be dealt with by NZEFHQ until the orders were issued for the demobilisation of the NZDiv in France. All applications had to be approved in New Zealand for discharge in Britain. It was decided that upon demobilisation, the NZEF would have no further obligation to those men who chose to be discharged in Britain. But this did not seem to stop men from asking for a free passage back to New Zealand. In February 1919 the High Commission in London sought clarification from NZEFHQ due to the number of requests that were coming directly to the High Commissioner. The reply was a firm restatement of the policy that the NZEF or New Zealand Government had no further responsibility for these men once their discharge papers were issued.²⁷

Thus the NZEF developed a Scheme of Demobilisation. The General Officer commanding the NZEF was responsible for demobilisation for Britain and France, in Egypt the senior combat officer of the NZMRB and the commander of the Samoan Expeditionary force. Responsibility was demarcated as follows. Up to embarkation, the NZEF commander was responsible; then upon boarding the vessel, responsibility passed to the naval

²⁶ NZEFHQ Routine Orders No. 224 issued 1/3/1919.

²⁷ WA Series 1 Box 8 1/45 Transports Available for Repatriation – Letter from New Zealand High Commissioner to NZEFHQ dated 4/2/1919.

authorities. When the troops arrived at their home port the New Zealand Defence headquarters in Wellington took over. Upon discharge from the NZEF, returned soldiers came under the Repatriation Department or the Defence Department in the case of sick or invalided men.²⁸

All ships for repatriation of Dominion troops were under the control of the Ministry of Shipping who set the maximum rate of return at 2,500 per vessel. Allotment of personnel to ships was detailed in the plan. All reasonable efforts would be made to allocate repatriated men to ships that called at their nearest port subject to the protocol of returning order. Officers of appropriate rank and experience were to be assigned on every vessel to ensure discipline during the voyage and compliance with disembarkation instructions.²⁹ Men in France or Belgium would be embarked from British ports to New Zealand as allotted by the War Office. Wellington was being bombarded with requests to return men out of sequence causing them to advise NZEFHQ in December 1918 that:

Many requests are being made for return of soldiers out of normal sequence, and [it is] possible such requests are cabled to you direct. In order to prevent any unfair advantage accruing by this means please see that no soldier is repatriated out of turn because of circumstances existing in New Zealand.³⁰

There would be exceptions. In January 1919, dental and medical students with twelve months study were given

²⁸ WA Series 1 5/10 Box 4 Miscellaneous Papers Relating to Demobilisation - Scheme of Demobilisation. For NZ Forces, Part 1 Troops Overseas.

²⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰ WA Series 1 Box 8 1/45 Transports Available for Repatriation - Cable from Department of Defence to NZEFHQ dated 7/12/1918.

priority for repatriation to New Zealand in order for them to continue their studies.³¹ All coal miners serving with the NZEF were separated out and sent to B Group Codford for early repatriation in the same month.³²

Chris Pugsley in *On the Fringe of Hell* questions the wisdom of this scheme. He points out that the Pioneers and the Tunnelling Company were the only units to return to New Zealand as “formed bodies”.³³ In this way New Zealand never got to see the NZDiv or the NZMRB as the formations that served overseas. This idea of sending units home as formed bodies has some merit. Many of the discipline problems can be traced to the mixing of men from different units and the breakdown in the comradeship and leadership that had been created during the war.

There was also the issue of the medical condition of the men returning to New Zealand, and the potential costs for ongoing care once the returned men reached their homes. Prior to the Armistice the NZEF MedicalHQ stated that it “was highly important that both officers and men be medically examined prior to demobilisation”. The view was that a careful clinical examination was to be undertaken just prior to embarkation. If this was not carried out the Government would be exposed to unjust claims for compensation.³⁴ We can now turn to the NZDiv in France and how these plans operated in the reality of the Armistice.

³¹ WA Series 133 3 Box 7 71/1 Demobilisation Instructions – NZEF Instruction No. 229 issued 25/1/1919.

³² *ibid.* NZEF Instruction No. 125 issued 27/1/1919.

³³ Chris Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell: New Zealanders and Military Discipline in the First World War*, Auckland: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991, p. 289.

³⁴ WA Series 1 3 Box 18 8/6 Reconstruction Committee – Note from NZEF MedicalHQ to NZEFHQ dated 16/5/1918.

Chapter Two: The New Zealand Division at the Armistice

In July and August 1918 hardly anyone expected the fighting to end as quickly as it did, thus the ceasefire came as a surprise. The Allied governments thought victory over Germany was possible, and New Zealand's Prime Minister William Massey had committed New Zealand to seeing it through. The Bulgarian Armistice began the conclusion of the fighting when it was signed on 29 September.³⁵ This was fortunate as the Allied army, despite the influx of the American forces, was hampered by manpower and logistical difficulties.³⁶ However the position that the Allied forces had reached by early October allowed President Wilson in his note of 14 October to insist that "the ceasefire must guarantee the Allies present military superiority".³⁷ The German High Command, Chancellor and ministers sat down on 17 October for a thorough review of Germany's position. Ludendorff advised that if the army could get through the next few weeks the pressure would subside. His belief was based on the practice of the Allied armies going into winter quarters at the end of November, when conditions would be too poor for effective campaigning on the Western Front. Open warfare would then resume in the spring of 1919 giving Germany four months respite. He felt a breakthrough was "possible rather than probable".³⁸

By November 1918, Britain was willing to stop the war if the conditions were right although France and Britain "believed

³⁵ David Stevenson, *1914-1918: The History of the First World War*, London: Allen Lane, 2004, p. 466.

³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 477.

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 473.

³⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 474-475.

that it would be impossible to renew the fighting”.³⁹ Therefore, Germany’s “sudden collapse caught them [Britain and France] unprepared” because it was thought earlier that fighting would go on into 1919 and even as far as 1920. Both nations were “surprised that Germany accepted this take it or leave it package so readily”.⁴⁰ On 4 November 1918 an area of Germany to be occupied extending to the Rhine bridgeheads at Mainz, Kolbenz and Cologne was established alongside a 40 kilometre wide demilitarised zone east of the river.⁴¹

The One Hundred Days that signalled the last campaigns before the Armistice opened with the offensive by the Australians and Canadians at Amiens on 8 August 1918, the so-called “black day” for the German army. This set the stage for rapid open warfare up until the Armistice.⁴² The NZDiv was in continual action from August to November alongside the 37th Division as a “spearhead of the British Third Army”.⁴³ Morale was high and can be put down to three reasons; training, leadership and the sheer size of the Division as opposed to other units in the Allied Army at the time.⁴⁴ The NZDiv was at such strength because of the reinforcements it was receiving. At the beginning of November 1918 there were 852 reinforcements in France, a further 11,526 in Britain, another 1,052 men enroute from

³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 477.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 477-481.

⁴¹ *ibid.*, p. 480.

⁴² Matthew Wright, *Western Front: The New Zealand Division in the First World War*, Auckland: Reed Books, 2005, p. 144.

⁴³ Glyn Harper (ed.), *Letters from the Battlefield: New Zealand Soldiers Write Home 1914-18*, Auckland: HarperCollins, 2001, p. 135.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 135.

New Zealand, and 9924⁴⁵ under training in New Zealand. This flow of reinforcements could have enabled the NZDiv to sustain full strength if they were called on to fight in 1919.⁴⁶ By 29 August the NZDiv had recaptured Bapaume and a month later had reached Maubeque on the northern bank of the Meuse.⁴⁷

On 1 November 1918, the NZDiv was holding the line at Beaudignies.⁴⁸ Rifleman Graham of the NZRB in a letter home wrote "as the war seems to be coming to an end shortly, I would not mind celebrating peace here. Then what a time when we get back to New Zealand".⁴⁹ By the night of 1 November, the British, Dominion, American and French forces had taken a vital train junction at Valenciennes, the river Scheldt, the Sambre canal and parallel railway line. This move broke the German army and what was up to then an orderly retreat became a rout.⁵⁰

On 4 November, the NZDiv undertook its last offensive of the war on the Western Front. It would be fighting over ground last contested by the original B.E.F in August 1914. The NZDiv was part of IV Corps alongside 5th Guards Division, 37th Division (New Army) and the 42nd East Lancashire Division (Territorial). IV Corps along with V, VI and XVII Corps formed the 3rd Army under General Byng.⁵¹

⁴⁵ Chris Pugsley, *The Anzac Experience: New Zealand, Australia and Empire in the First World War*, Auckland: Reed Publishing, 2004, p. 299.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 299.

⁴⁷ Cox and Ellis, *The World War One Databook*, p. 22.

⁴⁸ James Cowan, *The Maoris in the Great War: A History of the New Zealand Native Contingent and Pioneer Battalion: Gallipoli 1915, France and Flanders 1916-1918*, Auckland: Maori Regimental Committee, 1926, p. 152.

⁴⁹ Rifle Gladstone Graham 12386 12th Reinforcements 2nd Battalion NZRB. Letter dated 1/11/1918.

⁵⁰ Gregor Dallas, *1918: War and Peace*, New York: Overlook Press, 2000, p. 106.

⁵¹ Cox and Ellis, *The World War One Databook*, p. 185.

The division advanced with the 37th on its right and the 62nd on its left along with other units from the 1st, 3rd, and 4th Armies. The front line was 30 miles long running from the River Sambre north of Oisy to Valenciennes which had been captured three days earlier. The plan for the NZDiv was to advance and establish itself on a line Franc a Lour-Herbiginies-Touts Vents. If the opportunity offered, the success of the advance could be exploited by moving through the Foret de Mormal and toward the River Sambre. The town of Le Quesnoy was directly in the path of the advance and was taken by the NZRB in the famous attack with ladders on 4 November 1918. Foret de Mormal was taken the next day.⁵² Men were eager to end the fighting as rumours of the Armistice spread. As one soldier wrote "I hope it comes before we have many more stunts as one must surely come to a sticky end if one keeps going over the top ad infinitum".⁵³

After the successful attack on the Foret de Mormal, the Division was relieved on the night of 5 November 1918 by the 42nd Division and ordered into reserve by IV Corps HQ. The Division was well forward of the Foret de Mormal and nearly on the line of the River Sambre when the order came through.⁵⁴ The Divisional Artillery stayed on the firing line until 8 November then rejoined the division. The actual strength of the NZDiv on 6 November was 18,293 men. When compared with the theoretical maximum of 18,958 it made the NZDiv the strongest of all the British and

⁵² Lieutenant J.R. Byrne, *New Zealand Artillery in the Field 1914-1918*, Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd, 1922, p. 289. See also Wright, *Western Front*, pp. 156-157. Le Quesnoy had been under German occupation since August 1914 when the B.E.F retreated to the Marne.

⁵³ Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell*, p. 282.

⁵⁴ Cowan, *The Maoris in the Great War*, p. 154.

Dominion forces on the Western Front.⁵⁵ This divisional strength had been successfully sustained throughout 1918, a testimony to the effectiveness of the NZEF reinforcement system.⁵⁶

From 4 November the German forces were in full retreat although they made the Allied forces pay for every mile that was recovered. Heavy fighting of the past few months had ceased but the advance was held up by booby-trapped roads and villages. The state of the German army was drastically different from the formidable force that had broken the Allied lines in March. By the Armistice, only four German divisions on the Western Front could be considered fully fit, down from 98 on 1 April 1918.⁵⁷ After a meeting at 2.15am on Monday 11 November 1918, the Armistice was signed at 5.12am by the German delegation. This was amended to 5am and then the message sent along the front by radio telephone "Hostilities will cease on the entire front on 11 November at 11am French time".⁵⁸ The message did not reach everywhere on time. The American forces launched attacks that morning and were still fighting at 11am. Some units were fighting even after that time and had to be found and ordered to cease combat.

⁵⁵ Pugsley, *The Anzac Experience*, p. 298. The NZDiv had an infantry establishment of 11,566 men out of a maximum 14,317, and consisted of twelve battalions versus the nine battalion establishment in the British Divisions.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p. 298.

⁵⁷ Stevenson, *1914-1918*, p. 482. The placing of booby-traps could backfire on the Germans. A train station in Belgium booby-trapped caught a trainload of German troops retreating home and wrecked the train causing major casualties.

⁵⁸ Dallas, *1918: War and Peace*, p. 119.

The NZDiv received the following telegram from the 3rd Army HQ via IV Corps:

Following from Third Army begins. Hostilities will cease at 11.00 hours to-day November 11th. Troops will stand fast on line reached at that hour which will be reported by wire to Third Army. Defensive precautions will be maintained. There will be no intercourse of any description with the enemy until the receipt of instructions from Army Headquarters. Further instructions will follow...⁵⁹

On Armistice Day, the NZDiv had 24,115 men and women in the field. The NZDiv had been the leading division for 49 miles of the 56 miles the IV Corps had advanced on its front. Between 21 August and 6 November 1918 the division had taken 8,756 POWs, 145 guns, three tanks and 1,256 machineguns.⁶⁰ In the period March to November 1918 it suffered 14,000 casualties, 9,000 of those in the One Hundred Days.⁶¹ Russell wrote in his dairy the night of the Armistice. "News came thro [sic] late last night that armistice had been signed, and hostilities cease at 11 a.m. Thank God!"⁶²

The NZDiv was pulling back to reserve when advised that "[the] Huns have until 11am tomorrow to decide whether they will accept the Allies' armistice terms or not". It was noted that there was "great joy amongst the troops".⁶³ On another part of the line the reaction was different. On hearing the news of the Armistice, a battery Sergeant-Major

⁵⁹ Colonel H. Stewart, *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919: The New Zealanders In France* vol. 2, Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd, 1921, p. 602.

⁶⁰ Pugsley, *The Anzac Experience*, p. 298.

⁶¹ Harper (ed.), *Letters from the Battlefield*, p. 136.

⁶² Chris Pugsley, 'New Zealand: "The Heroes Lie in France"', p. 202.

⁶³ Wright, *Western Front*, p.157.

was heard to exclaim “now the war is over, we can get down to some real soldiering” and the comment from the men was “everyone knew what he meant”.⁶⁴ Men of the NZDiv had mixed reactions to the news that an Armistice was going into effect. James McKenzie 1st Auckland Infantry Battalion wrote in a letter “but strange to say, when the news came through the boys took it very quietly and there was practically no demonstration...I was about on the verge of tears, thinking of putting another winter on the line”.⁶⁵

N.E.Hassell wrote in his personal papers that the response from the front seemed subdued. Some were quite jubilant but others ambivalent. Nobody appeared to know what to do next and for the rest of the day “we just wandered aimlessly about doing nothing”.⁶⁶ Gunner Watkins of the NZDA thought “it is curious but there has been no outward exhibition of pleasure among us now that it is over. We are all very glad but take it quietly. I always reckoned I should do something violent when it [the armistice] came”.⁶⁷ Gunner B.O. Stokes “heard the announcement of the armistice...when we were still in the Forest de Mormal on a cheerless, dismal cold misty day...we trekked out of the wood on this dreary day in silence”.⁶⁸

Lawrence Blyth was commanding C Company, 1st Battalion NZRB:

⁶⁴ G.D. Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches: Officer-man Relations, Morale and Discipline in the British Army in the era of the First World War*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999, p. 172.

⁶⁵ Harper (ed.), *Letters from the Battlefield*, p. 150. James McKenzie personal letter dated 23/11/1918.

⁶⁶ Wright, *Western Front*, p.157. Quoting from the N.E. Hassell ‘Memories of 1914’ papers.

⁶⁷ Boyack, *Behind the Lines*, p. 87.

⁶⁸ Dallas, *1918: War and Peace*, p. 120.

When the Armistice was signed at eleven o'clock, one would have thought that we'd been given a holiday for being good boys and all that sort of thing...the orders were that we had to parade in the afternoon and do saluting by numbers, and this is what we did, in the afternoon of the Armistice, after we'd been fighting all these years!⁶⁹

The NZDA was on the road to Quivery. The history of the unit records the reaction:

The announcement was received calmly with no cheering, no demonstration. For these men, tired in body and mind and fresh from the tragic fields of battle, this momentous intelligence was too vast in its consequences to be appreciated in a single thought.⁷⁰

Private Ingram was marching when their officer advised the Armistice had been signed and would come into effect at 11am:

There was not even a cheer raised. There has been so many rumours floating about lately that, I think, everyone thought this information but another false yarn. We all scouted the idea of an armistice being actually signed, in our innermost hearts we has a feeling of deep thankfulness and relief which could not be repressed. However, no outward demonstration was made and the momentous news was most causally received.⁷¹

The Wellington Regiment battalions were marching towards Beauvois on the morning of 11 November when they were advised that the Armistice would take effect at 11am. The official history records that "the news [of the Armistice] was received very quietly. There was no demonstration. Deep

⁶⁹ Nicolas Boyack and Jane Tolerton (eds.), *In the Shadow of War: New Zealand Soldiers Talk About World War I and Their Lives*, Auckland: Penguin Books, 1990, p. 68.

⁷⁰ J.R. Byrne, *New Zealand Artillery* pp. 295-296.

⁷¹ Boyack, *Behind the Lines*, pp. 87-88.

down in everyone's mind, there was no doubt a feeling of profound relief and profound thankfulness".⁷²

Aleck Trafford of the NZRB wrote in his dairy for 11 November "very quiet day – normal routine. Had class on SMR for platoon".⁷³ Gladstone Graham of the same brigade was on a route march passing through a French village at 11am when the news was announced. The villages began to celebrate and the New Zealanders marched out of town.⁷⁴ George Tuck wrote to his parents on the day after "in this hour for the first time since facing the enemy my mind allows itself to really believe that I shall see you all again".⁷⁵ Russell noted in his diary on 13 November that "there has been little if any, exuberant display of enthusiasm over the armistice here".⁷⁶

The NZE were still on the front line rebuilding destroyed bridges and roads around Le Quesnoy when the Armistice came. The official history notes that it too displayed an absence of a "hysterical display of emotion which were [sic] such features of the celebrations in London and other centres of the Empire".⁷⁷ The Canterbury Regiment and the rest of the Second Brigade were resting at Le Quesnoy on 11 November when the Armistice was announced. During the afternoon the Brigade marched out for Beauvois.⁷⁸ The

⁷² W.H. Cunningham, J.S. Hanna, C.A.L. Tredwell, *The Wellington Regiment NZEF 1914-1919*, Wellington: Ferguson and Osborn Ltd, 1928, p. 329.

⁷³ Aleck (Alick) McGregor Trafford 25/469 NZRB. Diary entry for 11/11/1918.

⁷⁴ Rifleman Gladstone Graham letter dated 20/11/1918.

⁷⁵ Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell*, p. 283.

⁷⁶ Wright, *Western Front*, p.158.

⁷⁷ N. Annabell, *Official History of the New Zealand Engineers During the Great War 1914-1919*, Wanganui: Evans, Cobb and Sharpe Ltd., 1922, p. 222.

⁷⁸ Captain David Ferguson, *The History of the Canterbury Regiment NZEF 1914-1919*, Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1921, p. 287.

official history of the Canterbury Regiment is reticent about the reaction of the men.

Outside of the NZDiv, there were a number of specialised units that were serving with Corps command or as part of the LOC. At the time of the Armistice, attached to the HQ of the XXII Corps were a squadron of the Otago Mounted Rifles, the NZ Cyclist Battalion and the 2nd (Area) Employment Company. These units were located around the town of Mons. The NZ Tunnelling Company was engaged in building bridges across the River Sambre. The NZ Light Railway Operating Company was operating in the Ypres sector with the 2nd Army and at the time of the Armistice was employed on running standard-gauge railways.

The five Depot Units of Supply upon entering France came under the command of the Inspector General of Communications.⁷⁹ They were located at a number of the French ports and behind the front lines.⁸⁰ The Base Supply Depot, including the NZ Pay Staff at the Base Paymaster's Office, were located at Boulogne along with the Field Butchery, both units operating alongside the No. 1 and No. 5 Depot Units of Supply. The Field Bakery was located at Rouen with a small Veterinary section at GHQ 3rd Echelon.⁸¹ For weeks up to the Armistice the division had been full of rumour and speculation that the New Zealanders would be part of the occupying forces on the

⁷⁹ Stewart, *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919* vol. 2, p. 608.

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p. 608. The other NZDUS were located at Ham in Belgium (No. 2), at Marseilles (No.3), and in Hesdin (No.4).

⁸¹ *ibid.*, p. 609.

Rhine. The speculation increased when the reality set in on 12 November that the war was ending.⁸² The rumours were substantiated when IV Corps transferred to the command of the 4th Army on 14 November.⁸³

The German forces were instructed that they had fourteen days to pull back to the east bank of the Rhine. The withdrawal began on 16 November 1918 and last German troops left France on the two days later. By 22 November, the last of the German army had left Luxembourg. Four days later Belgium bid farewell to the last of the German occupiers. The Allied command had selected Cologne for the occupation zone for British and Dominion forces and this was established by 6 December 1918.⁸⁴ The NZDiv would now march to Germany to take part in the last task for the Allied Army on the Western Front; that of an occupying force.

⁸² Wright, *Western Front*, p.158.

⁸³ James Cowan, *The Maoris in the Great War* p. 155. See also Stewart *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919* vol. 2, p. 604.

⁸⁴ Cox and Ellis, *The World War One Databook*, p. 23.

Chapter Three: The New Zealand Division - Peace and the Occupation of Germany

The opening stages of the advance into Germany would be undertaken by the 2nd and 4th Armies. The 2nd Army would cross the frontier with Germany and occupy the bridgeheads with the II, VI, IX and Canadian Corps. The NZDiv which had been transferred from the 3rd to the 4th Army was selected to join in with the Army of Occupation after being transferred from the IV Corps to II Corps.⁸⁵

The order issued to the NZDiv was as follows:

The 4th Army has been ordered to form part of the Army of Occupation on the Rhine, in accordance with the terms of the Armistice. The march to the Rhine will shortly commence and although carried out with usual military precautions, will be undertaken as a peace march...till you reach the frontier of Germany you will be marching through a country that has suffered grievously from the depredations and exactions of a brutal enemy. Do all that is in your power by courtesy and consideration to mitigate the hardship of these poor, who will welcome you as deliverer and as friends. I would further ask you, when you cross the German frontier to show the world that British soldiers, unlike those of Germany, do nothing against women and children, and against the old and weak.⁸⁶

Each man of the division was advised by the Allied high command that:

The Allied governments have guaranteed that private property will be respected by the Army of Occupation and rely on you to see that this

⁸⁵ Stewart, *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919* vol. 2, p. 604. According to C.E.W.Bean the Australian divisions were not selected for occupation duty because the British Command preferred to have more docile troops in Germany.

⁸⁶ Aleck (Alick) McGregor Trafford diary entry for 20/11/1918.

engagement is carried out in the spirit as well as in the letter.⁸⁷

Unfortunately, Sapper D. Morris of the Engineers did not feel like carrying out the engagement either in the spirit or the letter. He was sentenced to three years penal servitude for stealing a watch from a jeweller in Mulheim the day the division arrived in Cologne.⁸⁸

The men of the Division had been promised leave but it was understood that when they could go away on leave could possibly take years as the peace was negotiated.⁸⁹ At any time, combat operations could resume and the NZDiv forced to return to the firing line. The commanders were required to keep Division in combat readiness.⁹⁰ While Russell began planning the move into Germany, there were men in the Division that had a political agenda unconnected with any demobilisation process. On 14 November 1918, a mass meeting was held by some 'Red Feds' in the New Zealand camps. Russell noted that it was a "friendly assemblage got up apparently by an agitator...who I understand has achieved some notoriety in New Zealand".⁹¹ He felt that he and his subordinate commanders would need to watch for bolshevism in the ranks of the division.⁹² The speaker at the meeting advised the soldiers that as they had left their homes to come and fight and now the war was over, the NZEF should, at the earliest

⁸⁷ *ibid.*, diary entry for 20/11/1918.

⁸⁸ WA Series 98 3 Box 3 Demobilisation November 1918-February 1919 – NZMG Battalion Routine Order No. 329 issued 28/1/1919.

⁸⁹ Stevenson, *1914-1918*, p. 481.

⁹⁰ Wright, *Western Front*, p. 160.

⁹¹ *ibid.*, pp. 158-159. Quote from Major General Russell's diary entry for 13/11/1918.

⁹² *ibid.*

opportunity, return the men to New Zealand in order to resume their lives. Any occupation of the Rhine should be the responsibility of the British troops, not New Zealanders.⁹³

The source of the disquiet in the division was the announcement on 13 November that it would be going to Germany to occupy the Cologne bridgeheads per the agreement reached with the Germans. Men feared that they would be occupying Germany indefinitely because of the very nature of the Armistice; a state of neither war nor peace.⁹⁴ Adding to the sense of disquiet were concerns raised by the men that they would have to march into Germany. This was addressed by informing the men that the French and Belgian railway systems were in a shambles due to the German forces intentional destruction as they retreated in Germany.⁹⁵ This feeling can also be traced to a change in attitude by the New Zealand soldier to authority and discipline. Many perceived the process as unfair.⁹⁶ This was reinforced when leave was cancelled and absentees were rounded up.⁹⁷ However, one advantage of the Armistice was that censorship restrictions were eased and men could communicate freely to loved ones.⁹⁸

Stirred by the speaker, a large delegation marched to the NZDiv HQ and advised Russell that they did not wish to be

⁹³ Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell*, pp. 283-284.

⁹⁴ J.R. Byrne, *New Zealand Artillery*, p. 304. See also Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell*, p. 285.

⁹⁵ Lieutenant A.E. Byrne, *Official History of the Otago Regiment NZEF in the Great War 1914-1918*, Dunedin: J Wilkie and Co, 1921, p. 384.

⁹⁶ Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches*, p. 172.

⁹⁷ Nicolas Boyack, E.P.Malone, Jock Phillips (eds.), *The Great Adventure: New Zealand Soldiers Describe the First World War*, Wellington: Allen & Unwin/Port Nicholson Press, 1988, p. 246.

⁹⁸ Harper (ed.), *Letters from the Battlefield*, p. 150.

part of the occupying force but rather wished to be returned home to New Zealand. Given the scheme in place for demobilisation, Russell was not in any position to acquiesce to such demands. He addressed the assembled men and advised that he, like themselves, was under orders and he expected that as good soldiers, the men of the division would willingly obey orders and willingly set off on the march for Germany and the Rhine bridgehead at Cologne. The response was jeering and the mob demanded that the orders be cancelled. The issue was only partly resolved. In order to encourage men to march into Germany, they were spared the task of carrying their packs on the march. This 'carrot' was balanced with the 'stick' of threats of dire punishment if there were any further disturbances.⁹⁹ Private Ingram wrote about how most of the men felt at the protest:

To me it was most exciting and humorous, though at times it looked as though the mob might get completely out of hand and damage be done and perhaps blood shed. Some of the malcontents were in an ugly mood, but the vast majority were, like myself, only there to enjoy the spectacle and treating the whole affair, more or less, as a good joke at the expense of the brass hats.¹⁰⁰

One the same day a Thanksgiving parade was held without disturbance. This was possibly the last time the whole division was assembled as a single unit. Russell did send a note to the War Office recommending that the NZDiv be demobilised and repatriated home as soon as possible.

⁹⁹ Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell*, pp. 284-285. The main agitator was a Private King from the NZRB. No action was taken against him by the NZDiv commanders. See also Wright *Western Front*, pp. 158-159.

¹⁰⁰ Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell*, p. 285.

Russell believed that the reaction of the men was due to the announcement of peace.¹⁰¹

Russell met his commanders on 13 November to begin planning the route for the march to Cologne and the process of demobilisation.¹⁰² He prepared for demobilisation in his “typical methodical way”.¹⁰³ The Division would stay in the IV Corps reserve area for rest, refitting, and “training...sufficiently strenuous to preserve physical fitness”.¹⁰⁴ There were the usual route marches and a lot of effort was put into ceremonial drill and ensuring the Division would be “spick and span for the move to the Rhine”.¹⁰⁵ As the NZDiv prepared for the march, the New Zealand Infantry and General Base Depot at Etaples, home to the infamous ‘Bull Ring’, and where all the reinforcements for the Division has passed through, moved to Rouen.

It was a smaller depot now designated the New Zealand Reception Camp a staffed by nine officers and other ranks.¹⁰⁶ On the day that the planning began at DivHQ, the NZDivTr and all the Supply Companies were consolidated for the march to Germany.¹⁰⁷ The NZDA took two weeks to clean up, re-equip, remount, and bring the batteries up to

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*, p. 285.

¹⁰² Wright, *Western Front*, p. 158.

¹⁰³ Pugsley, *The Anzac Experience*, p. 298.

¹⁰⁴ A.E. Byrne, *Official History of the Otago Regiment*, p. 381.

¹⁰⁵ Cunningham, Hanna, Tredwell, *The Wellington Regiment*, p. 330.

¹⁰⁶ NZEF Routine Orders No. 746 issued 30/11/1918 - Establishment: New Zealand Base, France. See also Stewart, *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919* vol. 2, p. 609. Stewart records that by November 1918, the unit's functions had been taken over by the Entrenching Group because the fluid nature of warfare in the final months of the war.

¹⁰⁷ Julia Millen, *Salute to Service: A History of the Royal New Zealand Corps of Transport and its Predecessors 1860-1996*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1997, p. 136.

establishment and was only finished when the march began.¹⁰⁸ One of the artillery brigades had personnel issues regarding the move into Germany but fortunately the problem did not develop into a case of ill-discipline. The NZE took the same amount of time to bring their Field Companies and Signal Troops into proper order for the march.¹⁰⁹

One of the sadder tasks was the formation of the New Zealand Graves Registration Unit. Their unenviable task was to locate, identify the dead and register the New Zealand graves for passing to the Army Graves Registration Service (predecessor to the Imperial War Graves Commission). Like all other British and Dominion troops, New Zealanders who were killed on the battlefield and were buried in identifiable graves would be re-interred in permanent cemeteries. It had been decided early in the war that this would be so. At the Armistice, there were 1,200 cemeteries with British and Dominion troops interred.¹¹⁰ The unit consisted of one officer, two tradesmen and fourteen other ranks made up of representatives of each infantry brigade and divisional artillery. They would go back over every part of Belgium and France that the NZDiv had fought.¹¹¹

On 18 November a divisional route march was held as a test and the results were satisfactory to the commanders.¹¹² By 23 November the NZDiv had concentrated and was

¹⁰⁸ J.R. Byrne, *New Zealand Artillery*, p. 304.

¹⁰⁹ Annabell, *Official History of the New Zealand Engineers*, p. 223.

¹¹⁰ Neil Hanson, *The Unknown Soldier: The Story of the Missing of the Great War*, London: Doubleday, 2005, pp. 289-290.

¹¹¹ NZEF Routine Orders No. 747 issued 30/11/1918 –Establishment: New Zealand Graves Registration Unit

¹¹² A.E. Byrne, *Official History of the Otago Regiment*, p. 384.

billeted in and around Beauvois and Fontaine, south east of Cambrai.¹¹³ The orders were issued to the NZDiv on 27 November initiating the march into Germany which departed from Beauvois the next morning. With the serenading bands from the 37th Division, the NZDiv stepped off on the 250 kilometre long route that led to the Rhine. This destination was reached by the first elements of the Division on 20 December 1918.¹¹⁴ During the march the NZDiv would pass to the 2nd Army's command. While the division marched through Belgium, on 9 December trains were put on in the Bothey-Bossiere area for visits to Brussels.¹¹⁵ The history of the NZDA described the march through Belgium in glowing terms. "The route now lay through Belgium and in every town and every village the New Zealanders were received with such enthusiasm that their march became almost a triumphal progress".¹¹⁶

However there were some disturbances within the NZDA as its brigades proceeded towards Germany indicating not all ranks were happy with the progress.¹¹⁷ At the same time the NZEFHQ was trying to demobilise the NZDiv as quickly as possible. As part of the occupation forces in Germany the men of the NZDiv would have to wait until the peace was settled before they could be repatriated home. The NZEFHQ, perhaps realising the inherent problems of this plan advised Wellington to:

¹¹³ Harper (ed.), *Letters from the Battlefield*, p. 150. See also John Thomson, *Warrior Nation: New Zealanders at the Front 1900-2000*, Christchurch: Hazard Press, 2000, p. 121. This was 1914 battlefield of Le Cateau.

¹¹⁴ Thomson, *Warrior Nation*, p. 121. See also Annabell, *Official History of the New Zealand Engineers*, p. 223.

¹¹⁵ J.R. Byrne, *New Zealand Artillery*, p. 305.

¹¹⁶ *ibid*, p. 305.

¹¹⁷ Chris Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell*, p. 285.

Cable privately to War Office asking for New Zealand Division to be demobilised earliest possible opportunity, on grounds of length of voyage and consequent greater difficulties of demobilisation.¹¹⁸

Orders were issued to all divisions that the comfort of the troops during the march was the first consideration of the commanders. Commanders were urged to be mindful of the “strain and sacrifices endured” during the almost continual offensives leading up to the Armistice.¹¹⁹ The marchers were given warm billets, plenty of food and periodic breaks of two to three days in an effort to keep grumbling to a minimum.¹²⁰ To further aid the march, on 7 December 1918 at Montignies-sur-Sambre, greatcoats and steel helmets were discarded and it was arranged that these would be forwarded by rail at a later time.¹²¹ One area that was a major issue for the Division was footwear and the transition from sedentary war of the trenches to extended marching left many men footsore. As the history of the Canterbury Regiment indicated:

The roads were for the most part good, but the boots worn by the men were not good enough to stand a long march; and as supplies of new boots and materials for repairs were a long time in arriving, a good deal of discomfort was suffered by many of the men.¹²²

A further imposition on the troops marching into Germany was the matter of rations. The amount proved to be

¹¹⁸ WA Series 1 Box 8 1/45 Transports Available for Repatriation- NZEFHQ cable to Defence Dept Wellington dated 9/12/1918.

¹¹⁹ Stewart, *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919* vol. 2, p. 605.

¹²⁰ Lieutenant A.E. Byrne, *Official History of the Otago Regiment*, p. 385. It appears to have been successful.

¹²¹ *ibid.*, p. 386.

¹²² Ferguson, *The History of the Canterbury Regiment*, p. 287.

“insufficient to sustain men on a lengthy march”¹²³, which suggests why some of the personal equipment of each man on the march was sent on to Germany by rail. However, the New Zealanders were able to forage for vegetables, potatoes, meat and eggs amongst the liberated populations of France and Belgium along the route of the march that added to their diet. Each regiment also applied its regimental funds to the purchase of foodstuffs for the men.¹²⁴ The accepted cause of the problems was one of maintaining supply to the 2nd Army along the disrupted transport infrastructure.

The following illustrates the issues the NZEF had with supply and how it affected all the units on the road to Germany. One of the pressing issues facing the commanders was the Field Bakery and Butchery and Supply depots. Just prior to the Armistice the division was advised that the Bakery at Rouen would be disbanded and all the equipment returned to Imperial Ordnance and the personnel repatriated.¹²⁵ This never eventuated and after the Armistice NZEFHQ was asking the War Office on 16 November:

It would be much appreciated if the following NZASC units now on the LOC in France could be spared at an early date with a view to their demobilisation and return to New Zealand please namely:-

Nos. 1,2,3,4 & 5 Depot Units of Supply
New Zealand Field Bakery
New Zealand Field Butchery¹²⁶

¹²³ *ibid.*, p. 287.

¹²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 288.

¹²⁵ WA Series 1 Box 17 Demobilisation of Supply Depots – Cable from NZEFHQ to NZDiv dated 31/10/1918.

¹²⁶ *ibid.* Letter from NZEFHQ to War Office dated 16/11/1918.

The request was made again on 3 December but only Depot Units No. 1, 5 and the Field Butchery were requested. The reason given was the “shortage of personnel in the New Zealand Division”.¹²⁷ The reply came from GHQ on 31 December 1918 that none of the three units would be demobilised unless suitable replacements were sent from Britain. At this time, these units were supplying other divisions of the Allied army and that:

Great difficulties are being experienced at all supply depots in France at present owing to shortage of personnel, and it is therefore regretted that the New Zealand units cannot be spared without replacement.¹²⁸

The War Office wrote to NZEFHQ on 4 January 1919 asking, if in the circumstances, the NZEF would agree to the retention of the NZASC units referred to in the previous correspondence. This meant that the men of the NZASC would be working for the British army for some time longer than had been planned. The NZEFHQ wrote again to the War Office on 15 January asking again for the units to be released for demobilisation stating:

The New Zealand Government is desirous of repatriating members of the NZEF as soon as possible, and it is required that the NZASC units may be transferred to England for repatriation at the earliest opportunity. It is regretted that no other New Zealand personnel is [sic] available to replace these units.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ *ibid.* Letter from NZEFHQ to War Office dated 3/12/1918.

¹²⁸ *ibid.* Letter in reply from GHQ to NZEFHQ dated 31/12/1918.

¹²⁹ *ibid.* Letter from NZEFHQ to War Office dated 15/1/1919. A staff officer wrote to the Base Commandant in Boulogne in February 1919 requesting an RASC officer for the command of the Field Butchery and No. 5 Depot Unit. The Commandant was also advised that these units were shortly to be demobilised.

A reply was received stating that the request would be put before Haig but the archives do not have a reply to the request in the affirmative. The NZASC units remained on duty until March 1919 when they were demobilised along with the rest of the NZDiv.

While the NZDiv began to prepare for the march, it was generally thought that a peace treaty would be completed with Germany in a few weeks.¹³⁰ Therefore the occupation was only to be a temporary stop on the road home for the New Zealanders. Bert Stokes serving with the New Zealand Divisional Artillery (NZDA) commented on his feelings at the time:

We got word that we [his battery] were part of the army of occupation, and we were going to trek to Germany. We were quite excited about it, although we wanted to come home. But we thought, well, here's a chance of going to Germany and no war.¹³¹

When the division reached a border town of Herbesthal between Belgium and Germany they were treated to an unusual sight. The Belgian half of the town was decked out in flags in celebration. At the train station, German troops were running the railway. To indicate their surrender, each soldier had a white patch on their jackets. The divisional infantry entrained here for Cologne and the designated area of occupation.¹³²

The NZDA and part of the NZDivTr continued to march on to Cologne, their progress impeded by the wrecked rail

¹³⁰ Sir Frederick Maurice, *The Armistices of 1918*, London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1943, p. 60.

¹³¹ Nicolas Boyack and Jane Tolerton (eds.), *In the Shadow of War*, p. 240.

¹³² Rifleman Gladstone Graham Letter dated 25/12/1918. See also Thomson, *Warrior Nation*, p. 121 and A.E. Byrne, *Official History of the Otago Regiment*, p. 386.

junctions, destroyed rolling stock and trains left behind by the retreating Germans.¹³³ The 1st Canterbury battalion led the 2nd Brigade over pontoon bridges on the Rhine on 20 December 1918 and moved to the allocated section of the bridgehead at Ehrenfeld, a suburb of Cologne.¹³⁴ The 1st Brigade group was established at Leichlingen in some high school buildings, the 2nd Brigade group at Mulheim in the exhibition grounds along with the central depot for the NZDiv and the NZRB (3rd Brigade group) at Bensberg in the former Imperial barracks.¹³⁵ The Engineers were located around the town of Leverkusen where the Divisional HQ was established. The Army of Occupation designated the NZDiv as the reserve Division for the II Corps.¹³⁶ At this point, Russell, who had commanded the division from its arrival in France, relinquished command to General Johnson of the NZDA who had been on leave and not taken any part in the march to Germany.

In December 1918 the NZDiv Standing Administrative Instructions (Germany) were issued. The document covered everything from currency rates to disarming of German police, discipline, control of civilians, registration of brothels, stores and supplies, the civilian postal service, administrative areas, communication, non-fraternisation with German women, identity cards and passes.¹³⁷ The intent expressed was:

¹³³ Stewart, *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919* vol. 2, p. 606.

¹³⁴ Ferguson, *The History of the Canterbury Regiment*, p. 288.

¹³⁵ Noel Taylor, 'In Some Corner of a Foreign Field: New Zealanders Buried at Cologne', *Journal of the New Zealand Military Historical Society*, 2:31 (2005), p. 70. See also Stewart, *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919* vol. 2, p. 606 and J.R. Byrne, *New Zealand Artillery* p. 306.

¹³⁶ Stewart, *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919* vol. 2, p. 606.

¹³⁷ Taylor, 'In Some Corner of a Foreign Field: New Zealanders Buried at Cologne', p. 70.

The general policy of the Allied armies is the life of the civilian population shall as far as possible continue uninterrupted and with the minimum of interference. All civilian institutions will continue to perform their functions under the supervision and subject to the control of the [Allied] Military Authorities.¹³⁸

Upon arrival, precautions were undertaken to prevent any armed uprising or civil unrest. The NZDiv would provide guards for German war material and factories as well as picquets.¹³⁹ Alongside guard duty the infantry regiments participated in drill, physical training and route marches. This was mainly in the morning and those men not detailed for guard duty were given leave passes for the afternoons and sightseeing was encouraged.¹⁴⁰ The NZDA settled into an ordinary routine. There was plenty of work polishing guns and vehicles but also ample leisure time. Sport events were organised although the men were not sure what the Germans thought of rugby. The friendliness of the German civilians was put down to the fact that the New Zealand occupation protected them from the chaos overtaking other German cities and towns.¹⁴¹

The NZE Field Companies conducted surveys of the infrastructure, established dumps and set up the barbed wire entanglements.¹⁴² Despite the prohibition of fraternisation, the German children warmly received New Zealand chocolate. But naturally, all the troops' thoughts

¹³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 75. NZDiv Standing Administrative Instructions (Germany) General Policy.

¹³⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

¹⁴⁰ Ferguson, *The History of the Canterbury Regiment* p. 288. See also Stewart, *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919* vol. 2, p. 606.

¹⁴¹ J.R. Byrne, *New Zealand Artillery*, pp. 306-307. See also A.E. Byrne, *Official History of the Otago Regiment*, p. 387.

¹⁴² Annabell, *Official History of the New Zealand Engineers* p. 224.

were still fixed on demobilisation and repatriation home.¹⁴³ While food was short with the blockade still in force, the NZDiv maintained ample supplies to the men. The Christmas meals were delayed due to the railway shambles and the division finally got its turkey “and other good things” on New Years Day 1919.¹⁴⁴

In January 1919 the brigades of the NZDiv in battle order practiced a response to civilian unrest in the occupied areas of Germany. Telegraph offices, railway stations and other strategic locations were occupied by armed New Zealanders. The main purpose was to impress upon the minds of the German civilians the risk they ran in attempting to riot.¹⁴⁵ The NZDiv was fortunate that it did not have to confront civil unrest during the occupation duty unlike the NZMRB.

When the men arrived in Germany, men of the 1914-1915 class were advised to hold themselves in readiness to proceed to the United Kingdom “as instructions for the move of the class and also others, may be issued at very short notice”.¹⁴⁶ It was requested that nominal rolls be made up by classes for demobilisation purposes.¹⁴⁷ The scheme that the Dominions had signed up to now came into effect.

¹⁴³ Wright, *Western Front* p. 159.

¹⁴⁴ A.E. Byrne, *Official History of the Otago Regiment*, p. 387. The Wellington Regiment’s 2nd Battalion menu for Christmas Day 1918 consisted of plum pudding and beer. See also Ferguson, *The History of the Canterbury Regiment*, p. 288.

¹⁴⁵ Ferguson, *The History of the Canterbury Regiment* p. 288. In January 1919 Berlin and Munich were scenes of urban combat between the Freikrops and Communists with many civilians killed.

¹⁴⁶ WA Series 1 4/29 Box 5 Demobilisation General file November 1918-March 1919 – NZDiv Circular Memorandum No. ZA 5/268 issued 26/12/1918.

¹⁴⁷ WA Series 98 3 Box 3 Demobilization November 1918-February 1919 – NZDivHQ Circular Memorandum No. ZQ5/288 issued 26/12/1918. See also NZDiv Circular Memorandum No. ZA 5/268 issued 26/12/1918.

The allotments for cross channel transport to Britain for repatriation were as follows:

Canada – 1,200 men 3 days per week
Australia – 1,000 men 3 days per week
New Zealand – 1,000 men one day per week
South Africa – as shipping was available but no priority.

It was noted that these numbers coming to Britain would delay the repatriation to home because of the shipping allocations and the lack of camp space in Britain.¹⁴⁸

The first stop on the journey home would be the New Zealand Reception Camp at Rouen the transit point for all demobilised men. This had moved from Etaples in January 1919.¹⁴⁹ There were problems with the arrivals at the camp. A memo went out to all the units of the division:

Please make it known to all ranks that any men arriving at the reception camp or the entraining station under the influence of drink will be returned to the units.¹⁵⁰

In February 1919 the name of the camp was changed to “The New Zealand Embarkation Camp” and took over a space formally used by an American Stationary Hospital.¹⁵¹

Men who did not report for their draft for repatriation via Britain were returned to their units unless they reported individually under authorisation. Other ranks that were on leave in Britain would have to report to the NZEFHQ in London rather than back to France from the end of January.

¹⁴⁸ WA Series 1 67/4/14 Box 23 Mobilisation/ Demobilisation Scheme 1918-1919.

¹⁴⁹ WA Series 179 1 Reception Centre Rouen Camp -War Diary entry for January 1919

¹⁵⁰ WA Series 1 4/29 Box 5 Demobilisation General file November 1918-March 1919 – NZDiv Circular Memorandum No. ZA 6/303.

¹⁵¹ WA Series 180 1 Infantry Depot Etaples War Diaries January-March 1919 – Entry for February 1919.

Officers were still required to return to France.¹⁵² It was hoped that “sufficient copies [of the demobilisation notes] will be forwarded to every unit of the NZEF to enable every man to be supplied with a copy”.¹⁵³ Unfortunately for dental mechanics and orderlies heading to Germany, they were to be retained with the Division and not sent home with their class. If these men wished to leave, they were required to obtain permission from the NZEFHQ directly.¹⁵⁴

1914-1915 Class men began to leave for Britain on Boxing Day 1918 including 89 officers and other ranks from the Wellington Regiment.¹⁵⁵ At the end of January 1919 NZEFHQ was able to report to Wellington that “[the] Division still at Cologne but only 12,000 strong. 1000 per week being transferred to United Kingdom for demobilisation”.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² WA Series 98 3 Box 3 Demobilization November 1918-February 1919 – New Zealand Machinegun Battalion Routine Order No. 328 issued 27/1/1919.

¹⁵³ NZEF Routine Orders No. 745 issued 30/11/1918 – Notes on Demobilisation.

¹⁵⁴ WA Series 133 3 Box 10 71/4 Demobilisation General File September 1918-October 1919 – Order from 4th Infantry Reserve Brigade HQ at Sling Camp issued 16/12/1918.

¹⁵⁵ Cunningham, Hanna, Tredwell, *The Wellington Regiment*, p. 334.

¹⁵⁶ WA Series 1 Box 8 1/45 Transports Available for Repatriation – Cable from NZEFHQ to Department of Defence Wellington dated 25/1/1919.

Chapter Four: The New Zealand Division Returns to Britain

Despite the need to be part of the occupation force in Germany, the NZDiv had to release men for demobilisation. Those sent on leave to Britain were sent to camps rather than returning them to the Division in Germany, along with the Maori Pioneers who had arrived from France in early January 1919.¹⁵⁷ First there came the usual form-filling. Every man in the division had to fill out a NZEF Demobilisation Certificate D-11. This asked for length of service which would be the determining factor in returning home and if there would be any claims for disability against the government when the soldier arrived in New Zealand.¹⁵⁸ Naturally, troops wished to go home as soon as possible but until there was sufficient shipping available it would have to be done on a first-come, first-to-go basis. Hence, the length of service suddenly became critical. As was outlined earlier, the NZEF had been organised into classes. Those last to arrive in Britain would have to wait.¹⁵⁹ It was decided that the men must be fully equipped before they left France for Britain. There was a minimum of kit that each man had to have because "it is important that all men should be fully equipped...before leaving France, to save refitting in the United Kingdom at additional expense to the Government".¹⁶⁰ Already the accountants and bureaucrats were at work.

¹⁵⁷ Wright, *Western Front*, p. 160.

¹⁵⁸ WA Series 1 Box 17 Demobilisation of Supply Depots – Copy of Demobilisation Certificate form D-11

¹⁵⁹ Julia Millen, *Salute To Service*, p. 138.

¹⁶⁰ WA Series 1 4/29 Box 5 Demobilisation General File November 1918-March 1919 – Undated memo from NZEFHQ.

What happened to the Otago Regiment gives a good indication of how the process worked. Up until the end of January 1919 the regiment consisted of the 1st and 2nd battalions. On 4 February, as the strength was being reduced with drafts leaving for Britain, the two battalions were reduced into a formation known as the Otago Battalion. This unit was then amalgamated with the Canterbury Battalion on 27 February 1919 to form C and D companies of the South Island Battalion. These companies would be the last to leave for Britain at the end of March 1919.¹⁶¹ The artillery units were progressively reduced in battery size along side the infantry regiments. The trench mortar batteries were disbanded and the men sent to the artillery and infantry units. The Rifle Brigade was completely disbanded and the men distributed amongst the North and South Island Battalions. The same would happen to the Machine Gun Battalion. The Engineers, the Field Ambulances and the Divisional Train were the only parts of the NZDiv disbanded by unit.¹⁶²

The first drafts for demobilisation that had left Cologne on Boxing Day 1918 endured a two day train ride through the bitter cold of a French winter and arrived at Boulogne to catch the next cross-channel transport. When they arrived in Britain they were sent to their respective base depots. Upon arrival in camp leave would be granted and when the men arrived back from leave they were transferred to the embarkation port.¹⁶³ As these early drafts arrived in Britain, NZDivHQ sent a memorandum that 32 men in two groups

¹⁶¹ A.E. Byrne, *Official History of the Otago Regiment*, pp. 388-389.

¹⁶² Stewart, *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919* vol. 2, pp. 606-607.

¹⁶³ J.R. Byrne, *New Zealand Artillery*, p. 307.

were to be shipped home as requested by the National Efficiency Board. This policy was instituted by Wellington so that the New Zealand economy could not be adversely affected in the transition to peacetime.

The NZRB was advised on 6 January 1919 that men of the 1914/1915 classes would be leaving for Britain.¹⁶⁴ The following month the 1916 class of the NZRB would be on leave in Britain and held at Sling Camp for early embarkation in March 1919. Rifleman Graham records in a letter that he did a lot of shopping to prepare for civilian life and finished up his personal business in Britain.¹⁶⁵ The NZDivTr personnel began their demobilisation on 14 January 1919 when the first draft was sent to Britain. The supply companies were retained in Germany to provision the garrisoned NZDiv.¹⁶⁶

Major General Russell would be forced by ill health to relinquish command of the Division on 1 February 1919 and command handed over to Brigadier-General Johnston. The Division had been lucky that it had retained the same commander for the whole of its existence as opposed to other Dominion and British divisions which seemed to have a revolving door of senior commanders. He sent a letter to all men of the Division saying that:

On leaving the Division after 3½ years of command I wish to thank all ranks for their loyal support and to congratulate them on the success obtained...All alike, including the Staff have done

¹⁶⁴ Rifleman Gladstone Graham undated letter – possibly January 1919.

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.* Letter dated 11/2/1919. Graham embarked for New Zealand aboard HMNZT *Northumberland* on 28 March 1919. He disembarked in Wellington and was discharged from the NZEF in Gisborne after 28 days leave.

¹⁶⁶ Julia Millen, *Salute To Service*, p. 137.

their share, working for the common end and together have earned a reputation of which their country is proud...This is all to the good. Now a word to the future, where fresh problems are in front of us. Successes as real, if less dramatic, will surely be ours. The effect will be less evident, because each will have his own zero hour. But the success will be as great, if we continue to be animated by the same spirit of each for all...In conclusion, I wish you all a safe return to New Zealand and every prosperity and happiness in the future.¹⁶⁷

Horses, still one of the primary modes of transport also needed to be organised and dispersed. By the end of January 1919 all horses in the Division had been classified as to their condition. Those in good condition were sent to Britain, the others to France and Belgium. Those who were not fit for transport were slaughtered by the Veterinary corps for food to supply the division. 3,676 horses were sent back to base; only five of those returned to New Zealand.¹⁶⁸ By 17 February 1919 all horses were replaced by mules.¹⁶⁹ This process was rapid in particular for the NZDA. By the end of January 1919 the NZDA ceased to exist as a unit. All equipment, guns, and stores had been sent to the ordnance authorities and the horses dispersed.¹⁷⁰ The NZDivTr Supply Companies in Germany were slowly disbanded. The 3rd company disbanded on 4 February and the equipment and men absorbed into the other companies. By the beginning of March the 1st Company was disbanded and all equipment handed in to

¹⁶⁷ Stewart, *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919* vol. 2, pp. 607-608. Major General Russell had commanded the New Zealand and Australian Division on Gallipoli.

¹⁶⁸ Wright, *Western Front*, p. 160.

¹⁶⁹ Millen, *Salute To Service*, pp. 137-138.

¹⁷⁰ J.R. Byrne, *New Zealand Artillery*, p. 307.

the stores at Mulheim.¹⁷¹ On 8 March 1919, the HQ Company disbanded and the NZDivTr ceased to exist.¹⁷²

The NZE began to demobilise in January 1919 when 1914-1915 men left for Britain and transport home. By 4 February 1919 the 3rd Field Company was disbanded followed by 2nd Field Company on 4 March. All equipment was turned over to the Occupying Army remaining in Germany. The 1st Field Company left with the last drafts on 25 March 1919. The following day thirty engineers with the final party departed for Britain.¹⁷³

March 1919 heralded the proper demobilisation process. In a memo dated 4 March 1919, the NZDivHQ noted that:

It is essential with the draft of 25 March, the Division should be absolutely clear of Germany, except for a few officers and other-ranks who will be detailed for special duty for perhaps a few days. Our supply services would have ceased to exist from that date and for other reasons also, it is important that the draft on the 25th should be a final clearing up. The despatch of officers must therefore be regulated so that only a minimum number are left for despatch by ordinary leave trains after 25 March.¹⁷⁴

The movements had already begun. The 1st battalion of the NZRB moved by truck on 28 February 1919 followed by the Auckland, Wellington infantry battalions and No. 1 Field Company NZE on 1 March. The No. 4 Veterinary Hospital left for Rouen the next day followed by the Sanitary Section

¹⁷¹ Annabell, *Official History of the New Zealand Engineers*, pp. 224-225. Mulheim was the central depot for the NZDiv in Germany to process the demobilised equipment. This equipment was turned over the Army of Occupation.

¹⁷² Millen, *Salute To Service*, p. 138.

¹⁷³ Annabell, *Official History of the New Zealand Engineers*, p. 224.

¹⁷⁴ WA Series 1 4/29 Box 5 Demobilisation General File November 1918 to March 1919 – NZ Div HQ Memorandum No. ZA 1/455 issued 4/3/1919.

on 8 March. The NZDiv Cyclists battalion took the demobilisation train that left Cologne on 18 March.¹⁷⁵

The New Zealand representative to the GHQ advised the NZDiv QMG that the NZEF manpower in France on 4 March 1919 stood at 6,390 officers and other ranks. When the weekly quota of 1000 left on 9 March, 75% of the NZDiv had been dispatched to Britain. The now infamous Depot units and Butchery & Bakery were enquired after. After all the correspondence in December and January, they were still supplying the occupation forces. "It is desired that these units should be given priority to personnel of the New Zealand Division".¹⁷⁶ Men in the NZDUS were getting very frustrated. One wrote to the High Commission in March 1919 and asked:

Could you give me any information as to when we are likely to move from here on our way home? There are 10 of us on the strength of the 2nd NZDUS all infantry men except one, having left our companies after the Armistice was signed for UK leave about a month ago which was refused on the grounds that we were due for demobilisation. Well, there doesn't seem much chance of us going from here for sometime, so I ask you if you can do anything for us.¹⁷⁷

NZEFHQ replied to the High Commissioner advising that they had been approached by a number of men serving with the NZDUS and LOC units in regard to the delay in demobilisation. They neglected to tell the High

¹⁷⁵ WA Series 1 Box 17 Demobilisation of Supply Depots – Cable from the New Zealand Representative at GHQ to NZEFHQ dated 10/3/1919

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.* Cable from the New Zealand Representative at GHQ to NZDiv QMG dated 4/3/1919

¹⁷⁷ *ibid.* Unsigned letter dated 8/3/1919 addressed to the New Zealand High Commission and passed along to the NZEFHQ.

Commissioner when these men would be leaving for Britain.

By 9 March 1919, the Division had reduced enough in size that it could be concentrated at Mulheim. As the New Zealanders left their billets, they were occupied by troops from the 2nd Division.¹⁷⁸ On 11 March 1919, the Assistant Adjutant General of the NZDiv recorded the status of the NZDiv in France, Germany and Belgium. The No. 4 Veterinary Hospital had completed demobilisation and the NZ Railway Company would complete demobilisation 12 March. The Sanitary Section, Field Bakery and Butchery were to be given orders at once to demobilise and the NZ Cyclists Battalion would leave for Rouen on 19 March. A memo from the Quartermaster General records shows that the No. 1 Field Bakery was sent back to Britain from Le Havre to Weymouth but left all their equipment in France. The No. 1 Field Butchery turned over their equipment at the Ordnance depot at Boulogne and then proceeded to Le Havre for embarkation to Britain.¹⁷⁹ The demobilisation of the five NZDUS was promised on 1 April. By 13 March 1919 there would be only 1800 men on duty with the NZDiv all of these would be bound for Rouen on the last train leaving Germany on 25 March. The DivHQ would follow on 27 March. The memo concluded with the statement that all of the NZDiv personnel would be out of France by the end of April 1919.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ Stewart, *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919* vol. 2, p. 607.

¹⁷⁹ WA Series 1 Box 17 Demobilisation of Supply Depots – QMG Memorandum to NZEFHQ dated 17/3/1919.

¹⁸⁰ *ibid.* Handwritten note dated 11/3/1919 from the NZEF AAG Title: Status of Demobilisation of New Zealand Units in France, Germany and Belgium. The embarkation camp at Rouen as of 13 March held 310 officers and 4,484 other ranks.

There were three main drafts that left Germany on demobilisation trains for Britain in March (See Appendix One, Table 1) in order to fulfil the requirement to completely evacuate Cologne.¹⁸¹ While this was going on the NZDivTr was forced to keep up the unit strength. “Reinforcements were obtained from infantry brigades and the Machine Gun Battalion”, but overall “the strength of the train was reduced in conjunction with that of the various brigades”.¹⁸²

Unfortunately for the YMCA personnel and the 2nd (Area) Employment Company, the size of the Divisional records and equipment forced them to delay their departure from Germany until 28 March.¹⁸³ However, with the departure of the final draft for Britain on 25 March, the NZDiv ceased to be a functioning whole. It had been in existence for just on three years. Despite the injunction not to fraternise with the local population, a British officer reported that on the platform when the train pulled out was a “seething mass of weeping German maidens”.¹⁸⁴ The reality of demobilising the NZDiv in France had occurred much faster than the NZEFHQ had allowed for when planning began in 1918.

By 24 March GHQ advised NZEFHQ that the demobilisation of the remaining LOC units in Germany, France and Belgium could begin. No. 1 Field Butchery and No. 3 NZDUS were ordered to move to Rouen on 20 March

¹⁸¹ WA Series 1 4/29 Box 5 Demobilisation General File November 1918 to March 1919 – NZ Div HQ Memorandum No. ZA 1/455 issued 4/3/1919.

¹⁸² Millen, *Salute to Service*, p. 138. The remaining troops would go on duty at Sling Camp on 28 March 1919.

¹⁸³ WA Series 1 Box 17 Demobilisation of Supply Depots – Cable from NZDiv to NZEFHQ dated 28/3/1919.

¹⁸⁴ Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell*, p. 290.

and 23 March 1919 respectively. By 27 March all remaining LOC units were to be demobilised as the Embarkation Camp at Rouen was being disbanded and GHQ wished to accelerate the withdrawal of units not already demobilised.¹⁸⁵ As promised, the five NZDUS were moved by rail to Rouen and the equipment was handed in to the various Ordnance depots at Boulogne, Dieppe and Calais. The final draft of the NZDiv embarked for Britain on 30 March 1919 from Le Havre.¹⁸⁶

There would also be a lasting legacy of the NZEF occupation. Left behind were 33 men who had died as a result of disease or accident while on occupation duty and buried in military cemeteries. For example, Private W.J Thomas was shot by a German policeman and died of his wounds and Private Wilde was killed by an accidental discharge of a rifle. Both men died in January 1919.¹⁸⁷ Here ends the story of the demobilisation of the NZDiv. We now turn our attention to the NZMRB.

¹⁸⁵ WA Series 1 Box 17 Demobilisation of Supply Depots – Cable from GHQ to NZEFHQ dated 24/3/1919 and a handwritten note from NZEFHQ dated 27/3/1919.

¹⁸⁶ WA Series 180 1 Infantry Depot Etaples War Diaries – Entry for March 1919.

¹⁸⁷ Taylor, 'In Some Corner of a Foreign Field: New Zealanders Buried at Cologne', pp. 71-74.

Chapter Five: The New Zealand Mounted Rifle Brigade at the Armistice

In the Middle Eastern theatre, Turkey was in far worse shape than the Germans with severely weakened armies and under attack from different directions. In hindsight it is not surprising that on 16 October 1918 they sought an Armistice. Again as on the Western Front, no one had “expected the Middle Eastern war to end so quickly”.¹⁸⁸ The NZMRB had played a great part in this collapse. As Chris Pugsley noted:

Eight months campaigning in the Jordan Valley with two raids into the mountains of Moab, the first a partial, the last a complete success, conclude the operations of the NZMR brigade...in the victorious year of 1918.¹⁸⁹

At the conclusion of the campaign, the NZMRB was part of Chaytor's Force, which consisted of the ANZAC Mounted Division, an Indian infantry brigade, unattached West Indian and Jewish infantry battalions.¹⁹⁰ The Brigade was exhausted and in desperate need of refitting and rest. Hence, it was pulled out of the line sent into bivouac at Jericho on 5 October 1918 and would not take part in the final operations leading up to the Armistice. The change from the heat of the Jordan Valley to the cooler conditions around Amman saw a dramatic increase in malarial fever in the brigade as it passed through highly infectious areas such as Moab. Trooper McMillian of the CMR wrote that the

¹⁸⁸ Stevenson, *1914-1918*, p. 466.

¹⁸⁹ Pugsley, *The Anzac Experience* pp. 141. See also Cox and Ellis, *The World War One Databook*, p. 208.

¹⁹⁰ Pugsley, *The Anzac Experience*, pp. 143. This was commanded by Major-General Chaytor the former commander of the NZMRB. At the time of the Armistice the NZMRB was commanded by Brigadier-General Meldrum.

regiment was “occupying areas where no measures had been taken to keep insects in check”.¹⁹¹

The first twelve days of October saw over 700 cases of malaria admitted to hospitals equivalent to one third of the brigade’s strength out of commission.¹⁹² This sudden influx of sick men overwhelmed the medical service. As the morbidity rate climbed the NZMC personnel were stretched which in turn accelerated the mortality rate. The lowered immune system of the men coming off the campaign could not stand the strain of the malarial fever. Treatment with large doses of quinine was effective in time. For example, the AMR had 158 men in hospital out of a total of 341 officers and other ranks.¹⁹³ Those men who withstood the critical stage of the disease were sent to General Hospital at Kantara for recovery and further treatment.¹⁹⁴ Trooper Hall thought that the inoculations were worse than the disease and that with the spread of malaria the squadrons were down to a few men each. Men were taking care of their own horses and of those in the hospital. Also routine duties in camp suffered due to a lack of men.¹⁹⁵ Fortunately

¹⁹¹ Corporal James McMillian, 7/1322 CMR, *Forty Thousand Horsemen*, pp. 285-290.

¹⁹² Pugsley, *The Anzac Experience*, p. 144. See also Pugsley, ‘New Zealand: “The Heroes Lie in France”’, pp. 205-206 and Lt. Colonel C. Guy Powles, *The New Zealanders in Sinai and Palestine, Official History of New Zealand’s Effort in the Great War*, Vol. 3, Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1922, p. 261. On 4 October, 145 men were hospitalised with malarial fever as the epidemic spread.

¹⁹³ Sergeant Charles G. Nicol, *The Story of Two Campaigns: Official War History of the Auckland Mounted Rifles Regiment 1914-1919*, Auckland: Wilson & Horton, 1921, p. 235.

¹⁹⁴ McMillian, *Forty Thousand Horsemen*, pp. 285-290. McMillian was struck down with malarial fever and survived. See also Lt. Colonel C. Guy Powles ed., *The History of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles 1914-1919*, Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1928, pp. 240-241.

¹⁹⁵ Trooper George Burton Hall 58208 34th Reinforcements AMR. Letter dated 18/10/1918. See also Powles (ed.), *The History of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles*, p. 238 and *The New Zealanders in Sinai and Palestine* vol. 3, pp. 261-262.

for the Brigade, reinforcements were arriving into camp to make good some of the personnel deficiencies.¹⁹⁶

The NZMRB left the Jordan Valley and entered Jerusalem on 9 October, spending the next two days in bivouac. By this time the epidemic had passed and the rate of illness fell dramatically. The brigade proceeded on 13 October to Richon-le-Zion and took up the old brigade bivouac area at Ayun Kara. Here the NZMRB was brought up to strength by a draft of reinforcements. Training was continued with the men available intermingled with sports and horse races including the WMR race meeting held on Armistice Day.¹⁹⁷ From 21 to 28 October all ranks received training in rifle exercises, bayonet fighting, bombing, Hotchkiss machineguns and signalling. On 29 October there was a general inspection by the GOC NZMRB followed by more training up to the declaration of the armistice.¹⁹⁸ Trooper George Hall wrote on the conditions the men were facing:

We are now miles and miles behind the firing line having a spell and are likely to be here for a month or more as sports are fixed for about this time next month.¹⁹⁹

Trooper James McMillian wrote on the news of the Turkish Armistice:

At the end of October the news came through of the armistice with Turkey and was received without the signs of jubilation that could shave

¹⁹⁶ Hugh Burrows, *Sergeant Larry Burrows DCM Rifleman Canterbury Mounted Rifles 1914-1919: A Brief Record of the Battles in which he fought*, p. 32. McMillian, *Forty Thousand Horsemen*, pp. 285-290. He records that he led five to six horses due to the shortage of men.

¹⁹⁷ Major A.H. Wilkie, *Official War History of the Wellington Mounted Rifles 1914-1919*, Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd., p. 232. See also Powles (ed.), *The History of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles* p. 241.

¹⁹⁸ WA Series 40 4 Box 4 Movements/Operations NZMRB January-June 1919 – NZMRB Operations Report for October 1918.

¹⁹⁹ Trooper George Burton Hall letter dated 18/10/1918.

been expected on such a momentous occasion. Perhaps this was because the war in Europe has not ended, and again because it may have been that the long years of excitement and danger produced such a feeling of apathy that the apparent end to it all came as a kind of anticlimax.²⁰⁰

Trooper Ted McKay commented on how the men of the NZMRB who had faced a long and arduous campaign in the desert now felt about the peace and the chance to return to New Zealand:

We faced the days to come with mingled relief and misgivings. We were fidgety, bored and a trifle fractious...we gambled a lot of course. There were crown and anchor schools everywhere...²⁰¹

The official celebration of the Turkish Armistice was held for the NZMRB at Richon-le-Zion on 2 November 1918 organised by the Jewish community. As the news came through of the other Armistices it led to what was called a "delirious fortnight".²⁰² Officers of the NZMRB spent this time indulging in raids on each other's messes.²⁰³

The NZEFEHQ in 2 November 1918 asked the NZMRBHQ to provide a list of other ranks proficient in bookkeeping and shorthand. The reply came back on 10 November stating that eleven men were proficient in bookkeeping but no shorthand experts could be found, or rather did not wish to be found realising that by volunteering they in all likelihood would remain while their comrades were repatriated.²⁰⁴ The

²⁰⁰ McMillian, *Forty Thousand Horsemen*, p. 290.

²⁰¹ Chris Pugsley, 'New Zealand: "The Heroes Lie in France"', p. 206.

²⁰² Nicol, *The Story of Two Campaigns* p. 236.

²⁰³ *ibid.*, p. 236.

²⁰⁴ WA Series 40 4 Box 4 NZMRB Movements/Operations January-June 1919 – Cable from NZEFEHQ to NZMRBHQ reference XFE995 dated 2/11/1918. Reply dated 10/11/1918.

Brigade would remain at Richon-le-Zion until 17 December 1918 refitting and we now turn to this period in the following chapter.

Chapter Six: The New Zealand Mounted Rifle Brigade Refits

The state of the NZMRB in mid December is described by Chris Pugsley as exhausted and this time was an “unsettled period”.²⁰⁵ Under these circumstances the Brigade began to march from Palestine to Egypt on 12 December 1918 and arrived at Rafa on 22 December where a new camp was laid out. During the march, fifty officers and other ranks representing the NZMRB participated in a memorial parade at the Ayun Kara battlefield.²⁰⁶ At the end of 1918 the Brigade had returned to full strength and an educational programme was begun to “keep up the interest and spirits of the men”.²⁰⁷ Trooper Hall of the AMR described the activities in the camp:

The heads are starting to drill us in equitation the same as you in camp perhaps there will be some ceremonial business at the end of it all...there are more applications for leave to the Old Country than can be granted. The leave is only for four weeks to Britain, Scotland or Ireland. Most chaps have their bivvys fixed up for winter, generally when things are fixed up there is a move.²⁰⁸

In addition to the educational programme there was military training to be undertaken. The NZMRB had to retrain all the signallers in line with the new procedures issued by the War Office which would come into effect on 1 January 1919.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁵ Pugsley, *The Anzac Experience*, p. 144.

²⁰⁶ Wilkie, *Official War History of the Wellington Mounted Rifles Regiment*, p. 234. The AMR remained at Richon-le-Zion until 18 December 1918. See also Powles, *The New Zealanders in Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 267-268.

²⁰⁷ Powles, *The New Zealanders in Sinai and Palestine*, p. 267.

²⁰⁸ Trooper George Burton Hall letter dated 12/12/1918.

²⁰⁹ WA Series 40 4 Box 4 Movements /Operations NZMRB January-June 1919 – Memorandum from NZMRBHQ BM/L/937 dated 4/12/1918.

The overall health of the men improved and men were now returning to the strength after recovering from the malaria epidemic.

The other significant event of this post-armistice period was the return to Gallipoli. As part of the Armistice negotiations, the Ottoman representatives insisted that British or French troops occupy the Dardanelles rather than Greek or Italian troops. The British began their occupation on 9 November 1918, just under three years since the last units had been evacuated. A majority of the Turkish troops had been evacuated apart from a small party left at Chanak awaiting the British arrival.

The 7th ALHR and the CMR were chosen as the official ANZAC representatives.²¹⁰ The men would be sent dismounted and only fit men were selected to make up the party.²¹¹ Their designated task was to conduct “a reconnaissance of the whole of the southern part of the Peninsula to report as to how the Turks were carrying out the terms of the Armistice”.²¹² The men left Ludd in Palestine on 13 November for the depot at Kantara. On 28 November, 25 officers and 464 other ranks selected from CMR sailed on the *Huntscastle* to Gallipoli disembarking at Chanak. It was fortunate that only fit men were selected. The sudden change in climate from the warmth of the desert to the freezing cold of the peninsula produced colds

²¹⁰ Burrows, *Sergeant Larry Burrows*, p. 32. See also Wilkie, *Official War History of the Wellington Mounted Rifles*, p. 232 and Chris Pugsley, *Gallipoli: The New Zealand Story*, Auckland: Sceptre Books, 1990, p. 348. The WMR assisted the CMR as far as Ludd with transport.

²¹¹ McMillian, *Forty Thousand Horsemen*, p. 290. See also Powles (ed.), *The History of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles*, p. 243.

²¹² Powles, *The New Zealanders in Sinai and Palestine*, p. 264.

and pneumonia while some men still suffered from the effects of malaria. 110 men were evacuated to hospital and eleven men who died are buried at Chanak.²¹³ Trooper Percy Doherty of the CMR was selected to go. He wrote that the party had arrived on 30 November and when sailing up the strait were impressed with the big forts bristling with guns that the Anzacs never reached. The men were camped at Camburnu near Chanak by a Turkish hostel which he described as “very filthy, infested with insects”.²¹⁴ He also noted the change in temperature. Men had to don warm clothing “and had to wear overcoats in the daytime”.²¹⁵

The CMR was sent by vessel to ANZAC Cove. Parties were sent out to explore the old battlefields and the old trenches left behind in 1915 in particular the site of Chunuk Bair.²¹⁶ Trooper Doherty described the CMR as having a “look around”.²¹⁷ The first party went on 7 December 1918. Trenches were found caved in and scrub had overgrown the battlefield masking old landmarks.

Other details had the task of searching for New Zealand graves which they then properly identified and tended to. The men were relieved to see that the graves of the CMR had not been looted; they had suspected the Turks may

²¹³ Burrows, *Sergeant Larry Burrows* p. 32, See also McMillian, *Forty Thousand Horsemen*, p. 290 and Powles (ed.), *The History of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles* p. 245.

²¹⁴ Trooper Percy George Doherty 7/437 CMR. Letter dated 19/12/1918. See also Powles (ed.), *The History of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles*, p. 245 and Powles, *The New Zealanders in Sinai and Palestine*, p. 263.

²¹⁵ Trooper Percy George Doherty letter dated 19/12/1918.

²¹⁶ Pugsley, *Gallipoli*, p. 348.

²¹⁷ Trooper Percy George Doherty letter dated 19/12/1918. See also Powles (ed.), *The History of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles*, p. 246. 48 officers and men were ordered to conduct a reconnaissance December 11-15.

have done so after the evacuation in December 1915. The Turkish forces had also cleaned up the battlefields leaving only "old bully beef and biscuit tins".²¹⁸ The work of the Army Graves Registration unit was appreciated by the New Zealanders. There were so many men that could not be identified that they were buried in common graves and memorials put up.²¹⁹ Trooper Doherty wrote from the old battlefields on the attitude of the defeated Turkish army still in occupation:

Here we are once more on the peninsula, but this time we are the boss dogs, and instead of the Turks shooting at us, they now stand up and salute us.²²⁰

By Christmas the men of the CMR feared they were going to miss out on Christmas treats. Trooper Doherty wrote home at Christmas:

The most pleasing and fortunate happening of Yule tide was the arrival on Christmas Eve of the New Zealand Christmas parcels and papers. They could not have arrived at a more opportune time, as foodstuffs are hard to procure in this land of the Turk and our Xmas looked as if it was going to be a hard one.²²¹

With the task completed on Gallipoli the CMR returned to Egypt on 19 January 1919 and arrived at the Rafa camp four days later.²²² Trooper George Hall wrote on 1 February 1919 that "Canterbury are back here. The cold on Gallipoli played up with the men there were eleven deaths...they are

²¹⁸ Trooper Percy George Doherty letter dated 19/12/1918.

²¹⁹ *ibid.* Letter dated 27/12/1918.

²²⁰ *ibid.* Letter dated 19/12/1918.

²²¹ *ibid.* Letter dated 27/12/1918.

²²² Burrows, *Sergeant Larry Burrows* p. 32. See also Powles (ed.), *The History of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles* p. 248.

blowing up some old ammunition here... [and] the signing of peace has been put off again".²²³

Meanwhile the rest of the Brigade was refitting and beginning the process of demobilisation. The effects of the malaria were still lingering. By the end of December officers, including the commander of the WMR and other ranks who had suffered from malaria were sent to the training units and boarded for return to New Zealand.²²⁴ Transports began to leave for New Zealand. *HMT Malta* and *HMT Nestor* sailed in December 1918 and arrived in New Zealand at the end of January 1919, carrying Category B and C men. Successive drafts would be sent home as their allotted transports became available.²²⁵ In addition to repatriating men there was the necessary task of creating an historical record of New Zealand's desert campaign. During January 1919 NZEFEHQ sent out a memo from the GOC asking for suitable men to be selected to sketch the battlefields in both panorama and ordinary styles.²²⁶ These sketches would be compiled with the official historical records held at NZEFEHQ to be returned to New Zealand.

While the Brigade was in camp some educational and military "training was done... [but] the really serious activities related to sport".²²⁷ Athletics, rifle shooting, and horse racing were the main sporting attractions. Events increased in size until a Divisional race meeting was held with a crowd of 10,000 in attendance. A series of very

²²³ Trooper George Burton Hall letter dated 1/2/1919.

²²⁴ Wilkie, *Official War History of the Wellington Mounted Rifles*, pp. 236-237.

²²⁵ McMillian, *Forty Thousand Horsemen*, p. 297.

²²⁶ WA Series 40 4 Box 4 NZMRB Movements/ Operations January-June 1919 – NZEFEHQ ENZ 90/50 issued 18/1/1919

²²⁷ Nicol, *The Story of Two Campaigns*, pp. 235-238.

competitive races were held among the units on both flat and steeplechase courses. To bring a touch of home, a comprehensive totalisator system was in place for the Anzacs to wager their pay.²²⁸ The size of these events also necessitated the AMDivHQ advising the NZMRB that sports and race meetings should be properly guarded and picqueted by units to which they belong.²²⁹ The YMCA also provided a range of activities of the non-gambling kind. A programme issued for the week ending 2 February 2 1919 advised that on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday nights there was a lecture by Captain Hunter. Wednesday night there was a debate on the topic 'That Women be granted all civic rights of Men'. Friday and Saturday nights were given over to the cinema and Sunday was a Song Service.²³⁰

Delicacies were always welcome. The NZMRB wrote to New Zealand Federation of Patriotic War Relief Societies on the supply of oranges to Rafa camp. Deliveries were arranged twice monthly from January 1919 and it was reported that "the distribution of oranges had been found to be particularly beneficial in maintaining the health of the brigade".²³¹ Also important was rest. Orders were issued that on a weekly basis parties of 200 men from the AMDiv would be sent to Descorps Rest Camp at Port Said. NZMRB would contribute one officer and 36 other ranks.²³²

²²⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 237-238. A detachment of troopers was instructed to carry sidearms and patrol the course during the event.

²²⁹ WA Series 40 4 Box 4 Movements/Operations NZMRB January-June 1919 – Memorandum from AMDivHQ to NZMRB issued 28/1/1919.

²³⁰ *ibid.* Notice AIF YMCA Programme for week ending 2/2/1919 issued 17/1/1919. Unfortunately the notice does not advise what topics the prolific Captain Hunter was lecturing on nor sadly the result of the debate.

²³¹ *ibid.* Letter from NZMRBHQ to New Zealand Federation of Patriotic War Relief Societies dated 13/12/1919.

²³² *ibid.* Order from AMDivHQ issued 3/1/1919.

But men were still frustrated and waiting to go home as Trooper Hall explained:

We are just waiting here nobody knows when we will be going home. Perhaps they will go home as they came there is a rumour that up to the tenth reinforcement are going home.²³³

He wrote at the beginning of February 1919 that:

Perhaps this will be the last letter you will receive from me if the rumours here are correct. If so the end of this month will see us on the eater. The base units are coming up from Cairo any day now. That in itself is a good sign because a chap never sees his kit bag unless he sends for it. Kantara is supposed to be where we take ship.²³⁴

When Godley had formally bade farewell to the NZMRB on 1 December 1918. He hoped that “you all may return in safety to your homes and may live long in happiness and prosperity in your greatly favoured country...”²³⁵

Yet three months later men were still awaiting transport to New Zealand. 1914-1915 class men were allotted to the *HMT Kaikoura* for sailing early March with 32 officers, seven nurses or wives and 1,059 other ranks (See Appendix One, Table 5). The mail was another source of complaint. By March 1919 mail from home was only just coming through thus the arrival of mail on Gallipoli for the party from the CMR all that more miraculous.²³⁶

One of the saddest things for the men of the NZMRB was the order to part from their horses. As the demobilisation

²³³ Trooper George Burton Hall letter undated but possibly January 1919.

²³⁴ *ibid.* Letter dated 1/2/1919.

²³⁵ NZEF Routine Orders No. 42 (254) issued 1/12/1918.

²³⁶ Trooper George Burton Hall letter dated 27/2/1919.

regulations stated, no horses from the Egyptian campaign were allowed to return to New Zealand. By February 1919, all horses had been classed A, B, C, or D according to Trooper Hall. He wrote that “no doubt the D class will be shot”.²³⁷ Instead the horses were further separated into three groups: those of no further use which would be shot, those to be sold and those to be retained by the Army of Occupation. The thought of sale to the local population horrified the men:

The men knew that horses sold to the Egyptians probably would end their days in miserable slavery and efforts were made, often successful, to have animals transferred to the class for the kindly bullet.²³⁸

Chris Pugsley calls this a “sad anticlimax to what had been a superb, disciplined performance in a difficult campaign”.²³⁹ The horses were led out into the desert and shot and buried near Rafa. In fact three horses did return to New Zealand including that of Colonel Powles of the WMR.²⁴⁰ However the tack that came with the horses needed to be disinfected by the NZVC before transport home. This included stuffing and cloth lining of the saddles and the harnesses but under no circumstances were horse blankets, picketing gear or brushes permitted to be sent back to New Zealand. They had to be destroyed in Egypt.²⁴¹

As demobilisation slowly progressed for the men of the NZMRB, EEFHQ approved concentrating the all NZEF

²³⁷ *ibid.* Letter dated 1/2/1919.

²³⁸ Nicol, *The Story of Two Campaigns*, p. 244.

²³⁹ Chris Pugsley, *The Anzac Experience*, p. 146.

²⁴⁰ Information provided by Carolyn Mitchum.

²⁴¹ NZEFEHQ Routine Order No. 232 issued 1/3/1919 - Horse Equipment.

personnel at Ismailia, a town outside of Cairo. The training cadre would return to their units by no later than 1 March 1919. It was expected that approximately 1,200 other ranks would be waiting repatriation in Egypt on the same day. The rest and refitting for remaining strength of the NZMRB came to sudden end in March 1919 when nationalist rioting broke out in Cairo. This escalated as the “natives broke out into open rebellion with the avowed intention of ousting the British from Egypt”.²⁴² We now move to the chapter covering this difficult period for the NZMRB, a final hurdle to be overcome on the path home to New Zealand.

²⁴² Wilkie, *Official War History of the Wellington Mounted Rifles*, p. 238.

Chapter Seven: The New Zealand Mounted Rifle Brigade and the Egyptian Uprising

The men of the NZMRB still in Egypt were waiting for their transports when rioting began to break out. Rumours of disturbances had been filtering through to the NZMRB camp for some time when on 10 March 1919 civil unrest erupted in Cairo and was put down by the civilian police and troops armed with batons.²⁴³ This stopped any progress of the demobilisation scheme. All men that were still serving with the NZMRB were now required for service in suppressing the riots. The Colonial authorities would have to rely upon these men to suppress the rioters in preference to the local police force which had proved unsuccessful in suppressing the unrest.²⁴⁴ On 17 March 1919, the brigade was ordered to Kantara to reequip and despatched by train from Rafa camp on the same day. At the Kantara depot the Brigade was issued with horses, arms, ammunition and general equipment.²⁴⁵ Due to the delay in the reequipping of the Brigade, it was only on 20 March that the AMR began to march for brigade's area of operations around Tanta in the Nile delta region.²⁴⁶ The AMR was followed by the CMR, WMR and the NZMRBHQ which established the base at Tanta. The AMR was moved to Talka and established a patrol pattern with ALH regiments. The AMR would remain there until embarkation

²⁴³ Powles, *The New Zealanders in Sinai and Palestine*, p. 268.

²⁴⁴ Nicol, *The Story of Two Campaigns*, p. 239.

²⁴⁵ Trooper Percy George Doherty letter dated 31/3/1919. See also Powles, *The New Zealanders in Sinai and Palestine*, p. 268.

²⁴⁶ Powles, *The New Zealanders in Sinai and Palestine*, p. 268. The NZMRB was forced to wait for the equipment to arrive from Cairo. The farriers put in long hours as all the horses needed to be re-shod before they could be ridden.

for New Zealand.²⁴⁷ The CMR formed a small column with armoured cars and an armoured train and proceeded to march through the delta to its patrol area based around Kafr el Sheikh.²⁴⁸ The orders for all the regiments were to conduct patrols and arrest rioters.²⁴⁹

Trooper Percy Doherty of the CMR described what actions they took in suppressing the riots. After moving out, the CMR attacked Kafr el Sheikh which was supposedly full of riotous mobs but was found to be deserted. The squadrons of CMR separated out and searched the surrounding villages, “catching the chief offenders and giving them a severe flogging”.²⁵⁰ Village heads and other men were sent to Jamilia where court-martials were conducted under military law and the accused “probably shot”.²⁵¹ Trooper Doherty expressed what many of the NZMRB men probably felt at this time:

We are still on the cleaning up process and have no idea how long it will last. We have already flogged several hundred natives and we are still going strong...but the novelty of flogging niggers [sic] is wearing off although our determination is still strong as we never forget that if the natives had not revolted we would now have been embarking for NZ.²⁵²

²⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 268.

²⁴⁸ Powles (ed.), *The History of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles* p. 248 and *The New Zealanders in Sinai and Palestine*, p. 270.

²⁴⁹ Wilkie, *Official War History of the Wellington Mounted Rifles* 1924, p. 238. See also Powles, *The New Zealanders in Sinai and Palestine*, p. 269.

²⁵⁰ Trooper Percy George Doherty letter dated 31/3/1919.

²⁵¹ *ibid.* Letter dated 31/3/1919.

²⁵² Trooper Percy George Doherty letter dated 31/3/1919. See also Powles (ed.), *The History of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles*, pp. 248-249.

Kafr el Sheikh was the CMR's base until they were withdrawn for embarkation while the WMR were based at Quesla until they were withdrawn for embarkation.²⁵³

Alongside the NZMRB, the 10th, 14th, and 15th ALHR were retained in Egypt.²⁵⁴ Trooper Doherty wrote home and described the situation in Egypt:

The most serious [event] has been the cancellation of our demobilisation for the time being...the Egyptians have revolted and want to kick the Europeans out of the country and have what they call "Egypt for the Egyptians". In the numerous districts and villages of the delta and also in upper Egypt they have done a great deal of damage burning railway stations, destroying all telegraph communication, pulling up the railway etc etc...a party of nine officers in route for Luxor from Cairo on leave were killed by a mob of Egyptians [and] four Australian nurses are also missing.²⁵⁵

Egyptian officials were charged with encouraging and supporting the rioters and seemed to be directing the violence against the transport network especially the railways. As the violence increased, the NZMRB withdrew its patrols and concentrated as a ready reaction force.²⁵⁶

For the civilian authorities in Cairo the situation had become so unmanageable that the 9th Squadron WMR was detached and sent back to the city to form a police force commanded by Major Foley of the WMR with elements of

²⁵³ Powles, *The New Zealanders in Sinai and Palestine*, p. 269.

²⁵⁴ Richard Pelvin (ed.), *ANZAC: An illustrated History 1914-1918*, South Yarra: Hardie Grant Books, 2004, pp. 247-258. The 10th ALH was repatriated to Australia in July 1919.

²⁵⁵ Trooper Percy George Doherty letter dated 31/3/1919. See also Powles (ed.), *The History of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles*, p. 248. The men were exasperated at being retained in Egypt long after the war was over.

²⁵⁶ Wilkie, *Official War History of the Wellington Mounted Rifles* pp. 239-240.

the ALH and the Mounted Artillery.²⁵⁷ Men of this composite force cleared the Armenian shopping quarter by jumping barricades with their horses and dealing to the riots with batons. Troops were also used to clear out houses where people were being killed.²⁵⁸ Disturbances began to break out across Egypt. In the Tanta Area where most of the NZMRB was located, they ran daily patrols. Armoured trains were running on the nearest railway lines in order to protect them from being sabotaged. The men had to deal with attacks on the railway lines, bridges, irrigation canals and disturbingly, the raising of a Turkish flag.²⁵⁹ Trooper Hall found himself and his fellow men from the AMR headed into action:

Perhaps you do not know that the Gippos [sic] have been causing trouble in Egypt all demobilisation has ceased here until further orders. The Brigade drew horses' saddles etc and preceded down the line to Cairo, Alexandria Luxor or some of those places each regiment getting different places we hear. The gippos pulled up a lot of railway line near Cairo Zaza Zig or somewhere near there also a good many stations have been burnt...the Arab quarter is out of bounds also the town at nights...leave has come out for 10% to England...²⁶⁰

The situation quietened down across the areas as the NZMRB patrolled and *The New Zealanders in Sinai and Palestine* noted that the "Gyppy [sic] went back to his usual industrious life a firm friend of the big men on the big horses".²⁶¹

²⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 238.

²⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p. 239.

²⁵⁹ WA Series 40 3 Box 8 Operations in Tanta Area March-June 1919.

²⁶⁰ Trooper George Burton Hall letter dated 29/3/1919.

²⁶¹ Powles, *The New Zealanders in Sinai and Palestine*, p. 270.

Trooper Hall wrote long after the riots were over on some of his impressions:

The papers could not have informed you people of what was happening here in Egypt. They should have known before the end of March that the NZ Brigade had started out into the Delta to put down the trouble. At Mansoura the tommies [sic] killed and wounded about sixty, they were the first troops to get there it civilised them there a bit some of the other places would have been better if they has the same treatment.²⁶²

Allenby, who back in December had been so harsh in his judgement of the NZMRB over the Surafend incident, now communicated his thanks to the men for suppressing the riot, with special reference made of the patience and tact during a trying and delicate situation.²⁶³

Problems began to surface with pay and food. Trooper Hall wrote in May outlining the problems the NZMRB was facing. He mentioned that a delegation was sent to the officers requesting better food and the extra pay. In theory, the NZMRB had served as part of the Army of Occupation (AOP) and pay was supposed to have been backdated to February 1919. The AOP was supposed to replace the NZMRB and free men for repatriation home:

The A.O.P was supposed to have taken over by the first (1 May 1919) which it has not done, the men have been making complaints about the food really it has been bad. Kaddlers marmalade and gyppo [sic] bread has been the order of the day the doctor here condemned it...²⁶⁴

There was a joke popular with the men of the NZMRB as to their predicament once the riots were over and they were

²⁶² Trooper George Burton Hall letter dated 27/6/1919.

²⁶³ Wilkie, *Official War History of the Wellington Mounted Rifles*, p. 240. See Chapter 13.

²⁶⁴ Trooper George Burton Hall letter dated 1/5/1919.

still waiting to leave for New Zealand. It “was to the effect that in the year 1925, the War Office suddenly scratched its head and exclaimed, “Great Scott! The New Zealand Mounted Rifles have been forgotten. They are still in Egypt”.²⁶⁵

Once the riots had been firmly suppressed the NZMRB went back to waiting for the demobilisation process to begin again. Race meetings were held again at the Heliopolis racecourse near Cairo where a NZMRB horse won the Allenby Cup. Men were given leave but preferred to “embark for New Zealand”.²⁶⁶ Then the answer to the men’s prayers came. A message from the EFFHQ was issued to the NZMRB on 17 June 1919:

Please send all New Zealand personnel to New Zealand depot Ismailia at once for demobilisation.²⁶⁷

Horses would be returned to the remount depot at Belbeis and the men moved to the camp at Chevalier Island where the remainder of the NZMRB was concentrated.²⁶⁸ They were going home at last. So ends the history of the NZMRB and demobilisation. We now turn to the Maori Pioneers.

²⁶⁵ Nicol, *The Story of Two Campaigns*, p. 239.

²⁶⁶ Wilkie, *Official War History of the Wellington Mounted Rifles*, p. 240.

²⁶⁷ WA Series 1 3 Box 6 XFE1058 - Troops Returning to New Zealand per HMNZT *Ulimaroa*.

²⁶⁸ Powles (ed.), *The History of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles*, p. 249.

Chapter Eight: The Maori Pioneer Battalion

Just as the NZDiv was withdrawn from the front line prior to the Armistice, so the Maori Pioneers were also pulled out of action. At the time of the Armistice the Battalion consisted of three companies comprised of Maori volunteers. When the NZDiv was formed in 1916 the Pioneer Battalion was assigned to the NZDiv less one company. This company comprised of Rarotongan and other Pacific Islanders remained in Egypt to serve with the NZMRB.

When the Armistice came on 11 November 1918, the Pioneers regretted not celebrating the Armistice “in a manner befitting the great occasion”.²⁶⁹ Given the state of the roads and the need to move troops into Germany, the Pioneers were assigned to road repair until 15 November. Fortunately, roads that were mined by the retreating Germans were not fired. Along with the work, the Battalion undertook a series of route marches and was allowed to travel for recreation.²⁷⁰

On 21 November, the Battalion was ordered to move and preparations began and the next morning the YMCA, canteen and billeting parties departed for Bevillers followed by the rest of the Battalion on 23 November. Camp life at Bevillers consisted of route marches, ceremonial drills; close order drills in the morning followed by recreation training in the afternoon which consisted of wood chopping,

²⁶⁹ Cowan, *The Maoris in the Great War*, p. 154.

²⁷⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 153-154.

cross country running and inter-platoon rugby matches. The Battalion also played other units within the NZDiv, beating an Auckland selection 27-3 on 26 November.²⁷¹

This brief period of rest and relaxation was interrupted the next day when orders were issued to move to Viesly. These were quickly cancelled but the battalion was “to hold themselves in readiness to march to Germany”.²⁷² Upon hearing the orders, one pioneer remarked that “everyone wanted to go home and the thought of garrisoning Germany was not a popular one. But there was a job to be done”.²⁷³

The Battalion’s march to Germany began on 28 November 1918 accompanied by a drum and bugle band. 116 men were returned to base as unfit for the march and transport was provided to carry baggage and blankets. The plan was to march for three days and rest for one. In spite of the cold and fog, the men were happy; there was peace and they were patient in enduring the delays caused by wrecked bridges needing repair. By 3 December 1918 the battalion had left France and entered the suburb of Charleroi receiving a warm welcome from the Belgian population. Some pioneers were lucky enough to get a bed for the night. The intense anti-German feeling of the civilians and the damage that had been inflicted on property owned by those identified as collaborators was evident to the men as they camped around the town.²⁷⁴

²⁷¹ *ibid.*, p. 154.

²⁷² *ibid.*, p. 154.

²⁷³ Chris Pugsley, *Te Hokowhitu A Tu: The Maori Pioneer Battalion in the First World War*, Auckland: Reed Books, 1995, p. 74.

²⁷⁴ James Cowan, *The Maoris in the Great War*, p. 156.

By 19 December 1918 the Battalion had reached Stembert and the next day a billeting party entered Germany and was sent by train to Ehrenfeld, a suburb of Cologne. The balance of the Battalion was given orders to move into Germany in three groups halting at Herbesthal before departing for Ehrenfeld on 21 December 1918.²⁷⁵ This order was rescinded.

On the same day the billeting party had departed for Cologne, orders were issued cancelling the move to Germany. The Battalion was held in the Vervirers district and ordered return to an embarkation camp at Dunkirk. Then the battalion was to be transported to Britain for demobilisation and repatriation to New Zealand. The billeting party would be left behind in Germany and not be reunited with their fellow Pioneers until mid January 1919.²⁷⁶ Russell visited the Battalion on Christmas Eve 1918 and told them they would be going to Britain for demobilisation. Naturally, the Pioneers were “very happy” to hear this news.²⁷⁷

The rationale for not sending the Maori Pioneers into occupation duty in Germany was founded upon pre-war rules. With the signing of the Armistice, GHQ believed that pre-war rules now applied again and that native troops would not be ‘appropriate’ for the garrisons in Germany. Major-General Russell emphasised that “this was not a New Zealand decision but one taken by the British

²⁷⁵ *ibid.*, p. 156.

²⁷⁶ *ibid.*, p. 154. See also Stewart, *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919* vol. 2, p. 606.

²⁷⁷ Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell*, p. 289.

authorities".²⁷⁸ This outrageous segregationist attitude was resented by the Maori Pioneers but they consoled themselves with the certainty that they were being repatriated home. In contrast, this 'consideration' of German feelings was not the policy of the French army.

After the Armistice, the German press quailed at the prospect of African troops making up part of the force occupying the Rhineland 'The Black Shame'.²⁷⁹ The French government felt under pressure to demobilize as many metropolitan Frenchmen as possible. Africans had no constituency and could be maintained under arms. Of course, there was also the strong desire to humiliate the Boche. And, unlike metropolitan troops, many *Tirailleur* conscripts were not demobilized in 1919, but stayed on for occupation duty in Germany.²⁸⁰

The return trip from Stembert to Dunkirk began on Christmas Eve 1918. The Battalion was entrained at Tournai on Christmas Day. By Boxing Day the Pioneers camped at Dunkirk in tents in miserable conditions. By this time, 60 officers (including the commanding officer) and men were hospitalised with influenza. The Transport section handed over their horses and equipment at Calais and arrived at the camp on 30 December 1918.²⁸¹

²⁷⁸ Pugsley, *Te Hokowhitu A Tu*, p. 74.

²⁷⁹ <http://www.worldwar1.com/france/tseng.htm> accessed 21/12/05

Leonard G. Shurtleff, *Tirailleurs Senegalais*

²⁸⁰ *ibid.*

²⁸¹ Cowan, *The Maoris in the Great War*, p. 157. The commander of the Pioneers at the Armistice, Lt Col Saxby died of pneumonia while on leave in England on 28 November 1918.

Orders were issued on 3 January 1919 for the Battalion to embark that day for Britain on the steamer *St George*, disembarking at Southampton. AGroupHQ directed that three military police would meet the 23 officers and 635 other ranks when they arrived in Southampton.²⁸² The Battalion would then go by train to Amesbury and march to No. 5 Camp Larkhill. This was used by the NZEF until space could be freed up at Sling Camp.²⁸³ Upon arrival at Larkhill, there was further segregation carried out by the NZDiv. Four officers and 45 other ranks, all non-Maori, were sent to Sling Camp.²⁸⁴

Conditions here were a vast improvement on Dunkirk. Huts were warm and the men had exclusive use of a bathhouse, recreational hall and two dining halls. On 7 January 1919 the Battalion was inspected and advised that they would be marching past the King in Whitehall and the men were kept busy with ceremonial drill.²⁸⁵ In a cable from the OC the Pioneer Battalion to the AGroupHQ at Sling requested bootmakers be provided as all the Pioneers equipment had been handed in at Calais. This was so that men could go on leave. The reply came back on 10 January regretting it was impossible to find tailors or bootmakers due to short staffing, a by-product of the demobilisation process.²⁸⁶ This meant Pioneers departing for their leave with tatty uniforms and poor footwear. The Battalion was granted fourteen days leave, with the first 400 men leaving on 12 January

²⁸² WA Series 133 3 Box 10 Pioneer Battalion France to Sling 1918-1919 – Handwritten note for sending by cable from Sling Camp dated 2/1/1919.

²⁸³ *ibid.* Group routine order No. 35 issued 7/2/1919.

²⁸⁴ Cowan, *The Maoris in the Great War*, p. 159.

²⁸⁵ *ibid.*, p. 158.

²⁸⁶ WA Series 133 3 Box 10 Maori Pioneer Battalion France to Sling 1918-1919.

and followed by parties over the rest of the month. The next day the drummers were sent to the Guards school in London for instruction.

In order to prepare the men for their post war life, classes were run in general education and elementary agriculture. The numbers attending indicated to commanders that it “showed how keen the men were to avail themselves for their occupation in civil life”.²⁸⁷ Sports also were a major activity. In February, the battalion’s team played the Welsh and Navy teams in three games and won two, lost one.

Health was a major issue. There was a measles outbreak in the neighbouring camps but there were few cases in the Pioneer camp. The medical officers inspected every day and on 12 February the Medical Officer of the battalion was able to send a memo certifying that the Pioneers were free of influenza and measles.²⁸⁸ Thus the men were now free to be repatriated home. The story of demobilisation now turns to Non-combatants, POWs, and the impact of influenza and managing VD alongside the hunt and location of suitable war trophies.

²⁸⁷ Cowan, *The Maoris in the Great War*, p. 159.

²⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p. 158. See also WA Series 133 3 Box 10 Maori Pioneer Battalion France to Sling 1918-1919 – Memorandum from Medical Officer Maori Pioneer Battalion issued 12/2/1919.

Chapter Nine: Repatriating Non-Combatants, POWs, War Trophies and the effect of Influenza and VD

Alongside the fighting units, the medical corps and the camps there were the non-military units that needed to be demobilised and returned to New Zealand. This included the YMCA, VAD and Red Cross workers in Britain and Egypt. There were also the POWs who needed to be secured, processed and returned home. The demobilisation process began under the spectre of the influenza pandemic. This worldwide tragedy is reflected in the NZEF as men who had survived the war now succumbed or who being so far away from home, would get the news that their loved ones had died as the pandemic swept through New Zealand. The other disease that remained a problem during the demobilisation was venereal disease. As this chapter will indicate, this was an administrative and discipline issue that took up valuable time at the NZEF headquarters. Finally, any returning force likes to bring back trophies from the battlefield and the NZEF was no different. The War Archives produced a remarkable set of documents on the handling and shipping of war trophies to New Zealand from Egypt in 1919.

In December 1918 there were 765 VAD and 115 Red Cross workers in Britain awaiting repatriation.²⁸⁹ There had been volumes of correspondence between NZEFHQ and the Red Cross and YMCA on repatriation of their workers. In

²⁸⁹ WA Series 1 Box 8 1/45 Transports Available for Repatriation – Matron in Chief New Zealand Medical Corps HQ to NZEFHQ Return on Location of Nurses (NZANS) as at 18/12/1918. See also Lt. Colonel A.D. Carbery, *The New Zealand Medical Service in the Great War 1914-1918*, Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1924, p. 497.

December 1918, the YMCA wrote to General Richardson asking if women who had given service to the NZEF would be returned to New Zealand. The letter referred to an earlier discussion and indicated that Richardson had advised that they could go back as passengers on the transports. Richardson replied to the letter and told the YMCA that the organisation had to apply to the High Commissioner who had in turn needed to obtain the necessary approval from Wellington.²⁹⁰ Further to this discussion, repatriation at the public expense was approved for Red Cross nurses and other personnel who joined the NZEF medical services in Britain as long as they had served more than twelve months.²⁹¹

At the end of January 1919, Colonel R. Heaton Rhodes wrote to Sir James Allen, Minister of Defence asking for free passage for the Red Cross, War Contingent and Nolan's Hostel Workers. His reason was as volunteers, these people had worked longer and harder than those employed by the government.²⁹² Previously, the High Commissioner advised the NZEFHQ that its responsibility was for military personnel, VADs and other civilians. Military Personnel and civilians under the British government would be dealt with by the Imperial Officer in charge of repatriation. With the consent of the New Zealand Government, the Red Cross and YMCA personnel could be returned to New Zealand on transports at the government's

²⁹⁰ *ibid.*, Letter from YMCA to NZEFHQ dated 20/12/1918. Reply from General Richardson dated 23/12/1918.

²⁹¹ See also WA Series 133 3 Box 7 71BM Demobilisation November-December 1918 – NZEF Instruction No. 94 issued 18/12/1918.

²⁹² WA Series 1 Box 8 1/45 Transports Available for Repatriation – Letter from Rhodes to Allan dated 30/1/1919.

expense.²⁹³ Midway through the month, General Richardson received a letter from the Red Cross advising that they would be applying for personnel to be shipped home to New Zealand on the available transports.²⁹⁴ Richardson replied stating that workers attested to the NZEF would be treated like soldiers and sent home. All others would have to apply to the Government via the High Commissioner for a paid passage.²⁹⁵ Those workers who were eligible for passage back to New Zealand were sent to a residence in Brighton to await their transport. While the repatriation of non-combatants was a minor administrative issue, the impact of the influenza pandemic was a trial for all commanders at the end of the First World War.

Influenza first appeared amongst troops on the Western Front in April 1918 just as the Germans were launching the second of their great offensives.²⁹⁶ The strain appeared in Britain in May 1918 and peaked in July 1918. This was the first wave which was relatively mild although the Germans felt that it impacted on their combat operations. The second and most deadly wave appeared at the end of October and peaked in the week prior to the Armistice. Men were dying in camps in Britain, behind the lines in France and in the many hospitals. There was a less deadly third wave in January 1919 that still took lives of men who had survived the war.

²⁹³ WA Series 1 Box 8 1/45 Transports Available for Repatriation – Cable from the New Zealand High Commissioner to NZEFHQ dated 7/1/1919.

²⁹⁴ *ibid.* Letter from Red Cross to NZEFHQ dated 14/1/1919.

²⁹⁵ *ibid.* Letter from NZEFHQ to Red Cross dated 15/1/1919.

²⁹⁶ Operation Georgette, which opened on April 9 1918. Also known as The Battle of the Lys.

For the medical staff of the NZEF, the symptoms are well known but this particular form of influenza chose as its victims young men in the prime of life. Soldiers were naturally vulnerable, particularly with the susceptibility of New Zealanders to respiratory disease and the effects of trench warfare. If the effects of the influenza were not sufficient themselves to kill, men faced the complications such as pneumonia which could be fatal.²⁹⁷

Out of the thousands of cases the NZMC dealt with after the Armistice, the NZEF recorded some 400 men who died of influenza or the complications arising from the disease.²⁹⁸ The most serious outbreak occurred on the HMNZT *Tahiti* carrying the 40th reinforcements to Britain. Sixty-eight men died at sea of influenza out of 1,051 on board. Another 116 men and nurses had to be hospitalised upon arrival whereupon four died of complications. Those men and women who had avoided a fatal exposure to the disease were incapable of going into any form of training upon arrival in Britain.²⁹⁹ The NZDiv in January and February 1919 had one thousand men evacuated sick from Germany. Upon recovery, these patients were sent to the camps in Britain for repatriation.³⁰⁰ By 7 March 1919 Southern Command medical authorities had asked AGroupHQ at Sling Camp to restrict numbers in each New Zealand camp to a maximum of 906 men as a way of controlling influenza. This restricted the total numbers

²⁹⁷ Linda Bryder, 'The 1918 Influenza Epidemic in Auckland', University of Auckland, MA Thesis, 1980, p. 24.

²⁹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 11. See also Carbery, *The New Zealand Medical Service*, pp. 492-493. By contrast the British Army had 112,274 cases of influenza and reported some 5,483 deaths. The number of cases was equivalent to ten full divisions.

²⁹⁹ Carbery, *The New Zealand Medical Service*, p. 492.

³⁰⁰ Wright, *Western Front*, pp. 144-169.

accommodated in the New Zealand camps to 6,720 men plus details based elsewhere and those in the isolation camp.³⁰¹

The Maori Pioneers did not avoid the second wave of the pandemic in November 1918. When the Pioneers arrived at Dunkirk there were already fifteen men isolated with influenza and sent to a Canadian hospital upon arrival. The embarkation camp was flooded leaving damp tents that men had to live in. This situation when combined with a long cold journey from the German border lead to over 70 officers and other ranks becoming ill, thirteen of which had to be hospitalised before the embarkation to Britain.³⁰² When the Pioneers arrived in Britain in early January 1919 more cases were reported. Those Pioneers in the camps and not on leave were put into immediate isolation. Despite this precaution, up to eight cases a day were hospitalised with only a handful of fatalities.³⁰³ By the end of the month the epidemic had abated. The Pioneers were still in isolation at No. 5 Camp Larkhill and very anxious to go home. A fresh outbreak in February resulted in the isolation continuing until the Battalion departed on the HMNZT *Westmoreland*.

The NZMRB suffered casualties when eleven men from the CMR died from influenza or associated complications while over on Gallipoli.³⁰⁴ Trooper Doherty in a letter dated 19

³⁰¹ WA Series 1 3/8/7 Box 19 Demobilisation New Zealand Rifle Brigade – Cable to NZEFHQ dated 7/3/1919. Handwritten draft from General Stewart, OC Sling Camp.

³⁰² WA 133 3 Box 10 Maori Pioneer Battalion France to Sling – Report to NZEFHQ from OC Maori Pioneer Battalion dated 6/1/1919.

³⁰³ Cowan, *The Maoris in the Great War*, p. 158.

³⁰⁴ Pugsley, *Gallipoli*, p. 348.

December 1918 noted the effect of the pandemic on the CMR:

We had an epidemic in the form of Spanish influenza when we landed here (Chanak) and things looked serious for a while but now it has passed over and the patients are improving, one officer (Lieutenant Pigou) and seven men died and over ninety men have gone into hospital at Chanak since arriving here.³⁰⁵

Due to the impact of the pandemic in New Zealand, the NZEFEHQ in Cairo was advised in July 1919 to fully diagnose all ailments so the term PUO (patient under observation) applied to repatriated men was not used as a euphemism for influenza forcing the department of Health to quarantine vessels and all on it upon arrival in New Zealand.³⁰⁶ In addition to influenza, there was another 'pandemic', that of a self-inflicted kind.

The commanders of the NZEF had to contend with the ever present pestilence of venereal disease. In December 1918 the Medical HQ held a conference to discuss repatriation of men suffering from VD. In the minutes it was noted that:

No officer or other rank who shows any active signs of venereal disease should be evacuated by hospital ship, ambulance transport or ordinary transport except where special permission has been granted by the NZEF Medical headquarters.³⁰⁷

Camp commanders were instructed that VD patients would be retained in camp for 28 days and if there was no reoccurrence for the disease while awaiting demobilisation

³⁰⁵ Trooper Percy George Doherty letter dated 19/12/1918.

³⁰⁶ Cable from Department of Defence to NZEFEHQ dated 25/7/1919.

³⁰⁷ WA Series 1 5/10 Box 4 Miscellaneous Papers relating to Demobilisation – Item 15, NZ MedicalHQ Conference Minutes dated 17/12/1918.

the men could sail on the vessel with their class of men.³⁰⁸ Those men who contracted VD while waiting for their assigned voyage home had to be taken care of in Britain at the New Zealand Government's expense. Therefore the NZEFHQ decided that as a form of punishment, all VD patients discharged from hospital would be sent to their reserve units and be the last to be repatriated to New Zealand.³⁰⁹ For example, 37 men were sent to the VD hospital from Sling Camp in March 1919 with symptoms of VD.³¹⁰

Despite the efforts of the NZMC and the NZEF commanders, VD patients were still being hospitalised in significant numbers in May 1919. In Routine Orders issued in that month it was stated that any personnel of the NZEF found to have VD by 1 June 1919 or if soldiers had a reoccurrence of infection through their own neglect, they would be repatriated by special transport.³¹¹ The commanders were hoping that the men's sense of shame would be sufficient to ensure compliance. When Hornchurch closed in July 1919, the Venereal section was kept open until August 1919 when the remaining 200 patients were transferred to the British Special Division Military hospital at Chiselden.³¹² We now turn to another

³⁰⁸ WA Series 133 3 Box 7 71/1 Demobilisation Instructions – NZEF Instruction No. 175 VD Patients issued 19/3/1919.

³⁰⁹ *ibid.* NZEF Instruction No. 99 VD Patients issued 30/12/1918. One wonders what reason the infected men gave to their loved ones for their delayed embarkation for New Zealand

³¹⁰ WA Series 133 3 Box 8 71/2/2 Demobilisation in Sling Camp – Statistics for Week Ending 16/3/1919.

³¹¹ WA Series 133 3 Box 10 71/4 Demobilisation General File September 1918-October 1919 – AGroupHQ Group Routine Order No. 129 issued 30/5/1919. This was to be thoroughly disseminated throughout all ranks.

³¹² Carbery, *The New Zealand Medical Service*, p. 500. See also NZEF Instructions No. 246 issued 16/8/1919 and No. 241 issued 6/8/1919.

special class of soldiers, those men who were prisoners-of-war (POW).

NZEF POWs held by German and Turkish forces. The prisoners that were captured on Gallipoli suffered greatly while in captivity. Of the twenty-seven men captured by the Turkish forces, ten died of their wounds while in captivity and one man died after repatriation to the Allied forces. At the time of the Armistice, the POWs were held at Sans Stefano loading wagons for the German army. When confirmation came through that the Armistice was signed, the prisoners were sent to Constantinople including Private William Surgenor who had been a prisoner since August 1915.³¹³ Private Surgenor was returned to the NZMRB on 16 December 1918 and sent immediately to Egypt for repatriation home. In Germany, 474 men were in German hands at the Armistice. Fifty men died in captivity and 391 were returned to the NZEF.³¹⁴ When the NZDiv arrived in Germany, the NZMC assigned a party of officers and other ranks to collect sick and wounded POWs and transport them to British Field ambulances. They were then sent to Britain for repatriation.³¹⁵

In May 1918 while the NZMRB was in combat, it was decided that there would be a selection of materials of war available for display in the Dominions' war museums provided it was not required by the EFF for combat operations.³¹⁶ The contemporary correspondence around

³¹³ Pugsley, *Gallipoli*, p. 361.

³¹⁴ NZEF Summary 28/6/1919.

³¹⁵ Carbery, *The New Zealand Medical Service* p. 499.

³¹⁶ Memorandum from EEF Chief of General Staff issued 27/5/1918.

the matter of war trophies indicates how much importance was placed on them by the NZEF and the other Dominions. The EEFHQ established the War Trophies Section, 3rd Echelon to handle the requests from the Dominion and British forces. On this basis, Wellington initiated a request to the NZEFHQ for a selection of war trophies and equipment used by the NZMRB in the Desert campaign. The initial steps in building a war trophy collection were undertaken in September 1918 by the New Zealand War Trophies representative Captain Rhodes. He was after anything of interest of the enemy's no matter how inconsequential.³¹⁷

In November 1918 Captain Rhodes was instructed to visit the NZMRB depot at Kantara and fossick around for unserviceable equipment that could be put on display. All material collected was to be shipped to the depot at Ismailia for storage and packing for transport. General Chaytor wrote to the EEFHQ in November and assured them that "there would be no difficulty in getting the shipping space to New Zealand".³¹⁸ Captain Rhodes had to be careful. The NZEFHQ discovered that some of Turkish machine-guns which had been captured by the NZMRB had been "borrowed" by some of the ALHR and marked for dispatch to Australia.³¹⁹ There were also enquires made about medical and latrine appliances, for example the cacolets, that would be "suitable for exhibition purposes in New

³¹⁷ WA Series 40 4 Box 4 Movements/Operations NZMRB January-June 1919. Memorandum ENZ 90/50 issued 3/9/1918.

³¹⁸ Letter from Major-General Chaytor to EEFHQ dated 7/11/1918.

³¹⁹ WA Series 40 4 Box 4 Movements/Operations NZMRB January-June 1919. Memorandum from NZMRBHQ issued 11/3/1919. At this time 44 machineguns were allotted to the Mounted Rifle Regiments and the 1st Machinegun Squadron as war trophies.

Zealand".³²⁰ The NZMC also requested that some pathological specimens be returned to New Zealand for further medical research. The NZEFEHQ approved the transfer and the material was shipped to Otago University Medical School.³²¹

The process of collection and identification proceeded while the NZMRB was being demobilised. By March 1919 Captain Rhodes had collected enough material to be shipped to New Zealand. It was planned that a mountain gun, 38 machine guns, artillery limbers, six field guns, one German Albatross plane, and a pontoon to be shipped aboard the HMNZT *Kaikoura*. The New Zealanders were also "anxious to obtain specimens of enemy ammunition for our own war museums but they acknowledged the need for approval issued by the EEFHQ."³²² A box lot of ordnance was collected and packed for shipment. This anxiety could have been potentially disastrous for the crew and passengers of the *Kaikoura*. There is a note in the archives dated 11 March 1919 noting that armed aerial bombs captured from the Turkish Airforce were being returned to New Zealand. The prospect of sending a box live explosives by vessel did not appear to raise any safety concerns.

A request was made for a tank to be taken back to New Zealand for the national museum. The NZEFEHQ asked EEFHQ what this would entail and was advised that a tank

³²⁰ NZEFEHQ Memorandum issued 5/3/1919.

³²¹ Memorandum from NZMRB Medical Service to CO NZEFEHQ issued 10/3/1919. Reply from NZEFEHQ issued 16/3/1919.

³²² NZEFEHQ note dated 11/3/1919.

could be supplied without guns and machineguns for the cost of £5,000. There is no reply, suggesting that the matter was quickly forgotten.³²³ It would have been a courageous public servant or officer who authorised expenditure of that considerable sum on a war trophy.

The HMNZT *Kaikoura* did not take the war trophies back to New Zealand. When the HMNZT *Ulimaroa* sailed in June 1919 its consignment of war trophies included five field guns, one Ford car, thirty machineguns, a German gas cylinder, the Albatross plane, a spare aero engine, automatic rifles, the pathological specimens for Otago University and presumably one box of live explosives. We can now turn to the chapter on the NZMC, the Hospitals and repatriation of the sick and wounded of the NZEF.

³²³ NZEFEHQ note dated 11/3/1919.

Chapter Ten: The New Zealand Medical Corps, Hospitals & Hospital Ships, Repatriation of the Wounded & Sick, and the Veterinary Corps

The NZEF built up an impressive medical infrastructure during the First World War which was the responsibility of the NZMC. Regimental Aid Posts in the front line fed into a network of field hospitals and permanent New Zealand run hospitals in Britain and Egypt. Supporting these land-based hospitals were the hospital ships NZHS *Maheno* and *Marama* and a fleet of ambulance ships and special ships for the transport of the amputees. There was also the work of the Dental corps and the NZVC. This chapter will provide an overview of how the medical service operated at the time of the Armistice and how the wounded were transported back to New Zealand along with a brief survey of the NZVC.

At the time of the Armistice there were 209 officers and 1319 other ranks serving with the NZMC. The bulk of these were in France and Britain while only 114 men were with the NZMRB.³²⁴ Demobilisation of this unit did not proceed along the same path as the combat forces. The speed of the demobilisation for the men of the NZMC was determined by the rate that the sick and wounded men were repatriated.³²⁵ The first unit to be demobilised was the New Zealand Stationary Hospital in France with the close of combat operations on the Western Front. It packed up and was repatriated to Britain on Boxing Day 1918. The Field

³²⁴ Carbery, *The New Zealand Medical Service*, p. 497.

³²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 497.

Ambulances were to remain with their brigades and provide care for the men. As the NZDiv reduced in strength the Field Ambulances were demobilised. The 3rd Field Ambulance was demobilised on 3 February 1919, the 2nd on 4 March. Upon demobilisation, the 2nd Field Ambulance had to part with their mascot, a donkey called Murphy who had been with the unit since their arrival in Egypt in 1915. Given the restrictions on animals returning to New Zealand, poor Murphy was not allowed to embark for Britain. 1st Field Ambulance left Germany on 25 March 1919 with the last drafts of the NZDiv bound for Britain.³²⁶ After the Armistice a house in Brighton was established as the accommodation point for Nurses, VAD and Red Cross workers awaiting passage to New Zealand.³²⁷ The demands of the hospitals required nurses in particular to remain long after the soldiers had left for home. In December 1918, there were 255 nurses in Britain, 40 in France and 35 in Egypt awaiting repatriation.³²⁸

The first hospitals for the NZEF were established in June and July 1915. The No. 1 Stationary Hospital remained in operation in Egypt until after the Armistice while the No. 2 Stationary Hospital was transferred to Britain in June 1916 and redesignated No. 1 New Zealand General Hospital (No.1 NZGH).³²⁹ The Aotea convalescent home at Heliopolis, a suburb of Cairo opened in October 1915 and

³²⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 499-500.

³²⁷ WA Series 133 3 Box 7 71/1 Demobilisation Instructions – NZEF Instruction No. 129 issued 28/1/1919.

³²⁸ WA Series 1 Box 8 1/45 Transports Available for Repatriation – Matron in Chief NZMCHQ to NZEFHQ Return on Location of Nurses (NZANS) at 18/12/1918. See also Carbery, p. 497.

³²⁹ Brigadier-General Sir D.J. McGavin, 'The New Zealand Stationary Hospital at Salonika', *The War Effort of New Zealand: A Popular History of (a) Minor Campaigns in Which New Zealanders Took Part: (b) Services Not Fully Dealt with in the Campaign Volumes: (c) the Work at the Bases*, Lieutenant H.T.B. Drew (ed.), Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd, 1923, pp. 114-115.

remained in operation until June 1919 when the sturdy matron and her volunteers returned to New Zealand with the men of the NZMRB aboard the HMNZT *Ulimaroa*.³³⁰ In October 1918 a convalescent camp was set up as an adjunct to the NZTUD at Ismailia on Chevalier Island. It also remained in operation until the end of June 1919.³³¹ At this time men with malaria and broken bones were still receiving treatment in No. 27 General Hospital.³³² Also waiting for embarkation was Trooper Goodwin of the WMR, suffering from neurasthenia. The medical officer had approved him going on the first available transport to New Zealand and was confirmed by NZEFEHQ.³³³

There seemed to be problems with the running of the Hospital in Egypt. In April 1919, the NZMCHQ advised NZEFHQ that a court of enquiry needed to be held to establish responsibility for shortages of certain instruments and other surgical stores short accounted for. A court of enquiry was held on 30 April. A note from NZEFHQ to NZMCHQ from General Richardson dated 20 May 1919 stated that:

The evidence [presented to the court] clearly shows that the Administration of the New Zealand General Hospital was run in a very lax manner. In my opinion, the CO of this unit is responsible.³³⁴

At the time of the Armistice, there was an enormous medical infrastructure within Britain serving the men of the

³³⁰ Powles, *The New Zealanders in Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 272-275.

³³¹ Burrows, *Sergeant Larry Burrows*, p. 42. See also Powles, *The New Zealanders in Sinai and Palestine*, p. 273.

³³² WA Series 1 3 Box 6 XFE1058 Troops Returning to New Zealand per HMNZT *Ulimaroa*.

³³³ *ibid.*

³³⁴ WA Series 1 3 Box 17 5/60 Hospital Egypt No. 1 Stationary Hospital January – May 1919.

NZEF. At the end of November 1918, there were 1,442 men in British hospitals, 4,886 men in NZEF hospitals and 3,000 men in Convalescent homes. Bill Taylor, lying wounded in a NZEF hospital when the Armistice was announced on the ward “was filled with the same feelings as the poet when he heard everyone burst out singing”.³³⁵ A VAD nurse remarked that with the announcement of the Armistice “there was absolute silence; & the thought no more soldiers killed, & the return to NZ soon”.³³⁶

No. 1 NZGH was located in Brockenhurst village 22 kilometres from Southampton. The NZMC had taken the operation of this hospital from the War Office in June 1916 when the hospital had been relocated from Egypt. It had a capacity of 1,500 beds across a number of sites around the village.³³⁷ The dispersed nature of the hospital operation caused the NZMC many administrative difficulties during the demobilisation process.³³⁸

The No. 2 New Zealand General Hospital (No.2 NZGH) was established at Walton-on-Thames and by the time of the Armistice had capacity for 1,600 patients.³³⁹ No. 3 New Zealand General Hospital (No.3 NZGH) was taken over by the NZMC at the end of 1916. It was located opposite the NZEF Camp at Codford and a few miles away from Sling Camp. This hospital served the camps and dealt with minor injuries and illnesses. Any patients requiring surgical procedures were transferred to No. 1 NZGH or No. 2

³³⁵ Chris Pugsley, ‘New Zealand: “The Heroes Lie in France”’, p. 200.

³³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 200.

³³⁷ Brigadier-General Sir D.J. McGavin, ‘The New Zealand Stationary Hospital at Salonika’, p. 121.

³³⁸ Carbery, *The New Zealand Medical Service* p. 486.

³³⁹ Brigadier-General Sir D.J. McGavin, ‘The New Zealand Stationary Hospital at Salonika’, p. 115.

NZGH. It had capacity for 1,000 beds including a 500 bed venereal disease section. The establishment of the VD section at No.3 NZGH came about due to the significant number of infected men requiring treatment from the Command Depot.³⁴⁰

Codford Camp's main function was to prepare men for further training prior to returning to active duty. It was here that men were categorised as either Category A or B or C. Category A men were sent to Sling Camp while Category B and C men were sent to Codford Camp. Those categorised as permanently unfit (C2) were sent directly to Torquay for repatriation on the next available transport.³⁴¹ A medical board was established at Codford to classify men and draft reports for disability claims. In January 1919 they were organised so at least 400 men could be processed each day. Support was provided by the No. 3 NZGH and the VD section.³⁴²

Hornchurch was the site of the NZEF Convalescent Hospital (NZCH) for other ranks. It had an official capacity of 2,500 patients and was the largest of all the New Zealand camps in Britain. Convalescing officers were sent to two Officer's Homes in Brighton.³⁴³ The specialist work done in pioneering plastic surgery at Sidcup Hospital was deemed so important that the entire NZEF section at the hospital plus 59 patients under care were repatriated to New Zealand as a single unit. Upon arrival in Dunedin the

³⁴⁰ Carbery, *The New Zealand Medical Service*, p. 489.

³⁴¹ *ibid.*, p. 495.

³⁴² *ibid.*, p. 495.

³⁴³ Brigadier-General Sir D.J. McGavin, 'The New Zealand Stationary Hospital at Salonika', p. 125.

specialists established a department at Dunedin Hospital for the ongoing treatment of returned men.³⁴⁴

One of the smaller units within the NZMC was the Dental Corps. This unit had grown from a small outfit to a large organisation by November 1918 and member of the Dental Corps operated with the NZDiv, the NZMRB and in the British camps at the time of the Armistice. In order to prepare men for the demobilisation scheme, more dentists were sent from New Zealand in 1918 to provide final treatment prior to embarkation. At the same time the corps was reducing in numbers as men were sent home on each transport to care for the men. The delay caused by strikes in Britain enabled the corps to treat all cases on hand prior to departure for New Zealand.³⁴⁵ All the personnel of the Dental Corps were repatriated to New Zealand by June 1919.

By 31 January 1919, there were 2911 officers and other ranks under treatment in the NZEF and British hospitals when the demobilisation scheme began in earnest for the NZMC. In March 1919 No. 1 NZGH demobilised with the last sailing of the NZHS *Maheno* for New Zealand with 398 patients. No. 2 NZGH was closed down in June 1919³⁴⁶ leaving 80 beds open beyond August 1919 and No. 3 NZGH closed and demobilised in July 1919. The NZCH at Hornchurch was supposed to close in April 1919 but

³⁴⁴ Carbery, *The New Zealand Medical Service*, p. 488.

³⁴⁵ Lt. Colonel T.A Hunter, 'New Zealand Dental Corps', *The War Effort of New Zealand: A Popular History of (a) Minor Campaigns in Which New Zealanders Took Part: (b) Services Not Fully Dealt with in the Campaign Volumes: (c) the Work at the Bases*, Lieutenant H.T.B. Drew (ed.), Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd, 1923, pp. 147-148.

³⁴⁶ NZEF Instruction No. 215 issued 3/6/1919. The closure date was 14/6/1919.

remained in operation until June when the NZCH was designated E Group and the patients repatriated home via Sling Camp and the hospital demobilised.³⁴⁷ The New Zealand Officers' Convalescent Home and Nurses' Home in Brighton were closed in June 1919 and the staff repatriated home on the next available vessel.³⁴⁸ The section at Oatlands Park for the men missing limbs was kept open as there were still patients awaiting fitting of artificial limbs at Roehampton. What medical equipment was not disposed of or sold in Britain was shipped to New Zealand as cargo on the transports. By the beginning of September 1919, 33 officers and 319 other ranks were still in hospital. This included 140 amputees awaiting their fittings.³⁴⁹ The story of amputees highlights the difficulty of repatriation of the incapacitated men from Britain.

Prior to the Armistice, General Richardson and the NZMC developed a plan to repatriate men who had lost limbs or who were blind. Over the course of 1918 there had been a steady stream of such men sent home to New Zealand as there was a need to clear bed space for the anticipated casualties from 1918 campaigns on the Western Front.³⁵⁰ But not all men would be sent home in a timely fashion as in the example of amputee Alec Hutton, who lost a leg in the fighting in September 1918.

Still in hospital in February 1919, he wrote in a letter home that amputees had been promised by General Russell that

³⁴⁷ NZEF Instruction No. 185 issued 1/4/1919. See also NZEF Instruction No. 192 issued 16/4/1919 and NZEF Instruction 221 issued 13/6/1919.

³⁴⁸ NZEF Instruction No. 211 issued 26/5/1919. The closure date was 21/6/1919.

³⁴⁹ Carbery, *The New Zealand Medical Service*, pp. 500-501.

³⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p. 483.

they would sail for New Zealand in specially fitted vessels. He was told by a fellow amputee that men sent on the HMNZT *Ruahine* were forced to use the standard companionways on one leg.³⁵¹ Hutton had to be very patient. By April 1919 he still had not been fitted for an artificial limb. He sourly noted in a letter “no limbie boat has left since January [1919] but one is promised next month”.³⁵² He wrote in May that there was a boat sailing at the end of May and another vessel in August. In fact it was three vessels that embarked for New Zealand repatriating 76 amputees.³⁵³ Alex Hutton finally embarked for New Zealand in October 1919 aboard HMNZT *Arawa*, thirteen months after he was wounded.³⁵⁴

Another group of patients that posed a challenge for the NZMC were men suffering from physiological illnesses including what was then termed shellshock. In 1917, No. 1 NZGH established a ward for shellshock cases that remained open after the Armistice until the hospital was closed in June 1919. By the end of December 1918, 1,511 patients classified as mentals, neurasthenia or shellshock, were evacuated from France to No.1 NZGH for treatment. Patients were still being treated when the hospital was demobilised in June 1919.³⁵⁵ The great number of vessels returning with demobilised troops and men suffering from war induced psychosis ended the policy of channelling men

³⁵¹ Boyack, Malone, Phillips, (eds.), *The Great Adventure*, p. 250.

³⁵² *ibid.*, p. 254. Letter dated 22/4/1919.

³⁵³ WA Series 1 3 Box 18 8/5 Returning Drafts of Sick and Wounded – Note from NZMCHQ to NZEFHQ dated 14/8/1919.

³⁵⁴ Boyack, Malone, Phillips, (eds.), *The Great Adventure*, pp. 255-256. Letter dated 1/5/1919. HMNZT *Arawa* embarked on 5 October 1919 with 586 men aboard.

³⁵⁵ Russell Clarke, ‘Not Mad, But Very Ill: The Treatment of New Zealand’s Shellshocked Soldiers 1914-1939’, University of Auckland, MA Thesis, 1991, p. 47.

through the hospital at Seacliff Dunedin. Medical specialists assessed individual cases prior to disembarkation in New Zealand. Medical officers on the transports signed medical certificates that could be used for committal of men to care in hospitals by a magistrate under existing laws.³⁵⁶ All efforts were made not to send men to mental hospitals although this system broke down when men first arrived back in New Zealand and some unfortunate returned men were sent directly to mental hospitals.³⁵⁷ The problem was an insufficient medical bureaucracy under equipped to care for the number of men returned to New Zealand. Between June 1919 and December 1921, 1,134 soldiers and ex-soldiers were treated at the Queen Mary Military Hospital at Hamner Springs.³⁵⁸

NZEFHQ planned that those in hospital or convalescing were the first priority for repatriation. The Government was very aware of the need to handle the sick, wounded, and invalid men with care. In December 1918, NZEFHQ was advised that:

It is essential that satisfactory arrangements [for messing/accommodation for the sick and injured] be made before embarkation, to guard against complaints on arrival in New Zealand.³⁵⁹

For example, the specific instructions for 74 invalid and wounded men to be transported home on the *Manuganui* in December 1918 stated that four railway carriages were put aside for these men and each man was to get a bed and be

³⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p. 47.

³⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 62.

³⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p. 95.

³⁵⁹ WA Series 1 Box 8 1/45 Transports Available for Repatriation – Cable from Department of Defence to NZEFHQ dated 12/12/1918.

supplied with warm drinks. The trains ran directly onto the dock and the patients were taken aboard as carefully as possible.³⁶⁰

Transport would be provided by hospital ships and ambulance carriers. The allocation of vessels for the sick and wounded was based on the following categories:

1. Hospital ships for cot cases and the more serious walking cases
2. Ambulance transports for walking cases still requiring treatment e.g. physiotherapy
3. Ordinary transports for disabled or convalescents not requiring treatment.

The classification was carried out for the first and second categories at Brockenhurst and Walton-on-Thames whilst the NZEF Command depot at Codford processed the third Category.³⁶¹

The hospital ships *Marama* and *Maheno* were the NZEF vessels under the Geneva Convention whose primary role was to return casualties to New Zealand. After the Armistice, their role was to transport home all the invalids and sick as soon as was practicable. The NZHS *Maheno* carried 76 medical staff and was equipped for 340 cot cases. The NZHS *Marama* carried 103 medical staff and was equipped for 592 cot cases. Both vessels evacuated patients from the New Zealand General hospitals and convalescent camps in Egypt and Britain. For example in December 1918, the NZHS *Marama* sailed for New Zealand

³⁶⁰ *ibid.* Cable from NZMCHQ to NZGH Nos. 1, 2, 3 and the NZCH dated 30/11/1918.

³⁶¹ Carbery, *The New Zealand Medical Service*, pp. 494-495.

carrying 577 men made up of cot cases, walking wounded, phthisical (TB) patients, one old case of syphilis and twenty mental cases.³⁶² In December 1918 and January 1919 the *Maunganui*, *Ruahine*, *Zealandic*, and *Port Melbourne* acted as ambulance transports.

In December both vessels were sailing with a full load of cot cases and the OC for Hospital Ships was instructed from Wellington that on no account must the fittings or equipment be interfered with. Passengers and cargo could be carried if the Medical Officer did not object.³⁶³ NZEFHQ replied to Wellington in December 1918 that NZHS *Marama* needed to undertake one more voyage and when the NZHS *Maheno* arrived in New Zealand her service as a hospital ship would come to an end (See Appendix One, Table 5). The classification of the vessels changed to Ambulance Transports so they could carry passengers and cargo which was not permitted under the Convention if they were hospital ships.³⁶⁴ The Ministry of Shipping told NZEFHQ that the NZHS *Maheno* would be painted in ordinary colours and the NZHS *Marama* would be dealt with in the same fashion when its service as a hospital ship ended.³⁶⁵ NZHS *Maheno* made its last voyage as a Hospital ship in March 1919 carrying 398 patients followed by NZHS *Mahama* which made its final voyage from Britain in June 1919 carrying 689 patients.

³⁶² WA Series 1 3 Box 18 8/4 Returning Drafts of Sick and Wounded – Cable from NZEFHQ to Defence Wellington dated 27/12/1918. See also Appendix One, Table Four.

³⁶³ WA Series 1 Box 8 1/45 Transports Available for Repatriation – Cable from Department of Defence to NZEFHQ dated 12/12/1918.

³⁶⁴ *ibid.* Cable NZEFHQ to Department of Defence dated 13/12/1918.

³⁶⁵ *ibid.* Cable from Ministry of Shipping London to NZEFHQ dated 18/12/1919.

The other major medical service was the NZVC. This was an important service for the NZDiv and NZMRB who relied upon animal transport during the war and during the demobilisation period despite the fleet motorised vehicles. Two mobile sections and two veterinary hospital sections were formed in 1914 and dispatched to Egypt with the Third reinforcements.³⁶⁶ The corps was broken up when the NZDiv was formed and sent to France. The NZ Veterinary Section operated from the Calais Veterinary Hospital until it was demobilised under the command of the Royal Army Veterinary Corps. The mobile section was located with GHQ 3rd Echelon at Rouen at the time of the Armistice.³⁶⁷ A single Veterinary section served with the NZMRB throughout the campaigns in the desert. All veterinary units would remain in service until the last vessels sailed from Britain and Egypt in September and July 1919 respectively although the workload of the NZDiv Veterinary section was reduced dramatically when the horses and mules were withdrawn from service.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁶ Dr. C. J Drakes, 'New Zealand Veterinary Corps', *The War Effort of New Zealand: A Popular History of (a) Minor Campaigns in Which New Zealanders Took Part: (b) Services Not Fully Dealt with in the Campaign Volumes: (c) the Work at the Bases*, Lieutenant H.T.B. Drew (ed.), Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd, 1923, p. 149.

³⁶⁷ Stewart, *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919* vol. 2, Auckland, p. 609.

³⁶⁸ Drakes, 'New Zealand Veterinary Corps', pp. 161-162.

Chapter Eleven: Demobilising the Camps in Britain

Under the command of Brigadier-General Richardson, the GOC NZEF Establishments in Britain, the NZEF operated camps in Britain from 1916 until October 1919.³⁶⁹ Richardson was in command at the time of the Armistice and remained in control until his embarkation for New Zealand in March 1919. The War Office was responsible for moving the men of the NZEF by sea and rail, and performing inspections to ensure the standards of the NZEF were equal to the British Army but the camps themselves were under control of the NZEF. The network of camps that developed was a substantial investment in men and materials by the NZEF to create an infrastructure to support the NZDiv in France. This chapter will follow the process of how this network of camps was closed down

Closing down the network of camps was not a simple exercise and would prove a considerable task for the NZEF administrators. The administrative process of demobilising the camps could be divided into three concurrent streams of activity; evacuation of the camps, disposal or transfer of military and non-military equipment and stores, consolidation of personnel into the main camps at Sling and Codford for repatriation. Such things as camp supplies, personnel transport and accommodation, ordnance contracts, medical records, wills, base records, dental work, and war trophies became a “never ending series of intricate

³⁶⁹ Stewart, *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919* vol. 2, p. 610. When Brig-General Richardson returned to New Zealand in March 1919, command passed to Brig-General Melvill followed by Brig-General Johnston upon his return to England with the last drafts of the NZDiv.

problems the solution of which was made more difficult by absence of precedents".³⁷⁰

Following on from the advice to the War Office, NZEFHQ Order No. 90 issued 15 December 1918 established a timeline of demobilisation of the camps. This was subject to variation according to the amount of shipping allocated for demobilisation. The base depots for the infantry battalions were redesignated as District Repatriation Detachments from 1 January 1919. The Detachments were to manage all men from all arms of the NZEF by provincial location such as Canterbury.³⁷¹

At the end of 1918 NZEFHQ issued General Evacuation Orders to all camps in Britain. The procedure was as follows:

1. Transport organised with command
2. Damages to barracks to be inspected and any damage caused by the NZEF paid for
3. All military equipment not shipped to New Zealand or disposed of in Britain, to be handed to Imperial Ordnance in accordance with the demobilisation
4. Horses released for sale
5. Canteen Accounts settled by all units
6. Regimental accounts to be settled by the paymaster
7. All contracts for services provided by civilian contractors to be cancelled unilaterally
8. Fatigue parties left behind to clean up
9. Men leaving the camp to carry one day's rations
10. Property to be sold in the United Kingdom goes to the Disposal Board and sent to records store in Paddington

³⁷⁰ *ibid.*, pp .610- 611.

³⁷¹ Ferguson, *The History of the Canterbury Regiment*, p. 295.

11. Property for return to New Zealand to be crated up and marked Ordnance Stores Wellington.³⁷²

This order started a chain of events that led through to the final disbandment of NZEFHQ in September 1919. From 1 January 1919 the main camps in Britain were redesignated. 4th Infantry (Reserve) Brigade at Sling Camp became known as A Group NZEF. This camp would accommodate Category A men awaiting repatriation. The NZEF Command Depot at Codford was re-designated as B Group NZEF and accommodated B and Category C men and the NZCH accommodated Category C men and those newly released from the hospitals. The NZEF Discharge Depot at Torquay was redesignated as C Group NZEF.³⁷³ This camp would house “married men with wives and families in the United Kingdom”.³⁷⁴ This would remain in operation well into 1919 processing drafts for transport to New Zealand and families of men who had gained passage on the transports.³⁷⁵ The YMCA also operated from Torquay offering educational classes to the discharged men as well as a 200 hectare farm leased for training by the NZEF.³⁷⁶

³⁷² Series 1 Box 11 2/26 Equipment Camps in United Kingdom Disposal/Demobilisation – General Evacuation orders issued by General Richardson NZEFHQ on 30/12/1918. See also Brigadier-General G.S. Richardson, ‘Education in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force’, *The War Effort of New Zealand: A Popular History of (a) Minor Campaigns in Which New Zealanders Took Part: (b) Services Not Fully Dealt with in the Campaign Volumes: (c) the Work at the Bases*, Lieutenant H.T.B. Drew (ed.), Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd, 1923, p. 229.

³⁷³ WA Series 133 3 Box 7 71BM Demobilisation November-December 1918 – NZEF Instruction No. 92 issued 16/12/1918.

³⁷⁴ *ibid.*

³⁷⁵ Lieutenant H.T.B. Drew, ‘The New Zealand Camps in England’, *The War Effort of New Zealand: A Popular History of (a) Minor Campaigns in Which New Zealanders Took Part: (b) Services Not Fully Dealt with in the Campaign Volumes: (c) the Work at the Bases*, Lieutenant H.T.B. Drew (ed.), Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd, 1923, p. 247. See also WA Series 133 3 Box 7 71BM Demobilisation November-December 1918 – NZEF Instruction No. 92 issued 16/12/1918.

³⁷⁶ Stewart, *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919* vol. 2, p. 610.

In addition to the main camps there were a series of smaller camps that housed the specialist branches of the NZDiv. The NZRB had Brocton camp as its reserve base since 1917 when a lack of bunkhouses at Sling Camp necessitated acquiring additional space. The NZFA and NZMC were located at Ewshott; the NZE, Tunnelling Company and Maori Pioneers were based at Boscombe, and Machine-Gun battalion at Grantham and the NZE Signallers at Stevenage.³⁷⁷ Due to the pressures of the demobilisation process through strikes and a lack of shipping, a camp was established in 1919 at Sutton Coldfield (designated D Group) to accommodate surplus personnel from the other camps as they were closed down and evacuated.³⁷⁸

The War Office chased the NZEFHQ to evacuate the camps as quickly as possible so they could be closed down and disposed of. In December 1919, NZEFHQ advised that by the end of January 1919, camps at Ewshott, Stevenage, Grantham, and Boscombe would be evacuated and the men and equipment sent to D Group Sutton Coldfield.³⁷⁹ No. 2, 3, and 4 Camps at Codford were to be handed over in early February as well as any excess transport.³⁸⁰

Stevenage Camp was evacuated in February 1919. Ewshott, Grantham Camps were evacuated in March 1919 with the return of the NZDiv from Germany. Boscombe Camp remained open until June 1919 due to the time taken

³⁷⁷ Lieutenant H.T.B. Drew, 'The New Zealand Camps in England', pp. 247-248. See also Stewart, *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919* vol.2, p. 610.

³⁷⁸ Stewart, *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919* vol. 2, p. 610.

³⁷⁹ Cable from NZEFHQ to the Secretary for War dated 6/12/1918.

³⁸⁰ Cable from NZEFHQ to the War Office dated 30/1/1919.

to dispose of stores and a fatigue party detailed to manufacture wooden crosses for the military cemeteries in France and Belgium. By May 1919 the War Office was getting impatient and cabled NZEFHQ asking “will you kindly advise this office of the estimated date by which you will be able to vacate and surrender any of the hutted camps now in occupation by New Zealand troops”.³⁸¹

The NZRB camp at Brocton was planned to close in February 1919 but was kept in operation until June 1919.³⁸² Sutton Coldfield Camp originally intended to be a short term solution was finally evacuated in June.³⁸³ Personnel were sent to B Group Codford and the motor transport to A Group Sling.³⁸⁴ No. 2 & 3 Larkhill Camps were evacuated in July along with B Group Codford and the personnel evacuated to Sling Camp.³⁸⁵ C Group Torquay closed in August along with the NZMT depot at Weybridge and the NZEF Supply Depot at Southampton Row London.³⁸⁶ A Group at Sling Camp remained open beyond September. The NZEFHQ in London evacuated its Bloomsbury Square quarters in September 1919 to begin the demobilisation process. By this time, the network of camps that had supported the NZEF in Britain and the NZDiv in France ceased to exist.

³⁸¹ Cable from War Office to NZEFHQ dated 27/5/1919

³⁸² NZEF Instruction No. 215 issued 3/6/1919. The camp closed on 14/6/1919.

³⁸³ Cable from NZEFHQ to OC NZRB dated 10/6/1919.

³⁸⁴ WA Series 1 5/10 Box 4 Miscellaneous Papers relating to Demobilisation – NZEF Instruction No. 207 issued 14/5/1919. See also NZEF Instruction No. 222 issued 14/6/1919. The camp was evacuated on 20/6/1919.

³⁸⁵ WA Series 133 3 Box 7 71/1 Demobilisation Instructions- NZEF Instruction No. 210 issued 24/5/1919. See also WA Series 1 3/8/7 Box 19 Demobilisation of the New Zealand Rifle Brigade – Letter from NZEFHQ to the War Office dated 29/5/1919.

³⁸⁶ WA Series 1 5/10 Box 4 Miscellaneous Papers relating to Demobilisation – NZEFHQ Instruction No. 90 issued 15/12/1918 -Evacuation of Camps. See also NZEF Instruction No. 245 issued 14/8/1919. The depot closed on 30/8/1919.

As if to emphasise the transition from a combat operation to peacetime activity in December 1918 the AMDHQ sent out a list of officers and NCOs to be transferred to NZEFHQ London to undertake pay and audit work as the great process of winding down the military machine in Britain began.³⁸⁷ This was followed on 3 January 1919 when NZEFHQ issued an instruction to all the camps requesting they provide a list of military and non-military equipment or stores that were the property of the NZEF.³⁸⁸ This was part of the preparation for demobilisation and the camps were to be advised as to the disposal of the equipment.³⁸⁹

As requested, the camps in January 1919 sent their lists to NZEFHQ. C Group Torquay had blankets, motorcycles, trucks, baths, hand tools, band instruments, tractors, ploughs, tack and one pig sty. Boscombe Camp had timber for crosses and garden tools. A Group at Sling Camp reported no surplus material other than regimental and ordnance stores. The NZCH reported a surplus of garden tools, kitchen equipment and portable buildings. Grantham Camp reported a stock of uniforms, officer's kit, webbing, timber, stationary, armourer's tools, boot making equipment, a motorcycle with side car and a milk testing machine.³⁹⁰

³⁸⁷ WA Series 40 4 Box 4 NZMRB Movements/Operations January-June 1919.

³⁸⁸ WA Series 1 Box 11 2/26 Equipment Camps in United Kingdom Disposal/Demobilisation. Cable from NZEFHQ to War Office dated 9/12/1918. Sling Camp note to NZEFHQ dated 7/1/1919. See also NZEF Instruction No. 144 issued 14/2/1919.

³⁸⁹ *ibid.* NZEFHQ Instruction No. 102 issued 3/1/1919. NZEFHQ Instruction No. 90 was issued on 16/12/1918.

³⁹⁰ *ibid.* C Group reply dated 20/1/1919; Boscombe reply dated 17/1/1919, A Group reply dated 22/1/1919, Hornchurch reply dated 21/1/1919, and Grantham reply dated 11/1/1919. Why the Machine Gun Battalion had a milk-testing machine in their depot is not stated in the archives.

The New Zealand Mechanical Transport Depot (NZMTD) replied to the instruction advising that:

This unit is not under order to prepare for demobilisation. Its date of departure for New Zealand will certainly not be before September of this year, until which date it will exist at nearly full strength in order to supply transport for the various camps.³⁹¹

NZEFHQ advised the AGroupHQ at Sling Camp to “sell horses by auction best market”.³⁹² To replace the horses that were auctioned off in Britain, four 3 ton and four 1½-ton trucks were required to be supplied to Sling Camp.³⁹³ The NZMTD managed by the end of December 1918 to supply seven 3-ton trucks to Sling and Codford camps. The camps would use the 3-ton trucks as 1½-ton trucks were unobtainable in December 1918 by any means. It was also suggested to NZEFHQ that No. 1 NZGH be supplied with a 3-ton truck to aid in the demobilisation of the hospital.³⁹⁴ By January 1919, the NZEFHQ had to source trucks on the open market as transport for men and equipment was still an issue. General Stewart (OC AGroupHQ Sling Camp) requested trucks to transport coal to the NZEF camps and hospitals.³⁹⁵ In February 1919 Sling Camp was struggling to get ambulances to take care of men at the camp. Two were required but one was unusable due to a lack of spare parts.³⁹⁶ In March the NZMTD was being asked to ascertain

³⁹¹ *ibid.* Cable from NZMTD to NZEFHQ dated 18/1/1919.

³⁹² Cable from NZEFHQ to 4th Infantry (Reserve) BrigadeHQ dated 10/12/1918. In April and May 1919, the NZEFHQ would get complaints about the reliability of the truck supplied to Sling and Codford camps.

³⁹³ Cable from 4th Infantry (Reserve) BrigadeHQ to NZEFHQ dated 1/12/1918. 1½-ton trucks were more suitable for transport than the 3-ton trucks available whose reliability was an ongoing concern.

³⁹⁴ Cable from NZMTD to NZEFHQ dated 17/12/1918.

³⁹⁵ NZEFHQ Memorandum from General Stewart issued 29/1/1919.

³⁹⁶ NZMTD Codford Camp Memorandum to NZEFHQ issued 3/2/1919.

the greatest number of mechanical transports which would be available for disposal on demobilisation as the number of men began to decline as drafts left for New Zealand. As well as disposal, NZEFHQ wished to minimise the purchase of spare parts and consolidate the holdings into the depot.³⁹⁷ The fleet of vehicles was slowly reduced in numbers as the demobilisation process continued and the majority of the NZEF repatriated to New Zealand.

There were opportunistic business men who saw their chance to make a handsome profit from the demobilisation of the NZEF. A Mr. Marshall, a Housebreaker and Contractor of Peckham wrote to NZEFHQ three days after the Armistice offering to:

Make offers for the purchase of any buildings, timer or other structures, in this country, that you may have the disposal of for demolition and clearance after the demobilisation.³⁹⁸

No reply was sent to the enterprising Mr Marshall but a staff officer in a handwritten note recorded that any surplus material would be disposed of by a Disposal Board. At the Armistice one did not exist and was created on 19 November 1918 under orders from Wellington.³⁹⁹ Other businesses wrote to NZEFHQ offering their services in disposing of surplus material from the No. 1 NZGH and the various camps, one of which promised high prices at auctions in Manchester. Both were sent to the Disposal

³⁹⁷ WA Series 1 3 Box 18 8/6 Reconstruction Committee – Cable from NZEFHQ to NZASC and NZMTD dated 25/3/1919.

³⁹⁸ WA Series 1 Box 11 2/26 Equipment Camps in United Kingdom Disposal/Demobilisation. Letter from Mr. Marshall dated 14/11/1919.

³⁹⁹ *ibid.* Undated handwritten note and letter from New Zealand High Commissioner to NZEFHQ dated 19/11/1919.

Board and the businesses were advised that their services would be called upon if required.⁴⁰⁰

NZEFHQ also had to balance the disposal of buildings and equipment a requirement to retain its military equipment for under a programme known as Scheme L. This was a plan for mobilisation in case the NZDiv had to take the field again if the peace process broke down. However, the transport to get the NZDiv men to the front lines was not available. Therefore, in January 1919 the OC Brocton Camp sought permission from NZEFHQ to hand over all the ordnance and equipment held on charge under Scheme L to the Royal Ordnance. Permission was sought from Northern Command who gave its authorisation and Brocton Camp divested itself of ordnance and equipment to the Ordnance depots.⁴⁰¹ At the same time, the OC Brocton reported that a swift evacuation of the camp as required by NZEFHQ was impossible.⁴⁰² Two days after the cable from Brocton, AGroupHQ was ordered to send from Brocton a 1000 Category A men with a full compliment of officers and NCOs from the latest reinforcements. This was done instead of sending earlier classes for demobilisation to enable repatriation of Category A men only from Sling Camp.⁴⁰³ This movement of men prevented the evacuation and closure of Brocton Camp as planned in February. In

⁴⁰⁰ *ibid.* Letter from Marshall dated 14./11/1919. Letters from Jackman & Masters dated 25/11/1919, letter from William Hall and Sons Auctioneers dated 7/1/1919. Handwritten note on letters stating the Disposal board would reply.

⁴⁰¹ WA Series 1 3/8/7 Box 19 Demobilisation of the New Zealand Rifle Brigade – Cable from NZEFHQ to Northern Command dated 15/1/1919. Reply from Northern Command dated 20/1/1919.

⁴⁰² *ibid.* Letter from OC NZRB Reserve Depot Brocton to NZEFHQ dated 14/1/1919.

⁴⁰³ *ibid.* Cable from NZEFHQ to AGroupHQ Sling Camp dated 16/1/1919.

fact “owing to a hang-up”⁴⁰⁴ in shipping, NZEFHQ found it necessary to ask for further accommodation for its men.

In January 1919 the financial implications of the demobilisation scheme were a subject of dispute between NZEFHQ and the War Office. At the heart of the debate was how the War Office should determine the financial settlements when the military equipment of the NZEF forces was taken over by the Royal Ordnance Corps.⁴⁰⁵ Before the reserve camps of the NZDiv were evacuated by the NZEF, the level of payments and adjustments required an agreement.⁴⁰⁶ While an attempt was made to resolve the dispute, the stores of military equipment were retained by the NZEF in its depots in Britain. At the end of January the dispute was resolved and NZEFHQ issued an instruction that all training equipment issued by the Imperial authorities was to be handed over to the nearest Ordnance depot. This instruction did not cover personal equipment, arms, accoutrements, and surplus clothing. This was superseded by an instruction in February 1919 that advised the following:

1. Equipment which the War Office agreed to take over is handed in to the nearest Ordnance depot.
2. Material required for New Zealand is packed and marked and despatched.

⁴⁰⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁰⁵ All the Dominion Forces were involved in this dispute with the War Office.

⁴⁰⁶ WA Series I Box 11 2/26 Equipment Camps in United Kingdom Disposal/Demobilisation – Letter from C.M. Stephen, Director of Equipment and Ordnance Stores to NZEFHQ dated 16/1/1919. See also letter from War Department to NZEFHQ dated 16/1/1919.

3. All other material not supplied under options 1 & 2 would be sold to the Ministry of Supply and the balance paid to the NZEF Paymaster.⁴⁰⁷

For example, Boscombe Camp by June 1919 sold pit timbers, corrugated iron held for France that was not required, hand tools, and track rail.⁴⁰⁸ In May 1919, the War Office declined to accept from the Dominions such military equipment as entrenching tools, steel helmets, binoculars, prismatic compasses and training stores. Wellington decided to ship the equipment home in preference to selling it in Britain.⁴⁰⁹

By the end of 1919 the NZEF had left all the camps in Britain but they were not forgotten. In 2006, the kiwi carved into the side of the hill overlooking what was Sling Camp is still visible. It was left there as a memorial to all the men from so far away who came to fight in the First World War. This concludes the survey of the demobilisation process of the NZEF. The next chapter illustrates the issue of ill-discipline within the NZEF and example from other Dominion and British forces.

⁴⁰⁷ WA Series 1 Box 11 2/26 Equipment Camps in United Kingdom Disposal/Demobilisation. Cable from NZEFHQ to War Office dated 9/12/1918. See also Sling Camp note to NZEFHQ dated 7/1/1919 and NZEF Instruction No. 144 issued 14/2/1919.

⁴⁰⁸ *ibid.* NZEF Instruction No. 134 issued 30/1/1919 and NZEF Instruction No. 142 issued 13/2/1919.

⁴⁰⁹ WA Series 1 3/8/7 Box 19 Demobilisation of the New Zealand Rifle Brigade – Cable from NZEFHQ to Department of Defence dated 23/5/1919. Department of Defence reply to NZEFHQ dated 31/5/1919.

Chapter Twelve: Ill Discipline in the NZEF

One of the constant themes in the study of demobilisation is the presence of ill-discipline amongst the New Zealand troops. This was not unique to New Zealand. All the British and Dominion forces at some point during the demobilisation process had to deal with rioting, protests and unwillingness to follow orders; acts which, as defined in the *Manual of Military Law* were to the prejudice of good order and military discipline.⁴¹⁰ Some of these examples of collective ill-discipline should not be labelled mutinies. Instead they are more in the nature of strikes, “more concerned with demobilization grievances than with refusing to fight”.⁴¹¹ This was the by-product of the transition to peacetime and the natural feeling of both volunteers and conscripts that now the war was at an end, they could “go easy”. These problems demonstrate the significant role played by the officer corps in the NZEF in maintaining military discipline at a time when everything else was pointing to an easing of army regulations. Often attempts made in the British army to instil unnecessary resulted in the disruption of good order and discipline. These citizen armies required:

Sympathetic officers, who continued in their wartime role of defending their men against capricious authority, and residual trust of men for the regimental officers, help many units to maintain their cohesion.⁴¹²

For example, the 3rd Australian Divisional Artillery suffered from a series of disturbances in January 1919 which was

⁴¹⁰ Cathryn Corns and John Hughes-Wilson, *Blindfold and Alone: British Military Executions in the Great War*, London: Cassel & Co, 2001, pp. 87, 338.

⁴¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 380.

⁴¹² Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches*, pp.173-174.

put down to tactless officers.⁴¹³ General Richardson who commanded the NZEF in Britain wisely noted the challenge for commanders upon the Armistice:

It was not to be expected that when war ceased men would quietly submit to the continuation of full-day drills and manoeuvres for which there was no further use.⁴¹⁴

This attitude amongst the men is not hard to detect. Soldiers changed their attitude to the army's authority and discipline once the Armistice came into effect. The daily grind of warfare, which kept the men's focus exclusively on fighting and resting, now turned to thoughts of home and re-entrance into the civilian workforce. Hence, many perceived the demobilisation process as unfair. Many volunteers believed that their contract with the army was finished and wanted their ticket. The reason was they believed they had completed the job for which they had enlisted the defeat of Germany. For those conscripted, the feeling was now they could be free of their enforced obligation to service in His Majesty's armed forces. Many saw the Armistice as the conclusion of the burden of service and expected a speedy return to civilian life and home. These attitudes shaped the process of demobilisation and contributed to ill-discipline.⁴¹⁵

There are many examples from the British and other Dominion forces. Two days after the Armistice, there was a mutiny at Shoreham Camp. British troops left the camp after a fellow soldier was abused by an officer. The command demobilised the men the next day to avoid

⁴¹³ *ibid.*, pp.173-174.

⁴¹⁴ Richardson, 'Education in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force', p.221.

⁴¹⁵ Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches*, pp. 173-174. Demobilisation for the British Army was delayed by the General Election in December 1918.

spread of mutinous behaviour. In Britain and France, the rear area troops were more militant. There were a series of large scale strikes involving British LOC troops and smaller incidents close to the front lines.⁴¹⁶ The rationale at the time can be summed up as “we’ll soldier no more”.⁴¹⁷ An officer of an English regiment noted his men “could scarcely be blamed. They were still, like most of us, not soldiers but civilians in uniforms”.⁴¹⁸ Men of the Royal Artillery in camp at Le Havre burnt down several depots in a riot lasting two days from 9 December 1918. The Canadian Corps faced trouble when it began to march into Germany to begin occupation duties. Unlike the NZDiv, the Canadians were forced to march in full combat gear including helmets. Protests were staged and some sixty Canadian soldiers were court-martialled for refusing to march and interfering with men trying to march.⁴¹⁹ Other Canadian troops in camp at Arras participated in a drunken riot for two days in the town prior to embarkation for Britain.

Australia had its own issues. There was a mass mutiny in a battalion of the AIF in October 1918 protesting about being used as shock troops.⁴²⁰ Men of the Australian Light Horse refused to re-board a train until their grievances had been heard. The major problem for the Australians was not ill-discipline, but criminal behaviour. Discipline in the AIF had been tightened by 1916 and then continuously improved. By the Armistice however crime was at a crisis point within the Australian divisions in France and the camps in

⁴¹⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 172-173.

⁴¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 173.

⁴¹⁸ *ibid.*

⁴¹⁹ Chris Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell*, p. 285.

⁴²⁰ Corns and Hughes-Wilson, *Blindfold and Alone*, p. 381.

Britain.⁴²¹ C.E.W. Bean, historian of the AIF made a key observation on the problems of ill-discipline:

The commanders of the A.I.F [in November 1918] were now suddenly faced by a problem in some ways opposite to that of the four previous years. It was certain that more than a year would pass before the last of the A.I.F could be transported home. The Australian force had a reputation for admirable discipline in operations but for being less easy to handle when it had less to do.⁴²²

The New Year brought more problems for the British and Canadian. Attempts to impose a peacetime training regime on men ready to leave for home also caused problems. The NCOs and privates of the 13th Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery went on strike after “clumsy attempts to enforce long hours of tedious and unnecessary drill”.⁴²³ An officer of the battery remarked that:

They are still the same men who won the war and if treated the right way and told the reason for things they are ready to do anything required of them.⁴²⁴

On 3 January 1919, 10,000 British troops ordered to embark from Folkestone refused and marched to the town and demanded rapid demobilisation. The order was given a second time to embark again the next day but refused. In Dover, a further 2,000 British troops demonstrated against their continued service in the armed forces.⁴²⁵ On 7 January, 1,500 men of the Army Service Corps took trucks

⁴²¹ Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches*, pp. 169-170. See Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell* p. 292.

⁴²² C.E.W. Bean, *ANZAC to Amiens*, Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1983, p. 515.

⁴²³ Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches*, p. 173.

⁴²⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 173-174.

⁴²⁵ Graubard, ‘Military Demobilisation in Great Britain Following the First World War’, pp. 301-302.

During this period, the British government was more concerned about mass unemployment caused by demobilisation than the feelings of men still in military service. See also Winter, *Death's Men*, p. 240 and Maurice, *The Armistices of 1918*, p. 58.

from their camp at Osterley to Whitehall. They had signs which included "We won the war. Give us our tickets." Four days later they were demobilised. The reason for their action was their fear that they would never be demobilised.⁴²⁶ Also 8,000 men in Brighton had a mass meeting to complain at the delays.⁴²⁷ On 30 January 1919, 5,000 British troops who had arrived at Calais disembarked and then demanded to be sent home. The issues behind these actions were pay, which had been addressed on 28 January when all the other ranks in the army received a pay rise.⁴²⁸ Another reason for the protests was the reluctance of soldiers to serve in Russia fighting with the White forces. Mostly, they did not wish to remain in the army and wanted to be demobilised. Thus the pay rise was accompanied by an acceleration of British demobilisation.⁴²⁹

On 30 January 1919, Churchill at that time Secretary of War and Air issued the following statement:

Unless we are to be defrauded of the fruits of victory and, without considering our Allies, to throw away all that we have won with so much cost and trouble, we must provide for a good many months to come armies of occupation for the enemy's territory. These armies must be strong enough to exact from the Germans, Turks and others the just terms which the Allies demand...⁴³⁰

⁴²⁶ Graubard, 'Military Demobilisation in Great Britain Following the First World War', p. 302.

⁴²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 302.

⁴²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 304.

⁴²⁹ Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches*, p. 173. See also Graubard, 'Military Demobilisation in Great Britain Following the First World War', p. 303.

⁴³⁰ Maurice, *The Armistices of 1918*, p. 58.

This also applied to the Dominion forces and meant that the NZDiv remained in France and Germany for the foreseeable future delaying any chance of demobilisation.

Ill-discipline even reached into the prestige regiments of the British army. In June 1919, the 3rd Battalion of the Coldstream Guards went on strike. Again the reason was an “over-zealous training regime inflicted upon demob-happy soldiers who held a number of not unreasonable grievances”.⁴³¹ The British government acknowledged their problems were a result of the requirement to keep a standing force to maintain the occupation in Germany and to maintain reserve units in France and in Britain. Furthermore, there was the physiological need to have a strong British presence during the peace negotiations.⁴³²

Between the Armistice and June 1919 there were thirteen incidents of riots and disturbances involving Canadian troops.⁴³³ The most serious was the mutiny/strike at Kimmel Park in March 1919 that resulted in five deaths, 23 wounded and 78 men bought before court-martials:

The mutineers were our own men, stuck in the mud of North Wales, waiting impatiently to get back to Canada – four months after the end of the war. The 15,000 Canadian troops concentrated at Kimmel didn't know about the strikes that had held up the fuelling of ships which had caused food shortages. The men were on half rations, there was no coal for the stove in the cold grey huts, and they hadn't been paid for over a month. Forty-two had to sleep in

⁴³¹ Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches*, p. 174. This was the finding by Major-General Childs, Director of Personnel Services.

⁴³² Graubard, 'Military Demobilisation in Great Britain Following the First World War', p. 303.

⁴³³ Howard G. Coombs, 'Dimensions of Military Leadership: The Kimmel Park Mutiny of 4/5 March 1919', *CFLI Contractor Report* CR02-0623, Kingston: Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2004, p. 2.

a hut meant for thirty, so they each took turns sleeping on the floor with one blanket each.⁴³⁴

The mutiny/strike was fuelled by the conditions described above but also the failure of the commanders to acknowledge and deal with the complaints from the men and also communicate the various problems outside of their control as part of the demobilisation process for the Canadian forces to the men waiting in the camps.⁴³⁵ However, the challenge to good order and discipline that the demobilisation process presented to the commanders was understood clearly at the time of the Kimmel Park riots:

Where you mix up all kinds of combatant and non-combatant troops into drafts that into the demobilization necessities in Canada and these men are held pending shipping arrangements they become most difficult to control.⁴³⁶

By the end of March 1919 the camp was mostly emptied as ships were quickly allocated to transport men home. Unfortunately men still in camp by June 1919 rioted again and this led to the death of a policeman when the station at Epsom was raided by Canadians trying to rescue their detained comrades.⁴³⁷

In some cases, ill-discipline in other forces would involve the New Zealanders. In July 1919 a British soldier was arrested by the British Military police. A crowd of civilians present objected to how the man was handled and took action and chased the MPs into the NZEF Detention Barracks at Sling Camp. The crowd was joined by other

⁴³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 1. The five men were killed attacking a sub-camp.

⁴³⁵ *ibid.*, p. 15. A vessel ship allocated to the Canadian forces for repatriation was rejected as inadequate. This was never communicated to the men. See also Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell* p. 292.

⁴³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴³⁷ Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell*, p. 292.

British and Australian troops who then went to the Police station to seek the man's release. A riot broke out and the NZEF Provost Marshals were turned out with their AIF counterparts to suppress the disturbance resulting in "several broken heads among the rioters".⁴³⁸

Just as in the examples from the other forces, ill-discipline during the period of demobilisation was quite prevalent within the NZEF. As Nicholas Boyack recorded in his book *Behind The Lines*:

The end of the war did not mean an end to rioting and mutiny; indeed it seemed to have resulted in a substantial increase. Significant and destructive riots occurred in all the British camps holding New Zealand troops.⁴³⁹

This chapter will look at the major incidents beginning with the Maori Pioneer Battalion, then the NZDiv followed by the NZMRB.

The major discipline problems began for the Maori Pioneers when they were transported to a camp at Dunkirk after being stopped at the German border. In the boring, cold, and wet conditions the men began to get out of hand. The OC diary entry for New Years Eve 1918 notes that "they [the men] seemed to be out of their senses".⁴⁴⁰ The OC of the Pioneers arranged for picquets to patrol Dunkirk to prevent the Pioneers getting into fights with the American,

⁴³⁸ WA 133 3 1 Box 5 28/83 Riot in Salisbury – Memorandum from the APM Salisbury Area to GOC A Group Sling Camp issued 7/7/1919. After the initial contact with the rioters, the British MPs would not leave the NZEF Detention Barracks and it was left to the New Zealand and Australian MPs to sort out the trouble.

⁴³⁹ Boyack, *Behind the Lines*, p. 161.

⁴⁴⁰ Cowan, *The Maoris in the Great War*, p. 157.

French and British troops.⁴⁴¹ An attempt by Lieutenant Angel, commanding A Company's picquet to take an illegal revolver from a Private Haenga had fatal consequences as Cowan noted in his history of the Pioneers:

It appears that there was a bit of indiscriminate shooting going on and when the picquet appeared on the scene and attempted to arrest one of the offenders he resisted. Lieutenant Wickam, one of the officers of the picquet tried to gain possession of the revolver, but was shot [by Private Haenga] and died of the wound. Lieutenant Angel was also slightly wounded.⁴⁴²

Lieutenant Angel took the revolver off Haenga but was assaulted by two other Pioneers with Haenga. All three men were arrested and court-martialled in Dunkirk.⁴⁴³ Prior to arrival in Dunkirk, kit inspections had turned up three revolvers "in possession of men not authorised to carry them".⁴⁴⁴ At the NZEF transit camp at Rouen two Pioneers were arrested and charged with rape. Further disturbances followed when the Pioneers returned to Britain including further indiscriminate firing of German trophy pistols.⁴⁴⁵

In Group Routine orders issued 20 January 1919, the commanding officer of the Sling Camp ordered that all Institutes and canteens in Bulford camp were to be out of bounds to NZEF troops and men found there would face

⁴⁴¹ WA 133 3 Box 10 Maori Pioneer Battalion France to Sling – Report to NZEFHQ from OC Maori Pioneer Battalion dated 6/1/1919.

⁴⁴² Cowan, *The Maoris in the Great War*, p. 157. Private Haenga was convicted of manslaughter and sent to prison. He was released in 1923. See also Pugsley, *Te Hokowhitu A Tu*, p. 75 and *On the Fringe of Hell* p. 289.

⁴⁴³ WA 133 3 Box 10 Maori Pioneer Battalion France to Sling – Report to NZEFHQ from OC Maori Pioneer Battalion dated 6/1/1919.

⁴⁴⁴ *ibid.* Report to NZEFHQ from OC Maori Pioneer Battalion dated 6/1/1919. There were complaints of other Pioneers discharging revolvers in the town but the report states that men from other forces were responsible.

⁴⁴⁵ Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell*, p. 289.

disciplinary action.⁴⁴⁶ A few days later a Pioneer discharged an illegal revolver and hit a woman in the arm.⁴⁴⁷ On 30 January 1919, a full parade was undertaken at Larkhill Camp. Detectives and witnesses tried unsuccessfully to identify the culprit. The Provosts' war diary for January 1919 records the incident and noted that "the behaviour of all ranks has been remarkably good", despite the "several thefts [which] have been perpetrated at YMCA huts".⁴⁴⁸

This had only a temporary effect. Banning of access to the canteens forced the Pioneers to seek alternative supplies. In February, British troops in their own camp witnessed:

A party of Maoris about 20 or 30 strong have just broken into our canteen, stolen a 36 gallon cask of Ale, and are now rolling it towards the Amesbury Road...some of them have pistols and are now covering their retirement down the road. Our men are very much disturbed and are turning out.⁴⁴⁹

A running fight developed when the British troops drew arms and ammunition and two British soldiers were wounded. There was no recorded further trouble for the Pioneer Battalion although there were few of their comrades in prison when the Battalion embarked for New Zealand. We can now turn to the ill-discipline in the camps in Britain and the activities of the Provost Marshals.

⁴⁴⁶ WA Series 133 3 Box 10 Maori Pioneer Battalion France to Sling 1918-1919 – Group Routine Order No. 17 issued 20/1/1919.

⁴⁴⁷ Suggesting that the Pioneers were very good at hiding their illegal revolvers or the kit inspections were less than effective.

⁴⁴⁸ WA Series 152 1 Provosts Corps War Diary January 1919 to July 1919 – Entry for January 1919.

⁴⁴⁹ Pugsley, *Te Hokowhiti A Tu*, p. 75 and *On the Fringe of Hell*, p. 290.

While NZDiv had minor discipline problems in France and Germany after the Armistice, the major locations of trouble were the camps in Britain. Disturbances had already occurred prior to the Armistice. In September 1918, Category B1 men in Codford Camp protested at the conditions including food quality, leave, heating fuel, blankets, punishment and the leadership of the camp commander Colonel Griffiths. In response to the protests, NZEFHQ changed the category of men in the camp to A1 and returned them to the front.⁴⁵⁰

With the announcement of the Armistice, a mob consisting of men from the NZRB rioted in their camp at Brocton. Windows were broken, the canteen was raided, and the Sergeant's Mess and officer's cubicles attacked. Men under punishment were let out of the barracks. The mob demanded to see the camp commander who agreed to see a delegation of ten men. The men's demands were a later reveille, later parade, short parade hours, being allowed to put personal items on shelves in huts and leave without the need for pass to Stafford town. Surprisingly this was agreed to by the officers present and the disturbances ceased.⁴⁵¹

In Sling Camp the announcement of the Armistice also led to a riot breaking out. Men from the NZEF and English troops raided the canteens, broke open beer barrels and proceeded to get drunk. It seemed to be led by the heavy drinkers amongst the men in camp. The riots were described by Private Cornelius Fraser:

⁴⁵⁰ Boyack, *Behind the Lines*, p. 160.

⁴⁵¹ *ibid.*, pp. 159-160.

Plenty of fights going on, blood everywhere. At first glance, one would certainly think there was a war in Sling Camp.⁴⁵²

Men were being trained in the use of the Lewis gun when the announcement came through. Corporal Fraser noted that:

Then the fun started, my table with the gun got knocked over. And that was the last we seen of them. They just went mad with joy and off. So we got our guns together, put them away and joined in the fun. And fun it sure was.⁴⁵³

It took three days to bring the camp under control. The board of Enquiry found the canteen lost goods equal to the value of £907 and found that there was no damage of any consequence to the buildings themselves. Each battalion at the camp was ordered to make good the losses from their own funds.⁴⁵⁴ In February 1919 at C Group depot at Torquay 150 men paraded to the CO and complained about the food.⁴⁵⁵

With the return of the NZDiv from Germany in March 1919 and resulting increase in men awaiting repatriation, Sling Camp experienced a series of riots in that month. The root cause of the riots can be traced to delays in repatriation caused by the limited availability of shipping. As in the example of the Canadian forces, the major contributor to this delay for the men of the NZEF was the influenza pandemic, along with strikes by both watersiders and

⁴⁵² *ibid.*, p. 88. See also Pugsley, 'New Zealand: "The Heroes Lie in France"', p. 200.

⁴⁵³ Pugsley, 'New Zealand: "The Heroes Lie in France"', p. 200.

⁴⁵⁴ WA Series 133 3 Box 10 Maori Pioneer Battalion France to Sling 1918-1919 – Sling Camp Administrative Staff undated with a reference to Brigade Routine Order 274/2744 issued 12/11/1918.

⁴⁵⁵ WA 148 1 C Group Discharge Depot War Diaries November 1918 to July 1919 – Entry for 21/2/1919. The diarist recorded that this parade was the first of this kind since the Depot opened.

seamen seeking pay increases in post-war Britain. These delays resulted in the men's frustration boiling over into ill-discipline.⁴⁵⁶

The riots on 14 and 15 March 1919 were led by men from the South Island battalions. No vessel had left for the South Island since the beginning of February 1919. In letter home, a soldier wrote that the riots were "caused apparently through men not being sent back in their turn and through a number of petty grievances".⁴⁵⁷ Some NCOs and privates were court-martialled for 'endeavouring to persuade persons to mutiny' and 'joining in a mutiny' both capital charges under the military justice code in force in 1919. The men were sentenced to prison terms and could count themselves lucky not to have faced a much stiffer penalty.⁴⁵⁸ Two hundred men raided the two canteens at lunchtime on 14 March then after being spoken to by the CO of the camp returned to their barracks. The disturbance was resumed that night and large picquets were dispatched to protect the canteens in Bulford and the Quartermaster stores. The next day the rioters looted all the canteens, the bulk store, three officer's messes and three Quartermaster's stores.⁴⁵⁹ The result of the March riots in Sling Camp was noted in a letter home stating that "boats

⁴⁵⁶ WA 133 3 Box 5 28/64 Disturbance at Sling Camp March 1919 – Minutes of a meeting in London held between a delegation of men and NZEFHQ dated 15/3/1919. A series of questions were raised on repatriation delays, leave, and other matters. For example, HMNZT *Kia Ora* was delayed in Britain due to engine trouble.

⁴⁵⁷ Boyack, Malone, Phillips (eds.), *The Great Adventure*, pp. 252-253. Letter from Alex Hutton dated 21/3/1919. See also Boyack, *Behind The Lines*, pp. 161-162.

⁴⁵⁸ Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell*, p. 292.

⁴⁵⁹ WA 133 3 Box 5 28/64 Disturbance at Sling Camp March 1919 – Cables from General Stewart to NZEFHQ dated 14/3/1919 and 15/3/1919. Southern Command requested a Court of Inquiry into the riots. The Canterbury, Otago and Wellington Regiments QMS stores were looted. A GroupHQ Routine Order issued 18/3/1919 requested the men return the looted material to reduce the amount to be paid to the Imperial Ordnance.

continue to leave for New Zealand carrying 'A' [Category] men because they kicked up a row at Sling".⁴⁶⁰ In June 1919, AGroupHQ wrote to the New Zealand Government asking that the damages incurred from the March riot accessed against the RASC and AIF⁴⁶¹ be paid by the NZEF as New Zealand troops were totally responsible for the riot.⁴⁶² As a further measure the canteens in Sling Camp were not reopened until early April 1919.⁴⁶³

At the end of March 1919 the atmosphere in the camp at Codford was described as "simmering". W.K Wilson wrote in his diary on the conditions in Codford Camp:

Codford the last few weeks has been unbearable, discipline has gone to the pack and the troops don't care a damn for officers and NCOs. The big canteens are simply gambling dens. All sorts of games of chance are being conducted and no notice is taken of the orders that say it has to stop. As fast as boats are available, men are despatched to but everybody is impatient and as there is no leave issued prior to a boat leaving many men just hire a taxi and decamp for a week. When they come back they find they have to go through the performance of waiting.⁴⁶⁴

For the main camps at Sling and Codford the ill-discipline problem would only be resolved as men were repatriated. As more vessels embarked for New Zealand in April and

⁴⁶⁰ Boyack, Malone, Phillips (eds.), *The Great Adventure*, p. 254 Letter from Alex Hutton dated 22/4/1919.

⁴⁶¹ WA 133 3 Box 5 28/64 Disturbance at Sling Camp March 1919 - Cable from General Stewart to NZEFHQ dated 15/3/1919. He advised that some Australian VD Hospital patients had assisted in looting one of the Quartermaster stores and were seen dressed in NZEF uniforms. See also a memorandum from the Canteen Supervisor dated 10/4/1919 reporting on the action of Australian soldiers in the camp.

⁴⁶² *ibid.*

⁴⁶³ *ibid.* Order from AGroupHQ to Detachment Commanders/Canteens issued 1/4/1919.

⁴⁶⁴ Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell*, p. 289. Quotation from the diary of W.K Wilson NZRB 1915-1919.

May 1919 ill-discipline amongst men in the camps awaiting repatriation became negligible.

The Provosts Marshal Corps was the unit within the NZEF whose task it was to enforce discipline and arrest absentees from France and Britain. Their War Diaries provides a picture of behaviour of the NZEF in Britain during demobilisation. The War Diary for December 1918 records the behaviour of men in Britain for Christmas was “remarkably good”.⁴⁶⁵ Petty thefts were on the increase from the YMCA huts owing to the greatly increased number of absentees since the signing of the Armistice (See Appendix One, Table 2). The diarist commented on the perennial bane of British officers:

Saluting in the British and Colonial armies as far as London and big centres are concerned, has practically ceased to exist and the matter is not being seriously pushed.⁴⁶⁶

The diary for February 1919 noted a report from the secretary of the New Zealand Soldier's Club advising the Provosts Corps that the behaviour of men at the club was, with a few exceptions, “exceedingly good”.⁴⁶⁷ With the demobilisation process now fully underway, reports were coming in from the camps around Britain the behaviour of the men in camp was generally good as numbers of men awaiting repatriation began to increase. According to the Provosts Corps diarist, the YMCA was still under siege from men from the NZEF. The diarist noted that “it is regretted that the number of thefts in the clubs and YMCA is high, but

⁴⁶⁵ WA Series 152 1 Provosts Corps War Diary January to July 1919 – Entry for December 1918.

⁴⁶⁶ *ibid.* Entry for December 1918.

⁴⁶⁷ *ibid.* Entry for February 1919.

this is only to be expected when such a large number of troops are on leave".⁴⁶⁸ In March 1919 the Provosts arrested a notorious offender:

Private Heketa, N.Z.P.B. [Pioneer Battalion] has again come into the lime-light and it is hoped for the last time, at any rate as a soldier. It will be remembered that this man was once before arrested for posing as a Maori prince and running up large accounts at some of the best London hotels and incidentally borrowing considerable sums from various money lenders in the City.⁴⁶⁹

In February 1919, Private Heketa gained an advance using fraudulent documents from the New Zealand Soldiers Hostel in London on two occasions totalling £20. He then vanished but was arrested on 1 March 1919.⁴⁷⁰ The War Diary for May records that the conduct of men in towns across Britain was "very good"⁴⁷¹ whilst the War Diary for June 1919 records the following incident at No. 2 NZGH on the night of 7 June 1919:

A civilian named W.J. Ryan entered one of the wards...and inflicted five wounds, with a knife, in the neck and extremities of Gunner A. Worger. Ryan alleged that Worger had been on very intimate terms with his wife while he had been on active service in Egypt.⁴⁷²

The major task in the Armistice period for the Provost Corps was to locate and detain absentees (See Appendix One, Table 2). Men naturally took advantage of the state of limbo provided by the Armistice to absent themselves to "stay

⁴⁶⁸ *ibid.* Entry for February 1919.

⁴⁶⁹ *ibid.* Entry for March 1919.

⁴⁷⁰ *ibid.* Entry for March 1919.

⁴⁷¹ *ibid.* Entry for May 1919.

⁴⁷² *ibid.* Entry for June 1919. Gunner Worger recovered from his injuries and Mr. Ryan received a twelve month prison sentence.

over on leave and see a bit of country before going back to New Zealand".⁴⁷³ Some chose to stay in Britain and never reported back to the NZEF.

In order to stir up these men, the NZEF published an advertisement in eighteen British papers on 23 July 1919:

Absentees of the New Zealand Force

All N.C.O.s or other ranks of the N.Z.E.F. who are absent without leave will, unless they report to Headquarters 'A' Group, Sling Camp, on or before July 31st 1919, be struck off the strength of the N.Z.E.F., and will forfeit all right to:-

- [1] Return Passage to New Zealand.
- [2] Payment of War Gratuity.
- [3] Or any other privilege granted to Soldiers of the N.Z.E.F.

G.N. Johnston, Brig-Genl.,
i/c Administration N.Z.E.F., in U.K.⁴⁷⁴

The Provosts corps by May 1919 was still sending escorts to France, Germany and Belgium to conduct absentees back to Britain. In June 1919, Private G.C. Halley was arrested in London. He had deserted from Sling Camp in June 1918 after being charged with "riotous behaviour" and sentenced to twelve months imprisonment with hard labour.⁴⁷⁵ In July 1919 the Provosts in Ireland arrested Private F.J. McKenna from the Wellington Infantry Regiment who had been absent since July 1918.⁴⁷⁶

An administrative matter for NZEFHQ was the men who were imprisoned for serious charges under military

⁴⁷³ Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell*, p. 289.

⁴⁷⁴ *ibid.*, p. 289. See also WA Series 152 1 Provosts Corps War Diary – Entry for July 1919.

⁴⁷⁵ WA Series 152 1 Provosts Corps War Diary January to July 1919 – Entry for June 1919. The prisoner was known to frequent a certain low quarter in the Custom House Victoria Docks.

⁴⁷⁶ *ibid.* Entry for July 1919. McKenna claimed to be a Captain in the Sinn Fein.

regulations. For example, in August 1919, 36 NZEF men were still serving their sentences in military prisons (See Appendix One, Table 3).⁴⁷⁷ A decision was made that those men still under terms of imprisonment were to be repatriated with an escort, in order of their class and under confinement. They would be discharged in New Zealand. The OC on the transport could keep the prisoner/s under lock and key and release them from custody as soon as he considered it fit after the embarkation of the transport vessel was complete. Any sentence the men were under would be remitted from the date of embarkation.⁴⁷⁸ In June 1919, three prisoners from the NZMRB were sent back on the HMNZT *Ulimaroa* under arrest and arrangement was made to set aside three cells for the imprisonment on the voyage.⁴⁷⁹ In November 1919, twelve prisoners from the NZDiv and NZEF in Britain embarked for New Zealand aboard the HMNZT *Kigoma*. Upon arrival in New Zealand, four men were discharged and the rest of the group were sent to prison to serve out their sentences.⁴⁸⁰

The Provosts Corps began demobilisation in March 1919 and men were sent to C Group Torquay for repatriation. Members of the Corps arriving at the camp would then be allocated to transport vessels to act as ship's police.⁴⁸¹ Those not demobilised continued to search for absentees,

⁴⁷⁷ Boyack, *Behind the Lines*, p. 186. Deserters from the NZEF were still being arrested in 1921.

⁴⁷⁸ WA Series 1 5/10 Box 4 Miscellaneous Papers relating to Demobilisation – NZEF Instruction No. 177 issued 22/3/1919 Repatriation of Men in Detention.

⁴⁷⁹ WA Series 1 3 Box 6 XFE1058 Troops Returning to New Zealand per HMNZT *Ulimaroa* – Cable from NZEFEHQ to NZTDU dated 22/6/1919 stating that the necessary cells must be provided.

⁴⁸⁰ Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell*, p. 293. One man had a ten year sentence to serve.

⁴⁸¹ WA Series 133 3 Box 7 71/1 Demobilisation Instructions – NZEF Instruction No. 180 issued 24/3/1919. See also WA Series 1 5/10 Box 4 Miscellaneous Papers relating to Demobilisation.

process prisoners and police the camps. We can now turn our attention to the NZMRB.

The most disturbing event in the history of the demobilisation of the NZEF was an incident at Surafend village for which the NZMRB played a central role. Perhaps the genesis of this event is encapsulated in a message that Godley issued to the NZEF as it first arrived in Egypt in 1914:

The natives in Egypt have nothing in common with the Maoris [sic]. They belong to races lower in the human scale, and cannot be treated in the same manner. The slightest familiarity with them will breed contempt which is certain to have the most far-reaching and harmful consequences. Every member of the Force in Egypt is charged with the enormous responsibility of maintaining the prestige of the British Race.⁴⁸²

The relations between the NZMRB and the local population were severely strained by 1918. During the campaign there had been an ambush at the village of Ain Es Sir caused by the treachery of the local Arabs which caused the unnecessary deaths of officers and men in other ranks. The men had been instructed to make friends with the local population and this had been the result. There was no punishment meted out when the village was reoccupied, and this was seen as “pandering to the enemy subjects at the expense of the troops and the neglect of the authorities at dealing with such cases”.⁴⁸³ Corporal McMillian of the CMR summed up the attitude of the men:

During the whole campaign all the troops has suffered severely from the depredations of

⁴⁸² NZEFHQ to HMNZ Transport No. 3 - NZEF Special General Order issued 30/11/1914.

⁴⁸³ Wilkie, *Official War History of the Wellington Mounted Rifles*, p. 236.

Arabs, more particularly in southern Palestine, not only in the continual thieving that went on but also in the way some of the thefts were carried out. Another matter that caused great resentment among the troops was the disturbance of the graves on the battlefields, where the Arabs had opened many of them in search of loot.⁴⁸⁴

At the conclusion of the campaign the CMR was sent to guard the prisoners from the 2nd Turkish Army Corps. The official history records that the “hardest task was to keep the Arabs, who were swarming over the countryside, from robbing and murdering the unfortunate Turks”.⁴⁸⁵ This certainly hardened an already hostile attitude to the local Arab population by the NZMRB. Powles in his *The New Zealanders in Sinai and Palestine* stated that “our troops suffered very much from the thieving propensities of the Arab”.⁴⁸⁶

This tension increased when the NZMRB left the Jordan valley and moved into camp at Richon-le-Zion near Jaffa. Soon after the New Zealanders arrived the men experienced petty thefts throughout the camp. They were not alone. The British and Indian camps also suffered from the spate of thefts by the local population.⁴⁸⁷ The policy followed by the local commanders frustrated the men as Corporal McMillian wrote:

Little effort was made to find and punish the perpetrators of these acts...the troops got really fed up with the apparent indifference shown by those in authority. The reason given for this

⁴⁸⁴ McMillian, *Forty Thousand Horsemen*, pp. 293-296.

⁴⁸⁵ Powles (ed.), *The History of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles*, p. 238.

⁴⁸⁶ Powles, *The New Zealanders in Sinai and Palestine*, p. 266.

⁴⁸⁷ Boyack, *Behind the Lines*, p. 164.

being [the official policy] was that it most important to avoid any friction whatever with the local population. In the opinion of the troops this policy was carried to far altogether, with the results that feeling against the thieves who didn't hesitate to murder their victims, built up higher with each offence.⁴⁸⁸

Thus by December 1918 the men felt for certain that the residents of Surafend had been responsible for opening the graves of men from the AMR on the Ayun Kara battlefield and were the main culprits of the thieving.⁴⁸⁹ The official history of the WMR states the village of Surafend:

Whose inhabitants had for many years terrorised the adjacent Jewish communities. They were thieves generally, and one of them at least was a murderer. The proximity of Surafend to the New Zealand camp afforded its people ample opportunity to extend their operation and during one of their early morning raids a New Zealand machine-gunner was murdered whilst endeavouring to recover property which had been stolen from under his pillow, the thief being caught in the act. In justice to the relatives of the victim, the authorities should have taken steps to arrest the murderer without delay, but nothing effective was done.⁴⁹⁰

The victim was Trooper L.T. Lowry of the 1st New Zealand Machine Gun Squadron. He was killed in his tent within the NZMRB camp on the night of 9 December 1918 after disturbing an intruder. Items that belonged to men of the unit were found discarded indicating a group had been involved in the thieving. It was alleged that tracks led from

⁴⁸⁸ McMillian, *Forty Thousand Horsemen*, pp. 293-296.

⁴⁸⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 293-296. See also Powles, *The New Zealanders in Sinai and Palestine*, p. 266. Powles states that there is not the slightest doubt the villagers were responsible for the murder of Trooper Lowry.

⁴⁹⁰ Wilkie, *Official War History of the Wellington Mounted Rifles*, pp. 235-236.

the camp to Surafend village but the MPs would not act without proof.⁴⁹¹

The reaction of the NZMRB men was predictable:

The troops took it upon themselves to do something about it. All the units in the area, British, Australian and New Zealand were of one mind about the need for some action and the outcome was a party assembled to pay a visit to the village and make some enquiry.⁴⁹²

According to a member of an ALHR the NZMRB men visited them saying:

Well we are going to raid it, of course, you have heard one of our chaps being shot...We feel very badly about it, these people have given us a very bad spin and we intend to make an example of them...Don't bring any ammunition or we will be shooting each other in the dark, but bring a pickhandle or some such weapon or a bayonet will be good as anything.⁴⁹³

According to Powles in *The New Zealanders in Sinai and Palestine* a man from an ALHR had been shot a short time earlier and there seems to have been tacit support from the Australians.⁴⁹⁴ Supposedly, "many messages were received from Jewish settlers and senior officers of other formations that this disturbance would have a very good effect on the natives".⁴⁹⁵ Small groups of soldiers came from Ludd, Ramleh and GHQ at Bir Salim. The inquiry found afterwards that these groups were organised into the

⁴⁹¹ Pugsley, *The Anzac Experience*, p. 286.

⁴⁹² McMillian, *Forty Thousand Horsemen*, pp. 293-296.

⁴⁹³ Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell*, p. 287.

⁴⁹⁴ Powles, *The New Zealanders in Sinai and Palestine*, p. 266.

⁴⁹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 266.

assault party alongside the men from the dead man's unit.⁴⁹⁶

On the night of 10 December 1918, the village of Surafend was cordoned off and the women, old men and children were forcefully herded out of the village.⁴⁹⁷ The search for the head man resulted in a confrontation where he was "arrogantly abusive to the troops and a fight started immediately".⁴⁹⁸ Approximately 30 Arab males were killed in the fighting and the village was burned along with a Bedouin camp nearby. The village wells were poisoned by dumping corpses into them.⁴⁹⁹ The men then returned to their camp. No officers intervened and that is unusual given the organised manner of the raid. The camp picquet only arrived after the attackers had left.⁵⁰⁰ As the author of the WMR official history states, "the Arabs gave no further trouble".⁵⁰¹

This action drew a lot of sympathy from the town of Richon-le-Zion:

I must say things were pretty hot, there is not one of them [Arab villagers] to be seen around now. They have got what they should have had earlier in the war. The Jews say it is a good thing, they are a treacherous lot...the police knew better than to interfere the mob was out for business.⁵⁰²

⁴⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 266.

⁴⁹⁷ Chris Pugsley, *The Anzac Experience*, p. 145 and *On the Fringe of Hell*, p. 287.

⁴⁹⁸ McMillian, *Forty Thousand Horsemen*, pp. 293-296.

⁴⁹⁹ Pugsley, *The Anzac Experience*, p. 145 and *On the Fringe of Hell*, p. 288.

⁵⁰⁰ *ibid.*

⁵⁰¹ Wilkie, *Official War History of the Wellington Mounted Rifles*, p. 236.

⁵⁰² Trooper George Burton Hall letter dated 12/12/1918.

The justification for the attack and murder of the villagers was that:

The troops had suffered casualties throughout the campaign by the reason the treachery of the natives who were seldom or never punished for the offences committed, and they became somewhat concerned about the apathy shown by the authorities when comrades were murdered in cold blood.⁵⁰³

A court of enquiry was convened but there was no co-operation from the troops. The secrecy of the planning meant there was no evidence to give to the Court and no one individual could be identified as the perpetrator.⁵⁰⁴ The Court could not bring any charges or name any men involved. Chaytor, incensed at the violence and the killings, blamed the subordinate commanders of the NZMRB, in particular the commanders of the AMR and WMR, as he was well aware an action on this scale could not have gone unnoticed by officers in the camp. However, he could not obtain any evidence to prefer charges against any officer.⁵⁰⁵ Chris Pugsley calls the Surafend incident a “blot on the reputation of the New Zealand Mounteds”.⁵⁰⁶ He believed that:

They acted out of tribal loyalty, in revenge for what had happened to one of their own, and their own officers tacitly accepted their actions. Surafend cannot be condoned but it can be understood.⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰³ Wilkie, *Official War History of the Wellington Mounted Rifles*, p. 236.

⁵⁰⁴ Boyack, *Behind the Lines*, p. 164. See also Wilkie, *Official War History of the Wellington Mounted Rifles*, p. 236.

⁵⁰⁵ Chris Pugsley, *The Anzac Experience*, p. 145. See also Colin Richardson, ‘Major General Sir Edward Walter Clervaux Chaytor: New Zealand’s ANZAC Commander’, *Born to Lead?: Portraits of New Zealand Commanders*, Glyn Harper and Joel Hayward (eds.), Auckland: Exile Publishing Ltd, 2003, p. 81.

⁵⁰⁶ Chris Pugsley, *The Anzac Experience*, p. 145.

⁵⁰⁷ *ibid.*, p.145. See also *On the Fringe of Hell*, p. 288. Chaytor did not punish the other ranks because he believed the murders were the sole responsibility of the officers of the NZMRB. It was their poor leadership and discipline that led to the men taking the law into their own hands.

This failure in command was punished. General Allenby paraded the AMDiv and called them “cold blooded murderers.” “Once I was proud of you” he said, “I am proud of you no longer”.⁵⁰⁸ No further leave was granted to officers and the AMDiv was not included in the medals and honours awarded in dispatches by Allenby.⁵⁰⁹ At the parade the troops threatened Allenby for his comments and later Allenby regretted his harsh words and was very complimentary to the NZMRB and felt honoured to have had the brigade under his command, particularly when he needed the NZMRB to put down the uprising in March and April 1919.⁵¹⁰ Based on the report from Chaytor, the New Zealand government paid reparations to the villagers.

There other major incidents of ill-discipline amongst the men of the NZMRB. There was rioting in the Greek quarter in December 1918 and July 1919 in the town of Ismailia. A Court of Inquiry Proceedings was held on 16 December 1918 to determine what had occurred in the riots that had occurred between the nights of 7 and 11 December. On the first night, 7 December there were some disturbances in bars caused mainly by British troops. On the following night, a shop was broken into and looted.⁵¹¹ The court noted numbers of MPs on picquets increased. The Military Foot Police dealt with about fifty NZMRB men. They were herded

⁵⁰⁸ *ibid.*, p. 145.

⁵⁰⁹ *ibid.*, p. 145. Chaytor sought to have the group rewards restored to the NZMRB after Allenby cancelled them as punishment for the Surafend incident. Allenby would include the NZMRB in his supplemental Peace despatch. See also WA Series 40 4 Box 5 27 Discipline August 1918-January 1919 – Order No.13/124 from NZMRBHQ issued 16/12/1918.

⁵¹⁰ Boyack, *Behind the Lines*, p. 164. See also McMillian, *Forty Thousand Horsemen*, pp. 296-297 and WA Series 40 3 Box 8 48 Operations in Tanta Area 1919 – XX Corps Special Order of the Day issued 2/5/1919.

⁵¹¹ WA Series 1 3 Box 6 Court of Inquiry Disturbance at Ismailia 1918-1919 – Court of Enquiry Proceedings dated 16/12/1918.

back to camp after standing up to the picquets by taking up branches for fighting however no fight broke out and the men returned to camp even though their passes expired at midnight.⁵¹² There were no disturbances on the night of 9 December but there was a threat of a disturbance in the NZMRB camps. A NZTUD circular was issued stating that if a mass meeting was held to “ventilate certain grievances...such an occurrence would be contrary to King’s regulations and the speakers would be subject to Court Martial...”⁵¹³ In May 1919 EEFHQ prohibited mass meetings to vent grievances.⁵¹⁴

On the night of 10 December, supposedly 3-400 New Zealanders and Rarotongans were in the Rue Negrelli “carrying out a more or less organised attack on the shops”.⁵¹⁵ The crowd only dispersed after officers of the picquet asked them to leave. The Court found that the Military Foot Police were particularly ineffective in breaking up the rioters. On the night of 11 December, another disturbance broke out and the shops were attacked once again but this time the picquets interceded and prevented more damage. The following day the town of Ismailia was placed out of bounds to all British and Dominion troops until 15 December. There were no further disturbances after the night of 11 December. The Court concluded from the testimony of the witnesses called that the New Zealand troops formed the majority of the mob.⁵¹⁶

⁵¹² *ibid.* Note from Military Foot Police dated 9/12/1918.

⁵¹³ *ibid.* NZTUD Circular No. 34 issued 9/12/1919. The men were asked to put their grievances through proper channels.

⁵¹⁴ *ibid.* Order issued 14/5/1919 by XX Corps HQ.

⁵¹⁵ *ibid.* Court of Enquiry Proceedings dated 16/12/1918

⁵¹⁶ *ibid.*

In his report to EEFHQ on the December riots, Chaytor noted that men of the NZMRB were present in large numbers in the disturbances. He reported that the primary cause of the disturbances was a lack of control in Ismailia itself which was outside NZMRB jurisdiction, and incitement from men coming from the Kantara camp. The first night of the riots on 7 December, he commented, was started by Kantara men to cover robbery of money and valuables. Inadequate control over the sale of alcohol and the lack of effective policing were both contributors to the riotous behaviour. For example, men in the town were not stopped by the Military Foot Police and their passes checked to see if they had permission to be in Ismailia.⁵¹⁷

The commanding officer of the NZTUD also came in for criticism. Lt. Colonel Dick was a competent field commander Chaytor reported but performed poorly in the command of the NZTUD and had “not coped with the situation as he should have”.⁵¹⁸ Part of the explanation for Lt. Colonel Dick’s poor performance was the size of his command. He had previously commanded a regiment of between 500-600 men but the nominal roll for the NZTUD was 1700 men of whom 1400 were convalescents) and the company of Rarotongan Pioneers awaiting embarkation to New Zealand. Thus he took over a camp with full of men with little to do and plenty of free time for mischief. In a report to the NZTUD the NZMRB Capt on picquet duty in Ismailia stated; “I regret to state that in all these crowds

⁵¹⁷ *ibid.* Report from Major General Chaytor to EEFHQ dated 10/1/1919.

⁵¹⁸ *ibid.*

there was a fair percentage of A & N.Z. Troops”.⁵¹⁹ Chaytor believed that Lt. Colonel Dick and other NZMRB officers had not called up extra men including the Provosts to go on picquet duty to quell the riot which Chaytor saw as a simple failure of command. Lt. Colonel Dick was relieved of command the moment the riots were over. Chaytor stated that “it was the officers who had to rise to the circumstances brought on by the end of the hostilities and maintain a grip on their units”.⁵²⁰ Lt. Colonel Dick’s fate was also sealed by the Surafend incident where Chaytor identified the cause as a “very grave lack of knowledge of their duties and responsibilities, or the deliberate neglect of their duty”.⁵²¹ In concluding his report, Chaytor commented that the Court of Inquiry did not get to the truth of the matter given the facts and while the damage caused by the NZMRB was assessed properly, the court did not determine who were responsible.

Outside commanders also thought that the New Zealand officer had done a poor job and selected him to be the scapegoat for the December riots. The OC Palestine LOC thought that a suitable officer should be selected as soon as possible to replace Lt. Colonel Dick.⁵²² The Commander of the Canal Zone reported that the NZTUD commander had failed to act:

With sufficient promptitude and firmness. From investigation I am moreover of the opinion that he has not the military experience in

⁵¹⁹ *ibid.* Report to NZTUD from Captain in charge of picquets dated 12/12/1918.

⁵²⁰ Chris Pugsley, *The Anzac Experience*, pp. 144-145.

⁵²¹ Chris Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell*, p. 288.

⁵²² WA Series 1 3 Box 6 Court of Inquiry Disturbance at Ismailia 1918-1919 – Note from OC LOC Palestine to NZEFEHQ dated 18/12/1918.

administrative affairs which is essential to the maintenance of correct discipline in a camp...⁵²³

The OC Palestine LOC reported his findings on the cause of the riots being provocative overcharging by shopkeepers. The troops, he felt, acted in an unsoldierly and reprehensible manner. He blamed the NZMRB men since most of the damage was done by the Brigade's men on the nights of 8-12 December.⁵²⁴ The OC Canal Zone stated that no British soldier took part in the rioting after the night of 7 December. To him it seemed as if the New Zealanders and Rarotongans "appear to have been the principle [sic] if not the sole offenders". The policing fiasco was also caused by a lack of cooperation between the British MPs and the Australian and New Zealand Provosts.⁵²⁵ The town was quiet for some months until July 1919 when further rioting broke out on the nights of 14-15 July.

The signing of the Versailles Treaty occasioned peace celebrations in Egypt from 12-14 July. Permission was given to the bars by the GOC Ismailia to remain open until 11pm, but all closed around 8pm.⁵²⁶ The French Club, where the Colonial and British officers drank, remained open to the designated time. On 14 July 1919, drinking shops were instructed to stay open until 11pm and if they closed earlier, it would be at their own risk. This order was sent to the Mamour (local civilian administrator) on 14 July by the British Commander for Ismailia.

⁵²³ *ibid.* Report from Brig Gen Lloyd, OC Canal Zone to Palestine LOC HQ dated 11/12/1918. This officer also recommended replacing the OC of the NZMRB NZTDU.

⁵²⁴ *ibid.* Report from OC Palestine LOC to EEFGHQ dated 3/1/1919.

⁵²⁵ *ibid.* Report from Brig Gen Lloyd OC Canal Zone to Palestine LOC HQ dated 30/12/1918.

⁵²⁶ The order as issued covered all three nights to 11pm.

Discovering that the opening hours had been extended for officers at the French Club, while the other ranks could not obtain alcohol, the men took umbrage and left for the town where a “spontaneous” raid took place on the night of 14 July. Around 8.45pm a large group estimated at 500-800 of Australian and New Zealand men were outside the French Club. When they asked for drinks to be served to them, they were denied by the staff in the club. The mob then asked if bars should have been open and was advised that they should have been. The mob left the French Club and wrecked and looted drinking shops, a silk merchants and a stationer known as the “New Zealand Stores”. In order to stop the disturbance, the mob was given beer by picquets so they would go home.⁵²⁷

The following night there was another riot. This was another raid supposedly “organised by Australians”.⁵²⁸ The shops attacked included photographers, jewellers, and stationers. Capitan Anderson, the 75th Division DAPM reported that at 8pm on the night the French Club was raided and looted of alcohol by a mob estimated at between 200 to 1000 men.⁵²⁹ Supposedly, the majority were New Zealanders.⁵³⁰ After looting the French club the crowd moved off to the Rue Negrelli and systematically broke into and destroyed all the shops along the street. Captain Anderson followed them and used the picquets to direct the crowd away from the

⁵²⁷ *ibid.* Court of Inquiry Proceedings Held 16/7/1919 for the riot on the night of 14/7/1919. Five cases of beer were given out to the men.

⁵²⁸ *ibid.* Court of Inquiry Proceedings Held 16-17/7/1919 for the riot on the night of 15/7/1919.

⁵²⁹ *ibid.* Witnesses differ as to the size of the mob.

⁵³⁰ *ibid.* Four ALH officer witnesses gave evidence that the mob was made up of mainly New Zealanders presumably seeking to divert attention from the participation of the other ranks from the ALH and cast the blame upon the New Zealanders.

main street into a side street and he stated that the crowd broke up and returned to their respective camps around 2130 hours. The picquets retrieved the loot from the mob and made some arrests but were more than happy to shepherd men back to camps to sleep off the effect of the alcohol.⁵³¹

Consequently, two Courts of Inquiry were convened to determine the cause and damages caused by the riots on the nights of 14 and 15 July 1919. The Court determined the major cause of the riot was that the other ranks:

Apparently resented the fact that the local shopkeepers could dictate to them as to hours during which they should be entitled to obtain alcohol.⁵³²

A lot of the bar owners claimed they closed early on the night of 14 July because they “ran out of beer”.⁵³³ The Court’s opinion was that the order did not reach the Mamour’s office until 7pm on the night of 14 July due to laziness so the bars never received the order to stay open. The Courts considered that another contributing factor was the French Club being seen to be open and enabling officers to drink. The NZMRB Provost gave evidence to the court that only about twenty New Zealanders were present, the rest being Australian and British troops. The Court of Inquiry found that the damage was done in the following proportions: ALHR 40%, NZMRB 40%, and British 20% and those officers who were present prevented more serious damage. While some shopkeepers gave a good account of

⁵³¹ *ibid.* Evidence given by Capitan Anderson to the court.

⁵³² *ibid.* EEFGHQ report to War Office on riots in Ismailia dated 14/9/1919.

⁵³³ *ibid.* Court of Inquiry Proceedings Held 16/7/1919 for the riot on the night of 14/7/1919.

the damage, others were vague and attempted to defraud the British authorities and obtain compensation.⁵³⁴

The Court of Inquiry for the riot on the night of 15 July was told by Captain Anderson that the mob was comprised of Australian and New Zealand troops. Captain Anderson suggested to the Court that the cause of the riot was the closing of shops in defiance of the order along with perceived overcharging by the shop owners along the Rue Negrelli.⁵³⁵ A Captain from the WMR took great exception that the ALH blamed the NZMRB for the 15 July riot. He told the Court that the mob were mostly British and Australian men with a scattering of New Zealanders. Lt Col Hulbert of NZMRB stated that only 150 NZMRB men were in town and any New Zealanders were arrested by the NZMRB NCOs sent to sort out the trouble.⁵³⁶

The Court's opinion was that the riot on the night of 15 July was a plan preconceived by Australian and New Zealand troops based on two factors. Firstly, it was a reaction to the events of 14 July and secondly, overcharging by shopkeepers in the town of Ismailia. It is interesting that this is given as a reason for both riots by the Courts of Inquiry. The Court found that NZMRB and ALH other ranks were responsible for the damage to the French Club but that British troops shared responsibility for the looting of the shops. The Court found that the officers charged with controlling the town on the night of 15 July did all they could with the few men they had available. While the Court found

⁵³⁴ *ibid.* Report from EEFGHQ to War Office on riots in Ismailia dated 14/9/1919.

⁵³⁵ *ibid.* Court of Inquiry Proceedings Held 16-17/7/1919 for the riot on the night of 15/7/1919.

⁵³⁶ *ibid.*

space to mention favourably the actions of officers from ALH, there is no mention of the NZMRB officers who tried to control the riot.⁵³⁷

The Court's findings were also challenged by the Brigadier General commanding the Ismailia sector. He felt that there was no evidence of a preconceived plan on the part of the NZMRB troops. "Colonial troops have only themselves to blame owing to their rough behaviour and lack of discipline in the past"⁵³⁸ for the fact that the bars shut down early. He gave an example of some minor damage to bars and drink shops back in June. In the General's opinion, "the bar owners had over four years of experience of colonial troops [and] they live in a state of panic and terror".⁵³⁹ He thought that prices were high, but troops made bad debts and broke glasses. It is clear that the British general thought that no British troops could have taken part; it was those ill-disciplined colonials. His evidence for this was the fact the colonial picquets did not make arrests. The Military Foot Police only arrested four men from the ALHR.⁵⁴⁰

In order to quell any further unrest, NZEFEHQ was instructed that if any disturbances continued, embarkation of New Zealand troops would be postponed pending investigation and men kept in Egypt. This was punishment for men charged with rioting on the two nights in July.⁵⁴¹ Some troops were court-martialled and sentenced to hard

⁵³⁷ *ibid.*

⁵³⁸ *ibid.* Report of Brigadier-General Commanding Ismailia Sector dated 21/7/1919.

⁵³⁹ Boyack, *Behind the Lines*, pp. 163-164.

⁵⁴⁰ WA Series 1 3 Box 6 Court of Inquiry Disturbance at Ismailia 1918-1919 - Report of Brigadier-General Commanding Ismailia Sector dated 21/7/1919.

⁵⁴¹ *ibid.* Cable from EEFHQ to NZEFEHQ dated 23/7/1919.

labour. Three CMR men were charged with rape but found not guilty.⁵⁴² There were no further disturbances on the part of the NZMRB men and those that were left in Egypt soon departed for New Zealand, leaving behind a sad disciplinary record in the post-Armistice period. The presence of ill-discipline within the NZEF, other Dominions and British forces during the period of demobilisation can be accounted for by the confluence of significant factors namely: alcohol, attitudes, leadership, cultural clashes, and a spirit of revolt.

Firstly, for the men of the NZEF consumption of alcohol was a recreational activity. Whilst the NZDiv and NZMRB were committed to military action drunkenness could be contained and limited in individuals or small groups. However, when the NZDiv and the NZMRB were awaiting demobilisation this constraint was removed. It then follows that men, whose main recreational activity was drinking, would become ill-disciplined in the camps where there was no other real outlet to the imposed discipline and boredom of waiting repatriation. Therefore the combination of access to alcohol and drunkenness fuelled the violence as in the example of the riots at Sling Camp in November 1918 with the announcement of the Armistice. In other examples, alcohol played a significant part in the looting of drinking clubs in Ismailia, the Maori Pioneers raiding another unit's canteen for a barrel of beer, and the looted canteens at Sling Camp in the March 1919 riots.

Secondly, the attitudes of the men during the demobilisation process, especially boredom and frustration. Attitudes were

⁵⁴² Pugsley, *The Anzac Experience*, p. 146.

shaped by petty delays, poor distractions, imposition of training, and waiting for repatriation. In particular, the 1916/1917/1918 classes that contained a mix of conscripts and volunteers was most susceptible to these attitudes and when combined with drunkenness created a violent outcome. For example, the men of the NZMRB remaining in Egypt in December 1918 were frustrated and very bored. The situation was fertile ground for the riots in Ismailia in the same month. Chris Pugsley suggests the frustration of the men of the NZMRB delayed in Egypt by the March uprising contributed to the unrest in July 1919.⁵⁴³

Thirdly, there was a cultural clash as expressed in the Surafend incident. The NZMRB was encamped in a region where there was long simmering tension between the local Arab population and Jewish settlers. An already hostile attitude to the Arab was provoked by petty thievery, desecration of war graves, and eventually murder of one of their own. The result was, as Chris Pugsley believes, a tribal act in the violent response towards the local population who were doubtless innocent of any charges. This was a shameful and disgraceful act by the men of the NZMRB but also understandable in the context of 1918. It is a mistake to apply rigorous 21st century standards of behaviour to men who had been advised by General Godley in 1914 that “the natives...belong to races lower in the human scale, and cannot be treated in the same manner...”⁵⁴⁴

⁵⁴³ *ibid.*

⁵⁴⁴ NZEFHQ – HMNZ Transport No. 3 NZEF Special General Order issued 30/11/1914.

Fourthly, there was the test of leadership in a period of transition from combat to peace that more than one commander failed. The NZEF senior commanders acknowledged that standards of combat discipline could not be imposed upon men now out of the front line. Greater foresight on the behalf of officers would have prevented problems from arising despite the constraints imposed by the demobilisation and repatriation schedule. This called for a different type of leadership but some officers were simply not up to the challenge. For example, Lt. Colonel Dick was made a scapegoat for the riots in December 1918 by both the NZMEB and NZEFHQ. It was acknowledged he had performed satisfactorily in the field but command of the NZTUD was beyond his talents. The command failure in the Surafend incident was a failure to properly take into account the problems that the Brigade was encountering in the camp and to show the men that their welfare was paramount. There was, at least in the men's eyes, too much kowtowing to the local population.

Finally, in the post Armistice environment there developed a spirit of revolt. The army system which had held the individual down for so long coupled with the immediate demands of combat could not be expected to restrain men once the combat had ceased. Men who accepted wartime discipline resented it when pre-war standards were re-imposed. Said one other rank about the post-armistice army: "spit and polish, we don't like that after active service".⁵⁴⁵ The spirit of revolt was also fostered by the breakdown of unit cohesion. With the decision to demobilise

⁵⁴⁵ Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches*, p. 173.

men as individuals by drafts and not by unit, the restraint that unit cohesion could have provided to men awaiting demobilisation was removed. Isolated from the comrades, thrown together in with strangers in uncomfortable surroundings it is no surprise that disturbances were common. While it was supposedly a fair system to send men home in class order, it would have been better for the discipline of the NZDiv and the NZMRB to have sent home the men by their platoon, companies and battalions. This thesis will now conclude with a review of the repatriation process, and the educational schemes.

Chapter Thirteen: Embarkation for Home

It was one matter for the NZEF to demobilise and quite another for the actual process of repatriation to begin. Transport was the major issue for the process of demobilisation. This chapter will discuss the initial process of repatriation which includes the allocation of vessels, the circumstances of planning for the voyage home, and when the majority of the NZDiv, Maori Pioneers, NZMRB and other units embarked for New Zealand. It will then discuss the education scheme introduced to prepare the men for lives after their service with the NZEF.

In order to get the men ready for repatriation there was an enormous amount of paperwork that had to be prepared. The demobilisation cards and clothing cards were the critical documents in the mountain of paper that the repatriation process generated. The headquarters staff expended vast amounts of time and effort with the completion, location and filing of these documents. In addition, dental forms needed to be filled out before the ship docked at the destination port in New Zealand. Men going home were required to have one good serviceable uniform and one part worn. The worn uniform would be handed over to the OC transport for supply to the depot in Wellington upon arrival in New Zealand and any extra uniforms were to be turned over to the stores.⁵⁴⁶ Men were to board the vessels fully equipped less their personal rifles

⁵⁴⁶ WA Series 1 5/10 Box 4 Miscellaneous Papers relating to Demobilisation – NZEF Instruction No. 196 issued 25/4/1919.

and any side-arms. These would go back as bulk cargo on suitable vessels.⁵⁴⁷

Each man's personal kit would be open to inspection for any items of military value.⁵⁴⁸ The Department of Defence advised NZEFEHQ that all the men coming home from Egypt had to declare all goods bought back other than military equipment which was supposedly duty free.⁵⁴⁹ Non-military items bought back to New Zealand were liable for duty and the dutiable allowance was set at £3.⁵⁵⁰ Despite injunctions not to overload vessels, there were plenty of personal effects and other non-military cargo that were shipped home.⁵⁵¹ For example, the embarkation of HMNZT *Waimana* was delayed for a week in May 1919 due to a special shipment for New Zealand being taken aboard.⁵⁵² Other articles that were required to be sent home were deceased soldier's effects. The New Zealand Kit Store in London arranged that vessels returning to New Zealand would be loaded with these effects and they would be dealt with by the Department of Defence in Wellington. When the Kit Store in Bulford was closed in July 1919, any unclaimed kit held in Britain was shipped home the following month.

In November 1918 the New Zealand High Commissioner wrote to General Richardson praising his ability to get ships for the NZEF. As Richardson sat on the Demobilisation

⁵⁴⁷ *ibid.* NZEF Instruction No. 176 issued 22/3/1919 Personnel A & B Groups. Men had to specify which port they wished to be repatriated and were granted fourteen days leave before arriving at Sling or Codford camps. Once in camp no further leave was possible. See also NZEF Instruction No. 201 issued 6/5/1919.

⁵⁴⁸ NZEFEHQ Order to OC Troops on *HMT Nestor* embarking 25/12/1918.

⁵⁴⁹ Cable from Department of Defence to NZEFEHQ dated 30/5/1919.

⁵⁵⁰ NZEFEHQ Routine Orders No. 233 issued 1/3/1919 Customs Duties on Effects of Returning Soldiers.

⁵⁵¹ WA Series 1 Box 8 1/45 Transports Available for Repatriation.

⁵⁵² *ibid.* Letter from NZEFHQ to New Zealand High Commissioner dated 28/4/1919.

Committee, the Commissioner believed he had an opportunity to press for the full requirement of New Zealand to be met. The attitude of the Ministry of Shipping that the vessels, which conducted trade with Britain in peacetime, would be sufficient for New Zealand's repatriation needs were, in the opinion of the High Commissioner, unhelpful.⁵⁵³

In the same month the Ministry of Shipping sent a note to NZEFHQ with the ships that would be allocated to repatriate demobilised men, invalids and families. The Ministry initially allocated the transport ships *Ruahine*, *Manuganui*, *Willochra*, *Tahiti*, *Zealandic*, *Matatua*, *Hororata*, *Briton*, *Ruapheu*, *Port Melbourne*, *Athenic*, *Tainui*, *Rimutaka*, and *Raranga* and *Oxfordshire* for voyages in December 1918 and January 1919.⁵⁵⁴ These vessels embarked for New Zealand between December 1918 and March 1919. When the *Tainui* embarked in March 1919 another seven vessels had been allocated to the NZEF (See Appendix One, Table 5). In total, forty-six vessels were allocated to the NZEF to repatriate its men and women from Britain and Egypt.

In order to minimise the complaints from the men, NZEFHQ was advised to make the most "thorough arrangements" prior to departure. Based on the experience of sending the NZEF to Egypt and Britain, overcrowding, inadequate deck space, bad ventilation, and insufficient space between the hammocks were identified as aspects that required consideration for the men's comfort. "Careful attention must

⁵⁵³ *ibid.* Letter from the New Zealand High Commissioner to General Richardson dated 20/11/1918.

⁵⁵⁴ *ibid.* Note from Ministry of Shipping dated 24/11/1918.

be paid to these matters” was the instruction from Wellington.⁵⁵⁵ A memorandum issued then stated that “one of the greatest difficulties experienced in the transportation of troops is that of food”. OC transports were instructed to offer varied and plentiful meals. Leeway was also granted to purchase stores if required on the voyage back to New Zealand.⁵⁵⁶ Despite the efforts made there were reports of problems on the early sailings to New Zealand. NZEFHQ cabled Wellington⁵⁵⁷ that transports *Tahiti* and *Ruahine* encountered problems with poor cooking facilities, inferior and monotonous meals despite the policy being issued in December 1918.⁵⁵⁸

In the demobilisation plans drawn up prior to the Armistice, the nominal rolls were divided up into the four ports of demobilisation; Auckland, Wellington, Lyttleton, and Dunedin. The rolls were also to be divided into year classes for repatriation namely 1914-1915, 1916, 1917, and 1918.⁵⁵⁹ Passage for families only applied to men who had married women in Britain or whose wife and children had arrived prior to 31 December 1917. Passage to New Zealand for these would have to be paid for.⁵⁶⁰ The NZEF granted passage to 3,000 wives and 600 children.⁵⁶¹ Widows and children of men who died while serving in the

⁵⁵⁵ *ibid.* Memorandum from Department of Defence to NZEFHQ Transport of Troops issued 17/12/1918.

⁵⁵⁶ *ibid.*

⁵⁵⁷ *ibid.*

⁵⁵⁸ *ibid.* Cable from NZEFHQ to Department of Defence Wellington dated 15/7/1919.

⁵⁵⁹ WA Series 133 3 Box 7 71/1 Demobilisation Instructions – Note from 4th Infantry (Reserve) BrigadeHQ Sling Camp to Reserve Camps dated 19/12/1919.

⁵⁶⁰ NZEF Routine Orders No. 739 issued 30/11/1918 –Moving of Wives and Children.

⁵⁶¹ New Zealand Yearbook 1919, p. 257.

NZEF were allowed passage home at the public expense.⁵⁶²

There was plenty of discussion between Wellington and London as the transport issue was worked out as this cable illustrates from December 1918:

Owing to the comparatively large amount of shipping placed at our disposal for us during Armistice...[we are] unable to fill with low Category men...in order to fill accommodation, return men from England of late reinforcements owing to inability to get from France until peace is ratified and Category A personnel [are available]. Endeavouring to get 1914-1915 men from France now and hope to be successful – but if cases of later reinforcements return this is to fill ships which other Dominions have done...men will return according to length of service.⁵⁶³

In January 1919 NZEFHQ issued Instruction No.107 confirming the order of repatriation (See Chapter One). By the end of January most of the low category men, invalids and the sick (excluding VD patients) had been repatriated. By the end of January 1919 NZEFHQ was able to report to Wellington that:

First returning draft fit men consisting of ANZAC troops 1914-1915 men leave by *Hororata* 1st February...⁵⁶⁴

The draft aboard the *Hororata* consisted of 43 Officers and 1462 other ranks and the men were drafts from Sling or the

⁵⁶² See also WA Series 133 3 Box 7 71BM Demobilisation November-December 1918 – NZEF Instruction No. 94 issued 18/12/1918.

⁵⁶³ WA Series 1 Box 8 1/45 Transports Available for Repatriation- Cable from NZEFHQ to Defence Dept Wellington dated 9/12/1918.

⁵⁶⁴ *ibid.* Cable from NZEFHQ to Department of Defence Wellington dated 25/1/1919.

reserve camps.⁵⁶⁵ As Category A men arrived in the camps for repatriation a policy was already in place to keep the men occupied. A memo was sent out from the 4th Infantry (Reserve) Brigade camp looking for a special body of physical instructors to be formed. The object of this group was to provide “bracing physical instruction [for the] maintenance of morale and discipline.” A school for physical instructors would be established and men who went through the instruction course would be allocated to the transports sailing for New Zealand to take platoon-size groups for physical drills aboard the vessels.⁵⁶⁶

The Demobilisation Scheme also considered the Ordnance stores that the NZEF had in France, Belgium, Egypt and Britain. It was felt that the end of the war gave the government a “favourable opportunity for purchasing the equipment necessary for the force to be maintained in New Zealand after the war”.⁵⁶⁷ Equipment would be classified as serviceable, repairable, unserviceable or obsolete and the GOC NZEF in Britain would form a purchase and disposal board to deal with the equipment. It was established as a priority that military equipment is returned for use by the territorial forces for training.⁵⁶⁸ Officers would have to hand into the NZMRBHQ Ordnance section or the quartermasters of the Training Units their revolvers, binoculars, compasses or any other stores issued by the government. It is debatable that the officers of the NZMRB

⁵⁶⁵ WA Series 133 3 Box 7 71/1 Demobilisation Instructions – NZEFHQ Instruction No. 101 issued 2/1/1919. NZEFHQ recorded that there were 305 1914 Class men and 853 1915 Class men for repatriation.

⁵⁶⁶ WA Series 133 3 Box 7 71BM Demobilisation November-December 1918 - NZ 4th Infantry (Reserve) Brigade BM No. 82 issued 27/11/1918.

⁵⁶⁷ WA Series 1 5/10 Box 4 Miscellaneous Papers Relating to Demobilisation - Scheme of Demobilisation. for NZ Forces, Part 1 Troops Overseas.

⁵⁶⁸ *ibid.*

had any of the Government Issue equipment still in their possession at the time of the Armistice. The returned equipment was sent to the Imperial Ordnance depot in Cairo.⁵⁶⁹ This chapter now continues with a discussion of the actuality of the repatriation process.

The NZDiv had ceased to exist as a unit when the last of the drafts had departed from Germany to Britain. Between the sailing of the *Hororata* in February 1919 and HMNZT *Paparoa* in September 1919 the bulk of the men of the Division were repatriated home. This totalled 34,767 men and women. This included men of the Veterinary Corps, Provosts, Dental corps, Nurses, VAD workers and Red Cross workers. This was accomplished by 42 voyages averaging 872 per voyage or 5000 per month over the seven month period.

It was intended that the Maori Pioneer Battalion return to New Zealand as a complete unit.⁵⁷⁰ All leave was due to be completed by mid-February 1919 and the Battalion was ordered to prepare for demobilisation. The wives of the Pioneers were sent to C Group at Torquay to obtain passage on the next available vessel sailing for New Zealand.⁵⁷¹ The cards for clothing and demobilisation were made up and any deficiencies in clothing and equipment had to be made up. The final inspection of the battalion was held at No. 5 Camp Larkhill on 25 February 1919. The Battalion would embark aboard the HMNZT *Raranga* due to

⁵⁶⁹ NZEFEHQ Routine Orders No. 230 issued 1/3/1919 Demobilisation – Officers Equipment.

⁵⁷⁰ WA Series 1 Box 8 1/45 Transports Available for Repatriation – Cable from NZEFHQ to Defence Department Wellington dated 9/12/1918.

⁵⁷¹ WA Series 133 3 Box 10 Maori Pioneer Battalion France to Sling 1918-1919 – Cable from Larkhill Camp to AGroupHQ Sling Camp dated 6/2/1919.

depart in March. However, three days later however, the Pioneer Battalion departed Amesbury, arrived at Liverpool, and boarded HMNZT *Westmoreland*.⁵⁷² Three Pioneers imprisoned in Gosport were released and were repatriated aboard HMNZT *Willochra* in March 1919. At this time absent Pioneers were rounded up and repatriated on the next available vessel. When the Pioneers embarked for New Zealand there was a panic at NZEFHQ when the demobilisation cards for the Pioneers could not be found.⁵⁷³ Consequently, a search was undertaken and the cards located some time after the Pioneers had left Britain. The Rarotongan Pioneer Company, 246 men strong, was repatriated as a complete unit in December 1918 from Egypt aboard HMNZT *Malta*, the first Category A men to leave Egypt for New Zealand.

The NZMRB was repatriated home between December 1918 and July 1919. A total of 6,042 officers, other ranks, and nurses (or wives) embarked on seven vessels (See Appendix One, Table 5). The first vessels repatriated married, Category B and C men in December 1918. The next vessel to embark was not until March 1919 and repatriated Category A men. Thereafter repatriation was suspended due to the need for manpower to suppress the riots. This manpower came from the Category A men who were of the 1916 class and above.

On 10 April 1919, the NZEFHQ requested from EEFHQ approval to immediately repatriate aboard the HMNZT

⁵⁷² Cowan, *The Maoris in the Great War*, p. 159.

⁵⁷³ WA Series 133 3 Box 10 Maori Pioneer Battalion France to Sling 1918-1919 – Cable from AGroupHQ to the Assistant Provost Marshal dated 1/3/1919.

Dorset 89 men. This group included two officers and thirty other ranks requested by cable from the National Efficiency Board in Wellington, thirty other-ranks of the 1914-1915 classes who have been repatriated in March aboard HMNZT *Kaikoura*, twenty Category C invalids, five 2nd Lieutenants whose training with the RAF was stopped with the conclusion of the Armistice.⁵⁷⁴ This was approved the same day by EEFHQ. The next day NZEFEHQ ordered all 1914-1915 men up to the 6th reinforcements were to assemble at Ismailia at the NZTUD and be shipped home.⁵⁷⁵

Repatriation was resumed in June 1919 when HMNZT *Ulimaroa* which left Suez on 30 June 1919 and arrived home on 8 August 1919.⁵⁷⁶ A nominal roll issued for the vessel shows that the draft of 75 officers, 1014 other ranks and two nurses came from the Mounted Rifle Regiments, Machinegun Squadrons, Signals, Veterinary corps, the Auckland Mounted Rifles Band and the Provost corps.⁵⁷⁷ On June 30, all the units that made up the NZMRB were disbanded including the 2nd New Zealand Machinegun Squadron which was returned from the 5th ALH Brigade on 26 June. The ANZAC Mounted Division was formally disbanded on 1 July 1919 and the NZMRB training units and depots formally disbanded on 23 July.⁵⁷⁸ The final drafts of the NZMRB left for New Zealand in July 1919

⁵⁷⁴ WA Series 1 3 Box 6 XFE1058 Troops Returning to New Zealand per HMNZT *Ulimaroa*.

⁵⁷⁵ *ibid.* Order from NZEFEHQ to NZMRBHQ, NZTUD issued 11/4/1919.

⁵⁷⁶ Wilkie, *Official War History of the Wellington Mounted Rifles*, p. 240.

⁵⁷⁷ WA Series 1 3 Box 6 XFE1058 Troops Returning to New Zealand per HMNZT *Ulimaroa*. See also Powles (ed.), *The History of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles*, p. 267.

⁵⁷⁸ NZEF Routine Orders No. 258/250 Demobilisation issued 30/6/1919. The units on the roster were the NZMRB HQ, AMR, CMR, WMR, 1st & 2nd Machine Gun Squadrons, NZE Field and Signal Troops, NZ Mounted Field Ambulance, 4th Coy. NZASC, and NZVC No. 2 Mobile Veterinary Section

aboard the HMNZT *Ellenga* and HMNZT *Hororata* ending almost five years of service in the Middle East (See Appendix One, Table 5).⁵⁷⁹ Five men were left to hand over the stores. Also packed in the hold of the *Ulimaroa* were ten bales of horse covers, a motorcycle for instructional purposes while the men were at sea and three typewriters all care of the Ordnance Department. The NZEFEHQ also dispatched twenty cases of regimental records and two cases of returned soldiers' effects.⁵⁸⁰

Despite the delays, the rioting and other impediments, the repatriation process was as efficient as possible. By September 1919, only 404 officers and 3,275 men remained in Europe including amputee Alex Hutton awaiting repatriation while a handful of men remained in Egypt. The majority of these men came home in October 1919.⁵⁸¹ The scheme developed by General Richardson had worked to repatriate the men as quickly as possible and ensure that the equipment required for the post-war New Zealand army would be shipped home. This was accomplished by a steady sailing of vessels to New Zealand. The planned embarkation rate of 7,000 per month was never reached. The repatriation averaged 4,500 men per month from Britain and 500 per month from Egypt,⁵⁸² achieved by some of the vessels making round trips. By November 1919, 52,833 men had been shipped home, 3,059 men had chosen to be discharged overseas and 792 were still on

⁵⁷⁹ Thomson, *Warrior Nation*, p. 146. See also Powles (ed.), *The History of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles*, p. 250.

⁵⁸⁰ WA Series 1 3 Box 6 XFE1058 Troops returning to New Zealand per HMNZT *Ulimaroa* – Memorandum from NZEFEHQ to OC Troops HMNZT *Ulimaroa* issued 28/6/1919.

⁵⁸¹ Carbery, *The New Zealand Medical Service*, p. 501.

⁵⁸² *ibid.*, p. 495.

active service.⁵⁸³ Some men and women would never see New Zealand. Eight demobilised personnel drowned and nine died at sea on voyages home to New Zealand (See Appendix One, Table 5). In total 638 NZEF personnel died on active service between November 1918 and August 1919. The Maori and Rarotongan Pioneers lost 37 men between demobilisation and discharge (See Appendix One, Table 4).⁵⁸⁴

There would be one last demand of spit and polish for the men of the NZDiv. There was a Triumphal March for the Dominion Troops through London in June 1919. 12,000 men marched past from New Zealand, Canada, Australia, South Africa, and Newfoundland. The New Zealand parade contingent numbered 1,000 men. Also present were 128 wounded NZEF men at the Queen Victoria memorial to salute the parade as it marched past.⁵⁸⁵ It was the last time units of the NZEF would parade. The concluding part of this chapter concentrates on the education scheme.

On the completion of the last combat action, Russell was concerned that the men of the NZDiv would get an education for inevitable return to civilian life although at this point there was no way to tell when that would be.⁵⁸⁶ Routine orders from NZEFHQ established the purpose of the education scheme to develop citizenship and help

⁵⁸³ W.H. Montgomery, 'Repatriation', *The War Effort of New Zealand: A Popular History of (a) Minor Campaigns in Which New Zealanders Took Part: (b) Services Not Fully Dealt with in the Campaign Volumes: (c) the Work at the Bases*, Lieutenant H.T.B. Drew (ed.), Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd, 1923, p.164.

⁵⁸⁴ Cowan, *The Maoris in the Great War*, pp, 162-169, 171.

⁵⁸⁵ WA Series 133 3 Box 8 71/2/2 Demobilisation in Sling Camp – Special District Order for Triumphal March of the Dominion Troops through London issued 3/5/1919.

⁵⁸⁶ Chris Pugsley, *The Anzac Experience*, p. 297.

soldiers get work upon their return to New Zealand.⁵⁸⁷ The camps were instructed that the demobilised soldiers would still be subject to drills, educational lectures in the fields of civics, personal hygiene, and the duties and privileges of New Zealand citizenship.

The NZEF calculated at the time that the demobilisation process would take a minimum of eighteen months. It was very close estimate as the actual period of formal demobilisation of the NZEF lasted from November 1918 to April 1920.⁵⁸⁸ General Richardson felt that it was a challenge for the NZEF in “how to interest and employ nearly 60,000 during the period of demobilisation”.⁵⁸⁹ In the history of the AIF C.E.W. Bean put it this way, “[that] there must be instilled a new motive to animate it [the NZEF]”.⁵⁹⁰ Consideration was given for the useful employment of troops while the process of demobilisation unfolded. “It is essential that troops should be kept fully employed during the waiting period”.⁵⁹¹ It was determined that employment would consist of vocational and general education, cleaning and repair, care packing and shipment of military equipment and stores, works of utility including salvage, rebuilding, cultivation and military and physical training “as may be advisable”.⁵⁹² The Government agreed with the NZEF commanders when in December 1918 a grant of £50,000 was authorised for the compulsory educational scheme. This would be established upon the foundation

⁵⁸⁷ NZEF Routine Orders No. 758 issued 15/12/1918 - NZEF Education Departments.

⁵⁸⁸ Richardson, ‘Education in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force’, p. 221.

⁵⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p.221.

⁵⁹⁰ Bean, *ANZAC to Amiens*, p. 515.

⁵⁹¹ WA Series 1 5/10 Box 4 Miscellaneous Papers Relating to Demobilisation - Scheme of Demobilisation. For NZ Forces, Part 1 Troops Overseas.

⁵⁹² *ibid.*

already laid down by the YMCA in 1917 at Hornchurch for educational programmes for convalescent men.⁵⁹³ With the Armistice, control of the educational programmes was taken off the YMCA and returned to NZEFHQ. Colonel Stewart notes that despite this arbitrary change in responsibility, the YMCA “gave the most loyal co-operation”.⁵⁹⁴ Both Sling and Larkhill Camps by March 1919 had an established training routine consisting of route marches in the morning followed by vocational classes, classes in economics, and physical drill.⁵⁹⁵ Despite the non-military work of demobilisation, the army still required men to freshen up their combat skills. In December 1918 two officers and five other ranks were sent to a bombing school under orders from the Southern Command.⁵⁹⁶

Schools were established for agriculture at Torquay Camp; engineering and telegraphy at Sling Camp; and architecture, building trades, and printing at Codford Camp.⁵⁹⁷ Classes were also undertaken in Germany but only lasted for a period of two months when the bulk of the NZDiv was returned to Britain. All ranks when not engaged in purely military duties were encouraged to take “opportunity of preparing themselves for their return to civilian life”.⁵⁹⁸ The NZDiv developed a scheme for soldiers and nurses allowing them access to courses held at

⁵⁹³ Stewart, *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919* vol. 2, p. 613. A school for disabled soldiers was established in August 1917.

⁵⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 613.

⁵⁹⁵ WA Series 133 3 Box 8 71/2/2 Demobilisation in Sling Camp – A Group HQ Group Routine Order No. 50 issued 27/2/1919 Timetable for camps week commencing 3/3/1919.

⁵⁹⁶ WA Series 133 3 Box 7 71BM Demobilisation November-December 1918. Note from Southern Command HQ to NZ 4th Infantry (Reserve) Brigade HQ dated 26/11/1918.

⁵⁹⁷ Richardson, ‘Education in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force’, pp. 224-227. See also Stewart, *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919* vol. 2 pp. 612-613.

⁵⁹⁸ Ferguson, *The History of the Canterbury Regiment*, p. 289.

polytechnics, factories, and universities in Britain prior to demobilisation. This scheme was suspended in March when the last drafts left for Britain. Orders were issued in December 1918 for 27 men to report to the Reception Camp at Opladen for return to New Zealand via Britain “for purposes of obtaining University education”.⁵⁹⁹ In January 1919, another 50 men were ordered to Britain for what was called Educational duty.⁶⁰⁰ Rifleman Graham wrote in a letter home after the Armistice on the education programme and life in the post Armistice division:

Now that the heads are giving lectures on Demobilisation scheme and Educational scheme, I am beginning to picture myself back in old NZ...we are peace time soldiers and tho' [sic] it is much more pleasant and comfortable, it will get very monotonous at time[s]. This I am willing to stick for I am sure it will not be long before we step on board the boat. No doubt we will have Xmas over on the continent.⁶⁰¹

Certainly the rapidity of the demobilisation of the NZDiv in Germany frustrated the plans of a comprehensive programme.

In Egypt the education classes so vital to the demobilisation scheme were begun in January 1919 in earnest. Trooper J Robertson, who in civilian life had been a school inspector, was promoted to Major and tasked with providing classrooms. These were fairly simple, being nothing more than “blackboards in the sand”.⁶⁰² Men were taught wool

⁵⁹⁹ WA Series 98 3 Box 3 Demobilization November 1918-February 1919 – NZDivHQ order ZA 5/363 issued 30/12/1918. The men were to report to camp on 31/12/1918.

⁶⁰⁰ *ibid.* NZDivHQ orders ZA 6/31 issued 4/1/1919 and ZA 6/517 dated 10/1/1919.

⁶⁰¹ Rifleman Gladstone Graham letter dated 20/11/1918.

⁶⁰² Nicol, *The Story of Two Campaigns*, p. 238. See also Wilkie, *Official War History of the Wellington Mounted Rifles*, p. 238.

classing and motoring mechanics. The programmes were terminated when the NZMRB was called back into active service to suppress the riots in March and April 1919. The rear area depots and camps, being more settled, were able to undertake some courses, mainly in agriculture.⁶⁰³

The education programme in which the command of the NZEF placed faith never lived up to expectations. Men, now free of the strain of combat and under a more relaxed disciplinary regime, were not inclined to devote themselves to training rather they were eager to get home.⁶⁰⁴ The nature of the educational course both in the NZDiv and the NZMRB were undermined by the gradual process of demobilisation which caused all manner of disorganisation and disruption to the teaching plan plus “the natural reluctance of war-weary men to assume studious responsibilities”.⁶⁰⁵ Despite the best intentions and the resources expended by the government and the NZEF, the educational programme was not a success. This was due to the compulsory nature and the military control.⁶⁰⁶ Even on the vessels sailing for home, men were still compelled to engage in training.

There is a case to be made that it would have been better for the returning soldiers if they were able to access such programmes after their arrival home in New Zealand. Perhaps as an indication of the lack of thought into the

⁶⁰³ Richardson, ‘Education in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force’, pp. 230-231.

⁶⁰⁴ Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell*, p. 290.

⁶⁰⁵ Annabell, *Official History of the New Zealand Engineers*, p. 224.

⁶⁰⁶ WA 133 3 Box 5 28/64 Disturbance at Sling Camp March 1919 – Minutes of a meeting in London held between a delegation of men and NZEFHQ dated 15/3/1919. The delegation was advised that AGroupHQ at Sling were not prepared to have 6,000 men sitting down with nothing to do.

post-demobilisation of the men is the insufficient quantity of Returned Soldiers' Handbooks produced. In January 1919, the shipping officer was advising NZEFHQ that only about 25 copies were available for each vessel returning to New Zealand, or one copy per approximately 40 men.⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰⁷ WA Series 1 Box 8 1/45 Transports Available for Repatriation –Memorandum from Major ESO NZEF to AQMG NZEFHQ dated 15/1/1919.

Conclusion

The first thing one asks about the demobilisation process is was it successful? The answer in the case of the NZEF at the end of the First World War is a qualified yes. The industrial nature of the war and the management task required was a new experience for many officers and politicians. Although the prospect of demobilisation was recognised in 1914, the scope and size of the task could hardly have been understood. The NZDiv and NZMRB had moved from enthusiastic amateurs to hardened professionals on the battlefield. When the Armistices were declared, they were partially prepared. This is a period of New Zealand's history of the First World War that has not had any serious investigation. Yet it was a rich social, administrative and military history.

That it went as smoothly as it did say a lot about the planning conducted even before the great offences of 1918 by the Demobilisation Committee in London. To the plan was added the organisational skills of General Richardson and staff of the NZEFHQ. The NZDiv was demobilised and repatriated between January and September 1919. It ended the war in reserve, camping on the battlefields last fought over in 1914. Selected to occupy Germany as part of the Armistice agreement the NZDiv was in occupation around Cologne from late December 1918 to late March 1919 when the last of the drafts entrained for Britain to await repatriation. The NZMRB was resting and refitting when the Armistice with the Ottoman Empire was signed. It spent the next five months in camp in Palestine and Egypt awaiting

repatriation home. After one vessel left in March with Category A men, an uprising in Egypt in March 1919 forced the remobilisation of the Brigade which conducted until it was demobilised again in June 1919 and disbanded along with the AMDiv. In June and July 1919 the NZMRB was repatriated home.

The Maori Pioneer Battalion was sent to France in 1916 and operated with the NZDiv until the Armistice. The Rarotongan Company was detached and remained with the NZMRB. The Battalion marched with the rest of the NZDiv until it reached the German frontier. Due to the sensitivities of the GHQ, the battalion was never sent into Germany as occupiers. Consequently it was returned to Britain via France and remained in camp until it was repatriated in February 1919. The Rarotongan Company was demobilised and repatriated in December 1918. Both these units were the rare exception in that they returned to New Zealand as complete units.

The spectre of infectious disease also hung over the demobilisation process. The worldwide influenza pandemic reached its second deadly peak at the time of the Armistice. Men weakened by war and eager to get home were struck down. A number of NZEF men died in Britain, France, Germany and sadly, Gallipoli from influenza or the complications arising from the disease. This also impacted upon the demobilisation process as a whole. The other disease of note was venereal disease. Even at wars end, men were still contracting VD or suffering the consequences. Those still infected by June 1919 would be

repatriated on a 'ship of shame'. The network of hospitals were evacuated and closed in 1919. Great care was taken in repatriating the sick and wounded men supported by the NZHS *Maheno* and *Marama* and ambulance transports but some men would die on the voyage home as in the sad case of Trooper Fraser Campbell.

Trooper Campbell aged 36, volunteered in 1916 and was serving with the 2nd Machinegun Squadron at the Armistice. He was demobilised and embarked aboard HMNZT *Ulimaroa* in June 1919. He committed suicide by hanging on 15 July 1919 and was buried at sea on the same day. He had been in the hospital aboard ship and his condition on that was described as one of general debility. His mental state was described as morose and he was suffering depression due to his ill-health. A Court of Inquiry was conducted into his suicide and the ship's doctor told the court that Campbell had stated to him that "he would not get better" despite appearing "to be much brighter" and that "[he] showed no sign of suicidal tendencies". The Court confirmed a verdict of suicide committed "whilst in a state of depression bought on by ill-health". Trooper Fraser Campbell was one more casualty of the First World War. Despite being demobilised and sailing for home, the effects of the desert campaign claimed another New Zealander. Sadly there was no treatment available in 1919 to prevent this poor farmer from taking his life so far away from home.⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰⁸ Series 18805 W5530 Box 38 Record No.0022256 – Campbell, Trooper Fraser WW1 17382 1914-1919. NZEF Personal file. Court of Inquiry record dated 15/7/1919.

The one area of delay was men awaiting artificial limbs as in the example of Alex Hutton. The NZMC slowly demobilised as the vessels embarked for New Zealand as doctors, nurses, and orderlies were assigned to each vessel. Non-combatants and POWs were also organised and successfully repatriated to New Zealand along with the valuable war trophies. The NZEFHQ put effort into securing war trophies and preventing the Australians from stealing machineguns captured by the NZMRB. Everything from guns, live ordnance, German planes, and medical equipment was packed and shipped to New Zealand from Egypt in 1919.

The other task the NZEF had to perform was the evacuation and closing of the camps in Britain. A timetable was prepared in December 1918 and the main camps were redesignated as A Group, B Group, C Group, D Group and E Group. The reserve camps of the units in the NZDiv were the first to be closed followed by the main camps as the men were repatriated. The process took nine months to complete causing some anxiety in the War Office. As the camps were evacuated the stores of equipment were sold in Britain or shipped home to New Zealand. The majority of the ordnance was returned to the British Army. There was a financial dispute over costs that took time to resolve that involved all the Dominion forces. In a time of transition from animal to motorised power, trucks became an obsession for the New Zealanders to assist the demobilisation and evacuation process. The vast numbers of animals that transported the men, ammunition, food and who carried the Mounted Rifle regiments into battle were disposed of in

Britain and Egypt. The horses of the NZMRB were shot rather than leave these noble companions in the hands of the Egyptians.

General Godley who had sailed with the Main Body in 1914 sent his farewell message to the NZEF in 1919 where he reflected that it had been his privilege to have commanded the NZEF “throughout the whole period of the war”.⁶⁰⁹ He believed that the men of the NZEF would:

Leave behind you a reputation for discipline, fighting qualities, steadiness, resource, initiative, hard work, and gentlemanly conduct of which you and New Zealand have every reason to be proud.⁶¹⁰

One of the major problems identified with the demobilisation process was ill-discipline. All British and dominion forces had incidents occurring during the demobilisation process. The type of offences ranged from simple drunkenness, to riots and vandalism, shootings, and the murderous vigilante justice at Surafend. Men were punished where possible or in some cases the punishment was forgotten about as they were quickly discharged from the army or repatriated on the next available vessel. There were New Zealanders in military prisons well into 1919 who were repatriated in converted cells aboard the transport ships. Hardly the epitome of gentlemanly conduct or good discipline as Godley indicated.

⁶⁰⁹ Stewart, *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919* vol. 2, p. 612.

⁶¹⁰ *ibid.* p. 612.

The Repatriation process was a mammoth administrative task. Low category men, sick and wounded and married men were repatriated in December 1918 and January 1919 from Britain and Egypt. Repatriation of Category A men in Britain and Egypt began in February 1919 and continued through until March 1920. Sadly a handful of men would die during the demobilisation and repatriation process. The NZEF was officially disbanded in August 1921. During the demobilisation and repatriation process an education scheme was introduced. It was not effective due to the attitude of the men to compulsive study. On the balance of the evidence, this programme should have been instituted when the men arrived in New Zealand.

This thesis has made an attempt to present the human experience of the demobilisation of the NZEF. We see George Tuck, whose words provided the title of this thesis relieved that he would be returning home; Rifleman Graham who looked forward to a celebration with his family; Private Ingram who thought that the protests of the NZDiv part in the occupation were a joke; Major-General Russell who had commanded the NZDiv for three years leaving the NZDiv as it began to return to Britain; Trooper Hall and Corporal McMillan of the NZMRB who fell ill with malaria at the Armistice then waited for repatriation that did not come until July 1919; The experiences of the Trooper Doherty and the CMR party upon returning to the birthplace of the ANZAC legend in 1918; Private Fraser who witnessed the riots in Sling Camp; the experience of the NZMRB and their feelings toward the Arab; Pioneer Heketa, sometime 'Maori Prince' and absentee; Pioneer Haenga who shot an officer

on picquet duty; finally, Alex Hutton who waited thirteen months for an artificial limb and a “limbie boat” to return him to New Zealand. Their examples are the human face of this history.

Perhaps the final word should go with Godley whose words looking back from the 21st century seem prophetic:

New Zealand, I am convinced, is able and destined to play a part in the world out of all proportion to her size and population.⁶¹¹

The men of the First New Zealand Expeditionary Force whose time had come and were demobilised to sail home to New Zealand would father future generations who would fulfil Godley’s prophecy. Undoubtedly this is the true legacy of the First World War and New Zealand’s part in the great tragedy of the 20th Century.

⁶¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 612.

Appendix One: Tables

11 March	18 March	25 March
Division Headquarters	Division Headquarters	Division Headquarters
NZ Engineers	NZ Divisional Artillery[1]	NZ Engineers[2]
NZE Signal Company	NZE Signal Company	NZE Signal Company
Nth Island Infantry Battalions[3]	Nth Island Infantry Battalions	Nth Island Infantry Battalions
Sth Island Infantry Battalions	Sth Island Infantry Battalions	Sth Island Infantry Battalions
NZ Rifle Brigade Battalions	NZ Rifle Brigade Battalions	NZ Rifle Brigade Battalions
NZ Divisional Train	Details from other units already sent to Britain	NZ Machine Gun Battalion
NZ Medical Corps – Field Ambulances	NZ Medical Corps – Hospitals/Field Ambulances	2 nd Coy NZ Divisional Train
4 th Battalion NZRB Band	Sundry Services - HQ	NZ Medical Corps
Sundry Services - HQ		Details from other units already sent to Britain

Table 1: Composition of the final NZDiv drafts for Britain from Germany March 1919

Notes:

[1] Matthew Wright, *Western Front: The New Zealand Division in the First World War*, Auckland: Reed Books, 2005, p. 160. The Divisional Artillery was officially disbanded on March 18 1919.

[2] Ian McGibbon, *Kiwi Sappers: The Corps of Royal New Zealand Engineers' Century of Service*, Auckland: Reed, 2002, p. 56. The NZ Engineers were disbanded as a unit by this time. These were the last of the men to leave for England.

[3] By this time, the individual infantry battalions had been reduced to two supra-battalions based on the men's place of residence in New Zealand.

Source: WA Series 1 4/29 Box 5 Demobilisation General File November 1918 to March 1919 – Div HQ Memorandum No. ZA 1/455 issued 4/3/1919.

Month	Absentees	Absent from France	Arrests
1918			
October	152 (22 AWOL)		37
November	261 (25 AWOL)		58
December	410[1]	100	76
1919			
January	536	134	74
February	690	140	75
March	460	47	
April	504	43	
May	483	11	
June	411	20	
July	357	22	

Table 2 Absentees/Arrests In Britain and France by the Provosts Corps

Note: [1] After the Armistice, the term Absent Without Leave was dispensed with.

Source: WA Series 152 1 Provosts Corps War Diary January to July 1919 – Entries for October 1918 to July 1919.

	Held in France	Transferred to Britain
1918		
December	314	1
1919		
January	306	1
February	302	3
March	384	198
April	357	28
May	42	
June	14	

Table 3 New Zealand, Canadian, and South African Soldiers Imprisoned in France December 1918- June 1919

Source: Chris Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell: New Zealanders and Military Discipline in the First World War*, Auckland: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991, p. 354.

	NZEF Overseas strength	Embarked from Britain and Egypt	Disembarked in New Zealand	Discharged Overseas	Deaths on Active Service
1918					
Nov	58129	1248	26	31	393[1]
Dec	56086	6830	2069	58	73
1919					
Jan	50693	3279	5306	65	38
Feb	46802	4159	3799	128	67
Mar	42233	9544	4413	291	29
Apr	34041	4303	7887	413	14
May	26487	6007	7178	361	8
Jun	22684	5764	3266	125	6
Jul	17039	6372	5687	0	4
Aug	11179	2066	5740	144	6
Totals		49572	45371	1616	638

Table 4 Strength of the NZEF, Disembarkations, Overseas Discharges, and Deaths November 1918-August 1919

Note: [1] Figure includes those killed in action from 1-8 November 1918.

Source: Document of data compiled by Archives NZ from Lt.-Colonel John Studholme, *New Zealand Expeditionary Force Record of Personal Services during the War of Officers, Nurses, and First-Class Warrant Officers; and Other Facts Relating to the N.Z.E.F.*, Wellington: Government Printer, 1928.

Embarked From	Date	Vessel	Officers	Other Ranks	Nurses[1]	Total	Remarks
Britain	7/11/1918	<i>Ulimaroa</i>	31	730	13	784	
	8/11/1918	<i>Tofua</i>	27	434	3	464	
	2/12/1918	<i>Maunganui</i>	24	839	5	868	Ambulance Transport
	3/12/1918	<i>Tahiti</i>	27	911	4	942	
	8/12/1918	<i>Ruahine</i>	36	671	10	717	Ambulance Transport
	19/12/1918	<i>Oxfordshire</i>	43	1009	3	1155[2]	
	19/12/1918	<i>Marama</i>	29	526	2	577	Hospital Ship
	23/12/1918	<i>Briton</i>	69	1089	7	1165	
	8/1/1919	<i>Matatua</i>	23	629		652	
	9/1/1919	<i>Ruapehu</i>	27	359	6	392	
	18/1/1919	<i>Zealandic</i>	18	995	8	1021	Ambulance Transport
	25/1/1919	<i>Port Melbourne</i>	34	1180		1214	Ambulance Transport 1 died at sea
	1/2/1919	<i>Hororata</i>	43	1462		1505[3]	
	3/2/1919	<i>Athenic</i>	37	666	24	727	
	7/2/1919	<i>Ajana</i>	21	873		894	1 drowned
	28/2/1919	<i>Westmoreland</i>	54	979		1033[4]	
	8/3/1919	<i>Willochra</i>	42	1014	7	1063	
	10/3/1919	<i>Maheno</i>	22	372	4	398	Hospital Ship 5 died at sea
	10/3/1919	<i>Bhamo</i>	27	780	7	814	
	11/3/1919	<i>Raranga</i>	29	1041		1070	1 drowned
	12/3/1919	<i>Corinthic</i>	44	1077	17	1138	
	14/3/1919	<i>Ionic</i>	49	643	18	710	
	17/3/1919	<i>Remuera</i>	37	435	9	481	
	18/3/1919	<i>Tainui</i>	48	399	47	494	
	27/3/1919	<i>Kia Ora</i>	15	964		979	
	28/3/1919	<i>Northumberland</i>	55	1279		1334	
	1/4/1919	<i>Arawa</i>	56	526	6	588	
	1/4/1919	<i>Paparoa</i>	25	555	6	586	
	2/4/1919	<i>Carpentaria</i>	17	557		574	
	5/4/1919	<i>Rimutaka</i>	21	684	7	712	
	12/4/1919	<i>Pakeha</i>	25	1330		1355	
	18/4/1919	<i>Tofua</i>	48	435	5	488	
	10/5/1919	<i>Waimana</i>	31	1643		1674	1 died at sea
	16/5/1919	<i>Prinzessin</i>	85	329	6	420	
	17/5/1919	<i>Maunganui</i>	50	1065	7	1122	
	18/5/1919	<i>Ruahine</i>	38	840	6	884	
	27/5/1919	<i>Tahiti</i>	55	1133	4	1192	
	31/5/1919	<i>Kigoma</i>	93	613	9	715	
	8/6/1919	<i>Chupra</i>	31	701		732	
	9/6/1919	<i>Marama</i>	20	669		689	Hospital Ship
	7/6/1919	<i>Ruapehu</i>	34	362	6	402	
	17/6/1919	<i>Briton</i>	77	981	15	1073	
	23/6/1919	<i>Giessen</i>	29	1061	6	1096	1 drowned
	28/6/1919	<i>Matatua</i>	25	656		681	
	2/7/1919	<i>Somerset</i>	27	940		967	1 died at sea
	3/7/1919	<i>Mamari</i>	21	1014		1035	1 drowned

Embarked From	Date	Vessel	Officers	Other Ranks	Nurses[1]	Total	Remarks
Britain	4/7/1919	<i>Port Hacking</i>	23	811		834	
	14/7/1919	<i>Athenic</i>	65	327	20	412	
	18/7/1919	<i>Cordova</i>	30	614		644	1 drowned
	5/8/1919	<i>Ayrshire</i>	30	638		668	1 drowned
	8/8/1919	<i>Tainui</i>	86	286	6	378	1 drowned
	9/8/1919	<i>Corinthic</i>	43	309	7	359	
	14/8/1919	<i>Adolf Woermann</i>	99	551	11	661	
	8/9/1919	<i>Ionic</i>	35	312	7	354	
	12/9/1919	<i>Remuera</i>	51	561	2	614	
	13/9/1919	<i>Paparoa</i>	22	190	6	218	
					44718		
Egypt	15/12/1918	<i>Malta</i>	35	604	4	643[5]	1 lost overboard
	25/12/1918	<i>Nestor</i>				149	
	26/12/1918	<i>Wiltshire</i>	12	600	4	616	
	6/3/1919	<i>Kaikoura</i>	29	1030	4	1063	
	30/6/1919	<i>Ulimaroa</i>	75	1014	2	1091[6]	1 died at sea [7]
	23/7/1919	<i>Ellenga</i>	42	1052	2	1096	
	28/7/1919	<i>Hororata</i>	40	1344		1384 [8]	
				16	6042		

Table 5 Vessels Embarked for New Zealand November 1918-September 1919

Notes:

- [1] These figures may include wives and children. For example, HMNZT *Maunganui* embarked on 2/12/1918 with four nurses and one wife aboard.
- [2] This voyage carried North Island men only.
- [3] This was the first draft of Category A men to embark for New Zealand. See chapter 13.
- [4] The Maori Pioneer Battalion embarked on this vessel as a complete unit.
- [5] The Rarotongan Pioneer Company (246 men) embarked on this vessel as a complete unit.
- [6] The Commander of the NZMRB, Brigadier-General Meldrum acted as OC Troops on this voyage.
- [7] This was Trooper Fraser Campbell, 2nd NZ Machine Gun Squadron. See chapter 13.
- [8] This was the last vessel that sailed from Egypt.
- [9] From October 1919 to March 1920, 2,353 men were repatriated on nine vessels from Britain. The last vessel to embark for New Zealand was HMNZT *Ionic* 31 March 1920.

Source:

Lt.-Colonel John Studholme, *New Zealand Expeditionary Force Record of Personal Services During the War of Officers, Nurses, and First-Class Warrant Officers; and Other Facts Relating to the N.Z.E.F.*, Wellington: Government Printer, 1928, pp. 378-381.

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Series 1 5/10 Box 4 Miscellaneous Papers Relating to Demobilisation

Series 1 Box 8 1/45 Transports Available for Repatriation

Series 1 Box 17 Demobilisation of Supply Depots

Series 1 3 Box 6 XFE1058 Troops Returning to New Zealand per HMNZT *Ulimaroa*

Series 1 4/29 Box 5 Demobilisation General File November 1918-March 1919

Series 1 3/8/7 Box 19 Demobilisation of the New Zealand Rifle Brigade

Series 1 3 Box 17 5/60 Hospital Egypt No. 1 Stationary Hospital January-May 1919

Series 1 3 Box 18 8/5 Returning Drafts of Sick and Wounded

Series 1 3 Box 6 Court of Inquiry Disturbance at Ismailia 1918-1919

Series 40 4 Box 4 Movements/Operations NZMRB January-June 1919

Series 40 4 Box 5 27 Discipline August 1918-January 1919

Series 40 3 Box 8 Operations in Tanta Areu March-June 1919

Series 87 2 Box 4 18 Board of Enquiry Sling Riot 1919

Series 98 3 Box 3 Demobilisation November 1918-February 1919

Series 133 3 Box 10 71/4 Demobilisation General File September 1918-October 1919

Series 133 3 Box 7 71/1 Demobilisation Instructions

Series 133 3 Box 10 Maori Pioneer Battalion France to Sling 1918-1919

Series 133 3 Box 8 71/2/2 Demobilisation in Sling Camp

Series 133 1 Box 5 28/83 Riot in Salisbury

Series 133 3 Box 7 71BM Demobilisation November-December 1918

Series 133 3 Box 5 28/64 Disturbance at Sling Camp March 1919

Series 148 1 C Group Discharge Depot War Diaries November 1918-July 1919

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