

Commemorating 150 years
of
New Zealand Cadet Force



1864 -2014

PETITION OF THE SCHOLARS OF THE HIGH SCHOOL, DUNEDIN.

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COLONY OF NEW ZEALAND,

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF THE UNDERSIGNED SCHOLARS OF THE HIGH SCHOOL,
DUNEDIN, HUMBLY SHEWETH :—

THAT your memorialists, to the number of more than forty, have been now for some weeks under military instruction, and, if they may judge from the praise bestowed on them from time to time by the Major Commanding the Militia, their progress has been satisfactory.

From the remarks which have fallen from those whose opinions are very generally respected, your memorialists learn that the establishment of a Cadet Corps, duly instructed, armed and in uniform, is likely to inlist a spirit into the rising generation which would materially nourish the most patriotic feelings, while it would infuse a recruiting element among the population, and would tend to give efficiency to any measures of defence that might hereafter be necessary. Your memorialists are glad that they have been allowed to take a part in the volunteer movement; they feel that the lessons they learn, and the spirit it encourages in them, are already producing a beneficial effect on them, and they earnestly desire to be officially recognised as a portion of the Volunteer force. With this view your memorialists approach your Honourable House, and pray that they may receive at your hands such encouragement as it may be in your power to afford.

And your memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

[Here follow 54 signatures.]

New Zealand Cadet Force 1864 -2014

By Phil Cregeen

This year represents the 150th anniversary of the formation of the New Zealand Cadet Force, here follows a brief history with an emphasis on the arms they were equipped with.

On 24 November 1864 54 students at Dunedin High School petitioned Parliament to be allowed to form a Cadet Corps, the rest they say is history.

By 1875 nearly every Military District in New Zealand had its own Cadet Corps with a total of 1,037 boys enrolled; most were formed at schools and colleges. The activities of the Cadet Force included regular parades, drill, musketry, annual camps and competitive shooting events. In 1885 there were 1,592 Cadets enrolled in the Volunteer Force and they were mainly equipped with **Snider Artillery Carbines** and **Muzzle Loading Pattern 1853 Carbines**. The numbers enrolled had increased to 1,942 by 1895.



Top: .577 Pattern '53 Carbine, 800 were imported in 1871
Bottom: .577 Snider Artillery Carbine c1885

A secret report to parliament by the Joint Defence Committee in 1900 recommended that School Cadet Corps should be placed under the control of the Education Dept. and that further Corps should be formed under the Defence Dept for school leavers, this would ensure that school cadets did not lose their enthusiasm for military training before becoming eligible for the Volunteer Force at age 18. The aim was to ensure a Volunteer Force of 20,000 men. This new arrangement came into effect in 1902. In 1903 the strength of the Public School Cadet Force was reported by the Education Dept as 9,370 equipped with 8,379 **model rifles** (dummy) for drill and 674 miniature rifles

(**Westley Richards Martini .310 cadets**) for shooting. At the same time there were 46 Cadet Corps under the Defence Dept. armed with **Magazine Lee Enfield Carbines (NZ Pattern) and Martini Enfield Carbines**. Given that the Education Act provided that: "in public schools provision shall be made for the instruction in military drill for all boys" the number of cadets had risen to 14,848 by 1907. Of the 56 Cadet Corps under the Defence Dept. 32 were connected with colleges or high schools.

The Defence Act of 1909 caused much reorganisation of the Public School Cadets in 1910 resulting in all boys 12 -14 years, or until they left school, becoming part of the New Zealand Junior Cadets. Cadet Officer Training units were set up at Teacher Training Colleges. To facilitate rifle shooting 25 yd ranges were introduced at schools and 500 **Winchester (M1902) .22 rifles** were purchased. At this time senior cadets (14 to 18 years) under the Defence Dept. were equipped with **Magazine Lee Enfield Rifles** in order to provide enough carbines for the juniors, whose Martini Enfield carbines were augmented by 1,000 Martini Enfield Rifles cut down to carbine length. As a consequence of the 1909 Defence Act the strength of

the Junior Cadet Force had risen to 29,067 by 1911, requiring 10,000 sets of new equipment (model rifles, belts haversack and caps) to be purchased. There were then in use sixty 25 yd ranges for the .22 Winchester rifles, and forty six 8-10 yd ranges for



Top: .303 Martini Enfield Carbine c1903
Bottom: .303 Lee Enfield Carbine (NZ Pattern) c 1903



Top: .310 Westley Richards Martini Cadet c1902

Bottom: .22 short Winchester M 1902 c1910

Photo J Osborne



BSA Model D Air Rifle

BSA Model D air rifles, a 1,000 .310 Martini rifles having been handed over to the Defence Dept.

In 1912 senior cadets were issued with **SMLE Mk I Rifle** and Pat 1903 bayonet withdrawn from Mounted Corps. On the eve of World War I in 1914 there were 25,659 senior cadets under training many of these being armed with the 15,000 **MLEs** supplied from Canada. In 1915 400 **Army pattern .22 training rifles** were received and shared jointly by Senior Cadets and Territorials. By 1916 it was found necessary to withdraw a large proportion of the senior cadet arms in order to provide rifles for training the reinforcements to the NZEF and as a consequence musketry training suffered badly. The war years saw a significant decline in the Junior Cadets due to a lack of instructors and equipment. It should be noted that throughout the war years about 8,000 boys were recruited into the senior cadets annually and when they reached the age of 18 the same number transferred first to the Territorial Force and then going on to join the NZEF.

After the war there was a change in emphasis for the cadets and in 1919 a new syllabus for training reduced the military content and introduced more character building aspects. However the defence Act of 1919 introduced Compulsory Military Training (CMT) for all males aged 14 to 21 and so numbers swelled. At the same time the stock of rifles for the senior cadets was replenished from the returning NZEF. By 1921 the Senior Cadet Force stood at 23,235, slightly more than the Territorial Force; at this time boys under 17 were required to fire 150 rounds of .22 ammunition and boys over 17 to fire 150 rounds of .303 annually as part of their musketry training. By 1930 the Senior Cadet Force had grown to 33,000 and a new syllabus of



Sgt Arthur Lamb

Winner of the Goring Shield for shooting 1919

Photo WBHS



Top: .577 Snider Carbine cut down from a rifle

Bottom: .303 Martini Carbine cut down from a rifle

training had been introduced the previous year. The main value of the Cadet Force being to provide well trained recruits for the Territorial Force. CMT was abolished in 1932 but most cadet units continued at school on a voluntary basis. By 1938 the Cadet Force had reduced to 16,995 and first aid added to the training syllabus and all units were associated with secondary schools.



**Top: .22 Short Rifle c1915
Bottom .22 SMLE Mk IV*c1923**

During the period of World War II training of School Cadets continued with a roll of 17,000 and an injection of modern equipment in 1944. In the post war period all training of Army and Air Training Corps cadets was organised by the schools with the only provision by the Defence Dept. being for uniforms, arms, ammunition and equipment and a small training staff.

From anecdotal evidence provided to the author we know that during the 1950s and 60s boys learned to use **.303 SMLE rifles, Bren guns and mortars** and some lucky ones got to try their hand with the **Vickers MMG and Sten gun**, these arms being kept in school armouries. From 1952 onwards to the end of the 20th Century cadet units also trained with the **Lee Enfield No 8 and No 9 .22 training rifle** as well as **Drill Purpose (DP) No 4 Rifles**.

As schools lacked suitably qualified teachers many school units were disbanded from the mid 1960s. The 1971 Defence Act, established the New Zealand Cadet Force, as a volunteer organisation, for which the Minister of Defence was responsible.

Today the **New Zealand Cadet Forces (NZCF or Cadet Forces)** is a voluntary military-style training organisation for New Zealand youth. Run in a partnership between the **New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF)** and a number of locally appointed community organizations, it is composed of three Corps (similar to the New Zealand Defence Force): the **Air Training Corps (ATC)**, the **New Zealand Cadet Corps (NZCC)** and the **Sea Cadet Corps (SCC)**. Now Cadets are provided with Norinco JW

15 A .22 rifles for drill and Marlin XT .22 rifles for shooting.

Continued Page 6



Barracks Week 1930s. The first week of each year was spent under canvas at Whangarei Boys High Photo WBHS

Acknowledgements: John Osborne

Whangarei Boys High School- black & white photos

-Old boy memories

<http://atojs.natlib.govt.nz/>



**Top: .303 Magazine Lee Enfield Mk I* c1910
Bottom: .303 Short Lee Enfield Mk I*** c1912**





Cadets on Parade 1948, showing the 'sandpaper' uniforms that were worn by the students *Photo WBHS*



.303 Vickers MMG



**Sea Cadets mount guard with Norinco JW15s
Gate Pa Commemoration April 2014 *Photo J Osborne***



.303 Bren Mk I LMG



**Top: .22 Lee Enfield No 9 c1960
Bottom: .22 Lee Enfield No 8 c1952**

Old Boys Remember Cadet Service

Allan Simmons (WBHS 1942-48)

In 1942 I became a member of the Boys' High at form 1 level and looked with envy at the seniors doing Military Training. The buildings were used as a Military Hospital so the 2nd World War was very much on our minds. It's hard to visualise the thrill of reaching the 3rd form and actually becoming a cadet. Flying had captured my imagination so the Air Training Corps was a natural progression. Although there were many exciting events relating to the army, such as the demonstration of the firing of a 15 pounder from beside the grand stand at Rugby Park using live rounds and aiming at an old car across on the Western Hills. It had been soaked in petrol, but despite direct hits, as we discovered later, it failed to ignite.

There was also the firing of the anti aircraft gun also using live rounds. Camps, a fire in the Western Hills bush set off by a Browning machine gun, plus lots of individual shooting, particularly of the 303s all added to the excitement, but the cream was flying in a Tiger Moth, circling my home and having a short time at the controls.

Add to that camps at Whenuapai and Ohakea where we had the opportunity to explore the cramped interior of a Flying Fortress, experience the hands on control of training equipment, such as the training Bolton Paul Turret and actual live firing of one. This was spectacular as the twin Browning machine guns poured out an incredible rate of fire. Aiming was with the use of reflector sights.

We had opportunities to fly in other aircraft, and unfortunately were present at Ohakea when some terrible aircraft accidents occurred.

Graeme Denton (WBHS 1952-58)

What could be more fun for young boys than being issued with real rifles and spending the first week of school playing with them. Of course there was lots of drills and marching, but there was also live shooting with .22 rifles at the school range and .303 rifles at Whareora range. Some of us were sent on special courses at Papakura Army camp or at Waiouru. I was lucky to attend a specialist weapon training course at Waiouru which included a section on camouflage. We learnt to fire Bren guns and .303 rifles. Also to strip and assemble them at speed whilst blindfolded.



Marlin XT .22

**This article first
published in**

**New Zealand
Antique &
Historical Arms
Association Inc.**

Gazette

September 2014