

1942.
NEW ZEALAND.

MILITARY FORCES OF NEW ZEALAND.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

REPORT.

The Hon. the Minister of Defence.

Wellington, 21st July, 1942.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the following report on the New Zealand Military Forces for the period 1st June, 1941, to 31st May, 1942.

GENERAL REMARKS.

Prior to the entry of Japan into the war, on the 7th December, 1941, the Army activities in New Zealand were principally directed to providing reinforcements for our forces overseas and maintaining the efficiency of our home forces at as high a level as possible in readiness for any deterioration in the international situation.

With the entry of Japan into the war the Pacific became a theatre of war, and the New Zealand Army had to be prepared to meet enemy action. New Zealand's claims for equipment were accordingly advanced to a high order of priority, and the quantities of equipment required were vastly increased.

The whole defence situation in New Zealand was rapidly reviewed, and immediate steps were taken to mobilize the whole of the Territorial Force and to strengthen our garrisons in the Pacific Islands.

The raising of additional units and expansion of others were also undertaken, and this process is still proceeding.

The undesirability of disclosing—possibly to the enemy—details of the equipment situation led to the obvious deficiencies in the equipment of the Home Guard being accepted by the public as an indication of the state of the Army as a whole. This was far from being the case, but during the first few months after mobilization the equipment available had of necessity to be issued to the mobilized forces, and little indication could be given at that stage as to what issues would be made to the Home Guard. Latterly, however, the equipment situation has improved beyond expectations, with a consequent improvement so far as the Home Guard is concerned.

The Home Guard was instituted as a civil organization, but is now an integral and important part of the Army. Its requirements in equipment for such very large numbers were quite beyond the capacity of the country to provide, but the arrival of equipment from abroad and a considerable increase in local production are now leading to appreciable results.

For reasons of security this report has been compiled on broad lines, details of equipment and names of places and Commanders, which might be of help to an enemy, having been omitted.

MOBILIZATION AND REORGANIZATION OF THE TERRITORIAL FORCES.

Early in 1942 the Territorial Force was mobilized and is now on a complete war footing.

Units of the National Military Reserve have been incorporated into the Territorial Force and mobilized.