

Headstones and Plaques

The contractors for the supply of headstones, owing to shortage of staff and material during the war period, were much in arrears in the early months of the year, and orders for headstones for burials in the year 1945 were still outstanding. Towards the end of the year, however, the position had very considerably improved and headstones for burials registered late in 1946 were being supplied.

Permanent Work on Graves

In connection with many war graves, mainly those in public cemeteries, there was delay in carrying out permanent work due to shortage of cement.

Eligibility for Burial in Servicemen's Cemeteries

With the laying-down of so many new lawn cemeteries it was found that branches of the New Zealand Returned Services' Association and local bodies were not sure as to what classes of deceased Service personnel should be accepted for burial in these cemeteries. The issue was discussed at a meeting attended by representatives of the New Zealand Returned Services' Association, the New Zealand Home-servicemen's Association, the three Armed Services, the Pensions Department, and the Department of Internal Affairs, and a unanimous decision was reached as follows :—

Servicemen's cemeteries are laid down for the burial of—

- (1) Service personnel who have served overseas ;
- (2) Home-service personnel who die on service up till the date of official peace ; and
- (3) Other home-service personnel who, prior to death, may have expressed to the New Zealand Home-servicemen's Association, next-of-kin, or relatives desire for burial in a servicemen's cemetery.

Branches of the New Zealand Returned Services' Association, the New Zealand Home-servicemen's Association, and local bodies concerned were informed accordingly.

General

Headquarters and branches of the New Zealand Returned Services' Association rendered to the War Graves Division most valuable assistance, and local bodies throughout the country very generously made available to the Government areas of their cemeteries for use as servicemen's lawn cemeteries. To the New Zealand Returned Services' Association and local bodies the Department extends its thanks.

During the year visits to the War Graves Division were made by Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Longmore, a member of the Imperial War Graves Commission, London, and Brigadier A. E. Brown, Secretary-General, Anzac Agency, Imperial War Graves Commission, Melbourne.

B. OVERSEAS BURIALS

Imperial War Graves Commission, London

The Division has maintained very close co-operation with the Imperial War Graves Commission, London. The annual and monthly reports of the Commission clearly indicate that it is most active in its work connected with cemeteries and burials of both recent wars.

Anzac Agency of the Imperial War Graves Commission, Melbourne

Co-operation has also been closely maintained with the Anzac Agency of the Imperial War Graves Commission, Melbourne. The New Zealand appointees to the staff of the Agency—one to hold office as Assistant Secretary-General and Chief Finance Officer and the other as a District Inspector—were selected towards the end of the year and will leave for Australia to take up their appointments early in June, 1947.

New Zealand Military Cemetery at Bourail, New Caledonia

Arrangements were made to hand over to the Anzac Agency for maintenance in perpetuity the New Zealand military cemetery at Bourail, New Caledonia, in which