

17. WAR GRAVES.

While all correspondence in connection with records, inquiries, and registration of graves will continue to be carried out through the N.Z.E.F. War Accounts and Record Office, the work of providing for permanent memorials and the care of graves has been allocated as under:—

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| (a.) National memorial in New Zealand | } By the National War Memorial Committee. |
| (b.) Six battlefield memorials (four in France and Belgium, one in Palestine, and one in Gallipoli) | |
| (c.) War graves in the various theatres of war... | |
| (d.) War graves in New Zealand ... | Department of Internal Affairs responsible for construction of cemeteries, erection of headstones, and care of graves. The New Zealand War Graves Committee to select design and material for headstones. |
| (e.) War graves abroad other than those in theatres of war | Under arrangements made by the New Zealand War Graves Committee. |

SECTION III.—PERMANENT FORCES AND PERMANENT ADMINISTRATIVE ESTABLISHMENTS.

1. NEW ZEALAND STAFF CORPS AND PERMANENT STAFF.

At the end of the Great War the Staff Corps and Permanent Staff were considerably below establishment owing to the casualties on active service and other causes. During the war these vacancies were not filled because it was thought that such appointments should be offered, at the end of the war, to those members of the Expeditionary Force with distinguished records.

From a large number of applicants from the Expeditionary Force forty-nine were selected by a special committee set up by the late Minister of Defence, and consisting of Major-General Sir A. H. Russell, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., Major-General Sir A. W. Robin, K.C.M.G., C.B. (D), Brigadier-General G. S. Richardson, C.B., C.M.G., C.B.E., Brigadier-General H. Hart, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.—a body of officers fully cognizant of the merits of those applying for appointment.

The selected candidates were put through a course at the General Headquarters School, Trentham Camp, where they were required to undergo training and examination and qualify as instructors before receiving appointments in the New Zealand Staff Corps. The same procedure was adopted in making appointments to the Permanent Staff, except that candidates were selected in the first instance by Officers Commanding Districts.

The appointment of these officers and non-commissioned officers filled the majority of the vacancies created by casualties and other causes in the ranks of the Staff Corps and Permanent Staff during the Great War.

The Dominion is to be congratulated upon obtaining for its Permanent Force so many officers and non-commissioned officers with such distinguished records. As proof of this the following list of decorations won by those appointed is given: Victoria Cross, 3; Distinguished Service Order, 8; Military Cross, 21; Distinguished-conduct Medal, 5; Military Medal, 3; Croix de Guerre, 3.

It is hoped that under this small corps of experts, including as it does many New Zealand officers who have held high appointments and have accumulated invaluable experience in the war, the Defence Forces of this Dominion will attain to a high degree of efficiency.

As a result of their war experience and subsequent training at the General Headquarters School the personnel of the Staff Corps and Permanent Staff are now very efficient, and steps will be taken to maintain their efficiency by means of periodical examinations and special courses of instruction at the central school at Trentham. Furthermore, all officers, warrant and non-commissioned officers will be annually reported on and recorded as either (a) fit for promotion, (b) fit to hold their present ranks, or (c) for retirement.

A number of non-commissioned officers in the Permanent Staff received commissions in the N.Z.E.F. during the war. These commissions were temporary and were not intended to be retained on demobilization, as such retention would have entailed an increase in establishment and additional expenditure which could not be justified. The usual procedure is for non-commissioned officers holding temporary ranks as commissioned officers to revert to their substantive ranks on demobilization. It was, however, decided to grant a special commission to those non-commissioned officers who were appointed to temporary commissioned ranks during the war, and who have not been subsequently selected for appointment to the Staff Corps, by appointing them to the rank of Honorary Lieutenant. These honorary officers will be eligible for appointment to the Staff Corps provided they pass the necessary qualifying examination and in other respects fulfil the conditions laid down for admission to the corps.

2. ROYAL NEW ZEALAND ARTILLERY.

The strength of the R.N.Z.A. has been reduced during the year from 358 to 260. Of this number 148 have been on service with the N.Z.E.F. Although the regiment is below establishment, I have stopped recruiting pending a decision as to the future policy of the New Zealand Defence Forces.

3. ENGINEER SERVICES.

The only permanent personnel in connection with Engineer services are those employed in the Works Branch. During the latter part of the war period the construction of hospitals and camps in the Dominion was carried out entirely by this branch of the Defence Department, and independent of the Public Works Department. There may have been good reason for this procedure, but I consider it inadvisable to continue it. It is uneconomical, and results in the duplication of machinery whereby two Departments endeavour to carry out the same functions. In order to remedy this faulty system of administration arrangements have recently been made for the Public Works Department to control all questions of maintenance and construction in future.