

This was the first occasion in which all three services of the New Zealand Defence Forces had taken part in combined operations. The whole operation was well planned and executed, and I am indebted to the Commodore Commanding for the very able and willing co-operation of the N.Z. Division of the Royal Navy throughout this difficult exercise.

The Hon. Minister of Defence was present at these operations, and took the opportunity of witnessing from the air the progress of the attack and re-embarkation of the troops.

7. SAMOA MILITARY POLICE.

The Government recently decided that the situation in Samoa warranted the recall of the Samoa Military Police and their replacement by a smaller force of Samoa Civil Police.

The strength of the Military Police was three officers and seventy-one other ranks, and the strength of Civil Police it was decided to maintain was forty-five.

Opportunity was given to the members of the Military Police to volunteer for one year's service with the Civil Police, and twenty-eight of them accepted the offer. The remaining seventeen were raised by the Police authorities in New Zealand, the Defence Department co-operating to the extent of equipping them.

The remaining members of the Military Police arrived in New Zealand on the 3rd May, and after being medically boarded those not requiring medical treatment were sent on leave pending discharge.

When all the members have been discharged or transferred to other units the Samoa Military Police as a unit of the N.Z. Permanent Forces will be disbanded.

The brief history of this small force has been interesting in several ways. It was raised and despatched at nineteen days' notice from civilian sources, with officers and sergeants only from the Permanent Forces. There was a rush of applications, and only the best men were selected, consequently a very high standard was maintained both physically and educationally. The pay offered was 8s. 6d. per diem, with free messing, quarters, and medical attendance.

The force was put into training in New Zealand under instructors of the Permanent Forces, and made quite a presentable showing when they embarked after their eight days' training. They were equipped with rifles, Lewis guns, and machine-guns.

The Force was used in strength on only one or two occasions to make arrests from hostile villages, and this was successfully carried out without bloodshed; but the presence of the force in the islands undoubtedly preserved the peace.

The discipline of the force during its twelve months' service was excellent, and the behaviour of all ranks has called for praise from all sides. Their health suffered a good deal from minor troubles, but there was little serious sickness.

Major P. H. Bell, D.S.O., N.Z. Staff Corps, commanded the force throughout, and the success of the force in great measure was due to his tact and skilful handling.

All expenses in connection with this force have been a charge against the External Affairs Department.

8. THE N.Z. ARMY RIFLE ASSOCIATION.

The N.Z. Army Rifle Association held its seventh annual meeting at Trentham from the 12th to the 15th March, 1929. The weather conditions were very favourable, the attendance excellent, and the standard of shooting high. As foreshadowed in my last annual report, special attention was devoted to competitions for the Vickers, Lewis, and Hotchkiss guns in drawing up the programme, with the result that the winning of trophies in these matches now requires not only shooting ability but also a high standard of fire discipline and fire control on the part of the gun teams and leaders. Under these conditions, success at the Army rifle meeting can only be obtained by careful training throughout the year.

The standard of rifle shooting was somewhat higher than in 1928. At the present time, when a large proportion of the fire power of Mounted Rifles and Infantry is provided by machine guns and other automatic weapons, there is perhaps a tendency to underrate the value of the rifle. I would emphasize that it is still the most important individual weapon, and that proficiency in its use is essential in developing the confidence of the soldier in his own fighting ability.

His Majesty the King's Medal, with Clasp "1929," was won by Staff Sergeant-Major (W.O. 1) J. H. Kearney, N.Z.P.S.

The Army Championship Belt was awarded to Lance-Corporal A. R. Symons, 1st Battalion, the Hawke's Bay Regiment, and the Cadet Belt to Sergeant F. J. Jane, 2nd (Cadet) Battalion, the Hawke's Bay Regiment.

9. RIFLE CLUBS AND THE NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION.

The number and strength of Rifle Clubs in the Dominion are shown in Appendix I (d). There are five fewer Rifle Clubs than last year, due to the disbandment of certain clubs in sparsely populated districts, and in one case through the amalgamation of two clubs. This has resulted in a decrease in membership of 141.

Free grants of ammunition and free railway passes have been accorded to Rifle Clubs as in previous years, and full advantage of this support is taken by members.

The annual rifle meeting of the National Rifle Association was held at Trentham from the 6th to the 13th February, 1929. A cash grant of £1,000, free ammunition and railway passes for competitors, and free use of the rifle ranges at Trentham, were accorded to the association, together with