

On Anzac Day the Contingent paraded with the Imperial and the Australian troops at St. Paul's Cathedral for Divine Service, which was followed by the Memorial Service at the Cenotaph.

The New Zealand representatives had the privilege and honour of providing His Majesty's Guard at Buckingham and at St. James Palaces on the 11th May.

On the following day, in addition to taking part in the march, three officers were included in His Majesty's Dominion Officers' Mounted Escort, and four other ranks supplied the Mounted Escort for the Right Honourable the Prime Minister for New Zealand.

The ceremony of presenting Coronation Medals took place at Buckingham Palace on the Friday following the Coronation: the presentation was made individually by members of the Royal Family, a gracious gesture which was deeply appreciated by the recipients.

The Contingent sailed from London on the return journey on the 27th May, after a unique and impressive experience.

The unstinted and varied hospitality which was continuously shown to the New Zealand representatives was thoroughly enjoyed, although it became almost embarrassing in extent. This warm welcome is largely due to the indelible impression left on the British people by the soldiers of our Expeditionary Force, who, to quote a British newspaper commenting on the Coronation, were "first-class fighting troops in battle and gentlemen out of it."

Many of our Territorial units are allied to regiments of the British Army, and a close liaison is maintained. The Coronation was the first occasion on which Territorial representatives have been officially in the United Kingdom and their allied regiments took every opportunity to entertain them and make them feel at home.

I wish to take this opportunity of expressing my deep appreciation of the unfailing hospitality and ready co-operation shown to the New Zealand Contingent by all ranks of the British Army, and particularly His Majesty's Brigade of Guards.

8. AIR SERVICES.

(a) ROYAL NEW ZEALAND AIR FORCE.

The strength of the Royal New Zealand Air Force at 31st March, 1937, was twenty-one officers and 164 airmen, new enlistments during the period under review being seventy-three airmen. During the period eleven airmen obtained their discharge, with the object in most cases of accepting more lucrative appointments as ground engineers in civil aviation.

Air co-operation with Naval and Land Forces was provided by both Air Force Stations during the year, the flying-times involved in these exercises being twenty-two hours and 126 hours respectively. As regards co-operation with the New Zealand Division of the Royal Navy, the provision of ship-borne aircraft with the cruisers on the New Zealand Station has considerably reduced the demands for this type of work on the Air Base at Hobsonville.

At the beginning of the New Year steps were taken to implement the plan of reorganization recommended by Group Captain Cochrane and approved by the Government. The R.N.Z.A.F. Station at Christchurch was reorganized as a flying-training school to undertake the training of pilots for the Royal New Zealand Air Force and, under arrangements which were made with the Air Ministry, for the Royal Air Force.

(b) NEW ZEALAND AIR FORCE.

The strength of the New Zealand Air Force (Territorial) has remained at seventy-one officers (exclusive of the four attached officers of the N.Z. Medical Corps), which is the maximum number of pilots who can obtain a reasonable amount of annual training on the equipment available. The training consisted of a ten days' annual camp and a six days' refresher course, which were carried out by the four squadrons in rotation at Wigram Aerodrome, Christchurch, between October, 1936, and March, 1937. The attendance and flying times were as follows:—

	Officers attending.			Hours flown.
Refresher courses	..	..	44	522
Annual camp	..	..	47	798

The syllabus of training included air gunnery, photography, navigation, wireless, and bombing with 8½ lb. practice bombs.

The Air Force Band, mentioned in my previous report, has now been formed and equipped. The strength is one officer and thirty-two airmen. The band carries out weekly practices, and has performed with credit at various ceremonial parades.

(c) AIRCRAFT AND EQUIPMENT.

An additional four Avro 626 training aircraft were ordered last year, but have not yet been delivered, the delay being partly due to the inability of aircraft firms in Great Britain to meet demands.