

**THE
NEW ZEALAND**



**ARMY
JOURNAL**

SPECIAL EDITION

OCTOBER, 1986

EDITORIAL BOARD

Chairman: Commander Support Command
Editor: Commandant The Army Schools
Members: Director of Co-ordination Army General Staff
Staff Officer Grade 1 (Pers/Log) Support Command
Staff Officer Grade 2 (Trg) Support Command
Staff Officer Grade 2 (Ops) Land Force Command
Regimental Sergeant Major Army Training Group

EDITORIAL POLICY

The Journal's aim is to provide a forum for the publication and discussion of matters of professional interest to the New Zealand Army. The Journal will not be used as a vehicle for promulgation of official matters and articles submitted need not be tied to current official policies or thoughts.

Contributions of any length will be considered, but for articles the ideal length is 3000 words. Letters to the Editor are particularly encouraged and will be fearlessly published in keeping with the requirements of good taste.

CONTRIBUTIONS

All contributions for publication should be typed double spaced and be addressed to:

The Editor
New Zealand Army Journal
Army Training Group
Waiouru.

The following are the latest dates for submission for inclusion in the issue shown:

July issue - 1 May
December issue - 1 October.

STATUS

Articles are published in good faith, representing the authors' own work unless otherwise credited. The views expressed are those of the authors concerned and do not necessarily conform with official policy.

No article or illustration may be reproduced without the permission of the Editor.



THE
NEW ZEALAND
ARMY JOURNAL

Special Edition

The 1986 Whitmore Lecture

This special edition of the NZ Army Journal has been published to record the inaugural Whitmore Lecture, delivered by Lieutenant General Sir Leonard Thornton, KCB, CBE at Waiouru on the 6th of August 1986.

This edition includes brief biographical notes on Major General Sir George Stoddart-Whitmore, KCMG from the article published in the first edition of the NZ Army Journal, and a short biography on Lieutenant General Sir Leonard Thornton.



MAJOR GENERAL SIR GEORGE STODDART-WHITMORE KCMG
FIRST COMMANDANT OF
NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCES

(Photo courtesy of the Schmidt Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library)

GEORGE STODDART-WHITMORE
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

On 1 June 1985 at the Army Schools Centenary, His Excellency The Governor-General announced the institution of the WHITMORE LECTURE. The lecture is held annually to honour and commemorate Major-General Sir George Stoddart-Whitmore KCMG, the first Commandant of New Zealand Defence Forces.

George Stoddart-Whitmore was born in Malta in 1830 where his father, Major George St Vincent Whitmore, RE, was serving. His mother was a daughter of Sir J. Stoddart, the Chief Justice of Malta. He was commissioned into the Cape Mounted Rifles and saw service in the Kaffir Wars, the Boer uprising and later in the Crimean war in the 62nd Foot Regiment, rising to the rank of Major.

Following service in England, Ireland and in Canada as aide-de-camp to the Commander-in-Chief, he attended The Staff College. In 1861 he sailed for New Zealand as Military Secretary to Sir Duncan Cameron, later resigning his commission and buying land in Hawke's Bay.

Whitmore subsequently held a number of appointments in the New Zealand Colonial Forces and took part in a number of military actions including the battle at Orakau. He was appointed Commandant of the Colonial Defence Force in 1863 and two months later was appointed to the Legislative Council. Following involvement in the Hauhau uprising he entered local politics and was elected in 1867 to represent Wairoa in the Provincial Council. Later that year he was appointed Commandant of the newly organised Armed Constabulary Force and was involved in the Te Kooti uprisings, and other military actions in the Wanganui area. He received the CMG in 1870 for services to the Colony. In 1869 Whitmore withdrew from the Provincial Council and remained as a member of the Legislative Council until his death. He held the portfolio of Colonial Secretary in Sir George Grey's Ministry until its defeat in 1879, and in 1882 was knighted. In 1886 he was promoted to Major General, the first time this rank had been conferred on an officer of the Colonial Forces. He resigned command of the Colonial Forces in 1888.

Whitmore had considerable literary attainments. His despatches, even when written in difficult conditions in the field, have much literary merit. His book, 'The Last Maori War in New Zealand under the Self-Reliant Policy', is impartial and well written. He also produced a herd book for shorthorn cattle, which he published 1867-70. He married Isobel Smith in 1865, the daughter of William Smith of Rugby, England. George Stoddart-Whitmore died at the age of 73 years on 16 March 1903.

A complete article on Major General Sir George Stoddart-Whitmore is in the 1st Edition of the NZ Army Journal).

THE 1986 WHITMORE LECTURE -
DEFENCE IN THE EIGHTIES

I have been invited to suggest for your consideration a philosophy to meet the training needs of the army over the foreseeable future. In such a context the foreseeable future cannot prudently be more than ten years, nor can it usefully be less than a decade and I propose to adopt that time-scale.

That decision is the easiest part of this proposition; and when we have decided on the operational requirements, that is the nature of the tasks that the army must prepare itself for, it is not too difficult to suggest what training patterns will most effectively and most economically meet those needs. It is that middle section on future operational tasks that presents the conundrums and it is on these that I will concentrate. There are political and other sensitivities here, and as we are close to developing events I am mindful of Sir Walter Raleigh's axiom that:

"Whosoever in writing a modern history shall follow truth too near the heels, it may haply strike out his teeth."⁽¹⁾

In theory the determination of the role of the army is not the concern of the soldier, even though his life may depend upon it; it is properly the concern of government. Governments respond not only to what they perceive to be public opinion but also to the thumb-screws of fiscal urgencies. All the same the generals must expect in the light of history to be censured for operational failures that may not be their fault, and when the unexpected happens, they will certainly be accused of failure to foresee the needs of the future. You will recall that it was a politician, Briand, quoting another and earlier politician, Talleyrand, who reminded Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister that 'War is much too serious a thing to be left to military men'. He had a point, but if you look at the mess that they made of that first world war between them, the generals and the politicians, no-one emerges with much credit. (There is, of course, an arm chair tradition that you never blame the troops for the way they fought, if badly, you blame the generals).

Hindsight is a safe and comforting indulgence, and wisdom after the event is, I suppose, better than no wisdom at all. Perhaps that is why post-operation second-guessing is as old as the history of warfare. You may recall that in 480 BC the high command of Sparta, the most powerful military state in ancient Greece, fell under public criticism for a sharp defeat at the hands of the Persians at the Battle of Thermopylae, north of Athens. The Spartans had continued to put their trust in the Hoplite Phalanx of armoured spearmen, reinforced by the unforgiving slogan, "Conquer or die". They failed to note that

the Persians coming from horsy country, not only knew about cavalry but had also developed archery skills which the Spartans regarded as rather underhand. When it came to the celebrated battle, the flank of the Spartan infantry phalanx was turned, and Leonidas and his 7000 Greeks were slaughtered to a man. It was nearly the end of Sparta, and a melancholy memorial standing today in the pass at Thermopylae records the posthumous reaction of the troops who bore the burden of their leaders' lack of foresight:

"Go tell the Spartans, thou that passest by, there here,
obedient to their laws, we lie." (2)

It is an epitaph that might be duplicated on a good many battlefields. In this case the tragedy was not total; foreshadowing events in that same theatre more than two thousand years later, a defeated army was saved by the intervention of the navy, and Sparta survived.

Our own history can turn up examples of failure to heed the lessons of the past, even in that same corner of the ancient world, in the unremembered mobile phase that at last brought to an end the static slaughter of World War I, the allies used a new weapon to support a Serbian thrust northwards from Thessalonika.⁽³⁾ The intervention of the then recently re-titled Royal Air Force decimated the Bulgarians and demonstrated for all time what happens to unprotected troops caught in mountainous defiles. Yet, only twenty-three years later, a commonwealth force was exposed to a similar fate not 300 kilometres away in northern Greece, and only escaped destruction by superior generalship and extreme fleetness of foot. It was a political decision that we should be there. In the subsequent campaign, military errors are observable, occasioned by the pre-war inadequacy of command training for middle-level officers when money was short. There is a lesson for the future in that fact.

It is important that politicians as well as generals have enough foresight to recognise what their decisions will lead to. When things go wrong the politicians will always blame the generals for the advice they have been given, and conversely the generals will blame their political masters. All in all, it is highly desirable that the two keep in step. We should be particularly conscious of that need at present because change is once again in the air. Back in 1867 Disraeli, speaking in the House of Commons, remarked that "In a progressive country, change is constant". I have often thought that the Army in New Zealand must be very progressive.

I should like to be able to record that Disraeli made his remark in connection with events which were occurring in the colony of New Zealand at the time and which, brought to prominence the man of our moment, George Whitmore, patron of this lecture series. Alas I think Disraeli's axiom was an unrelated profundity. Be that as it may, it seems appropriate that we should tackle the uncertainties of the future under the aegis of a man who responded positively to a period of profound change, both in defence thinking and in his own environment.

Sir George Whitmore, as he later became, was born in 1830 of a military family at a time when the demands of Empire made professional soldiering an unending source of employment for the upper and middle classes and a hard, if adventurous one, for the lower classes. In assessing his qualities it is

important to remember the background from which he came, and which he managed to transcend to some extent. Though he kept a reputation for being a stern disciplinarian throughout, there was nothing unusual about that in his time. Lord Raglan, the commander at Balaclava in 1854 wrote:

"I suppose one day the British soldier will be treated with humanity by his officers and his country. I hope so; he is, for all his faults, a noble creature."⁽⁴⁾

It was to be a considerable time before his Lordship's hopes were realised. He had distinguished himself as a young ensign of 17 in the Kaffir Wars, and by the age of 22 he was a brigade major. He had further service in as line regiment in the Crimea under Raglan, and was successful as a staff officer in what we would regard as the demobilisation phase of that campaign. He graduated at the top of his class at the Staff College in 1860. He was still only 31 and an ambitious young officer when, in the following year, he came out to New Zealand as Military Secretary to General Cameron, the officer in command of the 14,000 imperial troops imported to deal with the Land War troubles.

It is said that Whitmore had a quick temper and shortly resigned on a matter of principle; the alleged political interference with military matters. He took the equivalent of a retirement gratuity. In other words he sold his British Commission. With the proceeds he took up lunch at Hawke's Bay and set about developing what was to become a famous shorthand system.

However, his military career was not yet over. That came about because of a change in defence policy initiated by Premier Weld⁽⁵⁾ and carried on, with some misgivings, by his successor, Stafford. Being colonial resources had already been strained by the necessity to raise 3,000 militia from the settlers, plus what were called 'Native Auxiliaries' and the British Government were demanding payment of a capitation of forty pounds per head for all the imperial troops employed in defending the settlements. This was obviously a very serious burden for a population of only 150,000 New Zealanders already heavily in debt as a result of the war. There was a good deal of argument at the political level both in New Zealand and in London, but it was finally decided here that the redcoats were a luxury we could not afford, and the British Government gratefully accepted the opportunity to withdraw its troops. In New Zealand the expedient decision to ask them to do so was dignified with the title 'The Self Reliant Policy'. It was to involve New Zealand in quite a heavy expenditure during the Russian scares of the eighties, but it worked satisfactorily in dealing with what was fortunately not a very robust rebellion.

Whitmore supported the policy, although I suspect that he must have wondered about it later when he was in command of the field force, and saw his ex-colleagues still in the country, but forbidden to leave barracks to lend him a hand. When rebellion broke out in the Hawke's Bay area, Whitmore had been offered command of the district and he humbly obtained his wife's permission before accepting it. He was actively engaged from 1865 until 1867 when he became the Commander of the Armed Constabulary. Subsequently he conducted successful, if rather low-key operations, not both the east and west coasts of the North Island. He never had more than 2,000 men in total and his only fire support was the 16 pound mortar. By the mid-1869 peace was largely

restored. At this point Whitmore was obliged to abandon his field command, suffering from dysentery and rheumatism. Surely a most inconvenient combination of afflictions.

There is a familiar ring to the words with which the account of his operations is introduced:

"The East Coast campaign of 1868 - 69 began, as in most British warlike operations, with a reverse as unlooked-for as unaccountable."⁽⁷⁾

Some things do not change!

Whitmore's technique of command makes interesting study, especially against the background of his military upbringing. He was no longer dealing with tightly disciplined troops supported by an adequate commissariat. They were poorly trained levies and volunteers, both pakeha and maori, who might at any time abandon the musket when the situation appeared unfavourable, or other interests called. Whitmore recorded of the Wanganui "Friendlies" that "they regarded orders as themes for discussion, and obeyed or not, as seen fit". There was a motivational problem; he was later to write:

"The men did not have, as an English soldier would have done, the feeling that his countrymen honoured those who fought their battles."⁽⁸⁾

Only the Armed Constabulary could be entirely relied upon, and they were few. Commissariat arrangements were largely left to the commander. In addition, Whitmore had to carry the fight into unfamiliar terrain and against enemy tactics which had both taken heavy toll of the imperial troops. He wrote:

"We had to show the enemy that even in their own formidable bush, and against even the ambushes and surprises of their traditional warfare, we were able not only to hold our own, but to defeat them."⁽⁹⁾

In Whitmore we see a man who adjusted himself rapidly to the conditions of a new type of command. Not only in the intelligent tactics (such as the use of mounted infantry) and the logistic arrangements that he instituted but also in other aspects. He put green troops to work building tracks through "safe" areas of bush, less because the tracks were needed than because the troops would thereby be obliged to labour by day and harbour by night in the unfamiliarity of deep bush and become accustomed to the environment. He taught them to travel light, and to bivouac without tents. He showed public relations awareness ahead of his times by directing that press correspondents be provided with accommodation and rations and with appropriate copy. Sixty years later the war correspondents on Gallipoli were still struggling for recognition. On one occasion Whitmore "leaked" the fact that he had ordered a burial party forward in preparation for a cowardice trial, well knowing that he had no power to approve a capital sentence, even if that should be the finding of the court. The effect on other reluctant heroes was said to be magical.

Conversely, it was Whitmore who saw the need for a bravery award that could be granted to "Colonials" and yet be equivalent to the Victoria Cross, then reserved for imperial personnel. Thus the coveted New Zealand Cross came into being and remained in vogue until the eclipse of the self-reliant policy.

Enough of George Whitmore, who went on to become Colonial Secretary and Minister of Defence and subsequently Commandant of the Defence Forces and Commissioner of the Armed Constabulary. He was as well a member of the Legislative Council, or upper house. Perhaps this latter combination requires comment, for it was so in conflict with the British tradition that a special act of Parliament was required to allow Whitmore to be both a politician and the head of the Army, and incidentally, of the Police as well. No doubt it was to salve constitutional consciences that the government reached the economical decision that Whitmore should not be paid for his uniformed roles!

The tradition I refer to is of course the fact that since Cromwell's day the British people have managed to avoid a combination of military and political power, in that order of precedence, in one individual. It is a prudent principle of democracy. On the other hand we have all observed countries where a military dictatorship has provided eventual opportunity for democratic development. What makes one uneasy about such oligarchies is that they are self-perpetuating bodies without accountability, except to themselves and may be slow to see that the time has come to hand over power. It is that same uneasiness that we feel about the communist forms of government. The self-appointing ruling parties that show even less enthusiasm for the secret ballot box than their military parallels. It was Winston Churchill who pointed out how unsatisfactory the democratic system appears, until one considers the alternatives.

George Whitmore holds up the signboard, for it seems that we shall shortly find ourselves in a period of self-reliance. For us it is more absolute. Even in the midst of the Russian scare, Whitmore must have known that the might of Empire would rescue us from the foreign aggressor if it really became necessary. He also knew that New Zealand, if it was to continue to attract such support must show willing to contribute what it could to the common cause. The record of our contributions in blood and tears in the years that followed the turn of the century is well known; less familiar is the fact that from 1903 we contributed forty thousand pounds, and from 1908, the then substantial sum of one hundred thousand pounds, per annum, to the British Admiralty towards having a naval presence in our waters. In 1909 we paid a million pounds for what the New Zealand Prime Minister, Sir Joseph Ward called "A first-class battleship of the latest type", the battle cruiser "New Zealand".⁽¹⁰⁾ From 1926 onwards for ten years we contributed the same amount, a hundred thousand pounds per annum, towards the completion of the great base at Singapore, which cost sixty million in all.⁽¹¹⁾ Those latter figures are remarkable when you reflect that at the time New Zealand was experiencing the great depression.

I wanted to remind you of that evidence of New Zealand's long-term and considered support, at considerable cost, of the principle of collective security for 90 years and more. Painful political decisions were taken, not because we wanted to suck up to the British, but for pragmatic reasons. Military policy arose from those decisions, and not from the whim of battle-hungry generals.

The policy of collective defence and the concept of keeping hostilities as far as possible from our shores continued to attract public support as long as there was reasonable attachment to the major sponsor and to the causes that might have to be defended. In some ways that made strategic planning easy. Any operational contribution we could offer to a major power might be useful but hardly decisive and we could pick the things that we could do best, and at the least cost.

There was however one constraint. That was the desire, or the political necessity, for our government to have control over the way in which our troops would be used. This had not been achieved in the First World War, and was the subject of some debate even in the Second. It became accepted that the divisional level is the lowest at which there can be full and yet independent participation in a combined force. That principle was slowly eroded by financial restraints, by other political imperatives and by the changing scale of operations themselves. In Japan, at the close of World War II it seemed safe for us to contribute for political purposes an independent brigade to an occupation force. In Korea a few years later the sights were dropped again and New Zealand supplied an "Independent" Artillery Regiment and support elements, with the comforting thought that it would at least be a Commonwealth formation. For Vietnam in the early sixties we at first insisted on a non-combatant role for our limited contribution, but in 1965 again dropped our standards of operational independence by agreeing to send a field battery. Perhaps gunners were thought to be more reliable politically, in the sense that they could be expected not to get themselves killed quite as conspicuously as the infantry. When something more had to be done it was only the reassuring presence of the Australians that allowed the New Zealand Government to contemplate commitment at the company level.

That slow expedient retreat from a principle made some difficulties for the planners. It was becoming more and more difficult to justify any absolute force level as being appropriate for mobilization purpose. There were, of course, economic considerations, and we had a long history of the see-saws of public opinion on the need for defence expenditure. The nadir had been reached in the disillusionment following World War I. Writing of the situation in the early twenties, the historian Burdon says:

"The general feeling was against militarism of any kind, and there was little support for the citizen army. A National Defence League formed under the presidency of Sir Andrew Russell raised its voice in warning against the danger and folly of complete disarmament, but without making much impression. Had not the war to end war just been fought? It was scarcely to be expected that a government in desperate financial straits would refrain from taking advantage of the prevailing sentiment when it came to the point of economising in defence expenditure. The prospect of immediate bankruptcy was far more alarming than the distant and problematical threat of invasion."⁽¹²⁾

As a young soldier I saw some of the results of financial stringencies from that period, while a new war approached. I was also regaled by my predecessors with dispiriting tales of how they had hesitated to wear their

uniforms on the streets because of the likelihood that verbal abuse, or more solid evidence of disapprobation, would be hurled at them. The Army is not in that situation today, but the question of public attitudes remains very important.

Whatever the Defence Review Committee may have said about public views on nuclear weapons and ship visits, we have to accept that ANZUS is likely to remain inoperative, as far as New Zealand is concerned, throughout the time-frame we are considering. Certainly a change of heart or a change of government either here or in the U.S. might make possible a compromise on the ship access issue and thereby permit a re-activation of the treaty. However, our partners would be bound to reflect on the possibility of a further reversal, and it would take many years to build-up once more the warmth of confidence that makes such arrangements truly effective.

If we accept that worst case then the only collective defence relationship we have to consider is that with Australia. Some people might regard it as less a collective than a horse and rabbit pie under the familiar recipe of one horse and one rabbit. But we are not unused to being the rabbit, at least in size. Obviously we must keep as close to the Australians as they will let us get, in terms of joint planning, equipment compatibility, doctrine and so on. It will not all be plain cooking.

It is my assumption that the Dibb report will prove to be acceptable to the Australian Government as the basis of future policy. There are many people in New Zealand who would wish and expect us to follow a precisely similar policy. In many ways I wish we could. The fact is, however, as Dibb emphasises, that Australia intends to remain a full member of ANZUS, privy to a vast flow of technical and intelligence information which they will not be permitted to share with us, whatever their own inclinations. Secondly, we would not be able to link to the U.S., through the Australians, for assistance in equipment and logistic matters that have, in the past, offered us potential as well as actual cost-savings. We would appear in the ANZAC alliance as no longer quite the co-equals of the Australians. It is not too comfortable being half a rabbit in a horse and rabbit pie.

I do not want to make too much of such a change in relationship, but we have to be conscious that the Australians claim they already spend about twice as much per capita as we do on defence. The Dibb Report points to a steady increase in expenditure annually by the Australian Government. All the signs here, I am afraid, are pointing in the opposite direction, in spite of the undertakings that were given when the ANZUS debate began. It is because of the need to take a long-term view that I have laid emphasis on the history of the Army in New Zealand with some of the downturns and frustrations it has experienced in the past.

On a brighter note, we can be sure that the Australians will continue to see our future as linked to theirs in a strategic sense. Conversely, it seems obvious enough that any direct threat to the Australian mainland is automatically a threat to our security also. Therefore it would be sensible for us to join forces with them, literally, for the defence of their territory and the sea-air barrier to the North and North-East. Even so there are other considerations. You will have noted that in the Dibb concept the radius of effective military intervention against territorial infringement will be limited to the interdiction

range of land-based fighters, assessed as about 1,000 miles from Australia's shores. This clearly excludes New Zealand itself and much of the South Pacific area over which our government has expressed a desire to exercise a measure of control. Several questions then arise, the most pressing of which is where does this leave our battalion in Singapore?

There are others: should New Zealand plan to commit land forces to operations in the South Pacific area if effective air cover is not guaranteed? If the answer to that is no; should we press for more resources for the RNZAF to provide that cover, or persuade the Australians to step their zone forward, perhaps by granting them facilities in our territory? Should we give up the idea of defending the open areas to our North and North East and fall back, as in the Dibb concept, to defend the approaches to Kaitaia?

These questions are put very superficially; but there are serious matters there to be examined. Before we attempt to pick a way through the uncertainties, I want to turn for a moment to the question of what other obligations the Army should prepare itself to meet once the immediate defence of the zone is provided for. I do not include in this such tasks as aid to civil power or civil defence, which fall easily within the compass of conventional units but do not in themselves constitute a legitimate reason for maintaining armed forces.

I return constantly to the fact that New Zealand is not now and never will be capable of providing for its own defence, alone or in combination with Australia, in all circumstances. I should feel a great deal more alarmed about that were it not for the slightly cynical reflection that we can hope for a free ride into the ambience of ANZUS protection if the world situation goes bad, and the Australians are still with ANZUS. We could of course be passengers then, rather than part of the team. The Australians will keep an expansion base in their Army, both because they have an ANZUS obligation and in order to meet a heavier scale of attack than that envisaged in the Dibb ten-year time scale. It follows, however, that as long as we continue to welcome an Australian commitment to our security we must accept an obligation to contribute a proportional share of the joint defence when needed. That has always been a principle of collective defence, in the intra-Commonwealth arrangements, in ANZAM and ANZUS, in SEATO and under the Guam Doctrine.

There are wider connotations. Some people in New Zealand appear to believe that apart from regional self-defence there should be no question of military preparedness, on the grounds that New Zealand for too long has "fought other peoples' wars" in a naughty world. All of us have lived with the existence of the nuclear deterrent throughout most of our working lives and I suppose that most of us would agree that if such weapons were actually used, the policy of deterrence has failed, and civilisation would pay a terrible and an unacceptable price. It follows, I think that we all support the elimination of those weapons if it can be safely done. The fact is that the vast armoury of nuclear weapons in the western camp was created largely as a convenient and politically acceptable way of countering the superior conventional resources of the communist bloc nations. If we are ever to see a reduction in that stock then the ongoing problem of interim security has to be addressed. If progressive and parallel reductions are to be acceptable, the West must be assured that it will not be disadvantaged. In other words, conventional capacity must be

improved, assuming that the communist bloc will not reduce their current manpower superiority. It seems to me that New Zealand, as a constant advocate of a nuclear-free future should be prepared to play its part in providing that insurance of greater conventional readiness whenever the time may come. It will certainly not be in the immediate future. Meanwhile we should strive to keep alive the best capacity we can for the expansion of our very modest forces.

From this very brief survey one can visualise army roles involving firstly the defence of our own territory; a concept which for the moment I want to put at the bottom of the pile. Secondly, there is the shared defence, short-term and long-term, of Australia and its inshore possessions. Possibly, limited operations in the near Pacific in the third case and finally, on a wider stage and in the uncertain future, the need to develop a larger force from the expansion base.

Nothing very new in that you will say. I agree; but I also want you to take account of the fact that the operational environments in which you are likely to find yourselves will not necessarily be what you have planned for at all. History tells me that the only way you can prepare for war is with flexibility of mind, resourcefulness and adaptability. These are the qualities that our patron, George Whitmore, showed so well all those years ago.

I wonder if there are any other general guidelines I can offer you that will be a little more helpful than forecasting that if the unexpected can happen, it probably will. It will no doubt have occurred to you that as the scale of activities diminishes, so the need for operational co-operation reaches lower and lower into the military echelons. That applies not only to co-operation with the sister services, but also with the Australian services, and the indigenous peoples of our own country and in Australia, and perhaps in the Pacific Island states. It follows that the rank and file of the army must be able to understand and respect other points of view, local loyalties and local issues.

On the question of the expansion base, I know that there are those in the Army who feel that as resources contract, they should be concentrated on a smaller, highly trained Regular Force with superlative modern equipment. I take leave to doubt that prescription for reasons which I will present briefly. I see little need, for instance, for massive urgency of deployment with a major weapons capability in the roles foreseen. Secondly, I think it more important politically for New Zealand to demonstrate a capability to come to the party with a substantial force when the chips are really down than to have the best firebrigade battalion in the southern hemisphere. In other words, quantum seems more important than speed in our current situation.

Apart from that consideration I am a little uneasy that if an all-regular policy were followed the army could become distanced from the community on which it depends, and which depends on it. The more self-reliant a policy we are obliged to adopt, the more important does it become, as George Whitmore implied, that the whole of the population feel a commitment to their own defence and towards those who spearhead it. Israel presents us with a model of how it should work, and so does China no doubt. The interface with the community represented by the existence of the territorial force is valuable in philosophical terms, quite apart from the practical benefit of being able to tap resources that would otherwise be costly to reproduce. I tend to think that a strong, well-led and well-trained territorial force is probably more important now than hitherto.

So we come at last to the matter of how to prepare for these various and problematical tasks that may confront the Army in the current decade. It is not for me of course to suggest force levels or equipment policies, and I would not presume to tell you how to go about the delineation of training patterns. Most of you have spent your working life training men in one role or another, or you serve under senior officers who have done so. Perhaps, however, I could speak for a moment on the broadest policy lines.

Clearly there are matters to be sorted out with the Australians before one can be positive about tasks, numbers and training needs. In the case of the South West Pacific area, for example, if the Australian operational reach can be extended to cover, say, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga and the Tokelaus, then it is possible to envisage a warlike role in that vicinity. If not, we would be wise not to fool ourselves, and the trusting island governments, that those regions can be made secure. Just because we can mount a company operation on a Pacific beach, in the piping days of peace, with a frigate in the background and a Hercules or two dropping parachutists and supplies, it does not follow that we could operate in the same locality in a strategically hostile situation. There is danger that some people other than Pacific Islanders may have already become confused on the point.

Needless to say it would be possible for New Zealand to mount an intervention operation in those parts at fairly short notice, as it has been for many years; but that is not a warlike requirement unless you envisage aggression by one state against another, which is highly improbable, to say the least. If the requirement arose solely as a result of internal dissension, then I think any New Zealand government would be reluctant to intervene, and would certainly not do so precipitately. Nor would there be a need for a balanced military force in the usual meaning of that term. Instead the job would be better done by an armed constabulary, strong on communications and intelligence, transport and civil action resources.

The second potential task is certainly military. The giving of assistance to the Australians in the defence of their territory and approaches, and thereby protecting our own survival. However, noting the rate at which strategic planning advances in peace-time particularly in the absence of a perceived threat, and recognising what the reactions of the Australian Services are likely to be to the new outlook, I think it will be some time before potential tasks in that category are known. I have no doubt that the Australians would welcome our assistance in the event of a major and imminent crisis; but in a lesser situation their Army may well feel that the opportunity for land-force action is going to be somewhat limited and within their own force capabilities. In that event they may not be too enthusiastic at the idea of the New Zealanders muscling in to take part of the action. I come back to the thought that a major contribution over a longer time-base may be more useful and more welcome than a rapid but low-level response.

This impinges on the third projected role. A response to a global need at a time and in circumstances which cannot be accurately forecast at this stage, and indeed may arise from a scenario that the soldiers at least have not foreseen. It is difficult to get any political leverage out of so vague a prescription. It is all very well to believe, as I still obstinately do, that New Zealand's ultimate safety and prosperity depends not on events in the lonely

reaches of Australasia but will be decided in the wider world. It is quite another to get resources put aside to meet some undefined future need. There is some comfort in the thought that force capabilities developed for the Australian area could have application elsewhere if they are broad enough in shape and reasonably independent in role.

Finally there is the Fortress New Zealand role, arrived at by a mistaken analogy with certain recommendations of the Dibb report when others are ignored. I have referred rather disparagingly to the defence of the Kaitaia approaches, but I think you should perhaps regard that as dissimulation. There are two slightly suspect reasons why you should take it more seriously than I have done. The first is the obvious point that in the last analysis, every New Zealander of spirit would wish to defend Kaitaia (and every other hectare of our territory) if there was no other alternative in a truly threatening situation. The other is that local defence may be a more comprehensible and even a more acceptable concept to an ill-informed or xenophobic public than the more sophisticated and constrictive idea of collective defence. In preparing for the acceptable you may also be preserving a capacity for a more effective role. I suggest then that the planners should not dismiss too lightly the defence of Kaitaia and its environs.

So much for a superficial look at the possible roles for the future if we are divorced from ANZUS. It is a rather bleak picture. Whatever that outcome, we have to face the fact that it will be some time before all these matters are sorted out, and in the meantime the Army will go through a testing period. It will survive, of course, as it has in all the fluctuations of the fortune throughout its long history. There is a change in the Government's perception of your role, for the time being, and you must expect to attract a reduced share of national resources. Fortunately you are all optimists; no-one voluntarily becomes and remains a soldier without a generous share of that quality. You are also realists, and you are not going to allow yourselves to be seduced by the tongues of those in the community who want to believe, and want us to believe, that the world is about to enter a period of peaceful co-existence and universal trust, led apparently by New Zealand's moral example. That is not the real world and the more our citizens believe it is, the more likely does it become that the real world will fall in on us.

I say to you most earnestly that the day will come when your qualities and your professionalism will be needed. Indeed the qualities that the Army stands for are needed in the community at this time. Old-fashioned qualities like loyalty and just dealing, endurance, unity, enterprise and courage. Professionalism rests in the hands of this audience, and I hope that you will all make it your endeavour to maintain the high standards that have now been reached. If that means putting officer education ahead of hardware or accommodation then that must be accepted. If you doubt that, reflect again for a moment on history. Back in the lean days of the 30s when there were a lot of sincere people believing that war could not come again there was a tiny coterie of regular officers who managed to keep their professional dedication and skills alive and who, when the time came, were able to put together a national army of substantial proportions, capable of surviving the challenges that were to come.

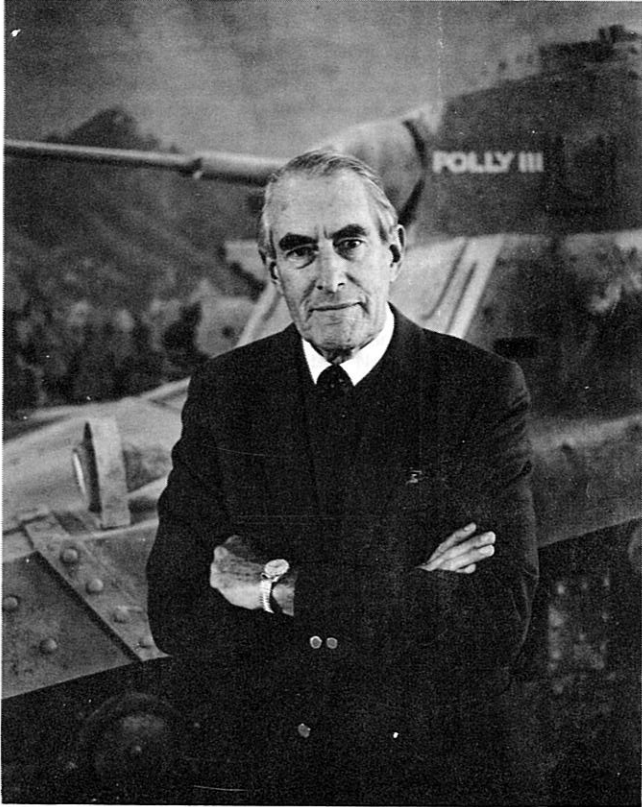
Finally, as you struggle with the complexities of the future, and especially in your dealings with friends and allies, there is one item of particular

comfort with regard to what you have to offer a defence partner. It is more important that laser controls or the refinements of electronic gadgetry, or even strength states. It is the ultimate weapon at your command. The quality of the New Zealand soldier. There has been some criticism of late that nearly 50 years ago not every one of the 105,000 soldiers who served abroad, and I presume the 125,000 who served at home, was a model soldier. I saw a fair cross-section of them at that time, and I have seen them since in Korea, Malaysia, Borneo and Vietnam and elsewhere. In that half-century I have seen something of the armies of a good many other nations. I accept that several of them have produced excellent results in particular circumstances. It is my considered view however, that for consistent performance in a wide variety of circumstances the New Zealander stands comparison with any. I am not suggesting that he is an easy man to lead, in the sense of being malleable, docile and naturally obedient. Quite the contrary. High quality troops need high quality leadership such as you are capable of providing. "If you choose godly, honest men to be captains" said Oliver Cromwell, "Honest men will follow them".⁽¹³⁾ The concept is a good one.

I have recently returned from three months abroad and I am able to tell you that whatever the reputation of the New Zealand soldier in his own country, it stands high abroad, among old friends and former enemies alike. Many of you in this room have contributed to the creation of that reputation. I say to the younger officers among you that there is something there for you to hold to, a mast of self-confidence and self-reliance for you to nail your colours to. The other considerations I have spoken about, the definition of specific roles and so on, are of course important; but this is the touchstone. You will want to go on beyond that and the more you can increase the ability of your men to feel comfortable with their place in the community, their understanding of social and political issues, confirm their tolerance of other cultures, their readiness to support each other against all comers, their endurance under adversity, their readiness to cope with the unexpected, the more will you prepare them for the demanding tasks that lie ahead. That is the process of tempering the weapon on which we have all depended in our turn, and which has never yet failed us or our allies. The robust, reliable and well-regarded New Zealand soldier. I think George Whitmore would approve of what he has become!

REFERENCES

- (1) "New Zealand - A Short History" (J.C. Beaglehole)
- (2) "A History of Warfare" (Montgomery) page 60 et seq
- (3) "November 1918" (Brook-Shepherd) page 137
- (4) "The Destruction of Lord Raglan" (Hibbert 1961) page 300
- (5) "Life of Sir Frederick Weld" (Lovat)
- (6) "E.W. Stafford - A Memoir" (Wakefield 1922)
- (7) "The Last Maori War in New Zealand under the Self Reliant Policy" (Whitmore 1902)
- (8) Ibid
- (9) Ibid
- (10) "An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand": 111, Page 251 and I, Page 467
- (11) "The New Dominion" (RM Burdon) Page 191
- (12) "The New Dominion" (Burdon) Pages 191-193
- (13) "Truth and Opinion in History" (CV Wedgwood) Page 239



LIEUTENANT GENERAL SIR LEONARD THORNTON, KCB, CBE

General Thornton was born in 1916 and educated at Christchurch Boys' High School. He entered the Royal Military College, Duntroon in 1933 and on his graduation four years later was awarded the King's Medal as the outstanding graduate in his class. He held several appointments in the Royal New Zealand Artillery until he was posted to serve overseas with the 2nd New Zealand

Expeditionary Force in 1940. During his war service with the 2NZEF he held the appointments of Commanding Officer 5 NZ Field Regiment, GSO 1 2nd NZ Division, Commander Royal Artillery 2nd NZ Division and Commander NZ Artillery, 2NZEF. By the end of the war in Europe, General Thornton held the rank of Brigadier, had been awarded the OBE and had twice been mentioned in Despatches. He was posted to Jayforce and subsequently appointed Commander British Commonwealth Sub Area, Tokyo. He also assisted the New Zealand prosecutor at the Far East War Crimes Tribunal during 1946.

In the post war years Sir Leonard served in a wide variety of capacities all of which have been closely associated with the operational development of the New Zealand Army and subsequently the higher Defence re-organisation. During his term as Deputy Chief of the General Staff from 1948 to 1950, he was largely responsible for the drafting of plans for the scheme of training to be introduced in the Military Training Act. In his later appointment as Commandant, Linton Camp he assumed the responsibility for the first intake of 18 year old trainees and laid the pattern for their subsequent administration and training.

He is a graduate of the Imperial Defence College and has held the appointment of Senior Army Liaison Officer, London. In 1955 he was appointed to the Army Board as Third Military member and Quartermaster General and then as Adjutant General. In June 1958 he was appointed, Chief, SEATO Military Planning Office in Bangkok and was responsible for planning the defence of the region.

General Thornton returned to New Zealand in 1960 and assumed the post of First Military Member of the Army Board, Chief of the General Staff and General officer commanding the New Zealand Division. At 43, he was the youngest General officer to hold this appointment. He was awarded the CBE in 1962.

On 1 April 1965 General Thornton was appointed Chief of Defence Staff (Designate) and visited the United Kingdom, Germany, the United States of America, Canada and Hawaii studying higher defence organisations. Three months later he assumed the appointment of Chief of Defence Staff as a Lieutenant General. He was knighted in 1967 with the award of the KCB.

He relinquished the appointment of Chief of the Defence Staff on 15 October 1971 and retired after 38 years continuous service.

From 1972 to 1974 Sir Leonard was New Zealand's Ambassador in the Republic of South Vietnam with accreditation to the Khmer Republic.

Between 1976 and 1982 the General chaired the Alcoholic Liquor Advisory Council and since 1980 has been a member of the Disciplinary Committee of the Medical Association of New Zealand. He assisted in writing and narrated the 1983 Television New Zealand production on Gallipoli and is currently involved in writing and narrating a television mini-series production on the life of Lord Freyberg. General Thornton is a Past-President of the New Zealand Army Association.

