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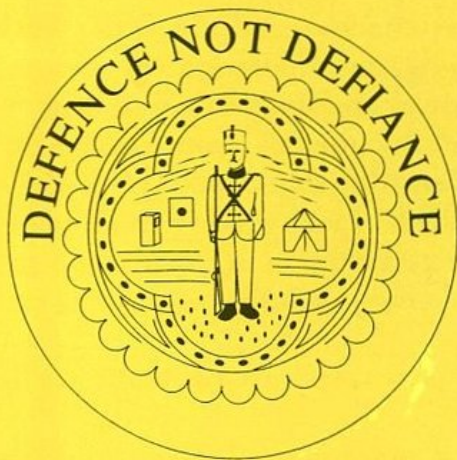
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Trentham Rifle Ranges

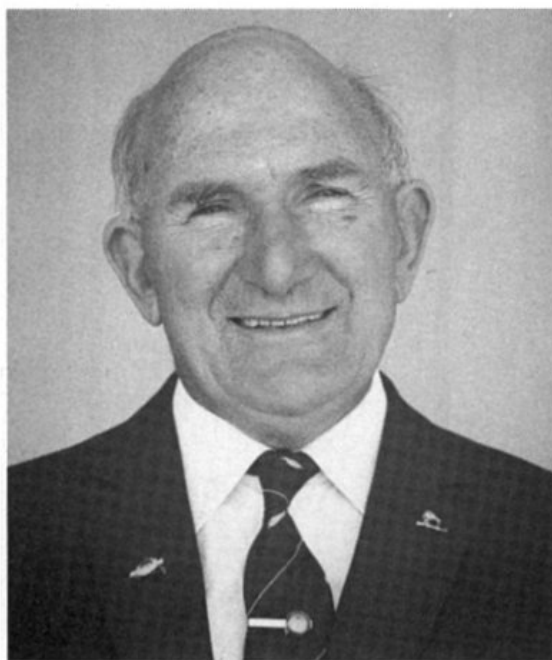
1892



1992



TO ALL COMPETITORS



On behalf of the Centennial Range Committee of the National Rifle Range Assn of New Zealand, it gives me great pleasure indeed to welcome you all to the Centennial of the Trentham Rifle Ranges. Also, I extend my warmest of greetings to the very many overseas competitors who have come from half way around the world, in many instances, to join us in our Centennial celebrations of this great rifle range.

The Trentham Rifle Range started from a very rural setting, the surrounding areas were all farms with very little urban settled areas. It has seen three major changes during the one hundred years of its existence. The first was the building of the Camp to train the thousands of troops for the First World War, the second was the building of the new facilities for the Second World War, and the third is the

rebuilding of the camp into the modern facility it is today. During the third change the ranges have changed also, so that today all competitors compete together on the one range, instead of two ranges which was the practice for many years.

Despite these changes, there is one element that never changes, and that is the world renowned Trentham Winds, it is still there to bedevil and challenge the modern Marksmen and Markswomen, as it did those Marksmen of one hundred years ago. As one very famous and distinguished Great Britain team member of some twenty odd years ago was heard to remark after a very hard and frustrating day coaching the Great Britain team during the Empire Match as it was then called, "I had wind from all points of the compass at once, one flag even went spinning up vertically in to the air, and just for good measure, we had to contend with four seasonal changes in the weather as well during the day".

Yes, that is Trentham at its best, or worst, and it is renowned worldwide for its vagaries of wind conditions.

The Centennial meeting, I am sure, will be a time of renewing old friendships, the making of new ones, the competition will be fierce both in individual matches and also in the team events, the camaraderie and friendship after the days shooting will be great. The Centennial Committee has worked very hard indeed to make the occasion a remembered one to you all, and so on behalf of the Committee I wish everyone of you, the very best of good shooting with a large amount of luck also, and have a very happy and enjoyable time while here at Trentham and in New Zealand.

Don Whiteman J.P.

Don Whiteman J.P.
Chairman Centennial Committee

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)

Founded 1861

Object:

**To encourage and promote competitive target rifle shooting throughout
New Zealand as a sport.**

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TRENTHAM RIFLE RANGE

1892 – 1992

THE SHOOTING SPORTS require a great deal more space than is necessary for many others. The multi-range fullbore discipline needs the most where firearms are concerned.

IN NEW ZEALAND from Colonial times ranges existed near the majority of urban centres. Population growth dictated the increasing confinement of shooting to areas of maximum safety. It was important that these should not involve shooters in too much travel. Facilities like permanent butts, firing mounds, adequate drainage and stable roading in their turn induced a communal policy which led in the Wellington district to the establishment of a range at Trentham.

THIS MET ALL THE FOREGOING REQUIREMENTS, and had the additional benefit of being centrally situated so far as New Zealand competitors were concerned. The national administrators of the sport gave their blessing to a project which some of them rightly claimed to have initiated.



**LIEUT. WM. BRIGHTON
NEW ZEALAND CHAMPION SHOT, 1861.**

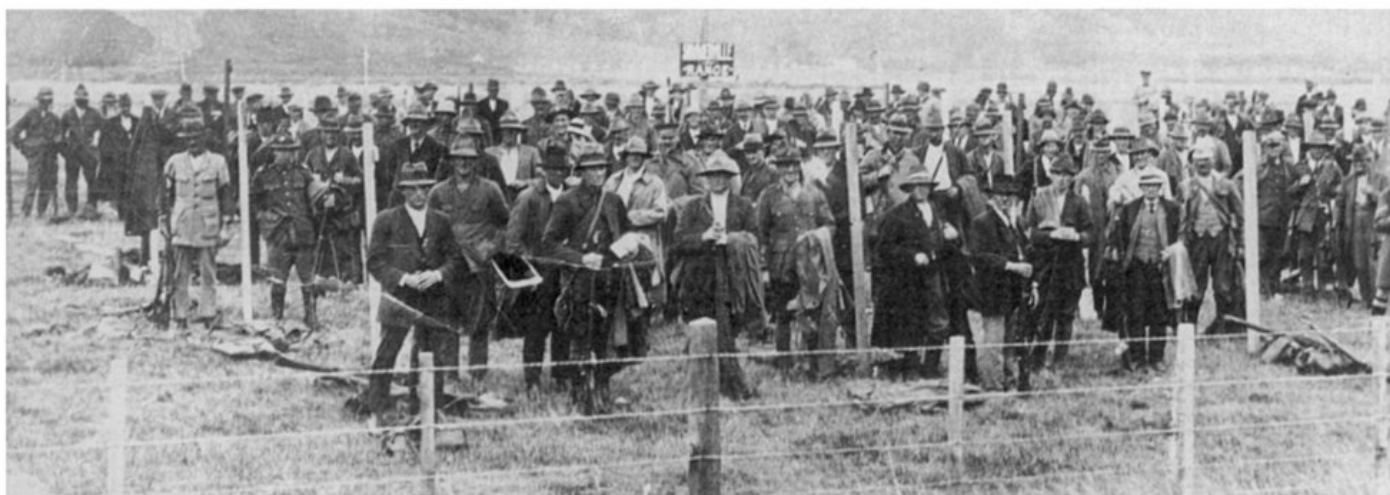
IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO SAY WHEN THE FIRST SHOTS were fired in the area. Early sportsmen must have pursued game of one sort or another over this rural land, tried out rifles and shotguns, even held competitions. But there is on record of a fullbore rifle meeting sponsored by the N.Z. Rifle Association in 1892 at Trentham “over the new rifle range”, referred to also as “permanent”. The report also mentioned that the Wellington public had contributed funds towards its establishment.

WHILST THE 1892 and 1893 National Championships were fired at Trentham on this "permanent" range it is interesting to note that the 1894 contests were held at Christchurch. They resumed at Trentham in 1895 but a further gap in preferences for an acceptable venue saw them held at Auckland, Oamaru and Wanganui. It was not until 1902 that the more or less unbroken chain of annual prize-meetings at Trentham was initiated.

PAROCHIAL PERSUASIONS no doubt influenced the choice of other venues around the turn of the century but there does appear to have been a feeling among the riflemen of the time that Trentham conditions were too tough because of variable winds induced by the surrounding hills. However, Trentham range continued to be used by both military units and civilian clubs established in the Wellington District. So the "permanent" epithet was justified.

TO RETURN TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TRENTHAM SHOOTING COMPLEX it should be noted that in November, 1900, the farmer-owner of the land, Alexander McCulloch, sold to the Crown a very large area, over 1,266 acres. This contained the range, a relatively small portion of the land transferred and extended from the railway line almost to the hill-tops.

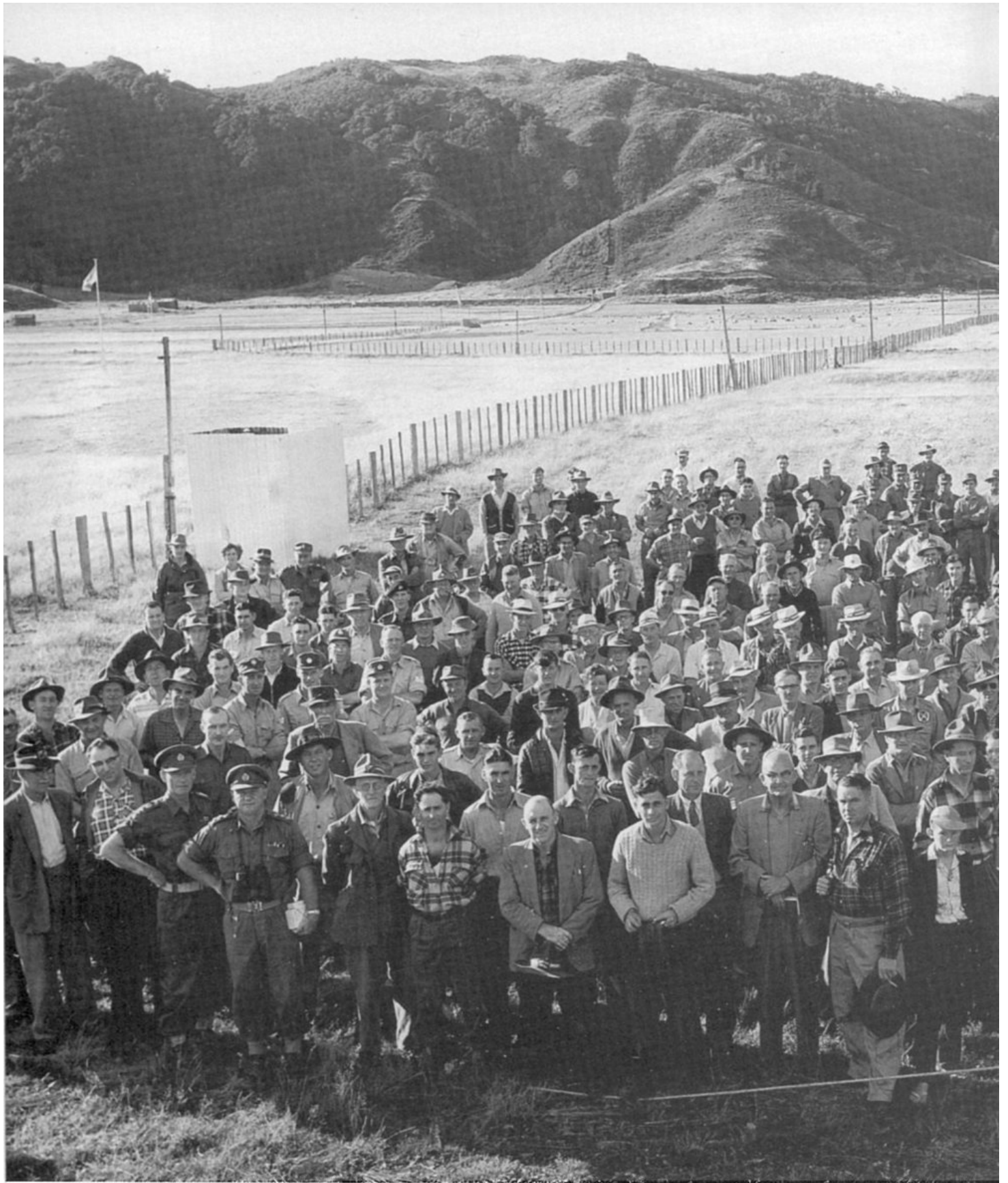
IN 1903 THE WHOLE AREA WAS MADE A PUBLIC RESERVE by the Minister of Defence, The Hon. R.J. Seddon, "for the purpose of a rifle range". The Defence Ministry, entrusted with the administration of the land, has since increased, and later decreased, the space devoted solely to shooting. Barracks, workshops, stores, and other military facilities have long been part of the scene.



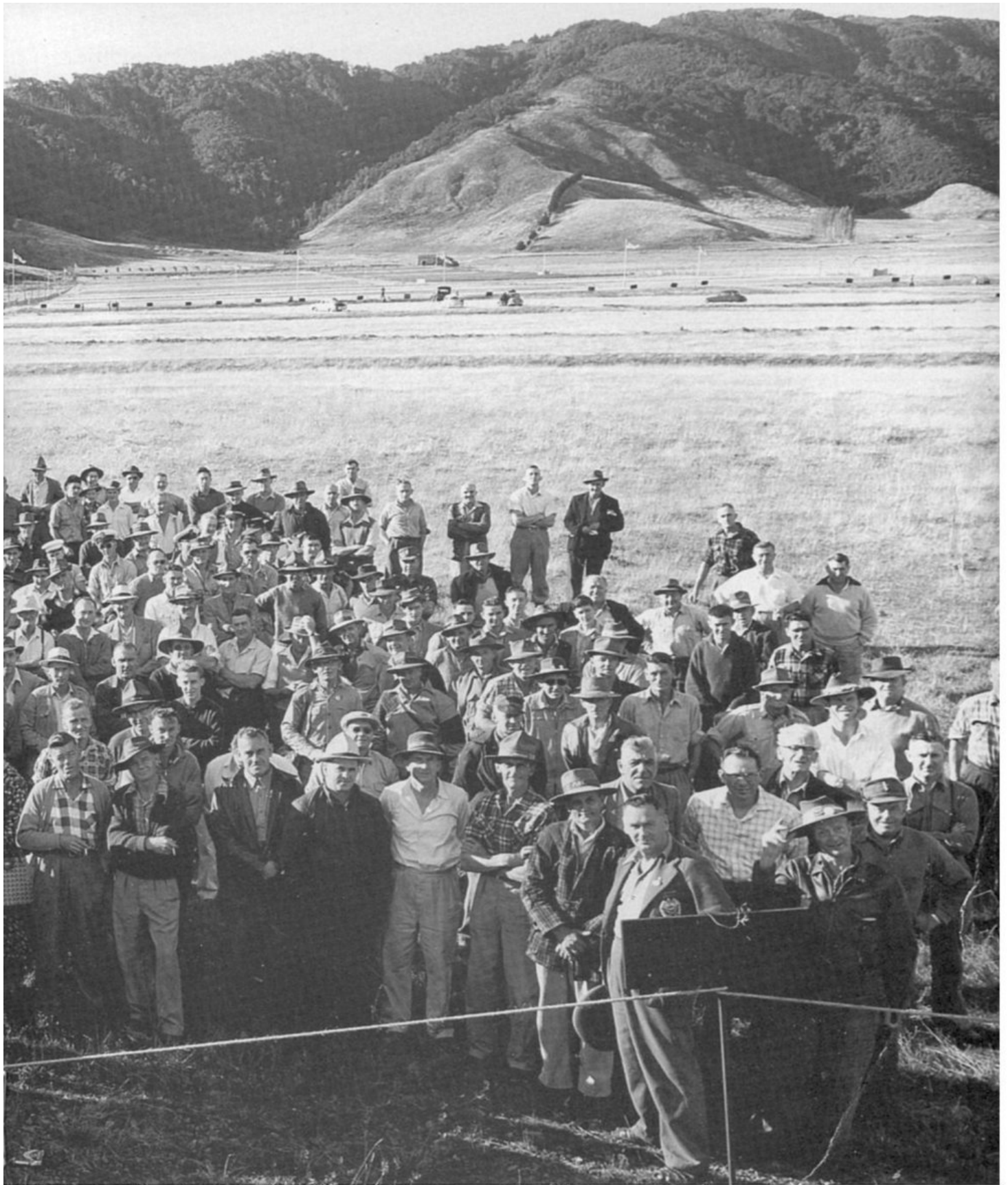
IN THE GREAT WAR, 1914-18, Trentham saw a sudden and vast expansion of camp facilities, mushrooming barracks and ancillary buildings with new roads, drainage, and water supply. The establishment there of the School of Musketry put pressure on the shooting sites; numerous extensions, adaptations and additions ensued. Again in World War II, 1939-45, it was a busy training ground. Peak demand was met with three ranges on the property, the Collins, the Somerville, and the Seddon each with twenty-five targets. The first-named, when disbanded, became part of a golf course for military personnel. For years the other two coped with military commitments and the requirements of the National Rifle Association and the Wellington District Rifle Association, both bodies using the two ranges simultaneously during their annual prize-meetings.



THE NEW ZEALAND RIFLE CHAMPIONSHIP has been contested on 117 occasions, the first in 1861. World Wars accounted for the cancellation of 11 of the customary annual prize-meetings. Periods of re-organisation of the sport saw the omission of 4 other contests in the late nineteenth century. A meeting in the early 1920s was transferred to Papawai and run in connection with the Wairarapa Championships.



TRENTHAM HAS BEEN THE POPULATION. There is nothing on the horizon to indicate a scare after World War II when Government housing. Surveys revealed that much of it is for military purposes.

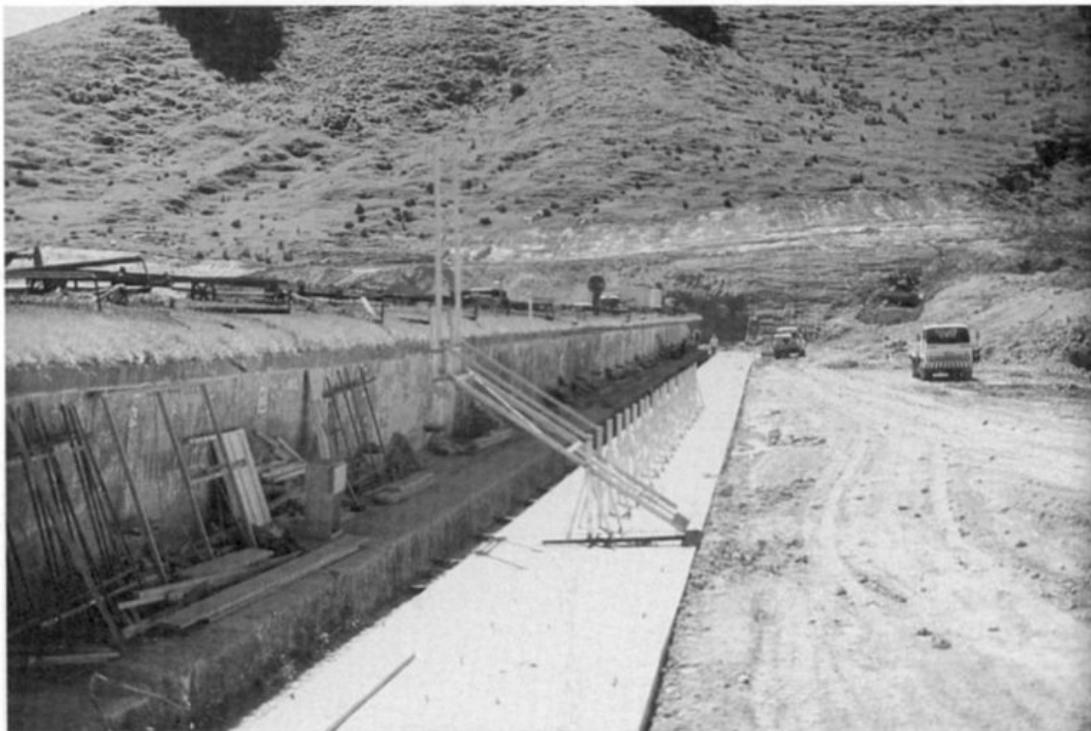


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peat country, totally unstable for building

THIS ARRANGEMENT continued satisfactorily until the early nineteen-eighties when Army, in a regional re-alignment of roads, elected to expand its barrack area by taking that portion of the Somerville range occupied by the 800 and 900 yard firing mounds. The N.R.A. found this totally inconvenient for its annual operations.

A SOLUTION WAS FOUND for the problems of the N.R.A. in an agreement with Government and the Defence Ministry in 1984 whereby the Seddon range would be expanded to accommodate fifty targets, sufficient to meet the traditional requirements of the N.R.A., without the necessity to call upon the Somerville range at all. This was to be a huge operation involving Ministry of Works and Army Engineers.

A SUBSTANTIAL PROPORTION OF THE COST was to be borne by N.R.A. An incidental benefit was a new arrangement for tenure of the Seddon, putting an end to a long period of uncertainty about the rights and duties of all parties dating back almost to the formation of the Reserve.



THE ACTUAL WORK involved the scrapping of the old target frames on the Seddon, extension and modernisation of the butts including the incorporation of shipping containers for target storage. Concrete construction included a very long platform for the newly-designed cantilever target frames provided by N.R.A. Substantial earthwork was called for in the removal of part of a hillside, lengthening of firing mounds, installation of new drains, and the building of a new access road down the side of the refurbished range. A massive earth ramp in the bullet-catching area was not the least of the improvements.

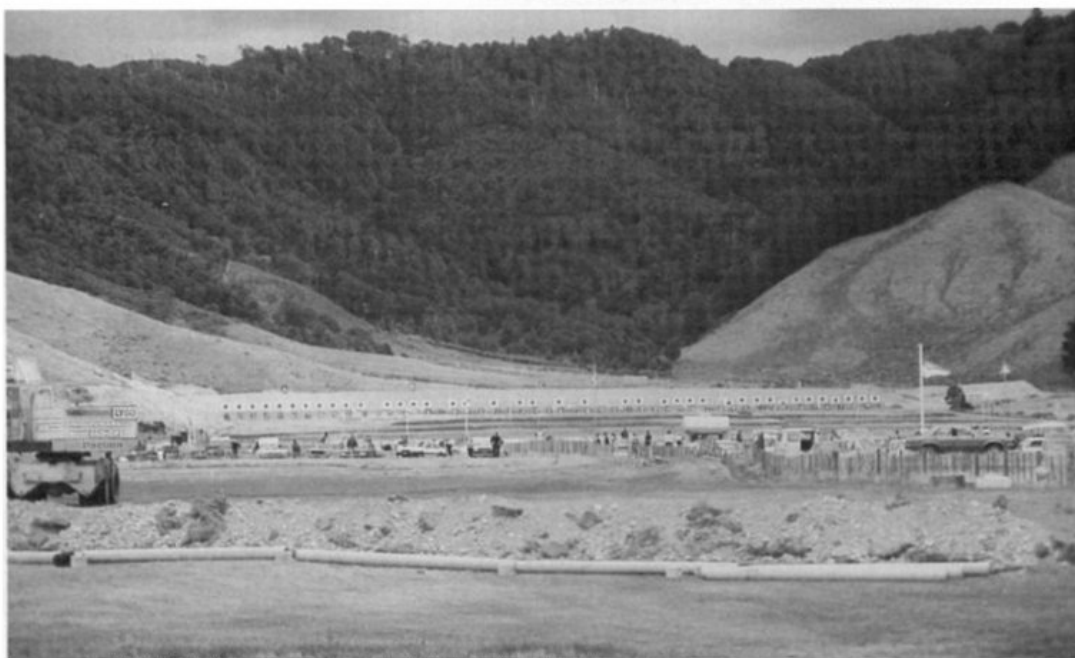
THE PLAN REQUIRED the removal of the N.R.A. Headquarters and Petone Rifle Club buildings, and the transfer of useful portions of these to the new shooting-village site on the Seddon, there to be re-assembled and amalgamated with other structures from the Camp area surplus to Army needs.



A FLOOD CONTROL SCHEME promoted by the Upper Hutt City Council to provide a ponding area over the ranges was by mutual agreement modified to incorporate a 1,000 yard firing mound. An entirely new target construction and storage shed was designed for erection behind the flood barrier.

BY WAY OF A TIMETABLE it can be noted that in January, 1984, the N.R.A. Chairman reported that Ministry of Works was preparing the working drawings, agreement having been reached on the nature and style of the various facilities to be provided. One year later he was able to tell the Council that the Seddon would be able to accommodate the 1985 National Championships, the last six months having been feverish activity in the field to achieve this. By January, 1988, the Chairman was able to say the total task of establishing the new Seddon range had been completed.

THE COST OF THIS IMPRESSIVE TRANSFORMATION was shared between N.R.A. and Defence Ministry, the Association contributing money and a great deal of free labour. The N.R.A. raised its finances in a debenture issue loyally supported by its members. For the whole project it found \$100,000 in cash. A substantial portion of this



was for the new target carriers. \$51,000 was paid to Government as the N.R.A. share of the range development cost. The free labour contents conservatively estimated to be worth around \$120,000, was largely the effort of Wellington Rifle Association members.

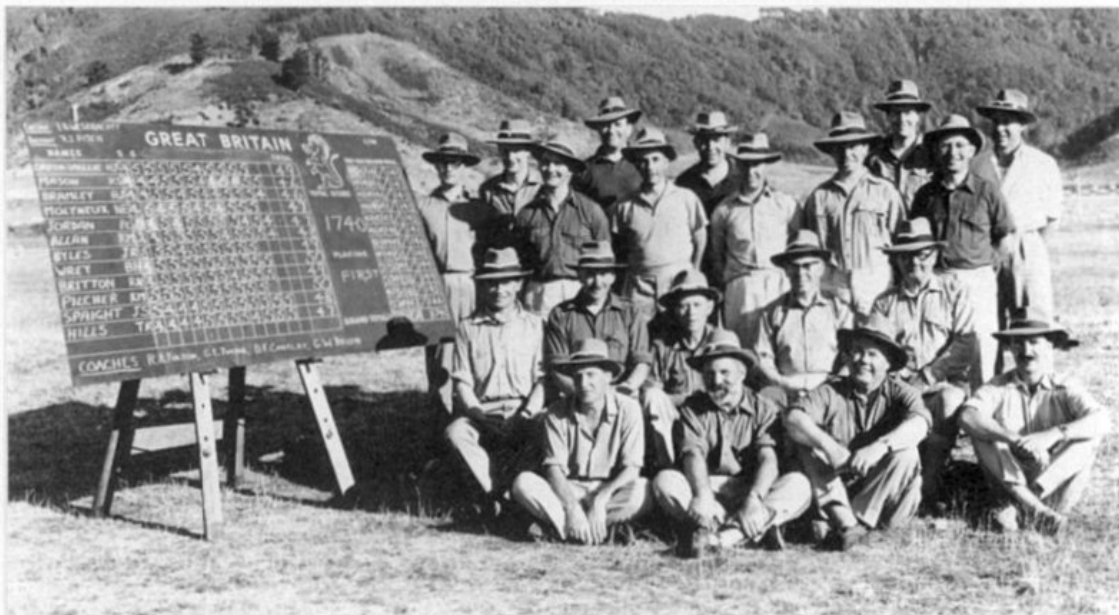
EVERY RANGE HAS ITS PECULIARITIES. Trentham has the special advantage of targets facing the sun through most of the day. Its rural setting and the natural clarity of New Zealand's atmosphere combine to provide target visibility of an exceptionally high standard, something often praised by riflemen from overseas. With a huge amphitheatre of bush-clad hills for a backdrop the scene is both soothing and stimulating. It welcomes the competitors, inviting them to do their best. There is another side to Trentham's character, as full of guile as its appearance is of benevolence. The wind conditions are totally treacherous, as erratic and at times as ferocious as the worst to be encountered in any combination of exposed and difficult ranges around the world. Windwise nothing is to be taken for granted. There are times of great peace, there are moments of agony out there.

THE ALREADY EXALTED STATUS of Trentham has been immensely enhanced by the 1984 reconstruction. Access, parking on and off the range, safety and security have all be researched and upgraded. Office procedures have been revised and upgraded. Statistics are speedily handled by computer with match results and aggregates promptly available. Clubs have refurbished their premises; food and refreshments are served in licenced houses. Accommodation is graded from top service in the adjoining Central Institute of Technology to do-it-yourself arrangements in the camp site.

THE CENTURY has seen untold thousands of men and women, young and old, enter this vast arena to learn, practise, compete, and sometimes win. They came from all parts of New Zealand, from Commonwealth countries, from foreign states. Sadly in times of war, a great many came to qualify for the deadly affairs of the battlefield. But a horde of them came to play, laugh and remember – the lovers of the world-wide shooting sports.

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND
COMMONWEALTH TEAMS SHOOT
TRENTHAM, NEW ZEALAND. 21st FEBRUARY, 1968.

GREAT BRITAIN RIFLE TEAM



WHAT WAS THE MOST ASTOUNDING DEVELOPMENT of the century in the Trentham shooting scene? Changes were to be expected in the types of rifles and targets, and in the variety of competitions. Snap and rapid shooting have disappeared from the sport; hand-loading of ammunition is almost universal; single-round target-rifles are the vogue. Who would have predicted in 1892 that a high proportion of competitors would be women? And that from their ranks would come future champions?

THEIR FIRST BATTLE WAS FOR RECOGNITION. It was fought in their homes, their workplaces, wherever women foregathered. It expanded into the rifle-club committees, and onto the firing mounds. "What? Women? Not likely! This is a man's sport!" True, there were occasions when "the ladies" were invited to "have a shot or two", and some satisfaction when they missed the targets. Those who scored a few bulls-eyes were faintly praised: too many good scores were seen as a threat to the male order.

SOME CLUBS, MOSTLY IN COUNTRY AREAS, did admit women to active membership, even in the pre-World War II sports climate. The name of Mrs E.D. (Teddy) Glynn (Auckland City) appears in the score sheets of the N.R.A. Championship meeting of 1947. Shooting in "A" Grade, she must have had extended experience. Teddy was a regular competitor thereafter and attracted media attention as something of a phenomenon.

TWENTY YEARS LATER, 1967, a woman's name appears for the first time in the Queen's Fifty, Mrs Pauline Hall (Akarana). Her shooting covered a term with the Onslow Club where she no doubt learned to cope with the vagaries of Trentham's winds.



BY 1972 GROWING CONFIDENCE and improving performance led riflewomen to make their first attempt to win the BNZ Champion Teams Match, where they performed creditably. Members: Coralie Catley (Waipukurau), Val Needham (Taumaranui), Margaret McDonald (Tapanui), Mona Taylor (Sydenham), Hazel Win (Onslow). Coach, Margaret McCarthy (Akarana).

Wendy McGuigan (Karori) gained the shooting skills on these Trentham ranges, and became in 1976 the first riflewoman to represent her country in an otherwise all-male team to Great Britain and Canada.

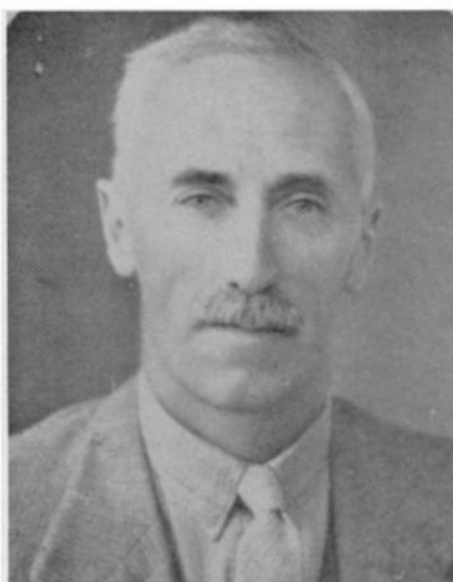
BY 1981 THE BATTLE for recognition was clinched beyond all doubt. Diane Collings was chaired off the firing mound, the first riflewoman to win the N.Z. Rifle Championship. No fluke: she did it again in 1987.



MRS D.R. COLLINGS, TE PUKE RIFLE CLUB,
WINNER LADIES' CHAMPION SASH, 1987 &
WINNER OF BALLINGER BELT, 1987

The urge to express themselves in open competition was something different from the willingness of the womenfolk to serve in the less spectacular business of feeding the multitude of competitors and range staff.

TRENTHAM RANGE has never been tamed. Up until now the perfect score of 500 points for belt series has never been shot. Barry Price in 1973 shot 495 but in 1986 Mark Buchanan raised the record to 497. Between 1914 to 1948 Major W.N. Masfield won the Championship 5 times. Still the Trentham Challenge stands.



Major W. N. Masfield

N.Z. Champion, 1948

Also Champion, 1914, 1929, 1936, 1939.

SOME GREAT OCCASIONS AT TRENTHAM

- 1892 Opening of the range. Rifles: Martini-Henry .45 inch.
- 1895 William H. Ballinger and his brother Arthur top-scored in a tie which was resolved in a shoot-off won by William.
- 1902 First of the chain of annual Championships continued here to this day. Rifles: Lee-Enfield Magazine and Martini-Enfield, both .303 inch.
- 1907 Arthur Ballinger won the Championships for the third time. He was entitled to keep the Government-donated Belt, and gave it to the N.R.A. for perpetual competition. It was then 34 years old. Now known as the Ballinger Belt it is believed to be the oldest sports trophy in the country.
- 1938 D. Roots (Patea) won the Belt for the 4th time.
- 1948 W.N. Masefield (Blenheim) won for the 5th time.
- 1961 N.R.A. Centennial prize-meeting.
- 1970 M.G. Gordon (Okawa) won the Belt for the 3rd time.
- 1971 Single shot 7.62 mm target rifles introduced.
- 1979 Palma Long Range International shot for the first time in New Zealand. Representative teams for U.S.A, Canada, Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand competed.
- 1981 Diane Collings (nee Blaymires) was the first woman to win the N.Z. Rifle Championship. Won again in 1987.

Six riflemen have top-scored twice at Trentham – D.J. Caughley (Masterton-Opaki), J.W. Curtain (Masterton-Opaki), G.L. Fuller (Gisborne), F. Jeune (Gisborne), R.H. Nicholl (Petone), and N.C. Petersen (Levin).

The N.Z. Rifle Championship has been won at Trentham 9 times by marksmen from overseas: 1938, Col. R. Bodley, South Africa; 1949, S. Kanaar, Australia; 1966, J. Caspers, South Australia; 1968, T.R. Hills, Great Britain; 1972, J. Cooper, Australia; 1974, Major W.H. Magnay, Great Britain; 1979, K. Golder, Australia; 1986, M. Buchanan, Australia (record score); 1991, G. Berman, N.S.W.

THROUGHOUT THE HISTORY of the shooting sport there has been co-operation from N.Z. Army, and, in the Volunteer days, beneficial domination. The interests of the sportsmen and those charged with the defence of our country have naturally intertwined. The nature of the sport and the mutual need for land-devouring ranges have guided both parties. The sharing of other resources like rifles, ammunition and technology, and the mingling of Service men and women in the Clubs as members have cemented a good relationship. Ministry of Defence continues to aid the shooting sport, and Seddon Range is a permanent token of the goodwill that exists between the National Rifle Association and Defence Services, fostered by Government.

REPORT OF THE N.Z.R.A. MEETING,

Held at Trentham, March 11th, 1892.

THE selection and adoption of a permanent range at Trentham as a central rifle range for the colony, marks a new era in the history of the Association, and will, I am sure, have a marked effect on its prosperity. I have no hesitation in saying that, in a few years' time, the New Zealand Rifle Association will be on a good sound footing, and the Council will be able to offer for competition double the amount in prizes that they do now. This is all that is wanting to bring over large numbers of competitors from the other colonies, and make our meetings as successful as they are in Sydney and Victoria. One other thing is also required, and that is, that our Government should give this Association the same encouragement as the Governments of the other colonies give to their Associations. The establishment of a permanent range, however, cannot be done without causing considerable expense; but it is a satisfaction to know that this expense is not a recurring one, and that, when the work is once completed, the expenses of our annual meetings will be limited to the expense of marking, camp fixing, etc. I regret that the Government could not see their way to assist in putting the range in order. Up to the present moment not one penny has been given to assist the Association in preparing what must of necessity become a Colonial rifle range. The money expended on the

range has been subscribed by the people of Wellington, Petone, Lower and Upper Hutts, and I take this opportunity of thanking them for their liberality in furthering a work that in all other colonies is undertaken by the State.

Opening Ceremony.—The range was opened on the 11th March, the first shot being fired by Mrs. Reeves, wife of the Hon. W. P. Reeves, Minister for Education. The special train from Wellington brought out a number of the public, who seemed to take a great interest in what was going on. The competitors were drawn up in close column of squads at the 500 yards range, and a rifle was fixed and sighted on No. 5 Target. On behalf of the Association, the Chairman asked Mrs. Reeves to open the range by firing the first shot. Mrs. Reeves then came forward to the firing point. The "Commence firing" sounded, bringing up the 25 targets simultaneously. A moment of suspense, broken by the sharp crack of the Martini giving out that the first bullet had sped on its way to No. 5 Target, and a cheer from the on-lookers greeted the appearance of the white disc showing that the shot was a bull's-eye. Major Sommerville then thanked Mrs. Reeves for the honour she had done the Association by firing the first shot, and the good example she had given to the competitors. The Hon. Mr. Reeves addressed the competitors, and congratulated them on the excellent range they had secured, and the work they had done upon it. The Government had the good of the Association at heart, and wished it and the Volunteers every success. He thanked the Association, on behalf of Mrs. Reeves, for the compliment paid her, and declared the range open. Mr. H. D. Bell, Mayor of Wellington, also congratulated the Association on establishing a permanent range so near the Capital of the Colony. On behalf of the citizens of Wellington, he begged to cordially welcome the visitors from the other parts of the colony, and he hoped the Bisley of New Zealand would prove as successful as that of the Old Country.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Trentham Rifle Range Centennial Committee would like to gratefully thank A.R. Grimwood for his assistance in providing much valuable information for this booklet. We also wish to thank R.H. Whiteman also for his material and help, also D.E. Whiteman for his supervision and Trevor Oliver for his expertise in printing and assembling the booklet.