

A HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL IN 100 OBJECTS WORLD WAR TWO MEDALS

Size: 5 in x 4 in / 125 mm x 100 mm

Description: Four medals.



The first, in order of precedence, is THE 1939-1945 STAR. It is a bronze star with six points each with two facets. The script is in a roundel, At the top is the Imperial State Crown and in the centre is the Royal Cypher of King George VI. The point has a fixed clasp with a central hole that carries a free-turning ring that carries the ribbon. The ribbon is 32mm wide with equal bands of Navy blue, representing the Naval Forces and the Merchant Navy, Army red, representing the Armies and Air Force blue representing the Air Forces. The equal band widths represent the equal contribution of the three services to victory. The reverse is blank.



The second is THE ITALY STAR, otherwise identical to THE 1939-1945 STAR. The ribbon is 32mm wide with a 7mm wide red band, a 6 mm wide white band, repeated in reverse order separated by a 6mm green band. The colours are those of the Flag of Italy.

The third medal is THE 1939-1945 WAR MEDAL. It is a cupro-nickel disc < 1.5 in / 35mm in diameter. The obverse shows a crowned effigy of King George VI facing left and signed by PM for Percy Metcalfe, the designer. Around the perimeter is the legend: "GEORGIUS VI D:G:BR:OMN:REX ET INDIAE IMP:" It is in short-form Latin so it can be fitted in. In English it reads "George VI, by the Grace of God, King of All the Britons and Emperor of India".



The reverse side shows a lion standing wanton on the back of a double headed creature one head that of an eagle and the other of a dragon representing the victory over the enemies of the west and the east. The years 1939 and 1945 are in two lines and in the 9 o'clock position are the letters ECRP for the designer, Edward Carter Preston.

There is a clasp at the top of the medal pinned to a prominent metal bar which, in turn, is attached to a narrow bar which carries the ribbon. The ribbon is 32 mm wide with 6.5 mm red band, a 6.5mm blue band, a 2 mm white band, repeated in reverse order, separated by a 2mm red band. The colours are those of the Union Flag.

The final medal is THE NEW ZEALAND WAR SERVICE MEDAL, it is a cupro-nickel disc < 1.5in / 35cm in diameter. The obverse has an uncrowned effigy of King George VI. Around the perimeter is the legion: "GEORIVS VI D:G:BR:OMN:REX F:D IND:IMP." It is in short-form Latin, slightly different from that of THE WAR MEDAL legend. It goes: George VI, by the Grace of God, King of All the Britons, Defender of the Faith, Emperor or India. Below the effigy are the letters HP, Percy Metcalfe, he designed this too. The reverse has the words 'FOR SERVICE TO NEW ZEALAND 1939-1945'. In four lines above a fern leaf.



There is a clasp at the top of the medal attached to separating fern leaves which is attached to a thin metal bar which bears the ribbon. The ribbon is 32mm wide with 5 mm wide white bands at either side and a 22 mm wide watered black centre. The colours are those of the New Zealand shoulder flashes. The fabric of the material is slightly crisper as are those of all the other medals.

Discussion: The medals are those of Sergeant Alfred Leslie Dodds, of the 6th Field Regiment, 2NZE. He was at Mount Albert Grammar School from 1922-1924. They are a gift of his sister Mrs Audrey Thompson-Davies, on 20 September 2000. The stars are not engraved on the back and the medals are not engraved on the rims. This was a common practice for WW2 medals.

There are photographs and other objects that were gifted at the same time and they, collectively, give a picture of the life and times of a WW2 serviceman who returned home and resumed civilian life.

A number of images taken by a Public Relations Department photographer who referred to the men as belonging to the 2NZEF (The Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force). Any more may have given comfort to the enemy. The action was at Castle Frentano, Italy in December 1943. This level of detail is known by a copy of a post-war letter of Alfred Dodds who asked for copies of the photographs. Three of them are reproduced here. They are all 6 in x 4 in / 150 mm x 100 mm. The first shows Stg. Dodds, in his words, "attacking a piece of bread".



The second shows the 7-man crew at lunch, the second in command is the corporal, those who are seated are probably sitting on ammunition boxes.

The third image is of the men in action under a camouflage net.





There are a number of 25-Pounder guns in museums and this one is restored and is in Edinburgh Castle. It is the view that the gunners would have had.

There is a triangular badge of the 6th Field Regiment The Imperial State Crown6 summounts an artillery piece below the crown are the letters N.Z. and below the gun is a motto scroll with black letters on gold, which translate as "The Right and the Glory Lead" and under the scroll, in white thread on black 6TH N.Z. FLD REGT. The sides of the equilateral triangle are 3 3/4 in / 95 mm.



There are two ONWARD badges photographed together. The larger brass badge is < 1 1/2 in / 40cm and the smaller silver badge is > 1 1/4 in / 30 cm. The brass badge is measured without the slide fastening (which would have fitted into the puggaree of the lemon-squeezer hat). The silver badge has a hinged side fastening.

Two different buttons were also gifted, each is > 1/2 in / 15 mm. The first is the standard brass button with four stars in the centre and the words NEW ZEALAND FORCES in a roundel near the rim. On the reverse is a loop for sewing the button to the uniform and the legend STOKES AND SONS. Stokes is a Melbourne firm that began in 1856 and is still in business (2018).



The second button is a pewter artillery badge, also made by Stokes.



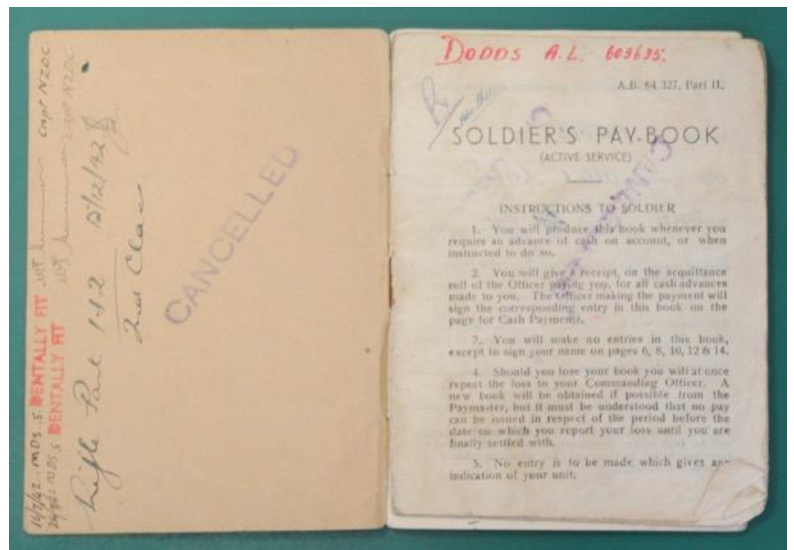
There is a shoulder flash, khaki with a black flash with white country name 2 3/4 in x 1 in / 70 mm x 25 mm.

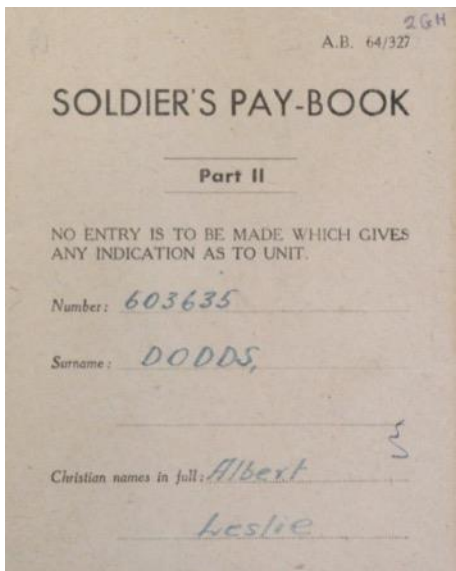




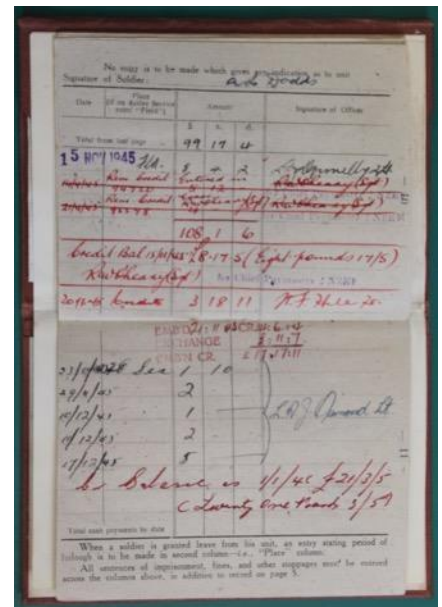
Sgt. Dodds' first paybook, 5 in x 3 ½ in / 125 mm x 90 mm, is in a suede leather folder with a kiwi design.

Inside there is a cancelled Soldier's Paybook in the name of Dodds A.L. On the first page there are no-nonsense Instructions to Soldier. The book is cancelled because it was full.

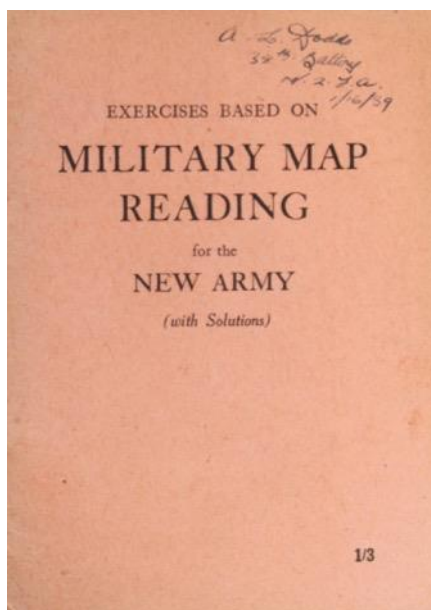




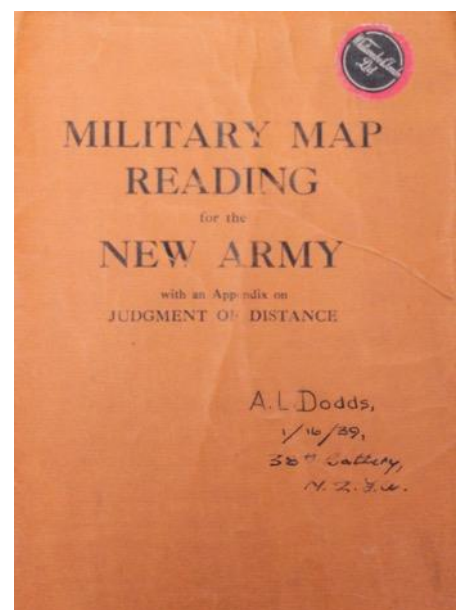
His last Field payment was on 15 November 1945. He embarked for home, earlier on 21 November 1945. He was at sea until 17 December 1945 and would have been home for Christmas. The last paybook entry was dated 1 January 1946.



While he was in training in New Zealand in 1939 he had a Military Map Reading booklet, 7 in x 5 ¼ in / 175 mm x 135 mm. It is 61 pages (The last five are blank).



It was written by Captain W. Stanley Lewis MSc(Lond), FRGS, Professor of Geography, University College, Exeter and F.W. Morgan MA (Cantab), Lecturer in Geography, University College, Exeter) and published by A Wheaton and Co. Ltd, Exeter, 1940 (Second Edition). There was also a book of exercises of 32 pages, which, in New Zealand was printed by Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd.



The only item of clothing in this collection, is Sgt. Dodds' army scarf. 25 ½ in x 8 in / 650 mm x 200mm.





Sgt Dodds' dogtags are tied together with original string, the russet circular one is 1 ¼ in / 35 mm in diameter and the grey octagonal one is 1 ½ in / 40 mm on the long side.

Each is stamped NZ/603635/CE/A/A.L. DODDS. That is, a New Zealand Military Serviceman, whose number is 603635, whose religion is Church of England, whose blood group is type A and whose name is A.L. DODDS.

There are two bank notes. One is Allied Military Currency, issued in Italy for 1 Lira. There is a serial number and it is series 1943. On the reverse there are 'Freedoms', Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Religion, Freedom from Want, Freedom from Fear. It is 3 in x 2 ½ in / 75 mm x 65 mm.



The other is 'real' money for 1 Lira. Regno d'Italia, Biglietto di Stato, a Corso Legale, i.e. Kingdom of Italy, Legal Status Ticket. It is 3 in x 2 in / 75 mm x 50 mm. On the reverse is an image of Augustus of Prima Porta, a marble statue of Augustus Caesar.





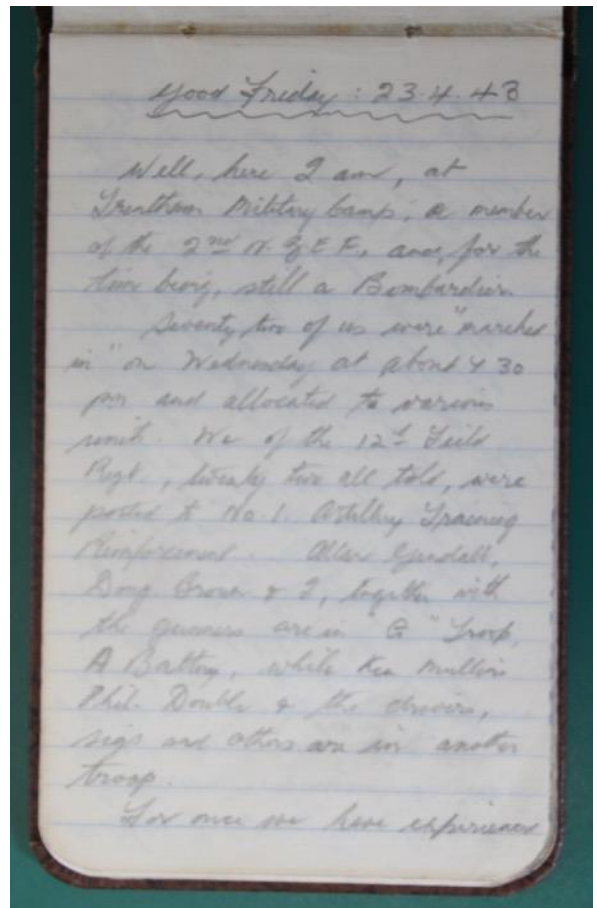
A suede leather writing case, with a meeting house and other decorative elements on the front. Sgt. Dodds had some artistic ability and this is probably his work.



The open dimensions are: 8 in x 13 in / 200 mm x 300 mm, the sleeve is wider. His number and name are carefully written. There is a space for notepaper and another for envelopes and a pocket for stamps and a long sleeve for a pencil.



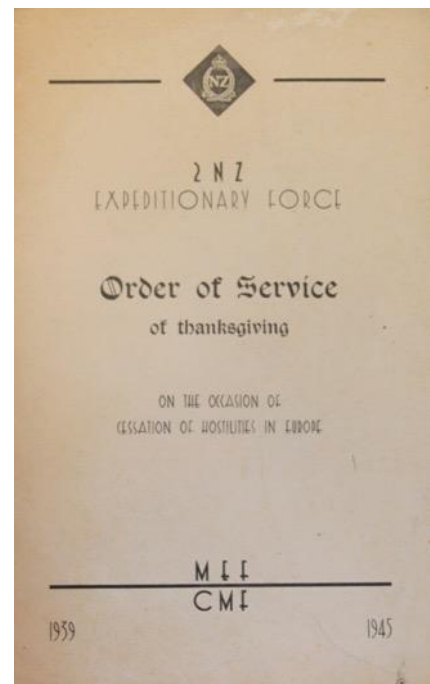
There are five diaries, which is a wonderful record of an army man. The first entry in the first book is dated Good Friday 23.4.43 begins with a pencilled sentence "Well here I am at Trentham Military Camp, a member of the 2nd N.Z.E.F. and for the time being, still a Bombardier." This is a flip top military diary from 23.4.43 - 5.6.43. it has an elastic closure, with end embedded in the cover.



The second diary is the same style as the first and runs from 6.6.43 to 25.7.43. it includes his embarkation on the Dominion Monarch. On board, is an entry for Friday 15.4.43 he noted: "I was walking along the deck this afternoon when a voice hailed me saying, "Do you still draw?" It was Vic Butler. I was delighted to see him again after so many years. He is a Captain in the P.B.I. [Infantry]. Gave me a letter from our old school-fellow Budge Hintz to read. Naturally it was a classic!" [Butler was wounded, returned to NZ and became Principal of Mount Roskill Grammar School. Hintz was in the Navy and returned to NZ and became the Editor of *The New Zealand Herald*.] The third diary is more difficult, it is loose pages mostly held together by two metal clips, the remaining loose pages are numbered. It is from 25.7.43 to 22.10.43. The fourth is a note book with tiny faint lines in small squares, seven to an inch. It has an elastic closure. It runs from 23.4.43 to 4.4.44. He was twice wounded and the fifth diary, in the style of the fourth runs from 5.4.44 to 6.11.44. Most of the last entries are food, the weather and meeting old comrades. He is obviously feeling the consequences of his injuries.

At the end of hostilities there was an Order of Service of Thanksgiving. There was no date and no church stated. It may have been an Order of Service that could have been used in a number of churches at various times. The war was still going on in the Pacific. VE Day (Victory in Europe Day) was 8 May 1945, VJ Day (Victory Over Japan Day) was 14 August 1945.

Apart from the Prayers in the Order of Service, there were four hymns; *Praise my Soul, the King of Heaven, Now Thank we all our God, For all the Saints* and *O God our Help in Ages Past*. On the cover of the Order of Service are the letters MEF and below the line CMF. The document was printed by Printing and Stationery Services, CMF. It may have been printed in Australia as the Combined Military Forces was in Australia. MEF stands for Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, it was a harking back to World War 1, the Force included in the Gallipoli campaign.



The final item in this series is a Certificate of Discharge for Sgt. Dodds. It is dated 9 April 1946. It is 6 ½ in x 5 in / 165 mm x 125 mm.

NEW ZEALAND MILITARY FORCES
SECOND NEW ZEALAND EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

Certificate of Discharge No 7796

Regt. No. 603635 Rank on discharge: Sergeant

Name (in full): Albert Leslie DODDS

is discharged from the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force on termination of engagement.

In New Zealand.		Beyond New Zealand.			
Yrs.	Days.	From	To	Yrs.	Days.
1	234	TOTAL		2	221
Total service: 4 yrs. 90 days.					

Wellington, New Zealand, 9th April, 1946

Adjutant-General, New Zealand Military Forces.

SPECIAL ATTENTION IS DRAWN TO THE NOTES ON REVERSE.

It is not surprising that it took so long. It was typed by hand, his military record would have had to be consulted. There were 2000 men of this School, alone, in uniform and about 140,000 Service men and women all of whom would have the same detailed Certificate of Discharge.

This is a remarkable collection of items. His wife, Alma, may have pre-deceased him. They had at least one child. In any event, the collection ended up with his sister and it is through her good offices that it came to us. Thus, one of the School's foundation pupils who went to war has his wartime memorabilia available to the wider Mount Albert Grammar School community.

Brian Murphy