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OIA-2023-4803

19 September 2023

Stanley Bannerman

fyi-request-23395-5eebd111@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Stanley Bannerman

I refer to your email of 24 August 2023 regarding responses to your earlier requests concerning the New Zealand Army's use of the term "the Duke of York's Own". This request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

In your reply of 13 July 2023, you stated:

"The correct title of the unit is Royal New Zealand Army Logistic Regiment. Approval has not been sought or given for it to be styled "The Duke of York's Own". Reference to "The Duke of York's Own" is informal and has uncertain origins."

However, in the document "History of the New Zealand Logistic Regiment", supplied in your reply of 14 August 2023 a letter is provided from the Chief of General Staff (dated 22 June 1999) stating:

"I am pleased to inform you that The Queen has approved the appellation "Duke of York's Own" being added to the "Royal New Zealand Army Logistic Regiment"."

- 1. Which one of these statements is correct?*
- 2. Could you please explain how these two statements are consistent with each other?*
- 3. Does the NZDF consider decisions by the New Zealand monarch to be official NZDF/government policy?*
- 4. Does the NZDF have a process to officially define unit titles? What is the process or requirements for a title to be considered official? Does an official process need to take place to change a unit's title? Does the monarch have any role in this process?*

Apologies for the misunderstanding. While the addition of the appellation was formally recognised as noted in the letter from the Chief of General Staff dated 22 June 1999, it never replaced the correct title of the unit. On 13 January 2022, Buckingham Palace released a statement noting the Duke of York's military affiliations and Royal patronages had been returned to the Queen¹.

Unit titles, which are effectively an establishment change, require the approval of the relevant Service Chief or the Chief of Defence Force for New Zealand Defence Force units. This is an internal process, except where the unit title includes a reference to a member of

¹ <https://www.royal.uk/statement-buckingham-palace-regarding-duke-york>

the Royal Family. In that instance, a recommendation by the relevant Service Chief is made through the Chief of Defence Force and the Minister of Defence to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister then makes a request to the Private Secretary to the Sovereign. When that member of the Royal Family ceases to perform duties associated with a particular role, all associations with that member of the Royal Family (such as unit titles and symbols) are automatically defunct.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website.

Yours sincerely

AJ WOODS

Air Commodore

Chief of Staff HQNZDF