

APPRAISAL REPORT

Department Name. New Zealand Defence Force

Location. NZDF Personnel Archives Trentham Military Camp

Records Appraised. XRAYs of former Service Personnel

Date of Appraisal. August 2006 (updated October 2006)

Appraiser. [has been removed]

1. Executive Summary

This appraisal covers a large group of approximately 50,000 XRAY images relating to former military personnel serving in the New Zealand Defence Forces (NZDF) between 1991 and the present day. The XRAY images were taken as part of recruitment medicals or when serving personnel required an XRAY as part of their medical treatment. Prior to 1991 the office responsible for the care of the medical records of former service men and women (NZDF Base Records) believed that it had the authority to destroy unwanted XRAYs which had been retained for seven years. XRAY images older than this were destroyed on an annual basis until a reorganisation of Base Records in 1991 resulted in this process being discontinued because of lack of resources. The XRAYs under consideration in this appraisal have built up since that 1991 decision. The NZDF have no use for these records as they are never referred to when future enquiries relating to individuals are made. The radiologists report resulting from the assessment of the XRAY is attached to the Medical File for this purpose. This Appraisal requests that the Chief Archivist agrees to the NZDF's recommendation to dispose of them. Because XRAYs are still being taken when Service personnel are recruited and during their service there is a requirement for an ongoing disposal authority.

2. Recommendations

Quantity of records recommended for retention as public archives Nil

Quantity of records recommended for destruction. Approximately 50,000 XRAYs

XRAY images should be destroyed after a 7 year Agency Retention Period.

3. Appraisal Circumstances

The NZDF is well known to Archives New Zealand and holds a number of Disposal Authorities for the records it creates. Despite the fact that XRAY disposals regime was in place prior to 1991, it has been confirmed recently by Archives New Zealand that the NZDF does not hold and never has held a Disposal Authority for this class of record. This is the reason for the NZDF conducting this appraisal and recommending that the

Chief Archivist agrees to the disposal of some 50,000 XRAYs currently held in storage at NZDF Personnel Archives at Trentham..

4. Agency Information

The NZDF is a large government organisation with offices, camps, bases, ships and miscellaneous facilities spread across New Zealand. The organisation employs 11,000 uniformed personnel who are supported by 2,000 civilian staff. Record keeping is generally well managed with a range of well documented procedures and corporate systems in place. The military personnel records are created and managed by the military units to which Service personnel are posted. When a person dies or is killed in service or retires or resigns from the Defence Forces his/her personal files including all medical records are transferred to the NZDF Personnel Archives (NZDF PA) unit at Trentham. NZDF PA is the NZDF unit responsible for the care and management of these records for up to 80 years before their eventual transfer to Archives New Zealand.

5. Precedents

The Appraisals conducted on military personnel records by Archives New Zealand in the past have resulted in these records being retained for all time as part of the history of the nation. No part of a military personnel file can be disposed of by the NZDF. Because the NZDF still receives a large number of enquiries from former Service personnel and their descendants it has been agreed that the Defence Force will retain records of all servicemen and women who served after 1 January 1920. A major transfer to Archives New Zealand of personnel records relating to the Boer and First World Wars has recently been completed but due to the number of enquiries for the post 1920 files it is not anticipated that this will be repeated in the foreseeable future. There were no XRAYs involved with the transfer of the WW1 files.

6. Controlling Agency

- a. Agency Name: The New Zealand Defence Force
- b. Agency Code: AABK
- c. Year Established: 1899
- d. Year Disestablished: Still Current

7. Appraisal Methodology

Each Servicepersons XRAYs are contained in a large square manilla envelope with the persons name and the date of each XRAY recorded on the front. In conducting the Appraisal the contents of a representative range of about 10% of the envelopes was inspected by the Appraising Officer. Long serving Records staff at NZDF PA confirm that the XRAYs envelopes reviewed for the purposes of completing the Appraisal are typical of the contents of all of the XRAY envelopes held in storage. Because XRAYs

are still being taken when Service personnel are recruited and during their service, there is a requirement for an ongoing disposal authority.

8. Description of XRAYs

No written material is included in the XRAY envelopes. The diagnostic notes made by the radiologist and any medical assessment resulting from the XRAY are filed on the individual Service persons Medical file which is retained permanently at NZDF PA. More than one XRAY image can be contained in each envelope and there are several different sizes depending on what part of the body was being imaged. XRAYs of hands and feet tend to be smaller (about A4) size while chest and long limb images tend to be (about A3) size. XRAYs of prospective recruits who did not actually join the Defence Forces for one reason or another are of the chest area only.

9. Records Description

- a. Date Span of Records: 1991 to 2006
- b. Quantity of records: Approximately 50,000 Envelopes containing XRAYs
- c. Title of Record Series: NZDF Servicepersons XRAY Images
- d. Record Keeping Process: XRAYs are taken when required by a Medical officer. While the person is still serving in the NZDF the employing Service (Army, Navy, Air Force) retains the XRAYs. When the person is no longer serving the XRAYs are sent to NZDF PA for storage.
- e. Previous Disposals: Prior to 1991 XRAYs were destroyed on an annual basis once they had been closed for 7 years. This destruction was incorrectly initiated by the NZDF and was not authorised by Archives New Zealand.
- f. Method of Filing: Because the records are not required to be accessed they have been stored randomly in cardboard boxes. The records have not been indexed.

10. Use of XRAYs

The NZDF Director General of Medical Services (DGMS) has confirmed that the Defence Force has no use for the XRAYs. These XRAY images are classified as 'Records containing information that is captured elsewhere'. When an XRAY image is taken it is assessed by a qualified radiologist and then further reviewed by the Medical Officer who ordered it taken. These reports are filed on the individual Servicepersons Medical file. Any future reference to the XRAY is made by consulting the radiologists' expert report and the Medical Officers decision on the appropriate medical actions to take. There is no requirement to further consult the XRAY image which is the reason why the Defence Force supports the destruction of this stored collect of records.

11. Schedule

A schedule for the records being appraised is at the Enclosure.

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Project manager Archives
for Chief of Defence Force

Encl: Schedule for NZDF Medical XRAY Images