X Lists, 2 New Zealand Expeditionary Force 1939-1945

Almost without exception, Second World War army service records contain numerous references to the 'X Lists'. The X Lists recorded personnel who were absent from their regular units for one reason or another.

Reproduced below is the definition of the various classes of X-List given in R. S. Wogan, *A treatise on the pay and records procedure inaugurated, developed, and maintained for the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force and the Territorial Forces (Records) within New Zealand during the war years 1939-1945 and afterwards* (Wellington: Army Dept, 1948), pp107-109:

**THE “X” LIST**

12. All personnel of 2 NZEF are held on the posted strength of a unit or are carried on the “X” list.

13. The “X” list is maintained in 5 sections, and all transfers to and from it – or from one section of it to another – are carried out by 2 Ech*. Units will, of course, casualty movements within the sections of, or involving transfer to, or from the “X” list, but 2 Ech will be the deciding authority on all questions concerning the “X” list.

14. **THE X (i) LIST** comprises all ranks posted to fill vacancies in authorised WEs [War Establishments] of a 2 NZEF Headquarters or a 2 NZEF extra-regimental unit (such as a base depot, school etc.). An officer placed in X (i) list will be seconded.

15. **THE X (ii) LIST** comprises all ranks evacuated on medical grounds beyond RAP [Regimental Aid Post]. Personnel so evacuated cease to be on the effective strength of their units. Temporary or acting rank will be relinquished 28 days after being so transferred to X (ii) list. Personnel remain in X (ii) list until they are classified as fit for posting by NZ Reception Depot (when they are transferred to the X (iv) list of their corps and marched out to the appropriate training depot), or until discharged by a medical unit direct to their original units. Personnel who, after evacuation beyond RAP are medically graded 1A or lower remain on X (ii) list until they are either (a) placed on NZ Roll, or (b) posted to a Base establishment, or (c) transferred to X (i) list at the Base. Personnel of HQs, or extra-regimental units, may as a matter of convenience be posted direct from NZ Reception Depot and need not be marched through their appropriate training depot. Any extra-duty pay will cease 7 days after transfer to X (ii) list, subject to the proviso that if prior replacement is made ED pay will cease from such prior date.

16. **THE X (iii) LIST** comprises

   (a) Confirmed prisoners of war,
   (b) Personnel officially declared missing,
   (c) OR under un-suspended sentence of detention or imprisonment (personnel undergoing field punishment remain on unit strength),
   (d) Deserter

Missing personnel will NOT be transferred to X (iii) list until the official notification is received from 2 Ech. Deserters are NOT struck off unit strength until [notification] is received by 2 Ech and personnel are declared deserters by 2 Ech through Part II Orders. Temporary or acting rank will be retained by, and extra-duty pay will continue to be payable to, personnel posted missing or PW [Prisoner of War].

17. **THE X (iv) LIST** comprises all unposted reinforcements and incoming reinforcement drafts. Personnel discharged from NZ Reception Depot (x(ii)) to Training Depots, fit for duty, are

X Lists and postings in WWII Army Service Records

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NZDF Archives

transferred to the X (iv) list of their corps, until posted to a unit, when they are struck off X (iv) and taken on unit strength. Reinforcements in transit between the Base and a unit remain on X (iv) (and the Base Depot strength) until they actually reach and are taken on the strength by the unit to which they are proceeding. Escaped PsW [Prisoners of War] who until such escape have been on the X (iii) list are transferred to X (iv) list on reaching their respective training depots.

18. THE X (v) LIST

(a) When officer personnel attend as students at courses of instructions or schools, for more than twenty-eight days, they will, ONLY at the discretion of MS, 2 NZEF, be transferred to X (v) list.
(b) When other rank personnel attend as students at courses of instruction for more then twenty-eight days, they will be transferred to X (v) list (and thus struck off the strength of their unit) unless the unit expressly states that they should remain detached.
(c) All candidates for OCTU [Officer Cadet Training Unit] will immediately transferred to X (v) list; on commissioning they will be transferred to X (iv) list of their corps and subsequently posted to a unit.
(d) All personnel acting as instructors at courses or schools outside the 2 NZEF, or struck off unit strength for duty with a unit outside the 2 NZEF, will be transferred to X (v) list. Although officers might in such circumstances be seconded, they will be placed on X (v) list.

19. Immediately an officer or other rank is transferred to the “x” list, he is “lost” to his unit, and is immediately replaceable by a reinforcement. Subject to …2 NZEF Regulations, a vacancy for promotion is immediately created. It is in the interest of the unit to make immediate promotion or replacement as there is no guarantee that the individual will ever return to his unit. Return of specialist may, however, be requested ….Once personnel are transferred to X (iv) list from any other section of the “X” list, they are liable to be used as reinforcements for any unit within their own corps. Subject to certain conditions and exceptions as laid down in 2 NZEF Regulations, acting or temporary rank will be relinquished on transfer to the “X” list.

Personnel temporarily detached from their units and not actually posted or transferred to other units or corps will NOT be transferred to the “X” list, neither will they be replaceable by reinforcements.

* 2 Ech was ‘2nd Echelon’ 2 NZEF – this was the administrative body set up at 2 NZEF Base Camp in the Middle East and Italy to process personnel matters within the expeditionary force. A separate ‘Base Records’ establishment processed personnel records in New Zealand.

Postings, Transfers, Attachments and Marching “In” or “Out”

Wogan’s “treatise on the pay and records procedure” also specifies the precise meaning of these commonly used terms:

….the terms “posted”, “transferred”, “marched in” or “out” are used in 2 NZEF as under:

POSTED: Any disposition of a soldier within his own corps or arm of the service; i.e., a soldier is “posted” to any unit of his own corps or to an HQ or extra-regimental unit, but not the “X” list.

TRANSFERRED: Any disposition of a soldier to a corps or arm of the service other than that to which he was originally posted: i.e., a soldier is “transferred” if, being a soldier of the NZ Engineers, he is struck off the strength of NZE and taken on the strength of the NZ Corps of Signals. He is also “transferred” to the “X” list. (HQ 2 NZEF authority is required for all inter-corps transfers).

X Lists and postings in WWII Army Service Records

http://www.nzdf.mil.nz/personnel-records/nzdf-archives/
ATTACHED: Used only to denote the temporary removal of a soldier from one unit to another. “Attaching” never removes a soldier from the strength of his original corps or takes him off the strength of a unit.

MARCHED IN OR OUT: Used to indicate the actual arrival in or departure from a unit, except in the case of arrivals and departures of patients to and from hospitals, in which case the terms “admitted” and “discharged” will be used.