

# DESPATCHES

**NEWSLETTER OF THE QUEEN'S REDOUBT TRUST**

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## THE ROYAL ENGINEERS

The Royal Engineers hold a unique place in the British Army, tracing their origin back to William the Conqueror and his engineering monk Bishop Gundulf. He was particularly skilled in engineering matters, and was commissioned by William to build, amongst other structures, the "White Tower" which is the central part of the Tower of London, in 1078. Having served three Kings (William 1 & 2 and Henry 1) and having earned the favour of them all, Gundulf is today accepted as the first King's Engineer and the "father of the Corps of Royal Engineers" of the British Army. The Corps claims a line of King's Engineers' which predates the engineers of the Board of Ordnance formed in 1414 and the formal founding of the corps in 1716.

1716 saw the emergence of the modern Engineering Corps. Initially composed entirely of commissioned officers, they

were joined after 1787 by a Corps of non-commissioned Royal Military Artificers, who were led by commissioned Royal Engineers. One of the functions of this group was to build saps as a method of attacking fixed enemy sites (eg Pratt's sap at Te Arei in March 1861). The skill of the Engineers in building saps, led to private soldiers of the Royal Engineers being described as Sappers from the late 18th century.

Unlike Infantry and Cavalry units, the Engineers have no battle honours but their motto begins with the word "UBIQUE" [everywhere], signifying that the Corps has seen action in all major conflicts and most of the minor ones as well; one such being the conflict in New Zealand during the second half of the 19th century. Despite the lack of battle honours, members of the Royal Engineers have won a total of 55 VC's since the Crimean war, although none in the New

Zealand wars.

The earliest Royal Engineer in NZ had the title of Commanding Royal Engineer, the first being Lt H W Lugard who arrived in 1840. He was followed by seven other officers, most serving only about two years. But the most senior of these, Colonel Thomas R Mould, was the senior Royal Engineer in New Zealand for eleven years from 1855.

In New Zealand most Royal Engineers were part of the 6th Engineering company and, judging by the large number of tender advertisements appearing in the Auckland newspapers, had their head office in the Albert Barracks in Auckland.

An important role played by Royal Engineers in the New Zealand conflict was communications. At this time there was no independent signalling unit in the army, a Telegraph Troop of the RE, first being formed in 1870, with the



**RE Sappers making gabion baskets at Pukerimu (Cambridge) in 1863**

By J O Hamley

## THE ROYAL ENGINEERS (cont)

Signalling Corps not being established as a specialist unit in its own right until a Royal Warrant created the Corps of Signals in June 1920.

Because telegraphy did not become a permanent part of the Royal Engineers activity until 1870, its use in New Zealand was very much a pioneering activity and had been recommended to the NZ government by Col Mould. It soon proved to have considerable tactical use as a military tool. In October 1862, two specialist Royal Engineer N.C.O.'s, Corporals A Brodie and R.E Butcher, were sent out to New Zealand to install and initially operate the military telegraph between Auckland and Queen's Redoubt. They worked independently but were employed under the Quartermaster General and paid by him.

Once the telegraph line was built, an ad hoc military telegraph department was established under Col Gamble which, utilizing troops various regiments trained them as telegraphists.

Specialist engineering groups were also sent to New Zealand, at various times and for particular purposes. One such, comprising non-commissioned officers and men, departed the RE barracks at Chatham on 11 April 1863. They comprised surveyors, draughtsmen and a photographer and were tasked to carry out a survey of New Zealand, as well as the design and erection of public buildings, building of roads and bridges and, if required the operation of the colonial mint. They were expected to be in New Zealand for several years and received a higher than usual rate of pay. (see also New Zealander, 27/6/63)

In 1860, Governor Browne sent Col Mould to Taranaki to assist Major General Pratt in controlling the volatile situation there. One of his first tasks was to supervise a major sapping operation against three adjacent pa, including Huirangi and Te Arei. When the sap finally reached the pa the troops found them abandoned and Pratt had captured them with sweat, not blood. In November Col Mould commanded the column of troops from Waitara which, as part of a pincer movement assisted General Pratt in the capture of Māhoetahi. Also involved in this action was Col Mould's son, Second Captain Frederick Mould, who commanded the sapper company.

According to James Cowan the work of the RE, led by Col Mould, was a major feature of the British Army activities in New Zealand and

Mould was responsible for much of the fort building during the Waitara campaign including the stockade at Matarikoriko.

Mould was a strong advocate of extending the roads south of Auckland and, on 24 December 1861 with two other RE officers and 24 sappers, he accompanied Colonel Gamble and troops of the 12th and 14th regiments south to Drury to commence construction of the Great South Road. Mould directed much of the ensuing work along the road, which probably included the construction of Queen's Redoubt, although no written information about this has so far been located. In July 1863 he joined the staff of General Cameron, was involved in most of the Waikato campaigns and oversaw the construction of most of the engineering works involved in that campaign.

Another RE officer involved in several actions during the war was Captain T E Brooke, who commanded the Company through 1863. He played a significant role in the capture of Rangiriri and, although wounded himself, played a vital role in digging a trench and erecting a wall of earth and planks to shield soldiers extracting the wounded men, including Captain Mercer RA, from the sheltered area close to the central redoubt. It was Captain Brooke who surveyed the huge Maori fortress of Pāterangi before much of it was destroyed by the troops. His measurements reveal that the excavations for the pā had a total length of 7084 metres with a volume of over 10,600 m<sup>3</sup> earth removed. This equates to removing almost 13,000 tonnes of soil. In contrast it is estimated that excavations for Queen's Redoubt, required the troops to move only approximately 1300 m<sup>3</sup> of soil, one tenth of the amount moved by Maori forces at Pāterangi!

The total number of Royal Engineers who served in New Zealand never exceeded 119, which number it reached

in 1865; building up from 30 in 1860 and dropping to ten after the company departed on 29 June 1866.

The last small sections of the RE left New Zealand, along with Royal Artillery and the 18th Regiment, in 1870.

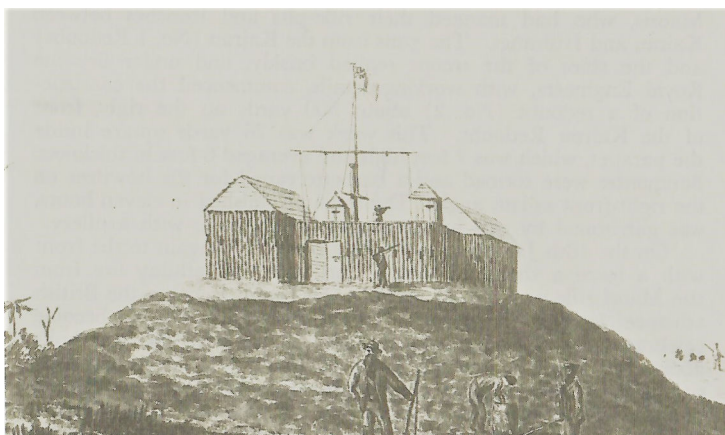
*Ian Barton*

## Colonel T R MOULD RE

Thomas Rawlings Mould was born 31 May 1805 in Hampshire. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Royal Engineers in 1826 and began his career on the Ordnance Survey of Ireland between 1827 and 1835, Thomas Mould married Anne Stirling in Dublin in 1830, where he was gazetted Lieutenant in 1831. From 1836 to 1839 he served in the West Indies before returning to England in 1840 where he was seconded for special duties with the Admiralty working at Pembroke, Chatham and Portsmouth dockyards. At Chatham he designed covered slipways and at Portsmouth was ADC to the dockyard Commander. During his period with the Admiralty he continued to increase in rank, being gazetted 2<sup>nd</sup> Captain in 1843 and Captain in 1846.

On returning to the Corps of Royal Engineers in May 1853, he spent the next two years back in Ireland before being promoted to Lt Colonel. Mould and his six daughters, (his wife Ann having died nine months before the family left,) arrived in New Zealand in 1855 where he took the post of Commanding Royal Engineer. Mould also had a son, 2nd Captain Frederick Mould RE, who served in New Zealand at the same time as his father.

In New Zealand Thomas Mould's work varied considerably. He designed the Upper Hutt blockhouse, built in 1860 to protect European settlers during the Wellington Wars, and planned the same type of struc-



**Matarikoriko Stockade**

From a drawing by Lt H S Bates (65th Regt)

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## COLONEL T R MOULD RE (cont)

ture at Blockhouse Bay in Auckland.

He also did work in connection with Albert Barracks in Auckland, where he was initially based. On 30 December 1857 he was appointed as Inspector of Public Works for the Province of Auckland. One proposed project that he reported on was the Provincial Council's desire to build a canal linking the Manukau and Waitemata harbours. His report was published in full by the newspaper, *New Zealander* on 7 March 1860. In it he relied heavily on the earlier report of Commander Drury RN, who mapped the whole coastline of New Zealand between 1850 and 1856. Drury had observed the considerable difference in high tide times between the two harbours. While this did not preclude a canal, it did raise many problems which led Mould to advise that *"he was not of the opinion that the canal project could be beneficially entertained."* The reserve for the canal was still there in 1957 when I helped plant trees on part of it.

Toward the end of 1860 Governor Gore Browne sent Mould to Taranaki, where the situation had become very volatile, to assist General Pratt. Here he was involved in the battle at Ma-hoetahi pa on 6 November 1860. In this Col Mould commanded one wing of a pincer movement (General Pratt led the other) and between them they were successful in taking the pa.

As he had married in 1830, his family must have been young adults when they arrived in New Zealand. At least one daughter was married in New Zealand. Harriett Rawlings Mould marrying Harry William Barber in Auckland, in February 1864

He was created a Companion of the Order of the Bath in 1862 and left New Zealand in 1866. In 1867 he was promoted to major general, retiring from the army in 1872. He died in London on 13 June 1886.

Ian Barton

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Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal\\_Corps\\_of\\_Signals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Corps_of_Signals)



**Colonel T R Mould RE**

(Richmond Album. National Library of New Zealand PA1-o-434)

Photograph dated 1870 but may have been taken just prior to his leaving New Zealand in 1866

### QUEEN'S REDOUBT EDUCATION CENTRE - OPENING TIMES

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**PURPOSE OF THE TRUST**

The Queen's Redoubt Trust was established in February 1999 with the intention of acquiring this nationally significant historic place and ensuring its protection; with the long term vision to restore and develop the site into a nationally recognised visitor attraction and education centre. In February 2001 the Trust completed the first major phase of the project, raising the funds to acquire the property in Pokeno which contains much of the site of the Queen's Redoubt.

**OBJECTIVES of the TRUST**

1. To acquire the Queen's Redoubt site at Pokeno to preserve it for future generations.
2. To make Queen's Redoubt accessible to the public by development and interpretation of the site as appropriate.
3. To restore the massive earthwork 'ditch and bank' walls of the fort (they were leveled after the war) as a key interpretive feature.
4. To promote education about the Queen's Redoubt and all the New Zealand Wars between Maori and European.
5. To establish a premier visitor and educational facility on the Queen's Redoubt site. This will be carried out in conjunction with an archaeological excavation programme to maximize knowledge of the site for future exhibition and interpretation purposes, and to promote public participation in the project. At the same time, historical research will continue into Queen's Redoubt itself, the Pokeno District, the Waikato Campaign of 1863-64 and the New Zealand Wars as a whole.



**Visiting group of senior Indian officers being hosted at Queen's Redoubt by the NZ  
Defence Force at the end of May 2023.**

They were led by Lt General Sukriti Singh Dahiya, an Engineer, and Commandant, of the National Defence College, India.  
(photograph by Peter Moy)

The Lt General is in the front row, five from the right, with his wife on his left.