



# DESPATCHES

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

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## SERIES ON BRITISH UNITS AT QUEEN'S REDOUBT

### 43<sup>rd</sup> REGIMENT (MONMOUTHSHIRE) LIGHT INFANTRY (The "Light Bobs") \*

The 43rd Regiment, along with the 68th (1864 – 66) which was not involved at Queen's Redoubt, spent the least amount of time in New Zealand; two years and five months from December 1863 until April 1866. The Regiment left for New Zealand in three groups, two from India and one from England, in October and November 1863. They were recombined in Auckland by early March 1864 and were posted at various places around South Auckland.

On 12 March, Lt Col Henry Booth with 150 men arrived at Queen's Redoubt, with Colonel Booth taking over command of the Redoubt from Lt Col Chapman of the 18th Regiment. **1** Private Tatlock, 43rd, arrived with his unit from England on 4 March and then spent a few days in tents at Albert Barracks, being issued with blue uniforms to replace their usual red ones and with water bottles and other field equipment. **2** They left on 9 March for Queen's Redoubt, marching, in stages, to the Redoubt, arriving on the 12th March, which means they were almost certainly part the detachment led by Colonel Booth. Tatlock was lucky though, for the next day he marched with the 100 strong "E" Company, the Surrey Redoubt while Booth and the others stayed at Queen's Redoubt until the end of April, **3** when they left for Tauranga and the battle at Gate Pa where Booth and many of his men were to lose their lives.

At Surrey, Tatlock records that they slept on a hill outside redoubt, wrapped in their "grey blankets with the blue sky as a canopy." It could not have been very comfortable and some of them rolled halfway down it during night. The next day they marched to Esk Redoubt and remained there for some time (probably until mid October) **4** . While at Esk they lived in huts inside the Redoubt, the timber of which was "sawn from the Kauri gum tree". Tatlock described this as the easiest station he had in the country. He engaged in several hunting expeditions for wild

bullocks and pigs and went on foraging expeditions of all kinds .

On 21st April a small party of the 43rd under Major Colville, **5** already in the Bay of Plenty, were ambushed while they were crossing the river by canoe near Fort Colville at Maketu. Providentially they escaped and Major Colville then led a party of 50 of the 43rd and 3rd Waikato Regt, to drive the enemy back. However, they were too firmly ensconced, requiring further troops from the 43rd, plus some Forest Rangers and friendly Arawa kupapa to deal with them. But because Colville's orders required him to stay close to the fort, the encounter became a long range sniping one, with 3 Privates of the 43rd and about 40 Maoris killed. On 27th April the Maori force attacked the fort in force. The HMS Falcon and the Colonial steamer "Sandfly" were sent from Tauranga and shelled the attacking Maori, forcing them to retreat along the coast toward Whakatane. In this action some 50 Maori were killed and nine taken prisoner. **6**

On the 23rd and 26th April 1864, a further two units, totalling 343 officers and men left Auckland for Tauranga with Colonel Booth commanding. With exception of units at Esk and Miranda, which included Private Tatlock, all of the 43rd Regiment was now in Tauranga. **7**

The British attack on Gate Pa commenced at daybreak on the 29th April with a massive bombardment, from both Royal Artillery and naval guns. **8** Included with the latter was a massive 110 pounder, rifled and breach loaded Armstrong, the only time a gun of this calibre used in New Zealand. **9**

Many of the men thought this gun was to be the trump card in the battle but, fired from a lower altitude than the Pa itself, many of the shells skipped across the top of the entrenchments and exploded harmlessly some 2000 yards to

the rear. The assault on the pa, made about 4pm, was shared between 150 men of the 43rd, led by Lt Col Booth and 150 men of the Naval Brigade led by Commander Hay (HMS Harrier). Hay and Booth shared command and led their men in column of four, two soldiers and two sailors abreast, through the breach made by the big guns. There were three other groups involved in the attack; the Moveable Column -to give covering fire for the assault, a combined reserve of 43rd Regiment and Naval Brigade -to follow the leading columns into the pa and the 68th Regiment - positioned at the rear of the pa to prevent defenders escaping out the back. **10**

But Cameron had miscalculated the impact of the bombardment, probably because many of the shells had overflown the target and the intricate design of the pa which allowed many of the defenders to remain safely within their bunkers. All they had to do was endure the shelling and wait for the attackers. When it came their counter-attack was a complete surprise to the British, throwing them into disarray and enabling the Maori defenders to repel them with relative ease. One other factor was important. The Maori, defending their own land, fought with great determination. **11**

Gate Pa was the first, conflict that the 43rd were engaged in, but their losses were relatively high; **12** the Regiment suffering 43% of the total officers and men killed or wounded. In fact, the 43rd lost more officers at Gate Pa than any single British regiment lost at Waterloo. **13** The navy suffered the bulk of the other losses (39%). **14** Fewer men of the 43rd took part in the battle of Te Ranga where five men , but no officers were killed.

The Company which had been split between Miranda and Esk redoubts (105 officers and men), returned to Queen's redoubt on the 28th October, leaving the next day for Otahuhu. An interesting aside to the time spent by

the 43rd at Miranda Redoubt was a fire that occurred there on the night of 4 October 1864. It broke out in a whare occupied by a detachment of the Colonial Defence Force, started by the negligence of Private Edward Hill of the CDF and sole occupant of the whare, who had not extinguished all fires and lights at "lights out" (8.45 pm). Of interest here is that Lt Cairns (43rd) was a member of the Court of Enquiry, held to investigate the fire, and one of the other 3 members was Ensign Perry, 2nd Waikato Regt; who signed himself Cranley L Perry (this is the same man who was Sergeant in Charge at the Pukekohe East Church). Lost in the fire were a carbine, two revolvers and 80 rounds of ammunition, plus many different types of army accoutrements. <sup>15</sup>

At the beginning of 1865 the various British regiments were scattered around the North Island with the 43rd deployed around Taranaki. By late April 1865 a redoubt, 101 x 94 feet, had been built at Warea on the coast on the north side of the Warea stream. Outside the redoubt, stables and a commissariat store were erected. Inland from the redoubt, at 100 and 250 yards distance, were two rock outcrops which served as lookout points for piquet's during the day. While based in this area food was cooked in the "camp kettle" and consisted of meat, bread or biscuit, with tea, coffee sugar, salt and pepper. Rum was also issued twice daily, ¼ pint at midday and the same at 5 pm. During summer the men wore a blue serge tunic and serge trousers with a flannel shirt. During winter cloth trousers were worn. They also had greatcoats. They slept in tents, on frequently changed fern or rushes, with three blankets and a waterproof sheet. <sup>16</sup>

Detachments were also based at Ta-tairamaka and Stoney River and all three were involved in several minor actions against the Hau Hau, without loss. Except for Warea, where in two separate actions, in late July and in October several men were killed or wounded, including Brevet Lt Col Colville, Captain Close, Sgt Clifford, Privates Pratt and Holohan. <sup>17</sup> The first of these involved a party of 50 men under Captain Close, who encountered a party of 50 - 60 natives who skirmished toward the troops, firing a heavy volley which killed or wounded at least four men, including Captain Close. Reinforcements from the camp arrived about 2pm forcing the Maori party to withdraw into the bush.

On 22 October 1865 Colonel Colville led a party of 90 men from Warea inland for about 3 miles. Here, at the site of an old pa they set an ambush. He sent Captain Mace with a group of mounted orderlies forward to locate the Maori forces and lure them back to the ambush. <sup>18</sup> The ruse was successful but the enemy forces made a determined stand in the dense bush and several British, including Col Colville were killed or severely wounded.

In February 1866 the 43rd were involved in the destruction of three Hauhau villages, including any crops they had growing. This was part of General Chute's 'scorched earth' approach to defeating the Hauhau.

These were the last offensive actions in which the 43rd were engaged, for on 19th February orders were received for the regiment to re-assemble in Auckland in preparation for their return to England and on 28 April 1866 the Regiment left Auckland for London.

Ian Barton

### A NEW BOOK ABOUT "QUEEN'S REDOUBT and the INVASION OF THE WAIKATO"

The Chairman (Neville Ritchie) and Secretary (Ian Barton), have spent the last year doing research and writing this book. It contains detailed background information, including a lot of new material and illustrations, about Queen's Redoubt and the invasion of the Waikato.

The book has chapters about the building of the Great South Road, the Redoubt itself, all of the related redoubts and other associated places like Port Waikato. It also covers the early history of Pokeno (pre Helenslee settlers), the pre European kainga in the area, British regiments which were associated with the redoubt, the soldiers cemetery and details of life and how soldiers lived in the 1860's.

It is being published by Atuanui Press (Mangatangi) as a hard-backed book and is expected to be available by the end of the year. Further details, including price, will be published in the December newsletter.

## References

\* Short red coats and jackets were adopted by the 43<sup>rd</sup> and on campaign, light infantrymen usually wore their hair close-cropped. The unusual spectacle of curtailed uniforms and short hair soon led to the appropriate appellation of "Light Bob" for this new brand of British fighting man.

1. Daily Southern Cross 13/3/1864

2. Extracts from Diary of Private Tatlock, National Army Museum, London. Ref 1996-09-78. Photocopy in Queen's Redoubt collection (QR accession no. 2014.22). 6 pgs.

3. Daily Southern Cross 26/4/1864

4. Tatlock diary

5. Spelt with one l. See Hart, 1869 p. 304

6. Levinge R G A 1868. Historical Records of the Forty third Regiment. p 281 -288

7. Daily Southern Cross 26/4/1864

8. Mikaere B & Simons C, Victory at Gate Pā? The Battle of Pukehinahina-Gate Pā: 1864. 2018. p 99

9. Fairfax D. Hobbling to the front - the Royal Navy in the Waikato and Tauranga campaigns 1863 -64. In Tutu te Puehu, Eds Crawford J & McGibbon I, 2018. P 198. This gun was a pivot gun and must have come from HMS Esk

10. Ibid, p 100-101

11. Ibid, p 103

12. Ibid Levinge p 286. 7 officers were killed and 2 wounded. 13 men killed and 27 wounded.

13. Ibid Eds Crawford J & McGibbon I. Beckett I F W pg 471

14. Stowers R, Blue Devils 2010 p 27

15. Archives N Z, R24495435. Report on Miranda Redoubt fire

16. Grant R A P in 43rd & 52nd Light Infantry Chronicle, 1892 p 156-58

17. Gibson T 1974 The Maori Wars, p 153, 154

18. Captain F J Mace was a colonial officer who joined the Taranaki Mounted Rifles in 1860. His unit consisted of mounted orderlies (Despatch riders) and were variously described as Mounted Volunteers, Taranaki Cavalry or Taranaki Mounted Volunteers. Mace emerged as one of the most courageous and gallant figures of the Taranaki Wars. He was awarded the NZ Cross for some of his actions during this period.

## EDUCATION CENTRE

### OPENING TIMES

Every Sunday 10 am until 2 pm.

OR by arrangement

Telephone Ian Barton 09  
239 2049



## Friends of Queen's Redoubt

Early in 2013 the Trust resolved to formally set up a group to be known as the "Friends of Queen's Redoubt". A membership database has been set up and anyone with an interest in the work of the Trust is invited to join.

Current membership fees are \$25 for individuals, \$35 for families, \$40 for Historical organizations and \$60 for Commercial organizations; all inclusive of GST.

Please post a completed application form with a cheque or deposit the amount in our bank account:- **12 3022 0397102 00** with your Surname as reference. Note that, from the middle of this year, the use of cheques will no longer be possible.

**I Barton, Queen's Redoubt Trust**  
**P O Box 26**  
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### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Given Name:

Surname:

Address:

Telephone:

Email address

#### Membership Category:

Individual \$25

Family \$35

Historic  
Organization \$40

Commercial  
Organization \$60

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### TREATMENT OF BRITISH WOUNDED AT GATE PA [PUKE-HINAHINA]

During the early stages of the conflicts between Maori and Pakeha, Maori tended to treat British dead and wounded with respect. This was perhaps most evident in the conflict at Gate Pa. Prior to the conflict, the senior Chief at Puke-hinahina - Rawiri Puheraki and other chiefs, including Henare Taratoa, drew up a code of conduct under which the Maori forces were told not to molest non-combatants, to treat prisoners with kindness and to respect the dead. **1** This did not become apparent until after the Maori defeat at Te Ranga when a copy of these rules were found on the body of Taratoa. Because of this code Heni te Kiri-Karamu, who had already fought against the British in the Hunua Ranges and was probably the only female in the besieged pa, heard the cries of the wounded after the attack and responded. Taking a nail can full of water from their trench, she carried it to a mortally wounded officer, who was one of those crying out, and gave him water to drink. She then did the same for three other wounded soldiers nearby. **2,**

Although I believe that Heni has the best claim to this act of mercy, the fact that it has also been attributed to others suggests that, during the night after the battle, several different Maori gave water to the wounded British. **3**

1. Cowan J. The NZ Wars and the Pioneering period. Vol 1. 1922 pp 412 & 427

2. Cowan J. Ibid, p 421. She had told Cowan of this when he interviewed her while researching his book. She also told Cowan that in 1867, when she and her second husband, James Foley, kept the Travellers' Rest hotel at Makatu, Colonel St John came one day and thanked her for giving his friend Col. Booth water at Gate Pa. This was when she first learnt the identity of the officer to whom she had given water.

3. Cowan also noted that this action had wrongly been attributed to a man called Te Ipu, and Bishop Selwyn, thought it was Henare Taratoa, because the rules had been found on his body. There is also unverified information that other Maori had given water to the wounded.



**Heni te Kiri Karamu –about 1868 when she was living at Maketu**

NOTE: Heni was the daughter of Arawa chieftainess Maraea and James Kelly, an Irish sea Captain. She was born at Kaitia in 1840.

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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.

## ARCHAEOLOGY

During the course of the monthly working bee, in February 2021, several stones were observed protruding through the turf inside the redoubt. They were visible because of the 'summer drought' and the area having been mown for hay resulting in very short grass length. As some of the stones appeared to form a line or edge, a decision was made to remove the overlying turf over a small area and expose the stones to ascertain what they represented. During the March working bee a small area was deturfed and the soil over the stones brushed off to reveal an 8 foot wide 'roadway' composed of chunky pieces of angular basaltic rock, possibly quarried from the military quarry on George Austin's farm about 3km from the redoubt. (George Austin made a claim to the Compensation Court in April 1865 for £535 for 40 chains of two railed fencing, timber cut and the quarrying of rock used by the Army at Queen's Redoubt.) Probing revealed the stones extended for at least 30m in a direct line between the east and west entrances to the redoubt;

in effect the roadway divides the redoubt in two halves, and was almost certainly the main wagon and cart access track. The surface of the roadway is quite uneven; there is a

possibility that soil was dumped over the rock to create a smoother but still hardened surface. The exposed area will be left open and fenced off as an interpretive feature.

## Exposed section of the newly discovered 'roadway' inside Queen's Redoubt

