



# DESPATCHES

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

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## SERIES ON BRITISH UNITS AT QUEEN'S REDOUBT

### 57<sup>TH</sup> (WEST MIDDLESEX) REGIMENT OF FOOT (THE DIEHARDS)

The "Diehards" served in New Zealand from 14 January 1861 until 10 Apr 1867. Along with the 65th, they probably saw the hardest fighting of any British regiment involved in the NZ Wars. But, unlike most regiments they did most of their fighting in Taranaki, only towards the end being involved with garrison duties in the Waikato and Auckland areas. During this latter period detachments did duty at the Bluff Stockade and Port Waikato, and the regiment holds the distinction of being the last to man Queen's Redoubt.

The 57th left India for New Zealand in two groups, the Right Wing on the "Star Queen" departed Bombay on 22 November 1861, arriving in Taranaki on the 23 January 1862. The left Wing left Bombay 4 days later on the "Castilion" arriving in Auckland on the 21st January, the next day leaving from Onehunga for Taranaki. Once in Taranaki, where a mixed force of British and colonial forces had already been beaten at Puketakauere in June 1860, they engaged with the Maori forces at Te Arei on 19 March 1861.

At the end of the First Taranaki war, all regiments, except the 57th -who remained on garrison duties, left Taranaki and returned to Auckland. The truce was not to hold however and on 4 May 1863 the first shots of the Second Taranaki war were fired when a group of Maori set an ambush on the coast near Oakura, apparently hoping to ambush Governor Grey and his party who were expected to pass that day. The Governor did not pass but a detachment of the 57th, led by Lt Tragett, did. All but one of the detachment of 9, including the prisoner they were escorting to New Plymouth, were killed. The man who escaped was Private Kelly who, although wounded, ran to St Patrick's redoubt at Omata, about 6 km away, and gave the alarm.

In May 1863, the Maori had built a rudimentary pa, consisting of trenches and

rifle pits but without any palisading or parapets, near the mouth of the Katikara stream. This was shelled by HMS Eclipse, anchored off the river mouth about 2 km from the pa and by an Armstrong battery about one km away. After the bombardment, the 57th successfully attacked with a bayonet charge and drove the Maori defenders inland. According to Sergeant Major Bezar, who was present, the 57th lost 3 men, the Maori defenders about 40.

On 2 October 1863 the Maori forces made a concerted attack on St Patrick's redoubt near Omata south of New Plymouth, and were beaten back with some difficulty. It was here that Ensign John Downs and Drummer Dudley Stagpool won the VC for rescuing a wounded comrade. They succeeded in bringing in the wounded man, who was lying about fifty yards from the bush, although the enemy kept up a very heavy fire from the bush at short range, and closer to hand from behind fallen logs. The man had been wounded during the engagement, and Ensign Downs with Drummer Stagpoole responded to the call of the Officer commanding the detachment of the Regiment for volunteers to bring him in.

Toward the end of 1863, Maori forces erected a strong position at Kaitaki on a north west spur of the Patua Range, about 5 km from the coast and 12 km SW of New Plymouth. Cowan described it as a well planned stronghold, well situated for defence and with skilfully arranged rifle pits covering the direct approaches. Col Warre of the 57th, shelled the pa in December 1863, but was unable to take the position because the party he sent to take the rear of the pa got entangled in thick supplejack and were unable to make contact.

The final attack was deferred until the 25th March 1864, when a force comprising the 57th, 70th and local militia plus an artillery unit of four guns, moved to within



**Ensign John Thornton Down VC**

1400 metres of the outer rifle pits. After shelling the rifle pits and forcing the Maori forces back into the pa. The militia attacked the pa driving the defenders still further back. When the defenders saw both their flanks turned, they retired through the bush at the rear. Although the settlers rejoiced at this conclusion, it was a little premature, as a Maori ambush two days later saw one soldier killed and another wounded.

In April 1864, Captain Lloyd, with a small party was engaged in a skirmish with a group of Hau Hau and Lloyd was killed. This was one of the earliest times the Hau Hau were involved in the conflict, and their subsequent action of removing Lloyd's head and parading it around the country did much to rally Maori to its cause. This turned the new religion, Pai Marire, which means "good and gentle", into the fanaticism of Hau Hau. One of the consequences of this was revealed in the Hau Hau attack on the detachment

of the 57th, commanded by Captain Shortt at a small redoubt, Sentry Hill, north of New Plymouth. Here the attackers charged the works shouting "hau hau", which they had been told would give them immunity to bullets. Unfortunately for them it did not work and about 50 were killed. One of the attackers Titokowaru, who was to play a major role later in the conflict, lost an eye in this skirmish.

The last action with which the 57th were involved was the capture of Otapawa Pa, about 10 km SE of Hawera. This was a permanent pa, located on a headland above the Tangahoe River and was regarded as impregnable. On 13 January 1866 the 57th and the 14th, reinforced by the Forest Rangers and the Native Contingent, attacked. They were supported by the R.A. with three Armstrong guns. From the description given, the attack must have been made from the west side, across a relatively level, open field; the 57th attacking the north corner of the pa and the 14th the south. Lt Col Hassard, leading the 57th wheeled left with some of his men to drive the defenders from the bush outside the pa, then turning and advancing into the pa, where he was mortally wounded. The Maori fought desperately and well but, when Private R Doakes cut down a portion of the palisade, permitting access by the troops, they broke and fled down a steep bush clad gully to the river Tangahoe.

During their time in Taranaki the regiments casualties were 4 officers; Lt Col J Hassard, Captain T W Lloyd, Dr W A Hope and Lt T R Tragett plus 24 NCO's and men killed or died of wounds and 3 officers and 51 men wounded. Amongst the Privates killed was Robert Doakes who, according to Warre, would have been awarded the VC, had he lived

After Otapawa the bulk of the 57th were moved to Whanganui and in April 1866 embarked for Auckland to do garrison duty in the Waikato. On arrival in Auckland the HQ company and four companies marched to Te Awamutu; with the other five companies based at other sites in the Waikato -one at Queen's Redoubt, with sections at the Bluff Stockade and Port Waikato.

In March and April 1866 the regiment departed for England.

Ian Barton

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## CHAPLAIN'S LETTERS

Five letters, held in the National Library of New Zealand collection, give us a previously unknown glimpse of the operation of the Hospital at Queen's Redoubt, immediately following the battle at Rangiriri in late November 1863. They were written by the Reverend John Frederick Lloyd to his wife Sarah in Auckland between 25 November and 9 December. Chaplains had been part of the British army since the 1796 but there is no record of any having come to New Zealand with the army. <sup>1</sup> If none did, it is very likely that local clergy stepped up to take their place. At least two Anglican clergy were present at the Redoubt after the battle, Rev Lloyd (Vicar of St Pauls in Auckland) and Bishop Selwyn. (3 Dec) There may also have been clergy from the other denominations, especially Catholic and Presbyterian.

While Lloyd writes mainly about the wounded officers, he also refers to non-commissioned ranks and includes some quite poignant comments about some of them. He does not go into great detail about his duties, but they seemed to involve talking to and encouraging the patients, hearing prayers every day in each ward and reading portions of scripture. He also spent some time encouraging them and telling them how pleased he was with how they were progressing. Sarah was also involved as, on several occasions, he asked her to pass messages to family members of the wounded men.

It is from Lloyd's letters that we get the best accounts of the work of the hospital. He comments twice on the use of chloroform (Nov 25 & Dec 9), which had been in use to sedate people since the Crimean War. One of the commonest injuries at Rangiriri was to the shoulder and upper arm and he describes the usual treatment for shoulder wounds as follows: -  
*One poor fellow yesterday had about 2 inches of the head of the bone of his arm taken clean out & another poor fellow had the same operation performed today, they both bore it remarkably well, of course they were under chloroform. Another poor fellow, a Swede,<sup>2</sup> a very nice fellow who is in the 40<sup>th</sup>, I think,*

*will have the same operation performed tomorrow. I feel many men have been wounded in the shoulder." (9 Dec)*

One patient, mentioned several times by Lloyd, and for whom he had a great deal of sympathy, was Ensign Ducrow of the 40<sup>th</sup> Regt. In his first letter (25 Nov) he says that *"Poor young Ducrow is also I fear dangerously ill. He is very feverish and it is doubtful if he shall recover."* The next day (26 Nov) Lloyd wrote *"Poor young Ducrow is somewhat better, not there is I fear any hope of saving his leg."* In the next letter (3 Dec) we read, *"Poor Ducrow has been operated on at last. The leg was taken off today at 12 o'clock. The amputation was made half way between the hip and the knee of the left leg. The bone of the knee & that above it was found very much shattered so that nothing could have saved his life if his leg had not been amputated. He is now as might be expected very weak & exhausted."* The next day (4 Dec) Lloyd told his wife that, *"Ducrow is very weak and low but that was to be expected after the operation. It seems very sad, poor young fellow, but I hope in a good state of mind."* In his last letter he did not mention Ducrow but an article in the DSC (12/12/63) said that he was alive on the 12<sup>th</sup>, and *"much improved"*. Unfortunately, he did not recover and died at 10.45 am on the 23 December, after being in Queen's Redoubt hospital for over a month. Andrew Ducrow had joined the 40<sup>th</sup> as an Ensign on 15 January, 1861. He was probably quite young and would only have been 21 or 22 at his death.

In his second letter (26 Nov) Lloyd remarks that the hospital had six wards for the wounded men. It is probable that the officers and men were housed in different wards and that the six wards were possibly tents, pitched outside the redoubt. <sup>3</sup>

In that letter he also wrote that, *"The wounded men are ... all doing well with one or two exceptions. Their contented & even cheerful demeanour under their sufferings is quite remarkable. I have never seen anything like it before. I have not heard a murmur or anything approaching to a murmur since I came here"*. In a later letter (4 Dec) he commented, *"There is a poor fellow of the 40<sup>th</sup>, named Roberts, a nice countenanced, gentle fellow who was wounded in the back, who I am afraid will not last many days. The expression of his face is very touching but I trust, poor fellow, he may benefit by the change. With the exception of him and about two or three others, all the men are doing well. One man named Scales, who we thought was dying, seems to be rallying & he may yet live. He is also a nice, gentle, pleasant countenanced man."* <sup>4</sup>

A problem for the wounded men was that the Purveyors Department of the army could apparently not see past the provision of basic food requirements,

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# 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**  
+ Your Surname

**I Barton, 40 Isabella Drive, Pukekohe 2120**

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Given Name:

Surname:

Address:

Telephone:

Email address

### Membership Category:

Individual \$25

Family \$35

Historic Organization \$40

Commercial Organization \$60





## Chaplain's letters (cont)

when those in hospital would have benefited from the occasional luxury.

Lloyd was particularly annoyed with the head of the Army Purveyors Department, H de Burgh Adams, *"because that for nine days they were suffering from the burning thirst that always accompanies musket wounds & while the town was overflowing with oranges there was not one here all that time. Dr Mouat has since told me that the day after the battle, foreseeing the need of some succulent fruit he telegraphed to de Burgh Adams asking that a supply be sent forthwith (Dec 3); but it was not until Governor Grey stepped in that oranges began to appear. Other civilians were not so slow on the uptake as, "Some kind friend of Capt Gresson's,(65<sup>th</sup>) he does not know who, sent him some strawberries from Auckland that he got today."* (Dec 4).

The most senior officer to be wounded at Rangiriri was Lt Col Charles Austen of the 14<sup>th</sup> regiment, who was badly wounded in the groin, although Lloyd reports that it was not supposed to be dangerous (25 Nov). The next day he was reported to be doing well but in his letter of 9 Dec he told Sarah that he had died. Rev Lloyd wrote to Col Austen's family, his letter being forwarded to the family by Sir Geo Grey.

In 1863, although surgeons were well aware of the need for cleanliness in hospital activities, the NZ Wars were the last fought by the British before antiseptics were discovered and Lister's finding that sepsis was the cause of much loss of life from wounds. However, Condy's disinfectant was widely used and both medical officers and orderlies washed their hands frequently. However, it is likely that sepsis was the major cause of the death, from wounds, of men like Austen and

Ducrow. Another wounded officer, Captain Mercer of the RA, who was badly wounded in the tongue and jaw, probably also died of complications from sepsis.

While John Lloyd never seemed to have harsh words to say of the military, he did make one critical comment which showed he was not particularly enamoured by General Cameron's conduct of the British attack on Rangiriri. The following comment was a postscript to his letter of 3 December; *"I am sorry to hear that there is a likelihood of more fighting. I hope the General will not be as prodigal of the lives of his soldiers as he was at Rangiriri, where he wantonly threw them away."* He may well have been echoing the thoughts of the wounded in the Queen's Redoubt hospital, with whom he had spent so much time!

Ian Barton

### FOOTNOTES:

1. Previously army chaplains had been part of individual regiments .
2. Possibly Corporal N Holmberg 40<sup>th</sup> Regt?
3. The only evidence for this is that, during a dysentery epidemic in April 1864, there were 150 men in hospital and they had to erect 20 marquees outside the redoubt to accommodate the overflow.
4. Roberts and Scales both died in the Queen's Redoubt hospital and are buried in the soldier's cemetery at Helenslee Road.

## QUEEN'S REDOUBT UPDATE

Quite a few changes have occurred at the Redoubt over the past eight months. Just before Christmas, the team from Snapper Graphics installed the last displays, apart from one which will explain the perspective of the local iwi, Ngati Tamaoho. More work has to be done on this and funding has to be sought. The new displays include the facility for showing videos, and one on the invasion of the Waikato is already playing. There are also two interactive ipads which contain most of the material on display, often in more detail.

The whole programme has been thrown into disarray, as have many aspects of all our lives, by the Covid 19 epidemic. Earlier in the year we had begun to let schools know about the availability of the Visitor Centre for class visits, but this was halted during the lockdown. The Visitor centre was closed to the public at the end of April and did not open again until Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June. However, schools have already begun making enquiries and there is a potential visit booked in for the end of July.

Another setback has been the enforced absence of our Chairman, Neville Ritchie who in January went to Taiwan for three months to complete some work and has not yet been able to return.

One positive effect of the lockdown has been the editor's chance to write more material for the book about Queen's Redoubt that he and Neville are working on. A possible publisher for this, Atuanui Press, has been found but finalisation of the project awaits Neville's return and the securing of a grant to cover printing costs.

Writing material for this book has meant digging much deeper into the history of the war in South Auckland / North Waikato than has previously been done. This has brought much more information to light. The book promises to be a useful addition to the history of the area at this time.

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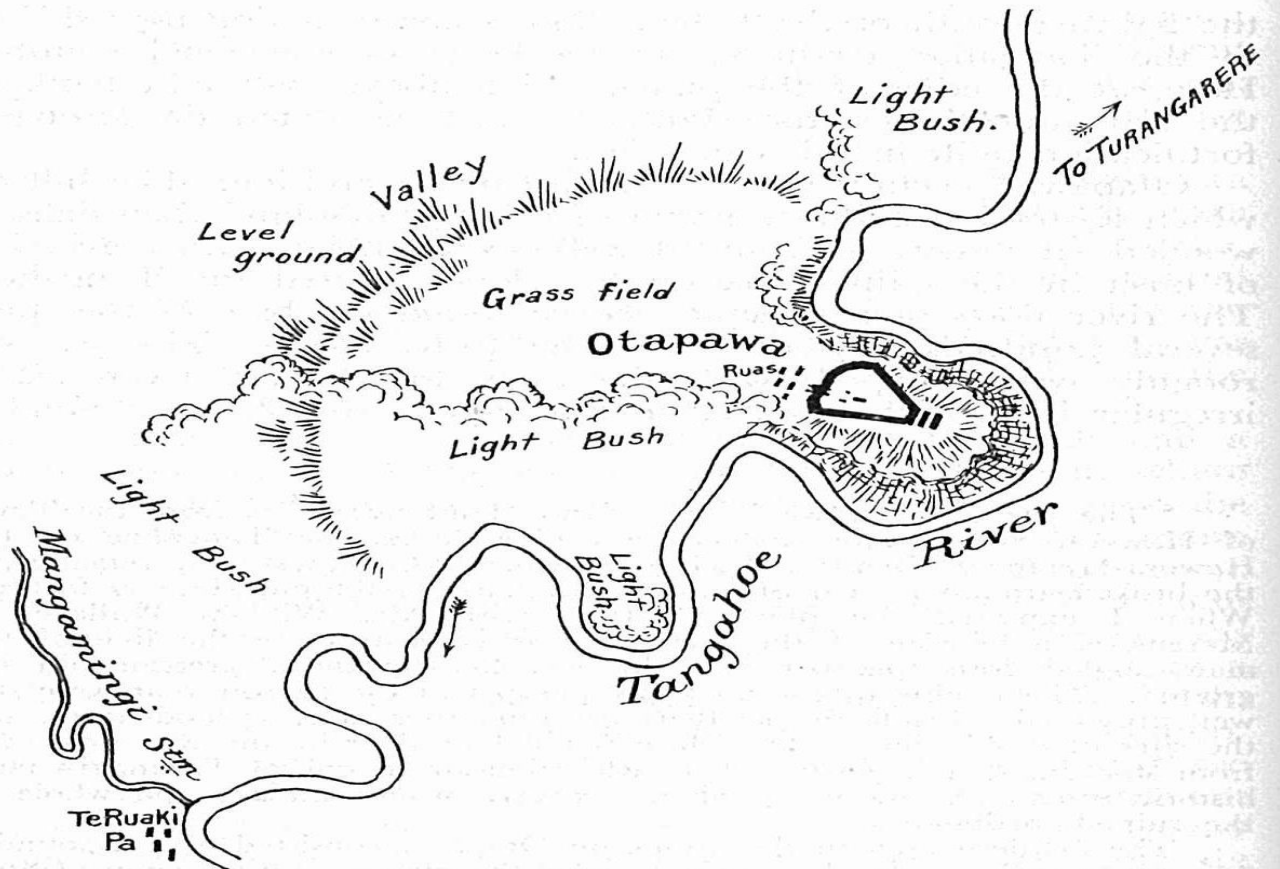
**Email.** ibtrees81@gmail.com

## 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.



*J. C., sketch-plan, 1918]*

Otapawa Pa, South Taranaki

## OPENING TIMES

Every Sunday 10 am until 2 pm.

OR by arrangement

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The above sketch was made by James Cowan in 1918, and appears in Volume 2 of his "New Zealand Wars and the Pioneering period". The 57th and 14th Regiments would have attacked the Pa from the west. (right hand side)

The formal opening of the Visitor Centre will not be held until all the displays are in place. Because we still have to complete the Ngati Tamaoho's section of the work, it is anticipated that this will not be until 2021. You will be advised when more information is available.