



# Hauraki News

“Whaka tangata kia kaha”

November 2018 Issue No 91

Official Newsletter of the 6th Battalion (Hauraki) Regimental Association Incorporated

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Registered with the Charities Services # CC35879

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<http://www.facebook.com/pages/6th-Hauraki-Association/230175227024470>

[tauranga.kete.net.nz/remembering War](http://tauranga.kete.net.nz/remembering-war)

**To review Hauraki News prior to 2008**

<http://tauranga.kete.net.nz/remembering-war/topics/show/1287>

## President's Report

I wish to thank the regular contributors to the Hauraki News; Russell Skeet & Gavin Marriott. Without those two, the Hauraki News would not be an interesting read. I marvel at their knowledge of the military & in particular things “Hauraki”.

Facebook has become an essential part of the reference the Editor uses to produce the Hauraki News. Facebook; 2020 ANZAC 6 Hauraki, Tauranga City Council, Tauranga Army Cadets, Tubby Tankman, John Dick & Red Diamond Club are the most common accessed. However, the most prolific Facebook is the one that uses the phrase, “ comments on a post you're tagged in”. It definitely has the ability to attract your attention.

In reference to the 6th Hauraki Association Facebook, it has not been used to its full potential by the Editor. There has been a number of Administrators whom have assisted over the period, but have for personnel reasons had to discontinue their services. The President, thanks them for their voluntary service over the years. It now comes down to the President & the Treasurer/Secretary to pick up the mantel. As John Dick told me a number years ago, “ Get into the modern world! Facebook is the way to communicate”.

Those of you who are on my data base you would have received a message regarding the Change of Commanding Officer, 3/6 Battalion RNZIR on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2018. I will write articles about that event in the February 2019 edition of the Hauraki News. I have the privilege of representing the 6<sup>th</sup> Hauraki Association, along with others, at the parade.

Your Association has been part of WW100 Tauranga over the past four years. It has been a great experience. We alternated meetings between the Mount Maunganui RSA & the 6<sup>th</sup> Hauraki Association. We gained new friends and renewed friendships of people we had already known. You would have seen many events either in person, or displayed in the Hauraki News. Throughout New Zealand, in the Cities & the Regions the events were displayed by volunteers just like us. The Centenary Armistice Day was our final event.

As President, I attend a number of parades & events over the year, on your behalf. At one of the services, it was mentioned about the Veterans Advisory Board has the task of **“Who should be**

**considered a veteran in New Zealand**". As members or former members of a Territorial / Reserve Unit; it would be of great interest to gain your views. Reply using all means of communication, email, Facebook, text or handwritten correspondence. Does the 6<sup>th</sup> Hauraki Association make a submission? Submissions close in March 2019.

The Association is in good heart, as shown by the numbers of members who have volunteered to be on the Committee and Area Representatives. Without these volunteers the 6<sup>th</sup> Hauraki Association we would cease to exist. The President thanks you all. Remember if you turn up to the monthly meeting, then you can join in with the decisions of 6<sup>th</sup> Hauraki Association; plus be part of a "PMC shout". You can also communicate your ideas to the Secretary, without attending the meeting. However, she cannot give you a "PMC Shout"

Kia Kaha

Des Anderson

## CENTENARY ARMISTICE DAY 11<sup>th</sup> November 2018

### Centenary Armistice Day Address, Tauranga, 11 November 2018

Lieutenant Colonel Cliff Simons, RNZAEC, PhD



Tēnā koutou katoa. Good morning to all of you on this very historic day, a day when one hundred years ago, the guns in the great war with Germany finally fell silent. Today is a day for mixed emotions just as it was one hundred years ago. When the Armistice was announced there was a tremendous outpouring of relief, celebration and patriotism right across the country and in many parts of the world. But underlying that there was a deep and crushing grief for lost sons, husbands, fathers, brothers, daughters, wives, friends and relatives; the 18,000 killed and 41,000 New Zealanders wounded in The First **World War**.

When New Zealand entered the war on 5 August 1914, there was a patriotic enthusiasm and many welcomed the prospect of war for king and empire. We might find that naive today, but it was firmly held at the time. Over the next few days there was a clamour to enlist for the 'great adventure'. Very few foresaw what this war would really be like. Ten weeks later, eight and a half thousand men who had received only rudimentary training, departed our shores along with 4,000

horses. The 'main body', as this first group was known, didn't know where they were going- possibly England, possibly France, but after months in Egypt they were keen to see action before the war was over. In April 1915 they received orders to sail for a most obscure place- Gallipoli. We know that story; the chaos, the bravery and sacrifice, the sheer resilience of the men. What an appalling shock it was for the country when news about the disaster and the deaths at Gallipoli started coming in. By the time the Allies evacuated the week before Christmas 1915, 2,800 New Zealanders had lost their lives.

Back in Egypt the Kiwis recovered and re-organised. Many returned home carrying terrible physical and psychological scars. There were already many reinforcements waiting and training in Egypt and two new units were established; the New Zealand Division and the New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade. In March 1916 the Division sailed for France and made its way to the Western Front where Germany and the Allies had been locked in an 18-month deadly stalemate, and the Mounted Rifles Brigade embarked on the Palestine Campaign.

Our division was one of the strongest on the Western Front and it gained a reputation for courage, resilience and initiative. It was involved in many battles, and some such as The Somme, Messines and Passchendaele have become seared into our nation's memory. These were battles on an industrial scale and the suffering, massive casualties and apparent senselessness of it all still astounds us today.

Back home in New Zealand, people kept the country running as well as they could; on the farms, in shops, factories, schools...an attempt at normal life. They wrote to their loved ones who were so very, very far away, read and re-read letters and postcards, hoped and prayed, knitting socks and scarves, raised funds, baked biscuits, grew food, sent care parcels, consoled the grieving and scanned the newspaper Rolls of Honour for the dreaded news; 'killed in action', 'missing believed killed', 'died of wounds', or feared a knock on the door by a delivery boy with a telegram. And when the worst news did come there wasn't a body to grieve over, no-one to hold one last time, no-one to bury and no grave to visit and no understanding of how they died. That's why the public memorials that were erected in each town, like our domain gates, were so important, they are the graves and the headstones for those families.

By 1918 all sides were exhausted. Germany made a final push to break through the Allied lines and was pushed back. It lost the submarine war in the North Atlantic and its land defences began to give way. In the last months the New Zealand Division distinguished itself and liberated dozens of French towns and villages, including the famous Les Quesnoy a week before the Armistice. There were three armistices before the one with Germany. Bulgaria, the Ottoman Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire each gave up separately. Each time crowds took to the streets in New Zealand, marched, sang, made speeches and put up flags and bunting. By early November it was becoming clear that Germany would surrender soon too, and a false newspaper report sent people streaming onto the streets on the 8th of November. Finally, the Armistice was signed on (those famous words) the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11-month, Paris time, and because of the time difference it was nearly midnight when the news reached New Zealand. So, it was the following day that the country woke up to the wonderful news.

And it was a day of amazing celebration. People in communities all over the nation streamed onto the streets and one reporter described the sound as a 'roaring chorus'; horns, whistles, cannon fire, sirens, empty kerosene tins- anything that made a noise. There were speeches, parades, marching bands, union jacks, patriotic songs, torchlight parades, bonfires, and the burning of effigies of the Kaiser. Such wild scenes of euphoria, such jubilation, such relief, it was over, and by the way, we had won; it was seen by many as a triumph of our values. But some couldn't celebrate. As one man put it, 'there were many who simply could not rejoice, and who were beneath a dark cloud of sorrow, mourning for their departed loved ones.'

On the Western Front the news of the Armistice was received with an overwhelming sense of relief. Herbert Hart wrote, 'so it is over, thank God for that, there was no jubilation and no excitement, each one asked himself and the others, now, how soon can I get home?'

In New Zealand there was a realisation that the men weren't home yet, the world was a very unstable place, lots of things could still go wrong. And one of those was the global flu pandemic that was sweeping the world and that eventually took 50 million lives. It killed 9,000 New Zealanders between the months of October and December 1918, just when we should have been

celebrating the end of the war. In fact, it was so bad that Auckland banned Armistice Day celebrations altogether on 12 November, because the disease was spreading so quickly. Tauranga was just a small place at the time with a population of about 1700 people in the town and 4,000 in the county. 109 of our soldiers died and we are commemorating each one of them here today. When news of the Armistice broke in Tauranga the fire station bell rang out and people quickly congregated near the Town Hall and a procession formed and marched through the town at 11 o'clock in the morning. A combined thanksgiving service was held in the Domain that evening, and a large bonfire on Mauao Mt Maunganui was lit, but a gala for children the following day saw many unable to attend through fear of the flu pandemic.

World War One cast a long shadow over our country. Many women were widowed or lost their sweethearts, and many of the men who returned home with terrible physical and psychological injuries could not resume normal work or normal family life. There was widespread depression, alcoholism, lingering illness and early death. The loss of so many men aged in their 20s and 30s affected the society, the workforce and the economy for decades.

But the country started to reassess its place in the world. Never again would Great Britain declare war on our behalf, and never again would we send men and women away to war without our government having a veto over where and how they were deployed. New Zealand began to make the first tentative steps (such as supporting the establishment of the League of Nations) that would eventually lead to it becoming a sovereign nation with its own distinctive point of view.

So, let us honour our remarkable forbears, our tīpuna today; those who fought in the Great War, those who died and those who suffered damaged lives, and those whose grief stayed with them throughout their lives. The war affected every family, and the people who took to the streets to celebrate the Armistice had seen what war could do, and now they hoped for lasting peace- **'the war to end all wars'**- which sadly it was not to be.

One hundred years later, on this memorable day in this jewel of a city, in our peaceful and prosperous land, let us try to understand their lives and be grateful for ours, and let us continue by our actions and by our words to work for peace and harmony for **all people**; peace in our homes and communities, peace in our nation, and peace in the world.

Lest we forget.

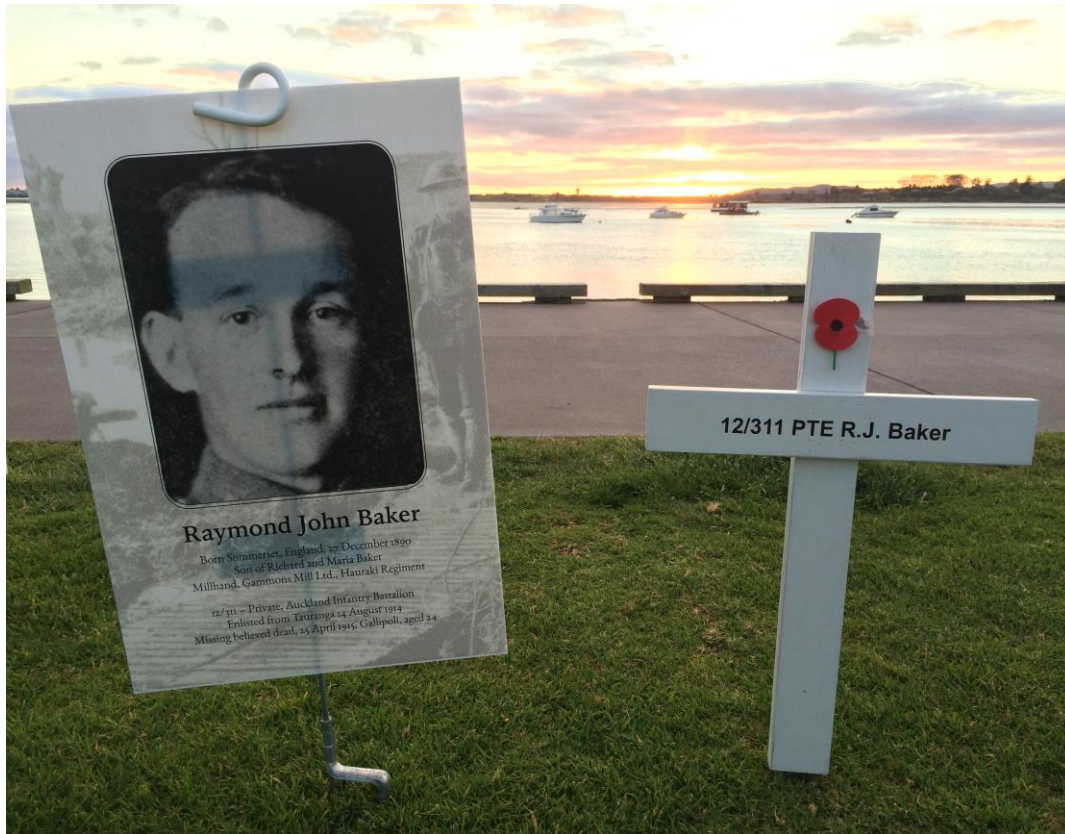


Every morning the Navy Cadets, Army Cadets & Airforce Cadets placed three crosses of the one hundred and twenty soldiers that were killed in action; who had come from Tauranga. The first three soldiers are highlighted below.

After completion, the crosses were moved to Memorial Park in preparation for Armistise Day.



## Raymond John Baker (1890-1915)



Raymond John Baker (Private 12/311) enlisted at Tauranga on 14 August 1914. He was reported missing, believed dead, on 25 April 1915 at the Dardanelles, Gallipoli. Researched and written by Debbie McCauley.

Raymond John Baker was born in Chedzoy, Somerset, England on 27 December 1890 to Richard and Maria Baker. They later lived at 'Hill View' in Otorohanga, Hamilton.

Raymond worked as a millhand at Gamman's Mill at Omanawa Falls in Tauranga.

On 14 August 1914 he enlisted in Tauranga for World War I. At the time of enlistment, he was already part of the Hauraki Regiment (D Company), having already registered for compulsory military training in Rotorua.

Raymond considered himself an Anglican. He was just over 173 cm tall and just under 62 kg in weight, with brown hair and eyes and a fair complexion.

He was part of the Auckland Infantry Battalion (6th Company) and departed on 16 October 1914 for Suez, Egypt.

On April 12 1915 he embarked from Alexandria in Egypt for the Dardanelles.

He was reported missing, believed dead on 25 April 1915 (reg. 1918/71049) in Gallipoli. He was aged 24.

Raymond's missing status was reported by the *Auckland Star* on 3 July 1915:

Pte Raymond John Baker a dispatch rider of the 6th Hauraki Regiment, reported missing in a recent list.

And then on 11 February 1916 the *Auckland Star* reported that he was now believed dead:

PTE. RAYMOND JOHN BAKER, some time ago reported as missing from the ranks of the Auckland Battalion, now believed dead. His mother resides at Otorohanga.

Medals:

- 1914-1915 Star
- British War Medal (1914-1920)
- Victory Medal

## Frederick Hugh Dodson (1891-1915)



**Tauranga auctioneer Frederick Hugh Dodson was killed in action at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. Newspapers reported that after falling mortally wounded he 'got up on his knees and emptied his revolver into the enemy and then fell back dead'. In 1917 Dodson Avenue in Milford, Auckland, was named in Frederick's memory. Story by Debbie McCauley.**

Frederick Hugh Dodson was born in Hukanui on 20 May 1891 (reg. 1891/8993). His parents were Albert Frederic and Selina Maude Wade Dodson (nee Gery) who married in Worlington, Suffolk, England on 23 August 1889.

Frederick worked as an auctioneer for the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Company.

He was also a Hauraki Regiment Volunteer and secretary of the Tauranga Rugby Union as well as playing hockey and being a keen sailor.

Frederick enlisted on 14 August 1914 (Service Number: 12/683) and served as a Lieutenant with the Auckland Infantry Battalion.

'A hero to the last' 2nd Lieutenant Frederick Dodson of the 6th Hauraki Regiment was killed in the first Gallipoli landings at age 23 on 25 April 1915 (reg. 1918/36756). Several months later, newspapers around the country reported the circumstances of his death. Including that after falling mortally wounded he *'got up on his knees and emptied his revolver into the enemy and then fell back dead'*.

On 4 May the *Bay of Plenty Times* reported his death with the headline "Tauranga's First Loss" and the following day published a long tribute that detailed Frederick's contribution to the town, making clear the full extent of his loss to Tauranga and indeed the country;

*The Fallen, Lieut. Dodson. The late Lieutenant F. H. Dodson was only twenty-five years of age and had resided in Tauranga for about seven years, where he was associated with the office staff of the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Company, Limited. He was posted to the Sixth (Hauraki) Regiment on the inauguration of the compulsory service system about four years ago. He at once displayed a keen interest in his work and showed great promise, which led to his promotion from the ranks of Colour-sergeant of his company. After one year in this position he was promoted to Acting Second Lieutenant and shortly afterwards qualified for his Lieutenancy, receiving his commission. He then took charge of the Tauranga Platoon and filled the command with great credit up to the time of his appointment in the main Expeditionary Force in August last. Close attention to military duties did not prevent Lieutenant Dodson from taking a keen interest in various branches of sport. For several seasons he was a member of the local representative hockey team and was regarded as one of the finest exponents of the game in the Bay of Plenty. He was an ardent boating enthusiast and for some years was part owner of the well-known launch Coy. He was always actively associated with the annual visits of the Waikato hounds to this district. For several years he acted as secretary to the Tauranga Rugby Union, his work in the cause of football earning the heartiest appreciation of the Union executive, the public, and players. In the local realm of sport his death leaves a gap that will indeed be hard to fill. Mr Dodson's manly and unassuming qualities won the esteem of all with whom he came in contact. Deceased was an only son, his parents residing at Takapuna, Auckland. Yesterday the flags on the public buildings in town were half-masted in memory of deceased. The news of Lieutenant Dodson's death has cast a gloom over the town, and the people in this district will join in extending their heartfelt sympathy to a brave New Zealander, who so ungrudgingly gave his life in the service of his King and country.*

Frederick is remembered on the Lone Pine Memorial in Lone Pine Cemetery, Anzac, Turkey. In 1917 Dodson Avenue in Milford, Auckland, was named in Frederick's memory.



## Ronald Tracey Matheson (1874-1915)



**Mining agent and South African War (Boer War) veteran Ronald Tracey Matheson was killed in action during World War I in South West Africa on 27 April 1915. He was the son of early Tauranga settlers Robert and Sarah Matheson. Story by Debbie McCauley.**

Ronald Tracey Matheson was born in Tauranga in January 1874 to Otumoetai farmers Robert McGregor and Sarah Matheson (nee O'Rorke) who married in New Zealand in 1870 (reg. 1870/4950). Sarah had arrived in New Zealand as a young child with her parents from Ireland and settled in Otahuhu in Auckland.

In 1869 Robert had purchased a 123-acre block which he called *Fairview* from Tauranga Maori. Otumoetai Pa had been deserted since the Tauranga battles of the New Zealand Wars in 1864. The Matheson Homestead was built in the 1920s.

*Most of the land in this Historic Reserve was acquired from the Government by Robert Matheson in 1870. The eastern half of the beach land was purchased from Hori Ngatai and Renata Toriri in 1881. This, together with the 110 acres of land on the western and southern sides purchased from James and Edward Foley in 1869 brought the Matheson farm up to 123 acres. The farm extended along the western side of the Otumoetai road from the seashore to about the number 400 on that road, the old boundary with the Tollemache farm "Bentley" ("Bentleigh"). The boundary then ran west to near the railway line, then north through the line of Meadowland Street across the present Levers Road to the seashore (Tauranga City Council, p. 16).*

Ronald was a mining agent and a South African War (Boer War) (1899-1902) veteran, mentioned in dispatches for capturing a small party of three armed Boers, and for carrying wounded men to safety.

Robert McGregor Matheson died in Otumoetai on 30 May 1906 (reg. 1906/376) and was buried in Tauranga Catholic Cemetery.

Ronald enlisted to fight during World War I. He served with the Union Forces of South Africa.

Lieutenant Ronald Tracey Matheson was killed in action in South West Africa on 27 April 1915, aged 38. His death notices read:

**MATHESON** the Prime Minister has advised Mr C P Stitchbury of Auckland of the death of his brother-in-law Lieut Ronald T Matheson, who was killed in action in German West Africa. Lieut Matheson was a native of Tauranga and went to the Transvaal in 1900. He fought in the South African war as a member of the Imperial Light Horse, and when the present war started, he volunteered and received a commission. He had been through all the fighting in German South West Africa. His widowed mother resides at Tauranga. Deceased was the elder son of the late Mr Robert Matheson of Otumoetai, Tauranga, and a brother of Mr Alister Matheson of Otumoetai. He was well known to old residents and his mother, brother and sisters will have the sincere sympathy of a large circle of friends in their great bereavement. [Bay of Plenty Times, 6 May 1915, p. 5 and Evening Post, 6 May 1915, p. 2]

*The late Lieutenant Ronald T Matheson, who was killed in action in German South West Africa, left Auckland in 1900 just after the outbreak of the Boer War, and joined the Imperial Light Horse. He was twice mentioned in despatches for capturing a small party of three armed Boers, and for carrying wounded men to safety. When he met his death, he was evidently serving as Lieutenant with the Union forces of South Africa. The news of the death of Lieutenant Matheson will be received with regret by a large circle of friends in Tauranga.* [Bay of Plenty Times, 8 May 1915, p. 2 and Bay of Plenty Times, 11 June 1915, p. 2]

The majority of South African and German burials in Namibia are the casualties of the battle of Gibeon which took place on 27 April 1915. Memorials to the Natal Light Horse and German dead have been erected.

Ronald was the uncle of Tauranga historian [Alister Hugh Matheson](#) (1925-2011), and brother of Alister's father [also Alister Hugh Matheson], who also served during both the South African War (Boer War) and World War I.



## Images taken at Memorial Park Tauranga on Armistice Day







## TIMARU

I gave the address in Timaru this year. A crowd of over 2,000 with most wearing Poppies. After the two minutes silence we heard ships at the local port let off their hooters, emergency vehicles sounding the sirens, church bells and much car tooting. It was also a service for Le Quesnoy as there were French students from near there, studying here. We had the flags of NZ looked after by the Sea Cadets, Britain looked after by the Air Cadets, Belgium looked after by the Army Cadets and France looked after by those French students. Grandchildren of local Le Quesnoy soldiers planted a tree and the French students assisted. My speech started off by saying "4 years ago I was at the opening ceremony of the WW1 centenary in Belgium. That seemed ages ago now, but that's how long the war lasted - ages". I focused on the involvement in the war from Maori, transport of our troops and that one of troopships was nearly sunk, the use of horses, the role of women, the influenza, life after the war leading to strikes and the depression then another war. At the end of the ceremony, streamers shot into the air and we went to the RSA for lunch. That was

followed with a brilliant performance of 'Blackadder Goes Forth' by the local drama league. If you ever see that show, the nurses come out into the audience and sing the old songs like 'Soldiers of the King' etc. The final scene where they're about to go over the top, saw the Blackadder actor saying "I shall now go and join other local heroes", then read the names out of all the local WW1 dead which came up on a screen. My uncle was mentioned. Then they went over the top, bang, and darkness. When the lights came on, many of us mean left not wanting to see each other's eyes.

from **Gavin Marriott.**

## WAIKATO



Armistice 2018, all across the nation and in lesser countries worldwide the cessation of hostilities during the First World War were commemorated, globally. Nowhere was this commemoration more poignant than here in the Waipa District of the Waikato.





LRDG was looking resplendent. — at [Lake Karapiro](#).



An extremely rare Semple Tank, albeit a repro, was pretty impressive. — at [Lake Karapiro](#).





Kevin in a Bren Carrier. — at [Lake Karapiro](#).

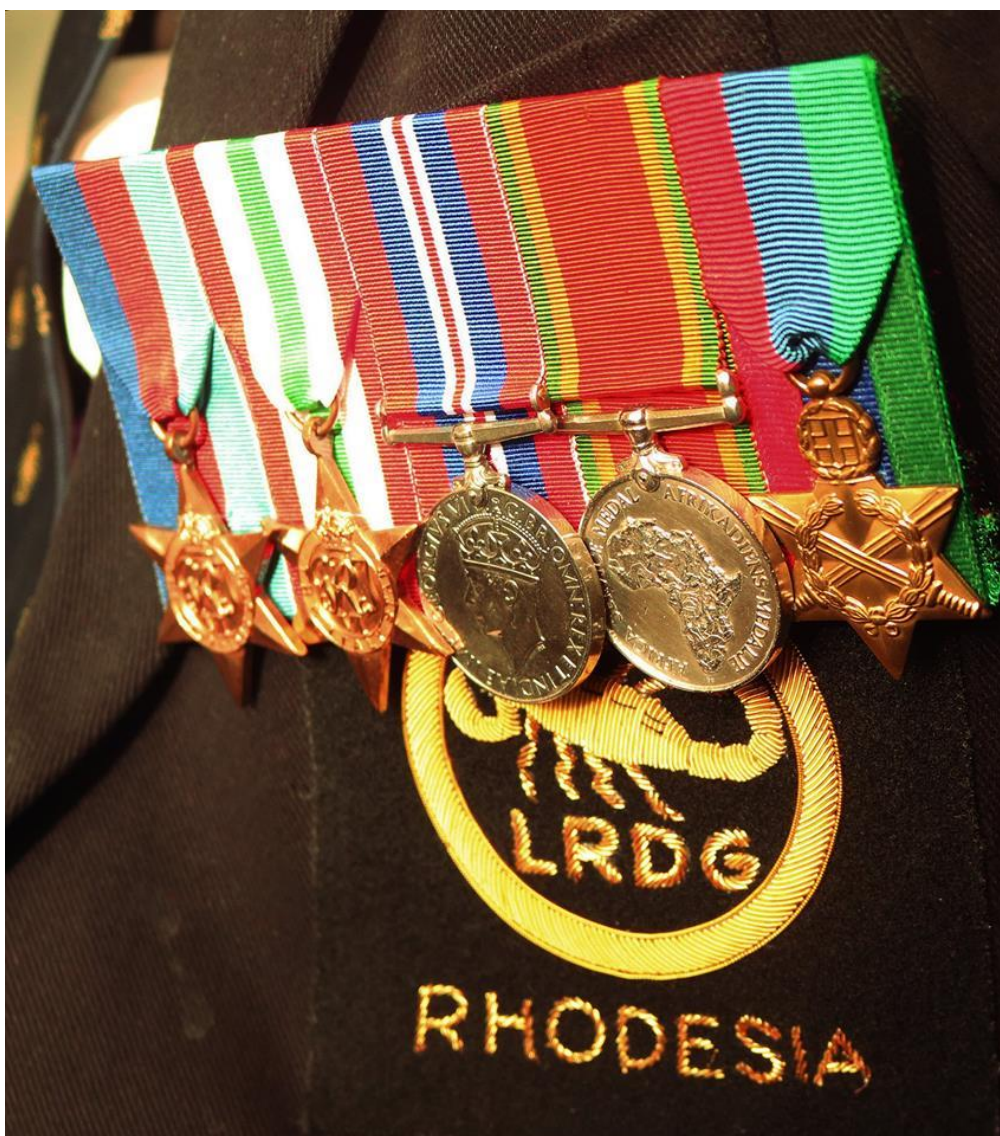


Things cleared and the South African War British had dried off enough for a bit of Boer tickling. — at [Lake Karapiro](#).





Alf Page contemplating just what I can do with that camera as we await marching off in Sunday's parade. — in [Cambridge, New Zealand](#).



A close up of some very expensively earned jewellery adorning Alf's blazer — in [Cambridge, New Zealand](#).

The highlight of the weekend awaited me, it was being able to uplift our patron, Tpr Alf Page, Z1 Patrol of the Long Range Desert Group. Well into his 90s Alf is one of about 3 remaining LRDG vets. Alf was the epitome of a respectable veteran, behind that veneer however is quite a mischievous sense of humour. Any time spent in Alf's company is an honour



This is what the convoy looked like from behind — in [Cambridge, New Zealand](#).



Des

You might be able to use this. It is an article I penned for the local book "From Gold Mine to Firing Line" produced in 2014 as part of the WW100 programme.

Russell

Chapter x

## **"Be steady, my men"**

### **The 6th Hauraki Company**

By Russell Skeet

#### **A prelude:**

It was probably as well that the Regiment was nearing readiness. On the other side of the world, storm clouds were gathering over Europe. When the storm broke, the Hauraki's would find themselves embroiled in the greatest orgy of bloodletting ever seen.<sup>1</sup>

Full of the confidence, bravado and naivety of youth, the young men comprising the 6th (Hauraki) Company of the Auckland Infantry Battalion, took Thames off to war. And a long war it was to be. Four years of brutal industrial scale killing defined by barbed wire and the machine gun. A new era of horror. Glory days indeed.

In August of 1914, at Alexandra Park in Auckland, the Auckland Infantry Battalion was raised. It was made up of the 3rd (Auckland), 6th (Hauraki), 15th (North Auckland) and 16th (Waikato) Companies, each company representing its parent Battalion. The Auckland Infantry Battalion was under the command of a Thames man, Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Plugge. Born at Tapu, on the Thames Coast, Plugge was a well-known local Thames identity, but at the time of his enlistment he was living in Epsom in Auckland and was the Headmaster of Dilworth Ulster Institute. <sup>2</sup> Plugge's regimental number was 12/1.

The Officer Commanding (O.C.) of the 6th (Hauraki) Company was Major Frederick Stuckey, a man of unassuming appearance who was a Master from King's College in Auckland with the regimental number 12/2. Stuckey was born in Christchurch, and was to lead the Hauraki's into their first test of war – Gallipoli. <sup>3</sup> He was 36 at his time of trial in 1915.

Stuckey had a Company second-in-command, Captain Wilfred Courtney Sinel. After his O.C.'s death on the ANZAC Cove beach, Sinel quickly assumed an important role with the Hauraki Company and was to emerge from World War One, having survived being wounded and taking part in more actions than any other Hauraki



<sup>1</sup> "Comrades Brave" by Richard Taylor, page 40

<sup>2</sup> Auckland War Memorial Museum "Cenotaph Database."

<sup>3</sup> Auckland War Memorial Museum "Cenotaph Database."



officer. He was a clerk before the war and worked on the Auckland wharves after the war.

Above: Major F Stuckey<sup>4</sup>

Within the 6th (Hauraki) Coy were four platoons, units of 50 men, under the command of a Lieutenant. It was these platoon commanders who would lead their men, literally from the front, into the fierce fire and storm of front-line battle, revolver in one hand and perhaps a whistle in the other. Maybe a bible in their tunic pocket; we might speculate seldom a photo of 'their girl' as many would have been scarcely old enough to have 'a girl.' Into battle that would severely test the mettle of combat hardened commanders, let alone these freshly graduated junior officers. The consequences of failure for these young men and their equally young charges was inevitably death. Little glory to be found amongst the detritus of modern war. The four platoon commanders leading the Haurakis were Lieutenants Robert Nicol Morpeth (age 22), Colvin Stewart Algie (age 27), William Evelyn Francise Flower (age 29 years), and Frederick Hugh Dodson (age 23 years). Morpeth was a bank teller on enlistment and Flower (aka William Evelyn Francise di Delle-Flower) was an inspector with the Department of Agriculture. Both men were from Thames.

Thames, at the outbreak of World War One, was a town of modest aspirations looking for a way to regain economic prosperity and regional significance not seen since goldfield days in the 1870s. That Thames should offer up a good number of men like Morpeth and Flower for participation in the 'death or glory adventure' of the Great War, ought not to surprise, as these were the days of Empire and Mother Country. The ghastly lessons of the Boer War had faded, and when the clarion call for the defence of the realm sounded from the old country, Thames men were as eager as any others. But the genesis for our men's enthusiasm for the 'call-to-arms' may have another thread – the Volunteer movement.

Thames was established on the back of a gold discovery with the field being proclaimed on the 1st August 1867. By mid-1868, after some initial doubt, it was pretty much a sure thing that the gold field would prosper, so that capitalists like Graham, Whitaker, Russell, and McCosh Clark were pouring money into the establishment of business, commercial and industrial enterprises in support of the burgeoning mining industry. The town was racing toward a population of 15,000 people, soon to be bigger than Auckland. Men from all walks of life populated the goldfield, and a significant number of them had previous military experience with the Imperial Army or had fought in the New Zealand Land Wars.



Above: Grahamstown, The Thames 1870

Source: *The Merv Cunningham Collection, The Treasury*

It was soon evident that it was just as well that there were plenty of men with military service under their belt on the goldfield. No sooner had the realisation dawned that the Thames was to be no 'fly-by-

<sup>4</sup> Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, AWNS-19150513-39-11

night' goldfield settlement, but rather a permanent township, worth the investment risk, than a clear and present threat to prosperity and potential wealth emerged - Te Kooti. In June of 1868, the Civil Commissioner, James MacKay, reported<sup>5</sup> to the Native Minister that he was informed by Hauhau messengers that if the Maori King succeeded in marching north of Ngaruawahia, the local tribes, Ngatimaru and Ngatitamatera, would rise up and attack Shortland and Coromandel, this, we might suppose, in support of Te Kooti's operations on the East Coast. It was rumoured that Te Kooti was set to come north. Perhaps to Auckland and so to Thames? The doubt was there. The die was cast. But Te Kooti did not move north and the King did not march. But Titokowaru, further south-west, did.

The Government called for volunteers for the Armed Constabulary<sup>6</sup>; 100 joined from Auckland and 70 enrolled from Shortland.<sup>7</sup> Number 6<sup>8</sup> Division, the 'Young Division,' was formed from the Auckland and Thames men, and, by November, was in south Taranaki, near Wairoa. Titokowaru had a pa in the vicinity, called Moturoa and the Thames men participated in an engagement on 7 November. Unsurprisingly, for New Zealand Land Wars engagements, the Government forces were withdrawn, in the face of determined Maori fighting. We might suppose the Thames men did well, as Colonel Whitmore, in command of the Government force, commented:

No. 6, retiring skirmishing, was now attacked by the enemy almost all along the line, and nearly hand-to-hand. Throughout the jungle the voice of the gallant commander rang out continually, 'Be steady my men, stick together,' and each time a cheery reply, 'We will sir,' might have been heard in answer from the 'Young Division.'<sup>9</sup>

With the capitalist's doubts about immediate guerrilla incursions pretty much dealt with, there was still Te Kooti, lurking in the Ureweras. It was time to conjure up a cause for a more permanent defence arrangement. In a bit of fanciful 'spin,' the need to avenge the deaths of the innocents massacred at Turanga, and to vanquish Te Kooti and his cohort from the field of operations, was levied upon the emotional vulnerability of the fragile gold mining settlement.

And so, it was that in early 1869 efforts were turned to the formation of both volunteer and militia units; volunteers to defend Thames, and militia units to range further afield.

The rush to the 'colours,' so-to-speak, was rapid; Hauraki Rifle Volunteers, with three companies, Thames Engineer Volunteers, No. 2 Thames Rifle Rangers, Puriri Rifle Volunteers, Thames Naval Volunteers, and the Tapu Rifle Ranger Volunteers. Later, there were the Thames Scottish Rifle Volunteers (1871), and the Thames Native Volunteers (1873). There had also been talk of forming Thames Veterans Volunteers, Cavalry Volunteers, Tararu Rifle Volunteers, Thames Volunteer Artillery Corps and Bagnall's Sawmill Volunteers. By 1879 there were in excess of 770 men<sup>10</sup> signed up in the various corps with another 110 plus in several cadet units, so that the Thames fairly bristled with soldiers, drawn from all parts of the community. A richly experienced, adventurous and reasonably motivated group of men comprised the more seasoned of the Thames military forces, while capable and mature officers such as Murray, Goldsmith, Cooper and Fraser developed those volunteers with less military experience.

But times change.

Communities built upon the discovery of gold can be fickle creatures, the Thames being no less subject to the vagaries of the ebb and flow of gold production, than any other. The fortunes of the volunteer movement reflected the 'life and times' of the township so that with the steady decline in gold production and consequent wane in population, the volunteer numbers diminished. By the late 1890s, the once chaotic, always enthusiastic and earnest, but amateur volunteer arrangements that had existed in Thames since 1868 were represented by a single unit. After the heady days of the Thames

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<sup>5</sup> NZ Archives ACFL 8170/3 428/68 ; MacKay (Shortland) to Native Minister, June 1868.

<sup>6</sup> *Daily Southern Cross* 8, October 1868. Required for service in the armed constabulary, three hundred men. Unmarried and not over 30 years of age, unless having previously served in colonial Forces or in a Police Corps, when they will be admitted up to 35. Pay, 5 shillings a day, with a suit of clothing.

<sup>7</sup> *Daily Southern Cross* 9 November 1868

<sup>8</sup> Number five division had been disbanded for mutinous conduct in the field, as reported in *The Evening Herald* (Wanganui Herald) 17 October 1868

<sup>9</sup> J Cowan, *The New Zealand Wars*, p254.

<sup>10</sup> "An Early History of Local Volunteer Forces in the Hauraki Plains" by A.M. Isdale

Volunteer movement in the late 1860s and early 70s, its decline had been a drawn-out affair, so that with the formation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Auckland Rifle Volunteers on 8 July 1898, the last vestige of the once proud Thames Volunteer Corps was represented by the Thames Naval Artillery,<sup>11</sup> although it was not a part of the newly established Battalion, being artillery and not infantry. Thames was instead represented by a second, and newly established unit, the Hauraki Rifles (Thames), dated from 11 October 1897.

The elements that comprised the Battalion were: <sup>12</sup>

Te Aroha Rifles (Te Aroha)

No 1 Company, Ohinemuri Rifles (Paeroa)

No 2 Company, Ohinemuri Rifles (Karangahake)

Hauraki Rifles (Thames)

No 3 Company, Ohinemuri Rifles (Waihi)

Coromandel Rifles (Coromandel)

Onehunga Rifles (Onehunga)

It was not until 15 November 1900 that the old Thames Navals became a part of the 2nd Battalion when they changed to the No. 1 Company, Thames Rifles. It was reported in the news that:

“The Thames Rifles (late Navals) were originally formed on 8 October, 1869, and have in spite of adverse circumstances continued in existence until the present date. It is the senior company of the Battalion.”<sup>13</sup>

The former Navals also contributed their band, just over a year later, when it became the Battalion band. With the Navals firmly established within the Battalion organisation, it might be claimed that the Battalion could trace its origins to 1869, 29 years earlier than the official date of 1898.

Reorganisations are often timely, and this one no less so than any other, this simply because of the start of the Boer War in South Africa in 1899. Men from the Battalion area were quick to volunteer, so that in October of 1899, ten Thames men from the Hauraki Rifle Volunteers had offered themselves up for service, being Messrs Swindley, Boyle, Murray, Newdick (A), Dudley, Longman, Rosewarne, Murdock, Finlayson and Newdick (P). Of the ten, two were accepted being Privates F Murray and A Newdick. At the same time the Paeroa contingent consisted of Sergeant-Major Bradford, Corporal Avery, Sergeant Hubbard, and Privates F Shaw, J Tetley, and W McPherson. Waihi and Coromandel also had volunteers accepted for service.<sup>14</sup> Enthusiasm for the war and victories achieved was very evident. Alistair gives this brief glimpse:



Above: The Hauraki Rifles and Band in camp at Tararu, Thames

<sup>11</sup> Previously the Thames Naval Volunteers, formed on 8 October 1869.

<sup>12</sup> *Chronological History of the Hauraki Regiment*

<sup>13</sup> Isdale, A.M.; *Militia in Hauraki*. Also, “*Comrades Brave*” by Richard Taylor.

<sup>14</sup> Isdale, A.M.; “*An Early history of Local Volunteer Forces in the Hauraki Plains Area.*”

In 1901, what appeared to be a minor administrative change occurred where the 2nd Battalion was changed to '2nd Battalion, Auckland (Hauraki) Infantry Volunteers.' This change was significant to the Battalion as it allowed the unit to carry colours – a distinction allowed to Infantry units – the first colour, the King's Colour being received on 26 September 1907.

On the back of the Boer War excitement, came a resurgent cadet movement. Thames Volunteer Corps had cadets from the earliest days but, like volunteering generally, they had languished and finally disappeared with the decline of Thames. But in 1901 cadets were back, this time administered by the Education Department, so that by 1908, there were 844 of all ranks present at the School Cadet camp at Omahu, these being from the Thames and Ohinemuri Cadet Battalions.<sup>15</sup> This enthusiasm for things military was timely, unfortunately, as the greatest 'call to arms' New Zealand has ever seen, was just six years away.

In the run up to World War One there were a number of legislative changes which affected the Battalion, one of which was in 1909, which resulted in 1911 in the renaming of the Battalion as VI Hauraki Regiment,<sup>16</sup> and a change to its structure so that it now looked less 'Volunteer' and more Army, with eight companies.<sup>17</sup>

A COMPANY	Formerly 1 Thames Rifles, based at Thames
B COMPANY	Formerly 1 Ohinemuri Rifles, based at Paeroa
C COMPANY	Formerly Hauraki Rifles, based at Thames – less one platoon based at Coromandel
D COMPANY	Formerly 3 Ohinemuri Rifles, based at Waihi
E COMPANY	Formerly Waihi Rifles, based at Waihi
F COMPANY	Based at Morrinsville
G COMPANY	Divided between Opotiki and Tauranga
H COMPANY	Divided between Rotorua and Matamata
THE REGIMENTAL BAND	Based at Thames

An important point to note at this stage in the development of the Battalion is the inclusion of units from south of the Hauraki area. This would lead, in due course, to the relocation of the Headquarters from Paeroa to Tauranga, reflecting the large increase in the size of the Battalion area.

Yet another, minor, organisational change occurred in 1913 when the Battalion structure was reduced from eight companies to four, so the companies were based in Thames, Paeroa, Morrinsville and Rotorua. The Thames company had three platoons from Thames and one from Coromandel, while the Paeroa company had one platoon from Paeroa, one from Karangahake and two from Waihi. Now the Hauraki's Volunteers were Army.

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<sup>15</sup> Isdale, A.M.; *"An Early history of Local Volunteer Forces in the Hauraki Plains Area."*

<sup>16</sup> The sixth most senior Regiment, out of the seventeen.

<sup>17</sup> *"Comrades Brave"* by Richard Taylor.





READY TO SERVE WHERE THE EMPIRE NEEDS THEM: MEMBERS OF THE 6TH HAURAKI REGIMENT ON PARADE AT THE EPSOM MILITARY CAMP, AUCKLAND.

Above: Ready to serve where the empire needs them: members of the 6th Hauraki regiment on parade at the Epsom military camp, Auckland (Auckland Weekly News 27 August 1914)

**Source:** Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland Libraries, AWNS-19140827-37-2

And so, it was that the Hauraki Volunteers came to be at the gates of World War One. On 25 April 1915 Stuckey, Sinel, Morpeth, Algie, Flower and Dodson, came ashore at Anzac Cove on the Gallipoli Peninsula. "Of these six men, four would be dead within two years and a fifth would have been invalided home, his war over. Only Captain Sinel would serve through the war, although he too would be wounded."<sup>18</sup>

In 1868, Thames men rallied to the flag and volunteered for military duties in defence of their town. In 1914 Thames men volunteered again, in defence of their country, but this time with grave consequences.

**Whakatangata. Kia Kaha**  
**Lest we forget.**





Former Commanding Officers of the 6<sup>th</sup> Hauraki Battalion Group.  
Lt Colonel John Dick, Lt Colonel Kenneth Brown & Colonel Alister McCaw.  
Taken at Annandale at the Funeral of Major (Honorary Colonel) John Allen. QC. ED.



## Bay of Plenty Officers' Club Inc

2018

### Les Munro Speech Competition



Les Munro wearing his medals in front of the Bomber Command Memorial in London which commemorates his fallen comrades from the Bomber Command air campaign of WW2

*In memory of Bay of Plenty Officers Club member*

Squadron Leader **John Leslie Munro**, CNZM, DSO, QSO, DFC, JP (5 April 1919 – 4 August 2015) was an Royal New Zealand Air Force pilot during World War II and the last surviving pilot of the Dambusters Raid of May 1943.

Greetings to you

Following approval at the 2017 AGM, it was agreed the Bay of Plenty Officers Club would establish an annual speech prize to be contested by cadets from the three Tauranga Cadet Units. In the interval, it was decided to name the contest after Squadron Leader Les Munro who a Club former member. A suitable trophy has been prepared (as attached) which will be held by the Unit the winning Cadet is a member.

In addition to the several hundred dollars it has taken to make the trophy, the Club has approved a \$100 prize be awarded to the winning cadet. This sum was determined in the hope we might be able to interest other like-minded groups to contribute to increase the prize money, so the runner-up could be included in a part portion of the prize.

This is an invitation for the 6 Hauraki Association to consider matching the initial amount noted to increase the prize money. If such this was possible, the publicity material would identify this contribution for 2018.

While we have agreed prescription with the NZCF Area Coordinator, the date and location for the competition has yet to be finalised

I look forward to your advice when you are able to do so

Kind regards & thanks

Des

Des Underwood  
Squadron Leader RNZAF (Rtd)  
President, Bay of Plenty Officers' Club Inc

On behalf of the Bay of Plenty Officers Club, this is a thank you, as our prize sponsors for the inaugural speech competition, including: the Mt Maunganui RSA Club, the Tauranga RSA Clubs, the 6 Hauraki Association and the Classic Flyers Aviation Museum

In the presence of a number of you, the competition was held on Thu 25<sup>th</sup> Sep 2018 in the Lecture Room of the Hauraki Army Hall which was competed for by the Unit champion speakers, including:

Army Cadet: Under Officer B. Taylor (Western Bay of Plenty Cadet Unit)

Navy Cadet: Able Cadet E. Andrews (Training Ship Chatham)7

Air Cadets: Leading Air Cadet A. Thomas (No.16 (City of Tauranga) Squadron)

After review by a panel of judges, a time-keeper and referee, the winner was Leading Air Cadet A. Thomas and the runner-up Under Officer B. Taylor. Each contestant was awarded a signed certificate together with individual cheques (totalling \$500). These presentations were made by **Mrs Christine Ross**, Les Munro's partner as well as an Officers' Club member.



At an Officers' Club Dinner formal dinner held at the Tauranga Club on Sat 13-Oct, [Leading Air Cadet Abbie Thomas](#) repeated her winning speech and she was presented with a Supplementary Prize, a flight in a Stearman Bi-plane at Classic Flyers. The Les Munro Lancaster Trophy is awarded the winner's Unit and for 2018 it was presented to 16 (City of Tauranga) SQN ATC which was represented by **Pilot Officer Rob Jones**, Training Officer. Again, Mrs Ross made the presentations

I look forward to your support for the 2019 Les Munro Speech Competition

Kind regards & thanks

Des

Des Underwood,  
Squadron Leader, RNZAF, Rtd  
President, Bay of Plenty Officers' Club

0274524767





First Prize Winner



Second Prize





Third Prize



The Panel of Judges

Hi Bob,

Here's my write-up from the survival phase of the Aumangea programme:

How does being paid to do a 5-day hunting trip up the Whanganui River sound?

What about if all you had was the clothes you stood in, a knife, a flint and a pot? That's what I had to do last month with 21 other men while completing the survival phase of the NZ Army's Aumangea Programme.

The Aumangea program is a comparatively recent addition to the army's training system, only starting in 2009, but already it's gained an international reputation for harsh training that pushes soldiers past their mental and physical limits. The aim is to toughen soldiers and build their resilience so that they have the ability to push through and win, regardless of the circumstances. This means being able to survive without any of your usual kit. But being Aumangea, going straight in to the bush would be far too easy, so we had a week of 'fatiguing first' - 3 days of Deathwish PT in Waiohuru - think 3 CrossFit workouts back-to-back . . . before breakfast. That was followed up with 4 days of swimming across the Whanganui River, dragging jerry cans up gorse-covered slopes and a bit of close country bush bashing all on a couple of oranges a day if we were lucky.

By the end of the week saying we were 'fatigued' was putting it mildly. It was at that point that we put packs on and did a bush bash over a ridge, swam across the river again and marched in to our survival location. Little did we know that night was the last we'd have with our sleeping bags, or I may have tried to appreciate it more.

The next morning, we had a couple of lessons on uses of plants we may find in the bush, and some tracking techniques. It turned out we were at the site of an old commune. I don't know what sort of person would want to live here but they'd managed to haul in enough to cobble together a huge roundhouse and a few other dwellings, and an old air tank they obviously used as a gong. It also meant there were a few exotic plantings, including some walnuts, so any spare time we had was filled looking for these gems of sustenance.

But there was no putting off the inevitable and soon we were marched down to one of the houses, put our packs away, put on all our warm kit, then took it all off when the staff told us not to even TRY smuggling anything in (although I admire the courage of the chap that wanted to put an unsheathed knife down his undies). We had a test on our native plants lesson which my section won, so we got the biggest pot and the best knife. From there, it was on.

We were taken down a hill to a space that had a bit of a flat, a steep area covered with ferns, and a large open area across the stream. On our first night I thought a small fern bivi would be the go so it would heat up quickly. As it turned out it was one of the most terrible nights any of us have spent in the bush. It took about 30 minutes and a lot of swearing to get the fire started, and the bivi was so cold, small and uncomfortable that we all ended up sleeping around it.

As for food, we'd managed to find a few mushrooms on the way in, and a bit of mamaku (black tree

fern) while collecting materials for the bivi. I'd had a run-in with mamaku about 8 years ago and remembered slime and retching. However, the instructor had said it was like potato when cooked right. I gave him the benefit of the doubt and actually tried some of this stew. If you want to recreate the experience at home, grab a block of polystyrene, put some toothpicks in it, soak it in sock juice for a day then take a chew. I don't think there's ever been a better way to convince someone that man is not meant to be vegetarian. All credit to the one man in our patrol who managed more than two spoonful's.

Thanks to that the next morning we were all raring for a hunt. Not having our rifles, we had to get a bit cave man, so we all chose a good-sized stick each and a couple of stones. We moved across the river and found that the open area was home to a few goats, but they quickly moved up in to the steep scrub and out of reach. However, as we moved further onward, we found that on the banks of the stream there was a colony of geese. The majority of birds flew off, but they left behind a few t-l-rat just hid rather badly. One of the men jumped on one and wrung its neck, but then saw another one right in front of him. What do you do when one hand is full of dead goose? Hit the other one with it! After whacking the second bird we thought that was good enough, but in the mean time our comrade from the navy had stripped to his undies and was doing a stealth swim across the stream to grab a bird that was hiding in a bush on the bank. As soon as he was under it

he jumped out and karate chopped this thing in the neck! If you were wondering, yes you can dispatch a bird in one blow.

Three birds in hand we returned to our camp. No one had much experience cooking geese and let me tell you there's a lot of plucking to be done. The whole place was covered in feathers by the end of it, but we had two birds in the pot, one in an earth oven and a good amount of guts to stock an eel trap. Maybe it was the fact that we hadn't eaten all day, but goose stew with a bit of manuka isn't half bad. While out hunting we'd also found a derelict old shed so we dragged some sheets of corrugated iron back to make a better shelter. However, that night we still all ended up around the fire.

The next morning, we found an eel in the trap. A couple of our patrol members were experts with these so within a couple of hours we were eating some of the best smoked eel I have ever tasted - soft, juicy flesh with crispy skin, all with that hint of manuka smoke.

The rest of us went out looking for other game but once again the goats proved elusive. It didn't seem to matter how fast we moved, they could trot off at walking speed and still beat us up the hill. We had to settle for only four geese. When we took the catch back to camp it was obvious, we had too much for ourselves, so we tried smuggling some to the two other patrols in the valley. As it turned out they were doing it tough, and one had been subsisting on nothing but mamaku and berries for the last couple of days. Knowing how much we hated it after just one serving I can only imagine how bad it was for that long.

That afternoon one of the men tried going on a solo mission after the goats. Perhaps the lack of carbs were getting to him but we found him creeping up a hill stripped down to his undies. Apparently, his uniform was 'rustling too much'. He didn't get any goats but someone did take his pants and hide them a suitable distance away.

By the third day we'd turned our bivi in to a bit of a palace, moved the fire inside, added a bit of a chimney and fern mattresses. No one really cared any more that we were sharing one spoon in the patrol of eight and all drinking out of the same jam jar. Likewise, we were ready to take on the goats.

When first light came eight soldiers armed with staffs had already moved in to position on the outskirts of the open area. Stealth meant we came over the crest to find eight goats unaware of what was about to happen. On the signal, we moved in and drove them to ice cliff. I found myself running full tilt at a bunch of three stinking billies. The cliff turned out not to be steep enough for them to fall off, and the goats looked like they'd get away up through some cliff scrub. Would it all be for nothing? Some of the faster men managed to head them off on the streambank. Two got away but one of the boys kicked one in the butt and got it in the water, then grabbed it around the head. Our knives were all completely blunt and his was no exception, so he stabbed the billy in the neck until it stopped fighting.

Fresh kill in hand, we gutted it on the bank then hauled it back to camp. On inspection it turned out to be about 7 years old, and stank! With our blunt knives it took a few hours to do the butchering. We even sent a man up to the staff to plead for a sharpening stone, which actually worked. Even so, the best we could do with the legs was to leave them just about whole in the pot. Knowing this thing was probably going to be as tough as boot leather I left it in the pot for about 4 hours, and added about half a manuka tree to the cooking water.

That evening, not having much hope, we pulled the legs out to get the meat off.

It was one of the best meals I have ever had. There was no trace of the billy smell, and the meat was as soft as fillet steak. If ever there was a case for game meat this was it. I feel sorry for kids that spend their whole lives eating meat that's come from polystyrene trays.

The next day we thought we'd have a rest, since we had a leg of goat smoking over the fire for jerky. However, by mid-afternoon we were so bored we ended up going out hunting just for something to do. Our well-practiced operation bagged 3 geese within an hour. When we came back to camp the staff had also dropped us off a leg of venison, so between that, the goat and the geese we had the rather unexpected scene of men saying they were actually sick of meat. Of course, it didn't help that I completely botched up the geese so badly they ended up like old boots.



On the last morning we met the other patrols for the first time in nearly a week. One had bagged one goat the whole time, and the other had only bagged a possum. They had a hollow, empty stare in their eyes, and some were unsteady on their feet. Time for an energising meal? No, a bit of meat and cheese, packs on, then we were issued picks and shovels for 3 hours of road repair work on the march out.

That's Aumangea.

Regards, Deborah Kendon

## WAIHI



Speakers and organisers of the talk, from left, Krishna Buckman, Cliff Hayward, Danny Thorn, Ashley Smith, Robyn Ramsay and Des Anderson. Photo / Kit Wilson

[By: Melanie Camoin](#)

Melanie Camoin the editor of the Waihi Leader

[melanie.camoin@nzme.co.nz](mailto:melanie.camoin@nzme.co.nz)

Descendants have paid tribute to a former Waihi serviceman who never returned from the Great War.

Private Ben Thorn was one of the 12,500 soldiers and nurses who fought during World War I.

Ben was part of the New Zealand Medical Corps deployed on the Western Front in Belgium helping rescue soldiers from the front line with other stretcher bearers.

He went to war with his brother, Tom, who made it back home.

On November 20, 1917, 22-year-old Ben was killed in action by shrapnel while saving the lives of others and was awarded the Military Medal for his act of bravery.

Last week, the Waihi Armistice 100 group met with two of Ben's descendants, Ashley Smith of Katikati and Danny Thorn of Auckland, to talk about Ben's story.

Waihi RSA secretary and treasurer Cliff Hayward MBE, along with the 6 Hauraki Association president in Tauranga, Des Anderson, also spoke to the audience on Wednesday at Banana Pepper.

Danny Thorn's father was Ben's half-brother, and he had little information about him before he started to investigate.

"Both Tom and Ben had written postcards to their little brother Georgie, my father, who kept them all those years in a battered old shoebox under the bed," Thorn said.

"There was a photo of them, standing side by side, in their crisp new military uniforms. They looked smart and similar, but not the same."

Thorn travelled to Ypres in Belgium last November for the centenary of his uncle's death.

He found no grave, but Ben's name was on the Roll of Honour among the Cloisters.

"I retraced his final steps those few hundred metres up from Scott's Post to the foot of the butte," Thorn said.

"Today one can still clearly see the outline of the openings into the tunnel and the spot where he was killed. It's on the left side.

"From up on top of the butte one overlooks the entire scene."

Great-nephew Ashley also retraced Ben's journey during World War I with the help of a cousin.

He then travelled to the Western Front with friends, who all went to pay respects to their ancestors lost in the Great War.

"Ben and Tom went to war together, and the sad part is that Ben was killed when the war was nearly over. Terribly sad.

"Being in Passchendaele, you see how war is really stupid, with so many lives lost," he said.

Along with nearly 10,000 other soldiers, Ben's portrait will be displayed during the Armistice special centennial commemoration from November 9-11 at Waihi Memorial Hall.

More than 2000 poppies have been knitted by community groups and individuals across town.

## 3/6 Battalion RNZIR



The 3/6 Bn combat shooting team ready for action.



## **COMMITTEE 2018- 2019**

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**Museum Curator:** David Cross

This newsletter is compiled by Des Anderson, President, of the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Hauraki) Regimental Association Incorporated. It contains many personal views and comments which the views of the Association or Committee may not always be.

If for any reason you would like to be removed from the mailing list, please send an email to [des.anderson@actrix.co.nz](mailto:des.anderson@actrix.co.nz) with the word 'remove' in the subject line or body

## 6th Battalion (Hauraki) Regimental Association Incorporated

### Application Form

New Membership  
**Full**

Renewal Membership  
**Associate**

Regimental Number

Date of birth

Full Name

Partners name (if applicable)

Full Postal Address

Telephone Number (home)  
Mobile

Business  
Email

Brief resume of service with 6 Hauraki  
(Include dates & appointments)

Highest Rank Held

Service in other Units

(If Associate member - your association to 6 Hauraki Assoc.)

### OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Joined

Receipt Number

Membership Number

This information is collected for the purpose of the 6 Battalion (Hauraki) Regimental Association Incorporated and is strictly Confidential. It will not be supplied to any other person or organisation in compliance with the Privacy Act.

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**91 Windsor Road Tauranga**

Electronic payment to 6th Battalion Hauraki Regimental Assn:

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