



AUSTRALIA'S LOGISTICAL AND COMMISSARIAT SUPPORT IN THE NEW ZEALAND WARS, 1863-66

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The year 1863 marks the high-water mark in Australian military involvement across the Tasman. The events of 1863, though less so in 1864 (particularly when looking at reactions to the second military settler recruiting mission), were supported by majority public sentiment in Australia, as well as by both the colonial and imperial authorities. The co-operation New Zealand received from Australia's imperial military, and civil representatives, enabled the scale and success of the campaigns that took place during 1863-64. This willingness, though again sometimes grudging and with an eye to colonial self interest evident during the Taranaki War (1860-61), saw Australian colonial governments once more interact with the imperial authorities and New Zealand government, ensuring a diverse array of military, commissariat and logistical support. Governor George Grey in a speech at the opening of the New Zealand Parliament on 19 October 1863 elaborated on his colony's request for military aid and the reaction of the Australian colonies. "The neighbouring colonies, to which I applied for such military aid ... have rendered every assistance in their power; and my thanks are in a special manner due to the Governor of Tasmania for the great promptitude with which every available soldier was despatched ... to this colony."² Such sentiments though only just begin to touch upon the true size and significance of Australia's involvement in New Zealand during 1863-66. It was during these years that the greatest volume of manpower and war materials and supplies were derived from Australia, and all this input allowed the enormous imperial and colonial war machine amassed by Governor Grey to attempt to conquer the North Island regions of the Waikato and Taranaki. This article therefore seeks to draw attention to this diverse array of logistical and commissariat aspects of these wars for which the Australian colonies played such a highly significant role.

The Australian contribution

During 1863-64, the Australian colonies again showed their geographical and practical importance by being able to supply quantities of arms, ammunitions, and a vast array of commissariat and logistical material to satisfy New Zealand's war needs. This was vital in the early stages of the developing conflict when taking into account the distance and time involved in seeking sources of manpower and military paraphernalia from Britain or other far flung points in the empire. While all these military preparations were taking place, the war also created a demand for a range of imports such as oats and "breadstuffs" to the benefit of Australian commercial activities and shipping.³ In December 1863 the *Launceston Examiner* provided some explanation from New Zealand for these initial commercial fortunes:

A great proportion of the shipping has brought down the provisions and supplies which the native war has rendered necessary: for whilst our population is increased by continual arrivals, our supplies of grain and produce from the native districts have almost ceased since the commencement of the war, and many of the

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- ¹ Previous articles on this period by Jeff Hopkins-Weise include "New Zealand's Colonial Defence Force (Cavalry) and its Australian Context, 1863-66", *Sabretache* September 2002, pp. 23-39 and "New Zealand's Armed Constabulary and its Australian Context, 1867-72," *Sabretache*, December 2002, pp. 19-38.
 - ² New Zealand: Parliamentary Debates: 1861 to 1863 (Wellington: G. Didsbury, Government Printer, 1886), pp. 733-734, 738, & 754; & also refer to, G.W. Rusden, *History of New Zealand: Volume II* (Melbourne: Melville, Mullen & Slade, 1895), p.245.
 - ³ For an example of this, refer to "Commercial" news, *Launceston Examiner*, 1 September 1863, p.4.

European settlers have been prevented from tilling their lands, as well as by the inroads of the natives, as by the necessary demands upon them for military service. Instead of exporting ... considerable quantities of grain, flour, and potatoes, we are [now] importing them largely ...⁴

The enormous scale of the military operations resulted in an ever-increasing demand for imported foodstuffs into 1864. Tasmanian newspapers in March 1864 pointed out that there was currently a very large demand for grain in Auckland by the New Zealand Commissariat, noting this department's current consumption at 25,000 bushels per month, and with respect to oats, consumption was exceeding one million pounds per month.⁵ The Australian colonies were therefore in the fortunate geographic and economic position to benefit from the vast commercial demands of New Zealand's wars. This diverse and conveniently located Australian support also allowed the war effort to proceed at a faster pace – something not possible if New Zealand had solely relied on Britain or other outposts of empire.

During this process of rapid militarisation in 1863 the New Zealand government was to find itself deficient in a whole range of military materials such as uniforms, equipment, tentage, weaponry, accoutrements and ammunitions. Australia became the convenient locale from which to obtain the requisite military materials to supply its expanding war machine.⁶ Britain did of course become an important arsenal from which New Zealand received military logistical and manpower assistance, so integral to the large-scale military campaigns of 1863-64 and the associated influx of imperial military force.⁷ Yet as occurred during the Taranaki War, Australia was vital in the overall expansion of military capability. This was especially evident in the initial stages of campaigning, when aid and support from England and elsewhere was often many months away and the proximity and promptitude of Australian support became so vital to New Zealand's immediate and short-term military requirements.

Tasmanian support

Brigadier-General Chute and other officers arrived in Hobart from Melbourne on 30 May 1863 on an official tour of inspection accompanied by Colonel Kempt, 12th Regiment, commanding Her Majesty's forces in Tasmania. To assist in the military build up in New Zealand a number of officers of the Ordnance and Commissariat Departments were ordered to depart as soon as possible, as was 100 tons of commissariat stores including a number of canvas tents, foodstuffs and building materials.⁸ In Hobart on 9 June the *Louisa* was loaded with these stores, including Ordnance Officers A.C. McDuff and H. Potter, before sailing for Auckland on 15 June.⁹

On 31 July 1863, the Tasmanian Colonial Secretary received a request for 500 Enfield rifles and accoutrements as well as any revolvers that might be available from the New Zealand Colonial Secretary's Office. The Tasmanian Colonial Secretary quickly brought this before Tasmania's military authorities who acted to fulfil New Zealand's request. Tasmanian authorities were able to provide the

4 *Launceston Examiner*, 19 December 1863, p.4.

5 *Launceston Examiner*, 19 March 1864, p.4.

6 "A.-No.6: Further Papers Relating to the Military Defence of New Zealand: Memorandum on Measures of Defence in Northern Island", *Journal of the House of Representatives of New Zealand: 1863* (Auckland), p.1 of A.-No.6; & also refer to, F. Glen, *For Glory and a Farm: The Story of Australia's Involvement in the New Zealand Wars of 1860-66* (Whakatane, NZ: Whakatane & District Historical Society, 1985), p.38.

7 Examples of press accounts of the military build up derived from England found in, *Sydney Morning Herald* [hereafter abbreviated as SMH], 28 January 1864, p.8; & 4 March 1864, p.5.

8 *Mercury*, 1 June; 2 June; & 4 June 1863.

9 *Mercury*, 10 June; 15 June; & 16 June 1863; & *South Australian Register* [hereafter abbreviated as SAR], 25 June 1863.

500 rifles and accoutrements promptly, but only a quantity of smooth-bore pistols as no revolvers were available. The *Reliance* received this consignment of weapons, sailing for Auckland on 5 August.¹⁰

It is important to acknowledge another request for Tasmanian military assistance that came from the Superintendent of Otago in June 1863. External defence fears were felt throughout the Australasian colonies as a result of the civil war raging in America (1861-65) and Britain's ambiguous attitude to the Confederacy and tensions with the Union, apart from concerns about other events fomenting in Europe and the Pacific. The provincial authorities of Otago felt particularly vulnerable so wanted to establish defences for the harbour of Otago as well as the town of Dunedin to ward off attacks by privateers. The Superintendent of Otago approached the Tasmanian governor with the request that they "may be supplied with two or three useful pieces of Ordnance of the largest size and the most approved construction that can be spared, together with the necessary shot and other material".¹¹ A reply on 16 July pointed out that as Hobart Town and Launceston "are very imperfectly defended" it was regretted in this instance that Tasmania was unable to meet the wishes of Superintendent of Otago.¹²

During February 1864 the Commissariat Department in Hobart supplied additional stores for New Zealand. The schooner *Annie* was loaded with these commissariat stores at Constitution Dock with the aid of a gang of prisoners and took several days to complete before clearing for the Waikato on 5 February.¹³ Following this vessel's return to Hobart the *Mercury* provided an account of the *Annie*'s arrival at Waikato and the intense activity being carried out at this vital New Zealand port:

Captain Fisher ... speaks very highly of the officials in charge at Waikato, by whose co-operation and assistance he was enabled to lighter nearly three hundred tons of cargo in five days. ... The ships *Beautiful Star*, *Alexandra*, *Albatross*, and *Sea Gull*, also arrived with stores while the *Annie* was in harbor. Captain Fisher attributes his quick dispatch to the effective service rendered by Mr. Jones, the commissariat officer in charge, and also by Mr. Simpson the officer in charge of the dockyards. The officers of the detachment of the 1st Waikato Regiment stationed at the harbor, also rendered every assistance, ... Captain Fisher says that while he was at Waikato, 100 of the 1st Volunteer Regiment were stationed there with three officers and there were about 100 people employed in the dockyards. There are extensive wharves in course of construction, and several very large store houses are being built, as it is expected that fully 10,000 tons of provisions will shortly arrive at Waikato, which is to be the principal commissariat depot.¹⁴

Further evidence of the quantity and variety of materials made available for use by Tasmanian authorities is evident in early April 1864 when the Hobart Town Commissariat Office advertised for tenders for commissariat supplies for "Military Service". This was not only to supply 10,000 bushels of feed oats, five tons of fine flour, and 2000 bushels of bran of the best quality, but also to provide shipping direct to the Commissariat facilities at "Manakau Harbor" before the end of the month.¹⁵ The Hobart Commissariat Office called additional tenders for "Military Service" towards the end of April. One was for the conveyance from Hobart to the Commissariat Depot at Onehunga of 75 tons of flour, 4000 bushels of oats, 3000 bushels of bran, and two tons of biscuits.¹⁶ Another was for the conveyance of approximately 180 tons of military stores from Hobart to Auckland. These stores consisted of 3200 loose shells, shot and shells packed in boxes, and some "18 to 20 tons of filled cannon cartridges,

10 CSD 4/85/411. Colonial Secretary: Gore Browne Period. Correspondence File: 411. Archives Office of Tasmania [hereafter abbreviated as AOT]; & *The Mercury*, 5 & 6 August 1863.

11 GO 19/1. (Despatches received from the Governors of Other Colonies & States: 17 Nov. 1862 - 30 Dec. 1899): Letter from Province of Otago New Zealand, Superintendents Office, Dunedin, 29 June 1863, to Col. Thomas Gore Browne, C.B., Governor of Tasmania. AOT.

12 Ibid..

13 *Mercury*, 2, 4, & 6 February 1864.

14 *Mercury*, 21 March 1864.

15 *Launceston Examiner*, 9 April 1864, p.5.

16 *Mercury*, 26 April 1864.

packed in metal boxes, for which a Magazine will be fitted in the vessel by the Royal Engineer Department".¹⁷

New South Wales support

Following correspondence with Brigadier General Chute on New Zealand's 6 June 1863 request for more troops and Armstrong artillery pieces, the Governor of New South Wales, Sir John Young, replied to Grey on 9 July outlining the colony's current position:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch of 6th June last, and learn with extreme concern that disturbances of a serious nature have again broken out in New Zealand.

2. This concern on my part is enhanced by the knowledge that the scanty garrison in quarters in Sydney cannot afford you reinforcements. I have along with my responsible advisers carefully considered all the bearings of the question and have very reluctantly come to the conclusion that no troops can possibly be spared from this Colony. Already as you are aware half the Infantry and more than half the Artillery have been despatched to New Zealand.¹⁸

This initial reticence to provide additional troops and arms, especially in light of the large contributions made during 1860, softened in August 1863 after the arrival of an official New Zealand government party headed by the Native Minister the Hon. Mr Dillon Bell.¹⁹ The arrival of such a formal party tasked to obtain a range of military and logistical supplies and to commence the recruitment of military settlers stirred New South Wales authorities to support as best they could all such endeavours. In correspondence to Grey on 18 August, Young was now able to state:

I have the honor to inform you in answer to your communications that I have in accordance with your request given Mr. Dillon Bell all the aid and countenance in my power.

2. The Ministers have liberally afforded him arms and ammunition from the Colonial Magazines and accorded him every facility for recruiting.
3. A further detachment of fifty men from Her Majesty's 12th Regiment embarks for New Zealand this day, ...²⁰

In August the New South Wales government directed the Colonial Storekeeper to send 1000 rifles and 200 breech-loading carbines to New Zealand.²¹ These weapons were conveyed on the *Claud Hamilton*. Before proceeding to sea this ship also took on board 150 barrels of cartridge powder from the powder magazine at Goat Island.²² On 24 September the *Novelty* departed Sydney for Auckland with another seventy-two packages of ammunition.²³ Then on 25 September, the *Lord Ashley* conveying from Sydney to Auckland the New Zealand government officials and recruiters and forty military settler volunteers, carried "40 cases firearms" from the Colonial Storekeeper.²⁴

17 *Mercury*, 30 April 1864.

18 NG/26: Copies of letters to officials & Private Persons 25 Jan.1855 - 25 March 1890: Despatch dated Sydney, 9 July 1863, pp.104-105; & also refer to Despatch dated Sydney, 30 June 1863, p.103. Archives Office of New South Wales [hereafter abbreviated as AONSW].

19 SMH, 14 August 1863, p.6.

20 NG/26: Despatch dated Sydney, 18 August 1863, p.110. AONSW.

21 SMH, 17 August 1863, p.4.

22 Among the cargo manifest of this vessel were "1 case revolvers, 56 cases arms, 30 cases accoutrements, 102 cases rifles, [and] 21 cases carbines" from the Colonial Storekeeper and "3 cases ammunition, 200 barrels powder, [and] 12 cases", from the Commissariat. SMH, 20 August 1863, pp. 4 & 5.

23 SMH, 25 September 1863, p.4.

24 SMH, 26 September 1863, p.6.

Governor Young also saw that two Armstrong artillery pieces were prepared for despatch to New Zealand. On 16 September he asked Commodore Wiseman of HMS *Curacoa*, whether apart from the 12th Regiment reinforcements from the Sydney garrison, he could also take these guns "with the requisite ammunition which the Colonial Treasurer prepared to place at your disposal".²⁵ HMS *Curacoa* departed Sydney on 22 September in company of another Royal Navy vessel HMS *Eclipse*, which was towing the Sydney constructed gunboat *Waikato*.²⁶ Apart from the 12th Regiment reinforcements and artillery pieces aboard this small New Zealand bound convoy, the gunboat was also loaded with a considerable quantity of other military stores.²⁷ An 1873 account of the war recalled how the two 40-pounder Armstrong guns "lent to the Colony by the Sydney government" were soon in action when they were placed in position to command the landing place at Meremere in late October 1863.²⁸

Sydney constructed gunboats

New South Wales was also a location with the requisite maritime construction capabilities to supply some of New Zealand's requirements for purpose built shallow-draft and highly manoeuvrable vessels capable of operating on the vast and difficult waterways of the North Island. These river gunboats became the first Australian built and exported vessels of war. The initial vessel was the iron sternwheel paddle steamer initially known as Gunboat No.3, as well as *Waikato*, which after arrival in New Zealand was formally named *Pioneer*. This vessel was reported as costing £9000 to complete and during July to September 1863 the progress of its construction by the A.S.N. Company works in Sydney, as well as its unique characteristics for defence, attracted much reportage in Australia.²⁹ On 15 September the *Sydney Morning Herald* in a detailed account of the completion of this gunboat, reviewed events:

Some five or six months ago, when the military commanders engaged in the Maori war had become aware of the necessity or great advantage of penetrating the centre of rebel Maoridom by effecting a passage up the rivers ... The New Zealand Government at once looked to New South Wales for such a vessel, and overtures were made through Mr. E.O. Moriarty, the Engineer for Rivers and Harbours, who commissioned with the Australasian Steam Navigation Company on the subject, and found them prepared to undertake the construction of a gunboat of the required description. Mr. T. Macarthur, the Company's chief engineer, was entrusted with the work, and in ... seventeen weeks the vessel was afloat ... Leaving out of notice the excellence of the workmanship, it must be a source of gratification to New South Wales that she has a firm capable of building a vessel like this to meet such an urgent emergency, when we consider that it would require some sixteen to eighteen months to import one from the mother country.³⁰

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- 25 NG/26: Despatch dated Sydney, 16 September 1863, p.114. AONSW. Young also confirmed arrangements for these guns with Commodore Wiseman prior to his departure for Auckland. Refer to, NG/26: Despatch dated Sydney, 21 September 1863, p.116. AONSW.
- 26 SMH, 22 September, pp.4 & 5; 23 September, p.4; & 26 September 1863, p.9.
- 27 The *Waikato's* cargo consisted of various munitions including "60 cases shot and shell, 600 cartridges for the 24-pounders, 1000 tubes, 10,000 Terry's rifle cartridges, 12,000 caps, 18,000 revolver cartridges, and about 100 loose shot." SMH, 22 September 1863, p.4; *Argus*, 26 September 1863, p.7; & *Courier*, 22 & 23 September 1863.
- 28 J.E. Alexander, *Bush Fighting: Illustrated by Remarkable Actions and Incidents of: The Maori War in New Zealand* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Low and Searle, 1873), p.92; & SMH, 21 November 1863, p.13.
- 29 Refer to: *Argus*, 24 July 1863, p.6; *Mercury*, 17 July; 28 July; & 21 September 1863; *Launceston Examiner*, 21 July 1863, p.4; & SMH, 28 August, p.5; & 11 September 1863, p.4.
- 30 The *Herald* also provided details of the construction, dimensions & propulsion of this gunboat. SMH, 15 September, p.4; & 21 September 1863, p.3; & also found in, *Argus*, 22 September 1863, p.6; & *Mercury*, 28 September 1863.

For this vessel's journey, preparations were also undertaken for obtaining crew for the *Pioneer*. Glen has previously observed:

The New Zealand Defence Minister ... issued instructions to Captain Mayne RN, ... commanding HMS *Eclipse*, to proceed to Sydney to supervise the completion, arming and crewing of the vessel. Mayne left before the end of August 1863 to engage a crew, "as many as you may deem necessary", and to purchase the small arms required. Under his supervision, Captain Breton was appointed to command and Lieutenant W.G. O'Callaghan ... was chosen as First Officer. In the carrying out of these instructions Mayne selected a crew from the Sydney area, many of whom had Royal Navy experience. There seems little doubt that New Zealand's river gunboats were not only built by Australians but also had at least one crewed by them.³¹

As part of this process advertisements for a chief officer were placed in Sydney during August, and in the following month tenders were called from insurance companies or underwriters "willing to insure the *Waikato* Gunboat, on her voyage from Sydney to New Zealand".³² For the voyage across the Tasman the crew consisted of Captain G.R. Breton, Lieutenant W.G.P. O'Callaghan³³, Chief Engineer Mr Jeffrey, and a crew of twenty-five other officers and men. Apart from the various armour and associated defensive superstructure installed on this vessel the crew were supplied with "a breach-loading rifle, and a revolver and Cutlass".³⁴ Later in November a letter to Sydney from the Chief Engineer detailed events that unfolded for most of the Australian enlisted crew with the vessel's takeover by the Royal Navy shortly after their arrival:

Since I wrote to you last, a good many changes have taken place with the gunboat, and everybody connected with her, some of them, I am sorry to say, not very creditable to the parties concerned with it. Two or three days after we arrived here the Commodore refused to have anything to do with her unless she was handed over to the Imperial Government. This the New Zealand Government would not consent to—however, after a great deal of talk and letter-writing, the Governor took it upon himself to hand her over without the consent of the Ministry ... On the 16th October, she was formally handed over to the Imperial authorities, and all hands discharged. I was the only one they asked to remain with her, which, after seeing the Minister of War and Mr. Dillon Bell, I declined to do. They have hacked and cut up the boat in such a manner that you would scarcely know her, and would think shame to own that you ever had anything to do with her. They took the second and third engineers of the [HMS] *Eclipse* and put them in her. The day before she was to leave for the *Waikato* they got up steam and had a turn about the harbour. Next morning they left ... and had only been away about two hours when they burnt the boilers and burst the donkey engine pump, and had to be towed back by the *Eclipse*. They had all the men they could get from the ships, and the shore, working night and day for eight days before they got her repaired again. They did their best to conceal the whole affair ...³⁵

31 Glen, op.cit., pp.27-28.

32 SMH, 24 August, p.8; 25 August, p.8; 18 September, p.1; 19 September, p.1; & 21 September 1863, p.1.

33 William George Pring O'Callaghan, the son of an admiral, followed his father by entering the Royal Navy in 1855. Here he was to see service in the Baltic during the Crimean War & later in China where he was invalided in 1859. In 1861 he found himself in New Zealand where he decided to settle & left the Navy. In August 1863 the New Zealand government appointed him as unattached Lieutenant in the New Zealand Militia & sent him to Sydney to assist in bringing over the *Pioneer*. Later he was appointed Lieutenant in the Taranaki Militia (March 1864) & served in the Taranaki Military Settlers & Wanganui Rangers. *New Zealand Gazette* [hereafter abbreviated as NZG]: No.43, 27 August 1863, p.360; No.58, 7 November 1863, p.488; & No.9, 12 March 1864, pp.117-118; & T.W. Gudgeon, *The defenders of New Zealand: being a short biography of colonists who distinguished themselves in upholding Her Majesty's supremacy in these islands* (Auckland, NZ: H. Brett, 1887), pp.430-432.

34 SMH, 14 October 1863, p.4; & also refer to, H. Chaloner, "The Historic River Steamer 'Pioneer' ", *Journal of the Auckland Historical Society*, Vol.2, No.1, (Oct.1963), p.14.

35 SMH, 16 November 1863, p.4; & also found in, *Mercury*, 30 November 1863; & *Launceston Examiner*, 3 December 1863, p.4.

On 21 September a considerable variety of munitions was loaded aboard the gunboat. Later that morning Sir Henry Barkly, Governor General Young accompanied by Commodore Wiseman and Lord John Tylour also inspected the vessel – an event heralded by a thirteen-gun salute from HMS *Curacoa* as this party boarded the gunboat. The next day the *Waikato* under tow by HMS *Eclipse*, departed Sydney. Despite a stormy and eventful voyage, both vessels arrived safely at Manukau on 3 October.³⁶

The *Sydney Morning Herald's* "Own Correspondent" on 7 November reported the successful performance of the *Pioneer* in action at Meremere when the vessel came under fire from Maori cannon.³⁷

I am happy to be able to bear testimony to the excellent qualities of the *Pioneer*. She is in many respects as good as possible, and does her work really well. She stood a heavy fire for upwards of two hours from the natives at Meremere, including being battered with the cannon, but showed no signs of injury. She steams well against the stream, doing from seven to eight miles an hour up the river. As the summer advances, there can be no doubt she will be found too large. Her chief fault being her length, which must certainly prove unwieldy when as in the height of summer the stream is almost confined to a narrow and tortuous channel. The small vessels now building in Sydney are expected to obviate this difficulty. One of these will probably be placed on the Thames, the other on the Waikato, and thus both rivers made a base of operations.³⁸

Following the reconnaissance at Meremere on 29 October the *Pioneer* carried out a further mission as far as Rangiriri on 31 October, and thereafter continued providing transportation for troops, stores and artillery wherever required. In December 1866 it was berthed at Port Waikato when it slipped its moorings and drifted out to sea before being detected. An attempt was made to rescue the vessel but despite some efforts these failed and the *Pioneer* was wrecked on the Manukau bar.³⁹

To add to the fleet being assembled for the water transport services, the New Zealand government decided upon the construction of two further iron gunboats. The tender for these two vessels was awarded to the Sydney firm of P.N. Russell and Co., and to allow for prompt delivery, these vessels were to be supplied as pre-fabricated sections which could be assembled on site in New Zealand. James Stewart, a Civil Engineer from Auckland who designed them, arrived in Sydney in October 1863 to superintend their construction. Stewart's design of these vessels took into account the need to turn easily in waters little more than their own projected lengths. They would also have a single paddle wheel so as to reduce their beam as well as armament and superstructures arranged so as to offer the best possible cover of both the river and its banks.⁴⁰ The *Sydney Morning Herald* noted:

of a smaller size than the last one built by the A.S.N. Co. These boats are to be about eighty feet long by twenty feet wide, to be propelled by steam (stem wheel); are to be put together here, taken away in frame

36 SMH, 22 September, pp.4 & 5; 23 September, p.4; 26 September, p.9; & 14 October 1863, p.4; *Argus*, 26 September 1863, p.7; *Mercury*, 22 October 1863; & Chaloner, op.cit., p.14.

37 For accounts of the use of the *Pioneer* at Meremere & other service thereafter, refer to: NZG, No.58, 7 November 1863, pp.486-487; J.E. Gorst, "Our New Zealand Conquests", *Macmillan's Magazine*, Vol.12, (May 1865 - Oct.1865), p.169; & Alexander, op.cit., pp.91-92.

38 SMH, 21 November 1863, p.13.

39 John Featon, *The Waikato War: 1863-4* [1879] (Reprint. Christchurch, NZ: Capper Press, 1971), p.55; Chaloner, op.cit., p.15; & R.D. Campbell, *Captain Cadell and the Waikato Flotilla* (Wellington, NZ: Maritime Publications, 1985), p.26.

40 SMH, 6 October 1863, p.4; J. Cowan, *The New Zealand Wars: A History of the Maori Campaigns and the Pioneering Period: Vol.1: (1845-1864)* (Wellington, NZ: W.A.G. Skinner, Government Printer, 1922), p.303; Glen, op.cit., p.28; & G. Howard, *Portrait of the Royal New Zealand Navy: A Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration* (Wellington, NZ: Grantham House, 1991), p.7.

direct to the Waikato River, and there to be rebuilt. These are, in all probability, but the pioneers of several others to be constructed for the river Thames and Wairoa.⁴¹

The P.N. Russell Engineering and Foundry Works in Sydney manufactured the pre-fabricated sections for these two gunboats during late 1863 and early 1864. Peter Nicol Russell established this firm in Sydney in 1842, which by the 1860s had developed into a major engineering and foundry business. It was capable of major iron and brass foundry, engineering, boilermaker and blacksmith works, and possessed various branch works and wharves, manufacturing goods from dredges to railway rolling stock.⁴² Earlier in 1845 the firm had been of assistance to the imperial forces being amassed for service in the Bay of Islands by manufacturing a small batch of Coehorn mortars.

The first of these pre-fabricated paddle steamers to be constructed was the *Koheroa*, which after a mere six weeks was ready for shipment. On 15 December 1863 the *Beautiful Star* departed Sydney with Engineer James Stewart as passenger and carrying the sections of the *Koheroa*, and a shipment of coal for New Zealand, arriving in the Waikato eight days later. The pre-fabricated sections of the *Koheroa* were then assembled at the dockyard facilities at Port Waikato where it was expected that in a short time "the little vessel" would be "ploughing the shallow waters of the Waipa, and accompanying the troops on their march with provisions and ammunition".⁴³ James Stewart also brought with him from Sydney additional tradesmen for the construction work. The *Herald's* "Own Correspondent" reported the *Koheroa* "is being rapidly put together by the citizens brought over by" Stewart at Port Waikato.⁴⁴

Completion of the *Koheroa* did not take place as rapidly as expected though Stewart was "quite sanguine of having the gunboat ready to go up the river by the 22nd January".⁴⁵ It was not until early February 1864 before the boat was in a state of readiness to undertake its first trial trip. Pressures to have the vessel ready for service were greatly increased when the gunboat *Avon* hit a submerged tree and sank on the Waipa River in early February. This situation necessitated the *Koheroa* be hastily readied in an incomplete manner as a replacement to ease the potential supply crisis faced by General Cameron's advancing troops.⁴⁶ During March 1864 the importance of the riverboats was shown when the *Koheroa* and the refloated *Avon* were able to penetrate the Horotui River in the immediate neighbourhood of the major Maori defensive positions at Piko Piko and Paterangi. This was even the more remarkable as "the drought ... has rendered the Waipa barely navigable, even for the *Koheroa*, to any where near Te Awamutu. The cannon and ammunition for the troops in the attacking column have been conveyed in the steamers, as also the provisions, with the exception of potatoes, of which the crop in the district is large."⁴⁷ Later in November 1865 the *Koheroa* foundered near Rahuipokeka (Huntly) but was raised in October 1866 after which the engines were removed and the vessel was hulked at Port Waikato. By 1867 it was reported as being just an iron shell.⁴⁸

41 SMH, 6 October 1863, p.5; & *Mercury*, 21 October 1863.

42 N. Selfe, "Annual Address to the Engineering Section", *Journal and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New South Wales*, Vol.34, (1900), pp.xxiii-xxiv, & xxvii-xxviii; & "Sir Peter Nicol Russell: A Great Engineer. The Story of His Life and Work", *The Australasian Engineer*, Vol.41, No.303, (7 Aug.1941), p.10.

43 SMH, 15 December, p.4; & 16 December 1863, p.5; & 8 January 1864, p.5; & *Argus*, 2 January, p.6; & 13 January 1864, p.5.

44 SMH, 22 January 1864, p.8.

45 SMH, 18 January 1864, p.4; & *Argus*, 8 February 1864, p.4.

46 SMH, 12 February, p.5; & 17 February 1864, p.4; Featon, op.cit., pp.75-76; J. O'C. Ross, *The White Ensign in early New Zealand* (Wellington, NZ: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1967), p.89; & J. Belich, *The New Zealand Wars: and the Victorian interpretation of racial conflict* (Auckland, NZ: Penguin Books, 1988), p.161.

47 SMH, 11 April 1864, p.5.

48 Campbell, op.cit., p.26.

The second of the Sydney pre-fabricated gunboats was the *Rangiriri*. The sections of this vessel were also loaded aboard the *Beautiful Star*, departing Sydney in February 1864. Upon arrival the *Rangiriri* was assembled at Port Waikato and was finally able to join the *Koheroa* in March. In August 1864 the *Rangiriri* and the *Pioneer* brought up personnel of the 4th Waikato Regiment to the location where the military settler community of Hamilton was established. The *Rangiriri* was to remain in New Zealand Government service until 1870. In 1890 the *Rangiriri* was abandoned alongside the riverbank at Hamilton where in 1982 the remains were raised and placed there as a historic monument.⁴⁹

Victorian support

In 1863 Victoria became a source for additional artillery pieces, when a battery of Armstrong artillery, the property of the Victorian government, was transferred to New Zealand. This occurred following negotiations initiated in Melbourne after the arrival of Colonel G.D. Pitt (via Sydney) with the New Zealand government party.⁵⁰ *The Argus* on 25 August revealed that Governor Grey had already sent a number of requests for military assistance since June:

Mr. Verdun stated that an application, dated June ... had been received ... urging that all the military assistance the colony could send should be sent. In reply, the New Zealand Government were informed that the Ministry were unwilling to give a decided answer, in the unsettled state of affairs between the Imperial Government and America, until the arrival of the then incoming mail. A second urgent application had been made ... in July, and a third bore date the 3rd of the present month. Both of these letters had been accidentally detained in Sydney, and had only reached Melbourne by the last mail. In reply, Major-General Chute had recommended to His Excellency that one-half of the whole artillery and infantry force in the colony ... should be sent to Auckland, and that one half of the battery of Armstrong guns, the property of the colony should be lent to the New Zealand Government.⁵¹

Victorian government ministers, however, went further and proposed the whole of the imperial garrison should be sent, and that the whole battery of six guns should be loaned to the New Zealand government if so requested. Glen, surmising on the debate which took place for these six Armstrong guns stated:

The Chief Secretary indicated that the battery of six guns ... in the Colonial Military Store in Melbourne were ready for use if required. The status of this battery became the source of much debate over that week. New Zealand had asked the Victorians for a "half battery" of Armstrong 12 pounders to establish their own artillery within the Militia. ... To order guns from England would involve a long and protracted sea journey; to request guns from Victoria was obvious. ... If these guns went to New Zealand, argued the Assembly, there was virtually no coastal defences in Victoria. ... After much debate, the Assembly decided half a battery was neither use nor ornament, and by the same token about as useful as throwing stones to the New Zealand Government. In their argument the Victorians made a virtue out of a pressing New Zealand necessity.⁵²

The military authorities issued orders on 27 August for the immediate despatch of the majority of the 40th Regiment and Royal Artillery personnel stationed in Victoria. The battery of Royal Artillery ordered for New Zealand was to also "take with them the six iron Armstrong 12-pounder guns, with equipment, ammunition, &c., ready for immediate service."⁵³ It was actually not until November after the terms of sale had been finalised before this complete battery of six Armstrong guns with

49 SMH, 13 February, p.7; 15 February, p.4; & 10 March 1864, p.5; S.A. Bryant, "Birth of Hamilton in 1864: Pioneers reminiscences and life in early days: by Sarah Ann Bryant, written in 1939", *Auckland-Waikato Historical Journal*, No.30, (April 1977), pp.9-10; E.A. Butt, "Romantic History of the Waikato", *Journal of the Auckland Historical Society*, No.4, (April 1964), p.5; Ross, op.cit., p.89; & Campbell, op.cit., p.26.

50 *Argus*, 22 August 1863, pp.4 & 5.

51 *Argus*, 26 August 1863, p.5; also refer to pp.4 & 6.

52 Glen, op.cit., p.16.

53 *Argus*, 28 August 1863, p.4.

ammunition and stores was despatched aboard the troopship *Himalaya*.⁵⁴ New Zealand parliamentary papers indicate that £3,592 1s. 8d. was paid to the government of Victoria for these guns through New Zealand's Crown Agent in London in 1864.⁵⁵

South Australian support

Following a written request from New Zealand the South Australian government in November 1863 consented to supply 500 long Enfield rifles lying in the Adelaide Armoury, after "having gone carefully into the question".⁵⁶ In January 1864, 120 rifles were also despatched to New Zealand via Melbourne aboard the *Coorong*.⁵⁷ As late as June 1866 the superintendent of the Adelaide Armoury was able to place on the table of the South Australian Legislative Council a "Receipt and Disposition of Small Arms". This indicated weapons sent comprised 525 "Rifled Muskets, Enfield Pattern, 1853" and one "Rifled Carbines, Westley Richards's Breech Loaders".⁵⁸

South Australian riverboats and the services of Captain Cadell

South Australia also became very important as a place where New Zealand could purchase riverboats for use in the vast waterways that were so heavily impacting on military campaigning in the Waikato and other North Island regions. Some of the riverboats that saw service with New Zealand's River Transport Service arrived indirectly, while others were purchased specifically for war requirements. Apart from useful riverboats, New Zealand was able to enlist the services and inland waterway expertise of Captain Francis Cadell to operate its growing flotilla of rivercraft.

Captain Cadell was one of the principal pioneers of river navigation and transport on the Murray River. Mennell's 1892 biographical entry on Cadell's life outlined that he

was born [in Britain] in 1822, and educated at Edinburgh and in Germany. He entered as a midshipman on board an East Indiaman, and took part in the first Chinese war, ... At twenty-two he was in command of a vessel, and meanwhile visited the ship-building yards of the Tyne and Clyde, gaining a thorough knowledge of naval architecture and the construction of steam engines. He studied the subject of river navigation after a visit to the Amazon; and in 1848, when he arrived in Australia, his attention was drawn to the practicability of navigating the Murray and its tributaries, ... Encouraged by the Governor of South Australia (Sir H.F. Young), he put his project into execution. ... His subsequent career was chequered and adventurous, and his end tragic and mysterious.⁵⁹

In June 1863 Cadell sold his last remaining riverboat *Wakool* to New Zealand, most probably for financial reasons, though this vessel was not utilised for military purposes and was later wrecked in 1865 in the South Island.⁶⁰ He received a telegram on 15 February 1864 from Colonel Pitt who had arrived in Victoria to recommence military settler recruiting. Pitt requested he see the New Zealand

54 *Argus*, 9 November 1863, p.4; 9 November 1863, p.4; & 7 December 1863, p.5.

55 "B.-No.2a: Papers Respecting The One Million Loan", Journals of the House of Representatives of New Zealand: 1864 (Auckland).

56 SAR, 30 November 1863.

57 SAR, 13 January 1864.

58 Proceedings of the Parliament of South Australia: 1866-7: Volume 1 (Adelaide: W.C. Cox, Government Printer, 1867), pp.2, 3, & 5; & Proceedings of the Parliament of South Australia: 1866-7: Volume II (Adelaide: W.C. Cox, Government Printer, 1867), "No. 34. Receipt and Disposition of Small Arms".

59 P. Mennell, *The Dictionary of Australasian Biography: Comprising notices of eminent colonists: ... [1855-1892]* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1892), pp.75-76. For other information on Cadell, refer to: *Argus*, 31 October 1862, p.7; 30 August 1879, p.9; & 15 March 1880, p.7; J.W. Bull, Early experiences of life in South Australia, and an extended colonial history (Adelaide: E.S. Wigg & Son, 1884), p.318; & I. Mudie, *Riverboats* (Adelaide: Rigby Limited, 1961), pp.36-45, 46-54, 55-61, & 66.

60 SAR, 26 June; & 12 August 1863; Campbell, op.cit., pp.9 & 25; & Mudie, op.cit., pp.54 & 56.

government agent J.C. Firth once he arrived, no doubt to seek advice on securing additional riverboats for New Zealand service, but also to obtain Cadell's services in the Waikato.⁶¹ The *South Australian Register* on 16 March 1864 stated:

We are glad to hear that our old friend Captain Cadell, who opened up the Murray to the trade of the colonies, has proceeded to New Zealand, under engagement with Colonel Pitt, to examine and report upon the state of the Waikato, with a view to clearing the navigation of that river, and rendering rapid the steam service for the transport of provisions and warlike stores for Her Majesty's troops. We are sure that all who know Captain Cadell will wish him success in his arduous, and, in the present state of the New Zealand war, most important undertaking.⁶²

In New Zealand Cadell's appointment as superintendent of the River Transport Service was confirmed as commencing from 15 February 1864, and he served in this capacity until 31 January 1866.⁶³

The River Transport Service and the Commissariat Transport Corps utilised a flotilla of various craft. This fleet quickly proved itself crucial for its ability to ferry troops and supplies as well as for communications throughout the difficult waterways traversed during the Waikato campaign. The motley collection of vessels involved included armoured barges, purpose built gunboats, armed steamers or schooners, and other small craft and boats. This "fleet" was operated by a variety of personnel from Royal Navy ships, the British Army, volunteers from the Waikato military settler regiments serving under the guise of the Imperial Commissariat Transport Corps, as well as civilians. The vessels and their crews ensured that imperial and colonial troops could be rapidly moved, and while in the field were able to be fed, clothed and equipped, as well as providing a water route into the heart of Maori-held territory in the Waikato and elsewhere.⁶⁴

During the initial stages of his superintendence in June-July 1864, Cadell was an instrumental figure in the selection of sites for the various military settlements of the men and families of the Waikato regiments. The Colonial Defence Minister writing to Colonel Haultain commanding the 2nd Waikato Regiment, outlined:

The object ... in selecting the sites at the head of the river navigation being to encourage the speedy growth of settlements at points where, from their natural protection, it is certain towns must eventually spring up, where travellers to the interior of the country leave the steamers and where the produce of the Upper Waikato districts would be shipped. ... Captain Cadell ... has been instructed ... to give his assistance and advice as to the points where the rivers ceases to be navigable for steamers.⁶⁵

Following the termination of Cadell's services as superintendent of the River Transport Services, his expected return to Australia was duly reported:

The *Argus* says that 'Capt Francis Cadell, so well known in this colony in connection with the navigation of the Murray and Darling Rivers, has for some two or three years past been superintendent of the steam transport service in Waikato, lately the seat of war in New Zealand. He is about to return to this colony, and we observe that before leaving Auckland he received a very handsome testimonial

61 As a result Cadell decided to go to New Zealand & departed Melbourne on 27 February. *Argus*, 15 January 1864, p.4; & Campbell, op.cit., p.10.

62 SAR, 16 March 1864.

63 Campbell, op.cit., pp.10 & 16.

64 Alexander, op.cit., pp.56-57; Cowan, op.cit., pp. 300-303; Ross, op.cit., pp.85-90; C.W. Vennell, "Early Waikato River Trade", *Auckland-Waikato Historical Journal*, No.39, (Sept.1981), p.11; D. Johnson, *New Zealand's maritime heritage* (Auckland, NZ: William Collins Publishers, in association with David Bateman Ltd, 1987), pp.96-98; & Howard, op.cit., pp.6-8 & 135.

65 "E.-No. 2: Papers Relative to Native Policy, including the following subjects:- ... Military Settlements", *Journals of the House of Representatives of New Zealand: 1864* (Auckland), p.64 of E.-No. 2; & also refer to correspondence on pp. 64-66.

from the officers and men of the service. It consisted of an address, a gold chronometer watch (bearing a suitable inscription), gold albert chain, diamond ring, locket, with likeness of Her Majesty Queen Victoria set in diamonds. The locket contains the likeness of Captain Cadell, by a local artist.⁶⁶

The array of gifts and associated testimonial items indicates the prominence of Captain Cadell in fulfilling his duties. His contributions to the day-to-day logistics which were more easily borne through an efficient river transport service, for both imperial and colonial forces throughout this period, has not yet received the acknowledgment it deserves, despite his vital role throughout these campaigns.⁶⁷

Certain South Australian riverboats were initially purchased for employment in trade and communication services for South Island interests, such as the 120-ton steamer *Sturt*. In June 1863 the *Sturt* received alterations and was prepared for sailing for use by the Nelson and Marlborough Steam Navigation Company. The vessel was despatched from Adelaide on 16 June and arrived at Nelson twelve days later.⁶⁸ In March 1864 New Zealand decided to purchase the steamers *Sturt* and *Prince Alfred* for government service on the Waikato and Waipa Rivers.

The *Sturt* was built for the Murray River ... and for several years was ... employed on that river. She is of exceedingly slight draught, and when her false keel is removed will carry 70 tons with only a draught of three feet six inches. What renders her peculiarly adapted for the rapid current of the Waikato is her great power in proportion to her tonnage, ... we learn the Government intend to run her from the Waikato Heads to *Rangiriri* ...⁶⁹

The *South Australian Register* in reporting the purchase of the *Sturt* and *Prince Alfred* in April pointed out: "It is understood that orders for further purchases of small steamers have been sent to the Australian Colonies".⁷⁰ The *Sturt* continued in service with the New Zealand Government until 1870 when it was wrecked on the Kaiapoi Bar.⁷¹

On 23 February 1864 Mr J.C. Firth, a New Zealand government representative, arrived in South Australia (via Melbourne) looking to purchase steamers. The 90-ton iron paddle steamer *Gundagai* which had been involved in the Murray River trade was subsequently chosen for this task and was purchased for £4250. The *Gundagai* arrived in Adelaide from Goolwa on 13 March where it was overhauled and repaired. The vessel was able to depart on 18 May, travelling first to Launceston, before finally arriving in the Waikato on 9 June.⁷²

The *Gundagai* proved to be one of the most useful boats in the New Zealand government's River Transport Service on the Waikato. In January 1865 its valued services ended on the Waikato River "on which she has done better than any other employed" and she was despatched to penetrate the Wanganui River "and so accompany the troops on the march".⁷³ Lieutenant-General Cameron in a

66 Supplement to the *Adelaide Observer*, 28 April 1866, p.4; & also refer to, Campbell, op.cit., p.17.

67 The New Zealand War Medal was later approved for issue to Cadell for his services during the campaigns of 1864-66. "G.-No.1: Papers Relative to the Issue of the New Zealand War Medal: No.2: Roll A", Appendix to the Journal of House of Representatives of New Zealand: Vol.II: 1871 (Wellington: George Didsbury, Government Printer), p.4 of G.-No.1: & also in, NZG, No.31, 31 May 1871, p.242.

68 SAR, 12 June; 16 June; 17 June; & 30 July 1863.

69 SMH, 29 March 1864, p.5; & also refer to 30 March 1864, p.5.

70 SAR, 6 April 1864; & also refer to, *Mercury*, 5 April 1864.

71 Campbell, op.cit., pp.11, 14-16, 26, & 27.

72 SAR, 23 February; 15 March; 16 March; 17 March; 5 May; 18 May; 19 May; & 16 June 1864; *Mercury*, 2 April 1864; & *Launceston Examiner*, 26 May 1864, p.4.

73 SMH, 12 January 1865, p.5; & *Argus*, 12 January 1865, p.5. For press coverage of this vessel's vital role on the Wanganui River & surrounding West Coast region in early 1865, refer to: SMH, 28 February, p.3; & 9 March 1865, p.8; & Sydney Mail, 11 March 1865, p.11.

report to Governor Grey about military affairs on the West Coast, acknowledged the role played by the *Gundagai* as well as the services of Captain Cadell:

On the night of the 15th, Brigadier-General Waddy marched from the Waitotara, ... [and] crossed the mouth of the Whenuakura ... on the morning of the 16th, and arrived on the left bank of the Patea, where he is now encamped.

On the same night Colonel Weare broke up his camp at Nukumaru, and took up General Waddy's former camp on the Waitotara.

Both the Waitotara and Patea can be entered by steamers of very light draught, and the two camps are supplied by sea from Whanganui, by the Colonial steamers "*Gundagai*" and "*Sandfly*."

I am greatly indebted to the officers in charge of these two vessels, viz.: Mr. Caddell and Mr. Marks, for affording me the means of reconnoitering the coast, and for the zeal and good will with which they perform the important duties of supplying the troops, and keeping up the communications with Whanganui.⁷⁴

The *Gundagai* continued in military and commissariat service on the West Coast during 1865-66 until wrecked while crossing the Patea bar on 25 June 1866.⁷⁵

Another individual who can be documented as having served as part of New Zealand's maritime services, was George Gregory, who unsuccessfully attempted to obtain a late-issue New Zealand War Medal in 1901-02. Individuals such as this are often overlooked as contributing to New Zealand's manpower requirements, as they are not so easily identified as say a military settler or an imperial soldier from Australia's garrison. Gregory was born in Herfordshire, England in 1836 and came to Australia aged fourteen. During his first five years in these colonies he followed a sea-faring life serving aboard a vessel trading between Australian and New Zealand. Temporarily relinquishing the nautical life he went to Namoi, New South Wales and purchased land and settled at Wee Waa. He is said to have later journeyed through Queensland arriving back in Sydney during the outbreak of war in New Zealand from where he journeyed to Auckland (possibly in 1864). In New Zealand he served as a deckhand and fireman aboard the government steamer *Sturt* commanded by Captain Fairchild. During this service he became involved at sea and ashore at Patea and Wanganui on the West Coast, as well as in the aftermath of the Poverty Bay Massacre on the East Coast. Later he returned to New South Wales and took up land at Narrabri in 1870 where he raised a large family. He died in 1913.⁷⁶

Naval coal and chandlery tenders, and shipping for troops, families & military casualties

As with supplying various army needs during the 1860s, the Australian colonies were also a place where commissariat requirements for the Royal Navy were also met. For example the Commissariat in Sydney in December 1864 advertised for tenders to "supply sundry articles of Ship Chandler's Store" for HMS *Miranda*.⁷⁷ In early 1865 contracts were issued by the Commissariat in Sydney "for Supplies

74 NZG, No.13, 25 April 1865, p.124.

75 Campbell, op.cit., pp.10-11, 16, 25, & 26; & Mudie, op.cit., pp.48, 50, & 66.

76 Because of the bias associated with colonial entitlements (as opposed to imperial issuance) & the stipulation to prove either conspicuous service or having come under fire, Gregory, like so many others failed to obtain a medal. Correspondence by him acknowledges real disappointment over this, especially in the knowledge of his participation during the years of renewed conflict for which he failed to obtain this small gesture of appreciation from the New Zealand government. Genealogical history on George Gregory, New Zealand war veteran (serving on government steamer *Sturt* 1866-68), & history of the Gregory family of Narrabri, New South Wales, courtesy of Stan Hannaford (Great Grandson of Nanango, Qld) to this researcher during 1997-99; & AD 1 01/4595 (War Medal application file): Gregory, George: National Archives of New Zealand.

77 SMH, 8 December 1864, p.8.

for Army and Navy Services at Sydney”, from mid 1865 to mid 1866.⁷⁸ Apart from stores the Royal Navy and other shipping firms utilised Australian coal for its steam vessels. Despite unfavourable results of experiments carried out by Commodore Seymour in 1862 on Australian coal on board HMS *Pelorus*, “Perfect Combustion” in a letter to the *Sydney Morning Herald* in August 1863 defended the Australian product.⁷⁹ The *Herald* the next day provided further commentary on Australian coal, maintaining its worth and value for money:

Australian ... coal is the cheapest for use on this station, and the opportunities for experiment on board the *Pelorus*, are not of a kind to give a fair trial. The utility of the colonial coal is sufficiently evidenced, not only by its uniform use in all colonial furnaces, both ashore and afloat, but by the preference given to it by the P. and O. Company ... It is already largely exported to California, to China, and to India, where it bears a high character in competition with coal brought from elsewhere.⁸⁰

The supply of such diverse Royal Navy needs enabled vessels to operate efficiently on the Australia Station as well as to maintain a constant presence in New Zealand waters throughout the 1860s.

Another aspect of Australian involvement was as a place from which shipping for a variety of military purposes could be procured. Apart from the despatch of the various contingents of Imperial troops in 1860 and 1863, shipping was also required for miscellaneous military needs. Tenders were called and charters agreed to return wounded or invalided troops and their families from New Zealand to Australia and then on to England. Shipping was also required to return regiments to England as they were being gradually withdrawn from the New Zealand theatre of operations during 1864-66. One early example occurred in April 1860 when the Tasmanian Steam Navigation Company was reported to be in negotiations with the Victorian government for the conveyance of troops and ammunitions from Melbourne to New Zealand aboard the *City of Hobart*, offered by the firm’s directors at £3500. The company was successful in obtaining the charter and on arrival in Melbourne from Tasmania this vessel embarked a strong detachment of the 40th Regiment bound for Taranaki.⁸¹ In August 1863 the Commissariat in Melbourne was again to call for tenders to transport 173 officers and men, ten wives, fifteen children, three horses and all associated “regulated quantities of baggage” of the 40th Regiment from Melbourne to Auckland.⁸²

Australian ports and facilities were also utilised for military shipping coming to and from England or other destinations – either for repairs, re-supply and fuel materials, or even as a temporary place for troops to disembark before continuing on to New Zealand. Such events occurred with the arrival of the troopship *Himalaya* in Melbourne in November 1863. This vessel was transporting the 50th Regiment from Colombo en route for New Zealand, required re-coaling in Melbourne taking a couple of days before being able to continue. During their very brief stay in Melbourne the officers of this regiment were reported as receiving a considerable amount of hospitality, but the necessity to get under way as soon as possible prevented acceptance.⁸³ In late December 1863 the transport *Australian* from Rangoon also ported in Melbourne carrying the headquarters elements of the 68th Regiment. This

78 SMH, 31 January, p.2; & 2 February 1865, p.6.

79 SMH, 20 August 1863, p.5.

80 SMH, 21 August 1863, p.4.

81 *Hobart Town Daily Mercury/Mercury*, 11 April; 18 April; & 23 April 1860; & *Launceston Examiner*, 12 April, p.2; 14 April, p.2; & 5 May 1860, p.2.

82 *Argus*, 28 August, p.8; & 29 August 1863, p.8.

83 After disembarking the 50th the *Himalaya* returned to Sydney in early December where re-coaling & stores were taken on board before departing for further duties. *Argus*, 3 November, p.4; 6 November, p.5; 7 November, pp.4-5; & 9 November 1863, p.4; & SMH, 5 December 1863, p.6.

vessel similarly required coaling before continuing on to Auckland, but these few days in port allowed a number of officers and men time to disembark and visit the city and the cricket ground.⁸⁴

In December 1863, Adelaide witnessed the arrival of the troopship *Armenian* from Rangoon with the other elements (four companies) of the 68th Regiment. This vessel suffered damage in a severe gale necessitating repairs and a refit before proceeding. The *South Australian Register* reported the vessel's captain presented himself to the South Australian government from which instructions were issued "for the prompt supply of his wants, so that no time might be lost in getting his vessel to sea again". The 68th troops were allowed to disembark and to pitch their tents on Torrens Island while the repairs were under way. The only reservations of Major Kirby commanding this detachment to the public responses to their temporary presence was "that the colonists may kill his men with kindness". While in Adelaide these troops were shown an array of hospitality, which included a cricket match organised between the 68th and a team of eleven cricketers representing South Australia at the Thebarton Racecourse, including organised catering, entertainment and additional coach services for the day. The *Armenian* was finally able to get under way for Auckland on 4 January 1864.⁸⁵

Shipping arrangements were also made in Australia for the conveyance of sick or wounded soldiers from New Zealand. On 9 September 1864 two Royal Navy officers, Captain David Spain and Lieutenant Jones, arrived in Sydney to arrange for the charter of a vessel for taking sick and wounded troops to England.⁸⁶ The Melbourne firm of Messrs. Bright Brothers became the contractors for this shipping task.⁸⁷ On 2 November the *Hero* arrived in Melbourne from Auckland with a contingent of several officers and 125 wounded or invalided troops. These men were then scheduled to proceed to England in the Black Ball line ship *Royal Dane*, which was chartered and fitted up for this purpose.⁸⁸

In August 1864 it was reported the "Sydney siege train battery", the detachment of Royal Artillery that had been despatched to New Zealand in 1860 had been ordered to prepare to return to Sydney. "The number of men belonging to the battery is forty-two, with one officer. Two of them have been killed in action since the battery arrived in Auckland." HMS *Esk* brought these troops back to Sydney on 8 August.⁸⁹ Later in December the Sydney Commissariat issued a tender notice for the conveyance from Sydney to England "of about 5 officers, 67 non-commissioned officers and gunners, 32 women, and 67 children, and baggage of the Royal Artillery", most of whom had returned from New Zealand service.⁹⁰ Tenders were also advertised in Australia calling for shipping to be able to provide transport for troops of the 68th and 43rd Regiments and their families from Auckland to England in December 1865. In January 1866 the Sydney Commissariat was reported as taking up the steamer *Great Victoria*

84 *Argus*, 28 December, p.4; & 30 December 1863, p.4. Later in December 1864 the *Roxburgh Castle* arrived in Melbourne from London with troops & families of the 7th Battery, 2nd Brigade, Royal Artillery. These troops & their families disembarked & were temporarily quartered at the Prince's Bridge Barracks before continuing on to New Zealand. *Argus*, 10 December, pp.2 & 3; & 12 December 1864, p.5.

85 After disembarking these troops at Auckland this vessel returned to Sydney in February where it was re-coaled & a consignment of horses for the Indian market was loaded. SMH, 19 December 1863, p.6; & 19 February 1864, p.4; & SAR, 21 December; 22 December; 23 December; 24 December; & 26 December 1863; & 6 January 1864.

86 Captain David Spain is referred to as the Resident Transport Officer, Admiralty Transport Office at Auckland in 1865, & presumably occupied this post during 1864. SMH, 25 December 1865, p.8.

87 SMH, 10 September 1864, pp.4 & 7; *Launceston Examiner*, 8 October 1864, p.5.

88 *Argus*, 3 November, p.5 (& also refer to p.4); & 7 November 1864, p.4; & *Launceston Examiner*, 8 November 1864, p.3.

89 SMH, 1 August, p.5; 8 August, p.3; & 9 August 1864, p.4. The *Herald* also republished a detailed account of the New Zealand war service of this "Sydney Detachment of the Royal Artillery" (republished from the *New Zealand Herald*), refer to, SMH, 11 August 1864, p.4.

90 SMH, 19 December 1864, p.2.

to convey troops from Auckland, and in February the vessel *Maori* was chartered in Adelaide to convey some of these troops from New Zealand.⁹¹ In March 1866 the Admiralty Transport Office in Auckland issued an additional tender for the conveyance of the 40th Regiment, a Royal Artillery Battery, and about one hundred military invalids and wounded men (including families) to England.⁹² Australian shipping or contractor firms were in an admirable position throughout the 1860s to fulfil the imperial shipping requirements for the commissariat, logistical and troop transports associated with the New Zealand campaigns, and in turn was a stimulus to Australia's shipping industry.

The New Zealand Commissariat Service

The sheer volume of military stores flooding into New Zealand during 1863-64 necessitated a vast commissariat network to deal effectively with the requirements of the expanding imperial and colonial war machine. Depicting some of this complex infrastructure, the *Mercury* on 26 March 1864 reported on the "Magnitude of the Auckland Military Stores":

We believe that there are few persons here who are aware of the magnitude of the Military Store Department in Auckland; more especially since the present war has been going on. The large reinforcements of troops that have been received have of course necessitated a commensurate supply of munitions of war, and the Military Store becoming inconveniently crowded, it was found necessary to erect new buildings both for present, and future requirements. Britomart Barracks, or more properly Fort Britomart, is the grand depot for these supplies from which they are distributed over the country, as the exigencies of the war may demand. It may well be imagined that the duty of issuing these stores is a very onerous and important one; and as the strict military routine and discipline by which this is effected will perhaps interest our readers ...⁹³

In assessing this logistical component of this commissariat organisation, it is important to remember the contribution of many of the men who enlisted for service as military settlers, both in New Zealand and Australia. Many of these were to provide a vital, yet generally unrecognised and unsung service to the overall war effort as volunteer personnel in the Imperial Commissariat.

Examples of Australian enlisted military settlers who saw service in the Imperial Commissariat are Jacob Cheshire and Henriques DeLeon.⁹⁴ Cheshire enlisted in the 2nd Waikato Regiment in Sydney on 11 September 1863 and was allocated regimental No. 757, and gave his trade as "Shoemaker". In New Zealand he also served in the 3rd Waikato Regiment and from this unit volunteered for service with the Imperial Commissariat Transport Corps. After military service, Jacob had a varied career in New Zealand and then later Queensland where he and his family finally moved to Inglewood in 1884 where he became Postmaster, and later dying in this community on 1 August 1898.⁹⁵ DeLeon (also as Henri/Henry DeLeon, & Henry Strode Henri) enrolled in the 2nd Waikato Regiment in Sydney on 21 August 1863.⁹⁶ In New Zealand he

91 Captain David Spain, Resident Transport Officer, issued these tenders at the Admiralty Transport Office in Auckland. SMH, 25 December 1865, p.8; & *Argus*, 8 January, p.5; 17 January, p.5; & 9 February 1866, p.5.

92 SMH, 12 March, p.6; & 16 March 1866, p.8.

93 *Mercury*, 26 March 1864.

94 For more detailed information on Jacob Cheshire & Henriques DeLeon, refer to, J.E. Hopkins [now Hopkins-Weise], *Further Selected New Zealand War Medal Rolls of applications granted up to 1900: Volume 2* (Brisbane, Qld: J.E. Hopkins, 1998), pp.5-11.

95 L.L. Barton, *Australians in the Waikato War: 1863-1864* (North Sydney, NSW: Library of Australian History, 1979), p.71; & Interview & information gathered by this researcher from Dorothea Cheshire, grand-daughter of the New Zealand war veteran & medal recipient, Jacob Cheshire, 3rd Waikato Regiment, Victoria Barracks Museum (Brisbane, Queensland), 10 December 1995 & June-July 1998.

96 Robin Barker, *'The Henri Letter: Part One'*. (29 November 1993); & *'The Henri Letters: Part Two'*. (17 August 1995). This genealogical history on Henry Strode Henri & the history of the Henri Family,

served with the 2nd Waikato Regiment until January 1864 when he transferred into the 3rd Waikato Regiment, before again transferring into the 1st Waikato Regiment in February 1865. Whilst serving in the 1st Waikato Regiment DeLeon volunteered for service with the Imperial Commissariat, attaining the rank of Sergeant and serving as an "Issuer". After his military service he embarked on a career in education (specialising in languages) firstly in Otago, briefly in Melbourne, and later in Hobart. DeLeon achieved the position of Professor of Languages, and died in South Brisbane, Queensland on 8 August 1925.⁹⁷

In order to try and see early action or to escape the mundane routine of redoubt life and the garrison duty most military settlers found they faced upon arrival in New Zealand, some Australian recruited military settlers applied to join the Colonial Defence Force (CDF) Cavalry.⁹⁸ Similarly, small numbers transferred to the Forest Rangers, while the largest number volunteered for service with the Imperial Commissariat Transport Corps (CTC).⁹⁹ Volunteering for service in the CTC was a common option for men of the four Waikato regiments. This was especially the case with the 3rd Waikato Regiment which had at least 616 officers, non-commissioned officers and men from its total compliment volunteering their services for duty with the Imperial Commissariat. From assessment of New Zealand government papers it seems that a total of 1942 colonials (excluding British Army or Royal Navy personnel) served in some role as part of the CTC, and of these approximately 1397 came from the four Waikato Regiments.¹⁰⁰ The logistical aspect of the wars was of crucial importance to military operations, for without the exertions of this corps, the combat troops and the various garrisons and redoubts could not have been effectively armed, clothed and fed under some of the most trying physical conditions. Men such as Cheshire and DeLeon served in a role usually not glamorous, often monotonous or arduous and not seeing combat, but nonetheless were extremely important to the overall success of the various North Island campaigns.¹⁰¹

Military Horse Trade, 1863-64

In relation to the CDF and the CTC especially, the Australian colonies were also the place where draught and cavalry horses were procured. This particular military horse trade may not have been as

courtesy of Ben Henri, of Ascot, Brisbane, Queensland, to this researcher in October 1995. References to "Henrique De Leon" & "Sgt. Henry De Leon" also found in, Barton, op.cit., pp.68 & 92.

- 97 Barker, op.cit.; & "G.-No.1: Papers Relative To The Issue Of The New Zealand War Medal: Enclosure 4 in No.3: List No.9", Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives of New Zealand: Vol.II: 1871, pp.18-19 of G.-No.1; & also in, NZG, No.31, 31 May 1871, pp.254-255.
- 98 For an assessment of the Australian context to the CDF, refer to, J.E. Hopkins-Weise, "A History of the Colonial Defence Force (Cavalry): and the Australian Context", *The Volunteers: The Journal of the New Zealand Military Historical Society*, Vol.26, No.1, (July 2000), pp.5-25.
- 99 Glen, op.cit., p.39; & Barton, op.cit., p.25.
- 100 "G.-No.1: Papers Relative To The Issue Of The New Zealand War Medal: Enclosure 4 in No.3: List of Officers and Men of the Local Forces, and Civilians, in New Zealand, who were employed in the Imperial Transport Corps, and paid from Imperial funds, entitled to the New Zealand Medal", Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives of New Zealand: Vol.II: 1871, pp.11-20 of G.-No.1; & also in, NZG, No.31, 31 May 1871, pp.247-256.
- 101 This force was sometimes referred to as the "Commissariat Transport Corps", the "Colonial Transport Corps", or simply as "C.T.C.", as well as earning the nickname of the "Mokes". N. Morris, ed., *The Journal of William Morgan: Pioneer Settler and Maori War Correspondent* (Auckland, NZ: Libraries Department, Auckland City Council, 1963), for references to "Mokes", see pp.129, 135, & 138.

large and long-lived as that which took place with India, but nonetheless was a significant market.¹⁰² The arrival of the New Zealand government party to Sydney in August 1863 also heralded the beginnings of the horse trade in this period. Among this party were several gentlemen who had come to purchase horses for the “military defence corps”.¹⁰³

The New Zealand government selected Edward Mayne to be their remount agent in Sydney.¹⁰⁴ He commenced this work in August by attending the “Burt & Co’s Horse Bazaar”. The initial advertisement in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 20 August sought “Troop Horses”, noting Mayne’s job to select for purchase horses suited for “cavalry work” with “Geldings preferred; must be quiet to ride, sound, not under fifteen hands high, or over seven years old”.¹⁰⁵ Further advertisements over the ensuing days continued to seek troop horses but at the same time also sought horses “adapted for cavalry purposes”.¹⁰⁶ Another advertisement appeared at this time seeking one hundred horses for the New Zealand government. Requirements here were that they “must be well bred, active and compact, sound, and quiet to ride, 15 hands to 15 hands 2 inches high, and from 5 to 7 years old.” Persons with such horses were invited to apply daily to 260 Pitt Street, Sydney.¹⁰⁷ One of the first horse exports occurred on 15 September when the *Claud Hamilton* departed Sydney for Auckland with eighty horses in its cargo.¹⁰⁸ Such horses were made available for the CDF Cavalry or the CTC.¹⁰⁹ To assist in the purchase of suitable horses for the requirements of the imperial government in New Zealand, Mr Anderson, a Royal Artillery veterinary surgeon, also arrived in Sydney from Auckland during October.¹¹⁰ In early 1864 the Commissariat Department in Melbourne, Sydney and Hobart Town were notified of the requirements for “Sound Horses” for both draught and lighter types for riding or pack animals.¹¹¹ During February-March 1864 advertisements in the *Sydney Morning Herald* again sought horses, this time specifically for the CDF.¹¹² The trade and supply of various types of horses from Australia was obviously of enormous value to the scale of military operations being undertaken in New Zealand.

Meat and Cattle Trade, 1863-66

The Australian colonies were also a major source of beef and mutton, as well as live cattle and sheep for New Zealand’s military and public requirements, particularly evident in the period

102 Yarwood in his expansive study of Australia’s horse trade with India only makes a very brief reference to a horse trade with New Zealand, which he viewed as part of Australia’s domestic market. Apart from inferring that thousands of horses were exported from Australia to New Zealand, A.T. Yarwood, *Walers: Australian horses abroad* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1989), pp.16 & 207 (Chapter 2, Note No.3).

103 SMH, 21 August 1863, p.9; also refer to, 15 August 1863, p.6.

104 SMH, 15 August 1863, p.6.

105 SMH, 20 August 1863, p.1.

106 SMH, 24 August 1863, p.1. Here Mayne directed attention he would inspect such horses when attending the Martyn’s Horse Bazaar at 246 Pitt Street, Sydney, on Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays until further notice. SMH, 24 August 1863, p.1; & also see continuation of advertisements in Sydney: SMH, 25 August, p.1; 26 August, p.1; & 27 August 1863, p.1. References to “Cavalry Horses for New Zealand” also found in, SAR, 9 September 1863.

107 SMH, 24 August, p.8; & 25 August 1863, p.8.

108 SMH, 16 September 1863, p.5; & also refer to, 6 October 1863, p.4.

109 Morris, op.cit., p.108.

110 SMH, 6 October 1863, pp. 4 & 5; & also see, Glen, op.cit., p.24.

111 *Argus*, 15 January 1864, p.7, & 30 January 1864, p.7; SMH, 1 February 1864, p.2; & *Mercury*, 22 February 1864.

112 SMH, 13 February 1864, p.12. These advertisements for CDF horses continued in SMH, on 15 February, p.8; 18 February, p.2; 19 February, p.6; 22 February, p.2; 4 March, p.6; 7 March, p.6; & 14 March 1864, p.6.

1863-66. The availability of Australian beef ensured adequate supplies to feed the needs of large numbers of imperial and colonial troops serving in the field. In early July 1863 the *South Australian Register* directed attention to

[t]he scarcity and the consequent high price of butchers' meat in New Zealand, has led, ... to a relaxation in the rules affecting the importation of sheep and cattle, so far as concerns Great Britain and Ireland and the colonies of South Australia and Tasmania. Our Auckland contemporary is indignant at the relaxation not having been extended to New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria, 'from which alone,' he says, "supplies are likely to come."¹¹³

In Tasmania the *Mercury* drew attention to this cattle trade as being "of no small importance" to the colony. This particular trade commenced in 1862 with the discovery of the Otago goldfields when various quantities of horses and sheep were sent from Hobart, and horses, sheep, horned cattle and pigs left Launceston. The *Mercury* stated that "[s]ince then, this trade has increased, and it promises to be a flourishing one. Steam, direct to New Zealand, is about to be laid on, and this will, in all probability assist it, indirectly, if not directly."¹¹⁴ By September 1863 the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that a mob of cattle from Warrah Station passed through Singleton for shipment at Newcastle. This station also supplied a "mob of 3000 fat sheep", and it was noted that "[s]uch arrangements have been made that continuous drafts of stock can be sent from this well-known station".¹¹⁵ By December 1863 the shipping of cattle was improved by technological innovation where instead of the usual horse-power being used to hoist individual cattle over a vessel's side, the steamer *Xanthe* commenced using its steam-derrick for the same purpose.¹¹⁶

In December 1863 the *Mercury* also directed attention to the difficulties faced in competing in the shipment of cattle to New Zealand. The lack of the proper wharf facilities with appropriate accommodation for stock, depth of water for vessels and associated loading infrastructure "militates against operations of that nature here". It was revealed how Gippsland pastoralists were assisted by the Victorian government by coming "to the aid of the ... stockholders by erecting yards and other appliances at the port whence cattle are shipped, and at present a large number are taken from that port of the colony".¹¹⁷ This governmental support was crucial to certain Gippsland pastoralists being able to secure the imperial meat contracts for New Zealand forces during 1864.

In August 1864 the New Zealand Commissary-General intended to start accepting fresh meat tenders from any of the Australian colonies and not limiting them to New Zealand as had occurred previously.¹¹⁸ In October it was reported that Mr J. Johnson of Gippsland was successful in obtaining the contract to supply "fresh meat to the whole of Her Majesty's forces in the province of Auckland". The *Sydney Morning Herald* referring to news contained in the *Southern Cross*, observed:

We need hardly say that Mr. Johnson has been largely engaged in the importation of cattle to this province, and that some of the finest stock brought here have been imported by him. He has a large cattle station in Gipps Land, Victoria, and owns the *Kate Waters*, *Eclipse*, and *Lombard*, which are all vessels exceedingly well adapted for carrying stock. The *Kate Waters* has made several successful attempts here, having lost very few cattle indeed.¹¹⁹

113 SAR, 2 July 1863.

114 *Mercury*, 22 July 1863, p.7.

115 SMH, 17 September 1863, p.4; & also refer to, *Argus*, 18 September 1863, p.5.

116 SMH, 10 December 1863, p.4.

117 *Mercury*, 10 December 1863.

118 *Launceston Examiner*, 16 August 1864, p.2.

119 SMH, 4 October 1864, p.4.

During late 1864 the Auckland Commissary-General advertised further tenders for fresh meat for the imperial forces in Auckland, this time for April 1865 – March 1866. Johnson is believed to have secured this also.¹²⁰

Press sources suggest that a considerable trade in cattle and other livestock to New Zealand also occurred during 1864 out of the New South Wales port of Newcastle.¹²¹ This included working bullocks, a resource greatly in demand by the CTC in the Waikato and Taranaki. In March 1864 the vessel *Dudbrook* left Newcastle for Auckland with a freight of cattle consisting mainly of 175 working bullocks. These had been selected by a Mr John Chadwick of Auckland as “well suited for the market for which they were destined”. This shipment included all “the necessary gear to equip perfect teams”.¹²² By late 1865 it became evident that the difficulties in getting cattle brought down country in reasonable time and in sufficient numbers to meet requirements, necessitated those involved seeking alternative sources for their cattle. This saw a proportion of the trade move to more northern ports in Queensland, and even effected Johnson in his ability to fulfil his meat contract. Information originally taken from the *Newcastle Telegraph*, was to state:

we learn that several other vessels which have been engaged for some time past as regular traders between here [Newcastle] and New Zealand are about to leave us for Rockhampton. Among others we hear that the *Kate Waters*, the *Lombard*, and *Eclipse*, all of which are under charter to Messrs. Johnson and Co., who have a contract with the New Zealand Government, are to be taken off this line, and henceforth to proceed to Rockhampton to take in cargo.¹²³

Conclusion

The evidence detailed throughout this article has been compiled so as to clearly show that Australia was of especial significance during 1863-66 in supplying both vast and various commissariat and logistic needs contributing to the scale of the New Zealand war effort. This period truly marks the high-water mark in Australian military involvement across the Tasman. As in previous years (ie. 1845-47 & 1860-61), Australian commissariat stores and arsenals contributed quantities of rifles and carbines, ammunitions, accoutrements, artillery and associated ordnance material. This was now extended with a considerable military horse trade; manufactured river gunboats (as well as a place to purchase existing riverboats); naval coal and chandlery supplies and services; shipping for a variety of military or commissariat purposes; successful tenderers for meat and cattle contracts; as well as all manner of foodstuffs, military clothing and other equipment. It was Australia's geographical proximity which enabled New Zealand's imperial and colonial authorities to successfully harness not only the imperial and colonial manpower potential within these colonies, but also this complex array of war materials and foodstuffs, all of which together, confirms Australia's considerable role in the New Zealand wars.

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120 SMH, 3 November, p.6; 8 November, p.2; & 8 December 1864, p.8; & also refer to, William Fox, *The War in New Zealand* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1866), p.13.

121 SMH: 11 January, p.4; 18 January, p.4; 13 February, p.7; 18 February, p.5; 8 March, p.5; 6 July, p.3; & 10 October 1864, p.4.

122 SMH, 9 March 1864, p.5; & also referred to in, *The Mercury*, 24 March 1864.

123 SMH, 3 October 1865, p.4.



THE DONKEY VOTE A VC FOR SIMPSON – THE CASE AGAINST

Graham Wilson¹

The story of the AIF abounds with myths. One of the most persistent of those myths is that connected with the purported recommendation for a Victoria Cross (VC) for Private John Simpson (Kirkpatrick) of the 3rd Field Ambulance, the so-called 'Man With the Donkey', and the supposed reason for its non-award. The story, one of the most persistent connected with the AIF, goes that Simpson was officially recommended for a VC by both his company commander and his unit commander; however, goes the story, due to inexperience on the part of the officers preparing the recommendation, Simpson was recommended 'under the wrong category' and thus he was 'only' mentioned in despatches, instead of awarded the VC that he had been recommended for.

Subsequently, there have been numerous campaigns mounted to award 'poor' Simpson the VC that he 'deserved' and was 'recommended for'. The campaigners have ranged from the highest in the land, including a Governor-General, a Prime Minister and numerous politicians, to the most ordinary people. What all of these campaigners hold in common, whatever their station in society, is that they are all grossly misinformed and indeed misled.

The 'Purple Cross' for 'Murphy'

A recent impetus for the posthumous award of the VC to Simpson was the award of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty's Purple Cross to Simpson's donkey in 1997. This more than slightly precious action has been a spur to campaigners as they feel that if Simpson's donkey has been 'recognised', then so should he. One major point about this overwhelmingly twee action on the part of the RSPCA is that a single award to, putatively, 'Murphy', Simpson's donkey, despite the disclaimers of the RSPCA, largely ignores the fact that Simpson is known to have employed at least four donkeys at Gallipoli. In addition, the 'posthumous award' of the Purple Cross, over 80 years after the event and to an entity whose fate is unknown, is little more than pointless. The RSPCA's action is, of course, the explanation for the somewhat sarcastic title of this paper. The problem for all of these campaigners, however, despite the 'recognition' of Simpson's donkey, is that the story outlined above, which, unfortunately, is the generally accepted one, just does not stand up to critical examination.

Background

Before examining the VC campaigns, it is probably in place to examine the actual historical background to the situation. Although I will refer on several occasions to John Simpson Kirkpatrick by his full legal name, as he is generally referred to as 'Simpson', for the sake of clarity that is the name I will mainly use.

John Simpson Kirkpatrick was born in South Shields in the County of Durham in England on 6 July 1892. The son of a merchant seaman, he too took up the call of the sea and at the age of 17 became a merchant seaman. Employed as a fireman or stoker on small trading ships, he worked his way to Australia where, in 1910 he jumped ship, i.e. deserted. It has been suggested by at least one knowledgeable person that Simpson was in fact paid off in Australia, rather than deserted. This theory

¹ This paper will be further developed and feedback on the issues the paper raises is sought by the author. Any feedback from this or any *Sabretache* article can be directed to editor@mhsa.org.au with the subject line marked "Attention author" and the email will be referred to the author. - Editor

is based on the fact that articles of engagement were not necessarily for a UK to UK trip but might be for one particular leg of a voyage only, in Simpson's case, from the UK to Newcastle in Australia. The theory is not supported by the indisputable fact that Simpson enlisted into the AIF under an assumed name. Under the *Merchant Shipping Act 1894*, deliberate failure to complete articles constituted the crime of desertion. A seaman guilty of desertion forfeited all wages due to him, not only for the ship he had deserted from, but for any other ship on which he engaged for return to the United Kingdom if he had not already been subjected to the punishment prescribed by law. In addition to loss of wages, a merchant seaman guilty of desertion under the *Merchant Shipping Act 1894* was liable to arrest without warrant in any British possession and a period of penal servitude up to 3 months, with or without hard labour.² This definitely supports the theory that Simpson was in fact a deserter as, had he enlisted into the AIF under his legal name, he was liable to arrest and detention for desertion from the merchant marine. The theory that Simpson jumped ship is supported by the man's own words. In a letter to his mother, mailed from Australia and dated 30 May 1910, Simpson quite openly admitted that he had 'cleared out' after waiting until the portion of his pay owing for the voyage out (referred to in his letter as 'the half pay'), which was due on 12 May, was paid. With the money duly paid, Simpson and 13 other members of the ship's crew deserted.³

Simpson knocked about Australia for the next four years, working at various jobs. At the outbreak of the war he was in Western Australia and he enlisted in the AIF in Perth on 5 September 1914. His unit on enlistment is given as AAMC or Australian Army Medical Corps. Various theories have been advanced as to why a big, strong, strapping lad like Simpson was enlisted into the Medical Corps, rather than the Infantry. These range from the influence of a mate who was enlisting into the Medical Corps, all the way to being the best way to avoid the fighting. Personally, I believe the most likely explanation is that the fighting units being raised from Western Australia were full and Simpson was simply allocated to the Medical Corps as part of the normal enlistment process. Certainly his physique, physical strength and acquaintance with hard work would have suited him well to the role of stretcher-bearer, to which work he was allotted with 'C' Section of the 3rd Field Ambulance, the medical unit of the 3rd Infantry Brigade.

Simpson embarked at Fremantle with the rest of 'C' Section aboard the aptly named SS 'Medic' on 4 November 1914. Arriving in Egypt, Simpson worked and trained with his unit until it departed for Lemnos at the beginning of March 1915. He landed with elements of his unit at Gallipoli on the morning of 25 April 1915. Presumably he worked as a stretcher-bearer and first aid man on the day of the landing. The next day, 26 April 1915, all accounts agree, Simpson commandeered a stray donkey and began to use it to bring lightly wounded men down from Monash and Shrapnel Gullies to the dressing stations at the beach. He continued this self-appointed task until the day of his death on 19 May 1915, at the same time managing to sew the seeds of an enduring legend.

Simpson's service at Gallipoli, his supposed heroism and self-sacrifice, quickly became the stuff of legend and since that time the man himself has become totally immersed by the myth. This in itself is bad enough as, firstly, the real Simpson is now almost impossible to find, but Simpson's contribution to the campaign, actually minimal when viewed in the cold light of day, has served to overshadow the courage and sacrifice of all of the other men who served there, especially the other medical personnel. Even worse, however, is the fact that the wide acceptance of the myth has led to strident demands that Simpson be awarded first Britain's and now Australia's highest award for gallantry, the Victoria Cross. As early as 1933 there were calls for a VC for Simpson, and these calls have continued unabated down through the years. It is almost certain, for instance, that readers will be aware of the efforts by Labor MP Jill Hall to secure this award for Simpson over the past few years. The aim of this paper is to

² Merchant Shipping Act 1894, Sec.221(a).

³ AWM3 DRL3424, letter from John Simpson Kirkpatrick to his mother, Mrs Sarah Kirkpatrick, date 30 May 1910.

examine the reasons why a VC not only cannot but should not be awarded to Simpson and to put the rarely heard case against this ridiculous concept.

The 'Case' For a VC

Leaving aside the enormous corpus of oral tradition, the case for a VC for Simpson revolves around a number of diary and journal entries and a written statement by Colonel John Monash, which is interpreted as a 'recommendation for a VC'.

In his diary, the CO of the 3rd Field Ambulance wrote, on 24 May 1915:

I sent in a report about No. 202 Pte Simpson J., of C Section, shot on duty on May 19th 1915. He was a splendid fellow and went up the gullies day and night brining the wounded on donkeys. I hope he will be awarded the D.C.M.⁴

On 1 June 1915, Sutton wrote:

A.D.M.S. is fighting about honours these has been a hitch and he says he has asked to be relieved if his recommendations are not accepted. Graham Butler is safe for the D.S.O. I am glad to say & I think we'll get a VC for poor Simpson.⁵

Another piece of evidence put forward by those who campaign for a VC for Simpson is contained in the personal recollections of Captain H.K. Fry, OC of the 3rd Field Ambulance's Bearer Company. Fry writes "Saw ADMS re Simpson & Goldsmith (Simpson for V.C.) Adams, Sharples & Jeffries & Carrick to give evidence"⁶ and later "Adams & Sharples evidence [re Simpson] in morning. Afternoon Jeffries. Saw ADMS – soft futile words"⁷.

Finally, the campaigners quote the so-called VC recommendation from Colonel John Monash, CO of 4th Infantry Brigade. In this oft-quoted passage, Monash wrote, on 20 May 1915:

I desire to bring under special notice, for favour of transmission to the proper authority, the case of Private Simpson, stated to belong to C Section of the 3rd Field Ambulance. This man has been working in this valley since 26th April, in collecting wounded and carrying them to the dressing stations. He had a small donkey which he used, to carry all cases unable to walk.

Private Simpson and his little beast earned the admiration of everyone at the upper end of the valley. They worked all day and night throughout the whole period since the landing, and they help rendered to the wounded was invaluable. Simpson knew no fear and moved unconcernedly amid shrapnel and rifle fire, steadily carrying out his self-imposed task day by day, and he frequently earned the applause of the personnel for his many fearless rescues of wounded men from areas subject to rifle and shrapnel fire.

Simpson and his donkey were yesterday killed by a shrapnel shell, and enquiry then elicited that he belonged to none of the Army Medical units of this brigade; but he had become separated from his own unit, and had carried on his perilous work on his own initiative.⁸

In addition to these recorded statements, those who currently campaign for the posthumous award of a VC for Simpson point to the unsuccessful attempt in 1967 by the then Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies, the Governor-General, Lord Casey, and the Chief of the General Staff,

4 AWM PR 2DRL/1227, Original Diary of COL A. Sutton, C.B., C.M.G., A.A.M.C.

5 Ibid.

6 AWM 41 [2/7.15] 'Personal Narrative Lt. Col. H.K. Fry D.S.O.', entry for 3 June 1915.

7 Ibid.

8 AWM PR83/69, 10 of 17.

Major General Brand, to have the VC awarded. This information is repeated, for example, by Curran.⁹

This is the 'evidence' on which the case for the posthumous award of a VC to Simpson is based.

The Case Against

The case against the award of a posthumous VC to Simpson is based on three aspects, namely; physical, historical and technical.

Physical. The main reason that campaigners for a VC for Simpson give as justification for the award is the stated 'fact' that Simpson 'saved over 300 lives' with his donkey. Curran for instance writes:

Simpson rescued somewhere in the region of three hundred casualties.¹⁰

The problem with this statement is that, firstly, it is physically impossible for Simpson to have brought down 'over 300 men' in the time that he was working and secondly, a clinical and unbiased examination of the facts will show that he did not in fact probably 'save' anybody.

First, let's take a look at the figure of '300 men saved'. The popular accepted belief is that Simpson toiled from dawn to dusk, tramping from the dressing stations at the beach up Shrapnel Gully and into Monash Gully, rescuing wounded men and bringing them back down to the beach. Let us examine the physics of that belief. Even today, for a fit person, well fed, unencumbered and not threatened by sudden death, the round trip from the beach to the top of Monash Gully and back again takes a minimum of three hours. That is a non-stop trip – up from the beach, turn around immediately at the summit, and walk back down again. Thus each trip to and from the beach would have taken Simpson a minimum of three hours, but this presupposes that no time at all was taken at each end, loading and unloading wounded men. But some time at least must have been taken at this task, at least five minutes at each end. Thus we now have a round trip time of three hours and ten minutes. To achieve his mythical goal of 300 casualties, Simpson would have needed to bring down 12-13 men per day. Presuming that no other time was taken, and presuming that Simpson started just after first light (a reasonable presumption, as it is known that he took breakfast normally at the water guard above the beach), with a round trip of three hours and ten minutes he would have needed to work from 0600 in the morning to 0600 the next morning, bringing down two men at a time for each trip and keep this up non-stop for the whole period from 26 April – 19 May to reach the total.

We have no idea what 'half the night' constitutes. Did it mean Simpson worked until there was no more light? With the round trip time of three hours and ten minutes, this would have occurred on this fifth trip of the day, which would have seen him arrive back at the beach sometime around 2200. Perhaps he worked on until the early hours of the morning, which would have meant the end of his sixth trip of the day, which would have ended at about 0200. This would give him four hours in which to take care of the donkey (or donkeys) get something to eat and, if lucky, catch a couple of hours of sleep. I personally find this hard to believe. Certainly, a physically fit person could keep up such a regime for a few days, but not for three consecutive weeks.

All accounts agree that Simpson began his self-appointed work on 26 April 1915, the day after the landing. He was killed on 19 May 1915, 24 days later. However, once again, all accounts agree that he was killed on 19 May 1915 at the very start of the day's work and thus that day can be

⁹ Curran, Tom, 1994 *Across the Bar The Story of "Simpson". The Man with the Donkey. Australia and Tyneside's Great Military Hero*, OGMIOS Publications, Brisbane, p. 369.

¹⁰ Curran, p. 368.

discounted, bringing the time down to 23 days. Accepting that Simpson managed the Herculean task of working from 0600 each morning to 0200 the next morning, without rest for the entire 23 days, then the maximum number of men he could have helped down, presuming two per trip, was 276. However, while there are mentions of Simpson bringing down more than one man at a time, this apparently was not the norm, and every extant photograph of Simpson shows him with only one man on the donkey. It would appear that the norm for Simpson was actually one man at a time, which translates to a maximum of six casualties per day, or 138 men. However, this figure does not take into account the fact that Simpson would have stopped to eat (we know that he did eat), to rest, to chat with mates and of course answer the calls of nature. This would possibly have taken at least two hours out of his day. i.e. or the equivalent of basically a round trip. This in turn translates in to a subtraction of one man a day for every day from 26 April – 18 May 1915, a total of 23, which, now gives a figure of 112. However, this figure still does not take into account other variables such as the increased time the trip would have taken after dark, possibly twice as long. Or the increase in time caused by physical exhaustion as both the day's work wore on and the privations of the campaign took their toll. Or delays in the journey caused by other traffic up and down the gullies. Although unable to prove it, I believe, and the figures quoted seem to support this, that the total number of men who Simpson gave a lift to on his donkey was at most 100, and probably less.

We now turn to the question of just who Simpson saved. The fact is that an examination of the evidence, based on cold, hard logic, shows that Simpson did not in fact 'save' anybody! In justifying this almost blasphemous statement, I would ask the reader to consider this question: who could Simpson have taken on his donkey?

This is not a trick question, but perhaps it would be better to consider who could Simpson **not** take on his donkey? The answer to this question is:

- Any man who was unconscious.
- Any man with a severe head or facial wound.
- Any man with a severe neck wound.
- Any man with a back wound.
- Any man with a chest wound.
- Any man with an abdominal wound.
- Any man with a pelvic wound, either anterior or posterior.
- Any man with a wound of upper leg, in particular major wounds of the thigh.

The reason for all of these exceptions is, of course, that these men could not sit on a donkey. Having eliminated all of these types of wounded men then, the question again is put, who could Simpson have taken on a donkey? The answer is:

- Any man with a minor head or facial wound.
- Any man with an arm or shoulder wound.
- Any man with wound to the lower leg or foot.

In other words, walking wounded. So in fact, the claim that Simpson 'saved' an unknown number of lives cannot be supported by a logical examination of the facts. Histrionic claims such as that quoted by Tom Curran in his book *Across the Bar* in which he quotes E.C. Buley as describing how Simpson would, with a 'lightning dash' dart into No-Man's-Land, take a 'wounded man on his back' and make for cover again just cannot be supported.¹¹ Curran's quoting of Buley's 1915 vintage outright jingoism with not a single word of critical analysis is an excellent example of the lack of proper scholarship in a book that is currently held up as one of

¹¹ From *Glorious Deeds of Australasians in the Great War*, by E.C. Buley – quoted by Curran in *Across the Bar*, p.279.

the best accounts of Simpson and his life and death. The fact that Simpson was doing nothing more than giving a donkey ride to lightly wounded men was confirmed by his commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Sutton, who, on 4 May 1915, wrote:

Pte Simpson has shown initiation (sic) in using a donkey from the 26th to carry slightly wounded cases.¹²

The phrase 'slightly wounded' reoccurs in the diary of Chaplain Gillison, who wrote:

I do not remember if I have mentioned a young fellow, Pvte. John Simpson, who used to take slightly wounded men down to the beach on a donkey.¹³

In addition to these two contemporary diary entries, the fact that Simpson assisted lightly wounded men is confirmed by all of the extant photographs of Simpson with wounded on a donkey. In every photograph it is obvious that the man on the donkey is lightly wounded and generally does not appear to be in any great distress. We also have the personal recollection of one of the men that Simpson 'saved', Peter Chick (1012 P.C. Chick, 12th Battalion). In 1965, in the popular magazine *Everybody's*, Chick recounted his tale of the day he was given a ride by Simpson, under the title 'The day Simpson said to me: "Ride the Donkey Mate"'. Chick told the story of how he had been wounded in the foot three days after the landing and then recalled:

Simpson was on his way back up the gully from the hospital clearing station. He saw I was limping and said: 'Ride on the donkey, mate.'

But I told him I could manage – that there were others worse than me.

He insisted: 'Get on, it's not far to take you back', he said.¹⁴

Incredibly, Curran, 80 years after the event, decides that he knows better than one of the senior medical officers on the spot at Gallipoli in May 1915 and advises us that Sutton obviously did not know what he was talking about when he described the men Simpson was carrying on his donkey as slightly wounded. Curran refers to Sutton's reference to 'slightly wounded' as 'his unfortunate designation' and then goes on to tell us just how dangerous, indeed life-threatening all leg wounds were at Gallipoli.¹⁵ Curran very generously excuses Sutton on the grounds that he was obviously tired and suffering from the strain of the campaign, that was beginning to take its toll.¹⁶ Here we see the classic, almost quintessential Simpson champion, ignoring facts, dismissing them or twisting them to suit the pro-Simpson bias.

Historical. In considering the historical part of the equation, it is necessary to refer back to the various written statements used by the VC for Simpson campaigners to prove their claim that Simpson was 'officially recommended' for a VC.

First of all, we have the diary entries from Simpson's commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Sutton. Then we have the written statement of Simpson's company commander, Captain Fry. Third is the official mention of Simpson by Monash. Finally, we have the official representations of the then Prime Minister, the then Governor-General and the Chief of the General Staff in 1967, as reported by Curran and others.

Taking these in order, the diary entries by Colonel Sutton are just that, diary entries, no more, no less. No matter what the champions of Simpson's VC cause say about the matter, diary entries, no matter from whose diary, do not constitute a recommendation for the VC. Sutton's diary

12 AWM PR 2DRL/1227.

13 King, Jonathan, 2003 *Gallipoli Diaries: The Anzacs' own story day by day*, Kangaroo Press, Kenthurst, NSW, p. 95.

14 *Everybody's*, 12 May 1965, p.7.

15 Curran, p.323.

16 Ibid.

certainly makes it clear that he may have wished to have Simpson awarded a VC, but that seems to be as far as he went. There is certainly no record anywhere of an official, written recommendation for a VC for Simpson. Simpson's champions are either not aware of, or ignore the fact that the Australian War Memorial holds 70 unsuccessful recommendations for award of the VC for the First World War. In every case the recommendation was rejected and in all but one case a lesser award recommended and awarded. The point is that each of the recommendations specifically named the man for award of the VC. None of these recommendations is for Simpson, a fact that renders the oft heard argument of Simpson's champions that he was not awarded the VC due to an 'administrative error' totally spurious and unsupportable.

As for Fry's input, those who quote this as a VC recommendation neglect to add that the document the statements are drawn from is a personal narrative written by the by then Lieutenant Colonel Fry at the behest of Colonel Butler, the official medical historian. Butler had requested medical officers who had served at Gallipoli to write down their recollections and send them to him. Thus, Fry's statements were made from memory, in either late 1918 or early 1919, almost four years after the events. Again, as with Sutton's diary entries, these statements by Fry, written from memory years after the event do not in any way constitute an official recommendation for the VC.

Next, Monash's mention of Simpson's work. Simpson's champions always hold this up as the official recommendation for a VC and state that the only reason that Simpson did not get a VC was that Monash's recommendation was entered under the 'wrong category.' This is, to put it politely, total poppycock. An examination of the nine VCs awarded to Australians at Gallipoli show that in every case, except that of Jacka, the formal written recommendation contains the words 'recommendation for the award of the Victoria Cross'.¹⁷ Nowhere in his written statement in reference to Simpson does Monash use the words 'Victoria Cross'. Monash's statement is in fact exactly what it was and is, a classic mention in despatches. From this we can see that Monash, while obviously aware of Simpson's activities, and possibly even in admiration of them, did not think them worthy of a VC.

A particularly interesting and significant portion of Monash's statement is the first sentence of the second paragraph. Note that Monash wrote that Simpson had the admiration 'of everyone at the upper end of the valley'. This implies that no one else at Gallipoli was aware of or in admiration of Simpson and gives something of a lie to the belief that Simpson was legend in his own time.

If any further proof was needed of the fact that Simpson's recommendation was never for anything other than a mention in despatches, we only have to look at the letter from Acting Commander of 1st Australian Division (Brigadier General Walker) to GOC ANZAC dated 28 May 1915.¹⁸ In this letter Walker writes:

In accordance with the instructions contained in your memorandum No. Ab.252, dated 18th instant, I have now the honour to bring to your notice the names of the officers, non-commissioned officers, and men, on the attached lists whose services are, for the reasons given, deserving of recognition.

2. It was, I understand, the intention of Major-General Bridges to forward these as a supplement to his dispatch, dated 7th May.

17 ANZAC HQ Ab344 of 1 Sep 1915 (recommendation for Shout, Hamilton, Keysor, Symons, Tubb, Burton and Dunstan) and ANZAC HQ Ab3648 of 7 Sep 1915 (recommendation for Throssell).

18 HQ 1st Australian Division 148/17 of 28 May 1915 (letter to GOC ANZAC).

Appended to this letter is a list of names, the names of members of the Army Medical Corps appearing on page 27. At this page are 17 names, comprising three officers, seven non-commissioned officers and seven privates, representing the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Field Ambulances and the 1st Casualty Clearing Station. The 15th name, almost at the bottom, is that of 202 Private Simpson, J. To the right of the list of names, under the column marked particulars, is the following entry:

The late General Officer Commanding referred in his previous despatch to the conspicuous gallantry of the A.A.M.C. The names hereon were submitted by the A.D.M.S. who in the circumstances had great difficulty in choosing from the many men whose courage and devotion were exemplary.

This makes it quite clear that, first of all, Simpson was never recommended for a VC, his recommendation being for a mention in despatches. Secondly, the relative position of Simpson in the list of names makes it quite clear that the people in charge at the time and in the place, i.e. those most qualified to decide and recommend, did not consider his actions to be any more praise worthy or deserving of recognition than those of all of the other members of the Medical Corps who worked, suffered and died on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

There are two non-Medical Corps recommendations on the same page as that containing Simpson's recommendation, one for 1571 Lance Corporal F. Hart and one for 918 Private F. Godfrey, both of the 12th Battalion. Hart was cited for having 'Left trenches under heavy fire for ammunition and, although wounded, return(ing) with it.' For his part, Godfrey's citation states that he 'Captured a German officer and went out single-handed and shot five snipers.' Both men displayed cold blooded courage of the highest order, yet it is significant that the award both received was the same as that extended to Simpson, i.e. a mention in despatches (Godfrey would subsequently be awarded a Distinguished Conduct Medal for a separate action). This is further proof that Simpson was never recommended for a VC and that the MID he received was exactly what he was recommended for.

Finally, we need to consider the 1967 application to the British authorities made, we are told, by the then Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies, the then Governor-General Lord Casey and the 'Chief of the General Staff', Major General Brand. As with the various statements held out to be official recommendations, the VC Simpson campaign regularly holds this unsuccessful attempt up as a precedent and urges the Australian government to once more go to bat for 'poor Simpson'. A major point put forward by the campaigners is that both Lord Casey and General Brand had served at Gallipoli and were thus eye-witnesses to Simpson's gallantry. There are two problems with this – first, although it is undeniable that Lord Casey had been at Gallipoli, as a staff officer, and would certainly have been aware of Simpson's activities, may even have seen him walking his donkey up or down Shrapnel Gully at some time, this does not necessarily make him an eye-witness to any actual act of gallantry on the part of Simpson. In addition, a statement put forward over 50 years after the events would have to be treated with a great deal of caution. The second problem is that while Charles Brand was a Gallipoli veteran and had indeed been Chief of the General Staff, his tenure as CGS had been from 1926 – 1928, not contemporaneous with the 1967 application as Simpson's champions believe! In addition, Simpson's champions are either unaware or deliberately ignore that fact that Brand, who retired from the Army in 1933, died in 1961, six years before he was supposed to have been involved in an application for the award of a VC for Simpson.¹⁹ These facts, Casey's unreliability as a witness and Brand's impossibility of bearing witness, render the 1967 application totally valueless as any sort of precedent for contemporary government action. The fact that Curran blithely refers in his book to Brand's involvement in the 1967 application is yet another example of the very poor

¹⁹ *Australian Dictionary of Biography, 1899-1939, Vol 7, pp. 390-391.*

scholarship displayed in the book that for some reason is considered the best contemporary account of Simpson.²⁰

The Technical Impediments

Finally, the technical impediments to the posthumous award of either a Victoria Cross (VC) or a Victoria Cross for Australia (AVC) to Simpson.

For the award of a VC, even ignoring the fact that Simpson was never recommended for the decoration, the fact that the British published the end of war list in 1919 and the then monarch, King George V, decreed that no more operational awards would be made for the recently concluded war make it impossible for a VC award to be even considered. This, of course, was the reason that the 1967 application was unsuccessful. In addition, the fact that Simpson has already been mentioned in despatches means that he could not be awarded a VC as this would constitute being decorated twice for the same action. This is contrary to a long standing tenet of both the British and Australian Honours and Awards systems. For a VC to be awarded (even if this were possible), Simpson's MID would first need to be cancelled. The British government has stated categorically that this would not be done. Again, Simpson's champions point to the case of John Jackson, the Australian VC recipient who was originally recommended for the DCM. When Jackson's DCM recommendation was upgraded to a VC recommendation, his original DCM recommendation was, unfortunately, not withdrawn due to an oversight. As a result, the DCM was gazetted two weeks after his VC was gazetted and for the rest of his life Jackson insisted on wearing both the VC and the DCM he said he was entitled to, despite the fact that his DCM was cancelled in *The London Gazette* on 20 July 1916.²¹ The Simpson for VC campaign states that since Jackson's DCM has been cancelled, then cancelling Simpson's MID to clear the way for the award of a VC would be simplicity itself. This reasoning ignores the fact that the cancellation of Jackson's DCM was the result of that recommendation having been overtaken by a recommendation for a higher award. Jackson's DCM was not cancelled in order to pave the way for the award of a VC, it was cancelled as the DCM recommendation had been upgraded to a VC recommendation and he could not have two decorations for the same act of gallantry. In Simpson's case, since he never was recommended for a VC, but was recommended for and ultimately mentioned in despatches, before a VC could be awarded, even if this were possible, he would need to have his MID cancelled. As the MID was the correctly recommended and gazetted award, the British would never consent to this.

Going beyond the matter of the impossibility of the cancellation of Simpson's correctly gazetted MID, for a VC recommendation to have any sort of chance at all, the recommendation would need to be accompanied by several verifiable eye witness statements. At this remove of history, over 90 years after the event, obtaining such eye witness accounts would be impossible. Regardless of the claims of Simpson's supporters and champions, the written statements of Lieutenant Colonel Sutton and Captain Fry do not and cannot constitute recommendations or eye witness endorsements for the award of a VC.

Plan B for the Simpson for VC campaigners is for the award of an AVC to Simpson. As with the VC this is totally impossible, as well, of course, as being totally inappropriate. In the first place, the awarding of a decoration that was not even in existence until 76 years after the events it is meant to be awarded for is completely inappropriate. Beyond this, however, the current policy on the recommendation and award of the AVC is contained in Defence Instructions (General)

²⁰ Curran, p.369.

²¹ Wigmore, Lionel and Harding, Bruce, 1986 *They dared mightily* (Second Edition, revised and condensed by Jeff Williams and Anthony Staunton), Australian War Memorial, Canberra, pp. 75-76.

Personnel 31-3 'Australian Gallantry and Distinguished Service Decorations' DI(G) PERS 31-8 states quite explicitly, at paragraph 22:

Nominations for the Victoria Cross are to be supported by signed statements of at least three witnesses of the act for which the award is recommended. Wherever possible these statements should be on oath.²²

As with witness statements for an award of the VC to Simpson, finding three eye witnesses to attest to Simpson's actions is, obviously, a total impossibility. Thus the award of a AVC to Simpson would be a technical impossibility, even if it were merited. Before concluding, there are several other technical points that Simpson's champions consistently get wrong. The first of these concerns precedents for a posthumous award of the VC and its impact on attempts to get a VC for Simpson. In the end note to his book, discussing the failed 1967 bid, Curran writes:

Their request was denied. The British military leaders sent a very gracious reply saying that much as they would like to do this, "it would begin a precedent which would be impossible to implement."

NB. This statement by the British War Office was incorrect. The precedent had already been set,

In 1907, the Victoria Cross was awarded posthumously, (and most deservedly so) to the late Lieutenants Melvill and Coghill, for their gallant actions in attempting to save the Regiment's Colours, at Isandhlwana, South Africa, in 1879, during the Zulu Wars.

The award was made 28 years after the event.²³

Curran's argument, as with others, appears to be that the British were saying that awarding a posthumous VC to Simpson in 1967, 52 years after the event, would set a precedent for posthumous awards long after the event. Curran then counter-argues that the award of the VC to Coghill and Melvill in 1907, 28 years after their deaths in action in South Africa, already set the precedent. As with all others who make this argument, Curran totally misses the point. The decision to award posthumous VC's to Coghill and Melvill was a precedent for the making of posthumous awards not a precedent for making delayed posthumous awards. The point that Curran and others continually miss is that both Coghill and Melvill were recommended for the VC at the time of their action, The VC Statutes, however, did not permit posthumous awards at the time and the best that could be done for them was to publish their names in *The London Gazette*, with the notation that, had they lived, they would have been recommended to the Queen for the award of the VC. Once the precedent for posthumous awards had been set during the Boer War (1899-1902) the decision was made to award the VC's to Coghill and Melvill that they had been recommended for. Here is the crux of the matter – Coghill and Melvill *were* recommended for the VC, Simpson, as demonstrated in detail above, was *not*.

Another point missed by Curran, and others, and yet another example of the incredibly sloppy scholarship that is the hallmark of the VC for Simpson campaigners, is the fact that when putting forward the argument based on Coghill and Melvill's VC, those putting the argument always state that it was Coghill and Melvill who set the precedent, with the gap of 28 years between action and award. This is totally incorrect. *The London Gazette* of 15 January 1907, carried a total of six names of officers and men who were awarded the VC posthumously based on recommendations made at the time of actions that had cost them their lives in the years preceding 1907. These were, with the date of their gazette recommendation and the conflict involved:

- Private Edward Spence, 42nd Foot - 27 May 1859 (Indian Mutiny)
- Ensign Everard Aloysius Lisle Phillips, 11th Bengal Native Infantry - 21 Oct 1859 (Indian Mutiny)
- Lieutenant Nevill Josiah Aylmer Coghill, 24th Foot – 2 May 1879 (Zulu War)

²² DI(G) PERS 31-3 'Australian Gallantry and Distinguished Service Decorations', paragraph 22.

²³ Curran, p. 369.

- Lieutenant Teignmouth Melvill, 24th Foot - 2 May 1879 (Zulu War)
- Trooper Frank William Baxter, Bulawayo Field Force - 7 May 1897 (Matabele Rebellion)
- Lieutenant Hector Lachlan Stewart MacLean, Indian Staff Corps - 9 Nov 1897 (Matabele Rebellion)²⁴

So in fact the greatest length of time between a recommendation and a posthumous award was 48 years, not 28 as Curran and others state, and is still immaterial to Simpson's case in any event, since each of the six had been recommended, whereas Simpson had not.

The next technical detail that Simpson campaigners invariably get wrong is the belief that Simpson was not awarded a VC because of an order then in existence which stated that medical personnel were not to be recommended for the VC for rescuing wounded, as this was their job anyway. Curran mentions this at the very end of his book and notes that the first VC awarded at Gallipoli went to a British stretcher-bearer (Lance Corporal W.R. Parker, RMLI) of the Royal Naval Division on 1 May 1915. Curran seems to infer that if Parker, despite this putative order, could be awarded the VC for rescuing 'a number of wounded men from a trench' then it is manifestly unfair for Simpson, who 'rescued somewhere in the vicinity of three hundred casualties during ... his donkey-trips down Monash Valley', to be denied the award.²⁵

Yet again, we see the efforts of the Simpson campaigners fall victim to poor scholarship. The order to the effect that the VC would only be awarded for acts of conspicuous gallantry which were materially conducive to the attainment of victory did exist. And the order did in fact state that:

Cases of gallantry in life saving, of however fine a nature, will not be considered for the award of the VC.

However, the fact that Curran and others consistently miss is that this order was not published and promulgated until August 1916, well over a year after Simpson's death at Gallipoli in May 1915. While no original copy of the order can be located, it was re-published, apparently in identical form to the original, in AAMC orders for the 1st Australian Division on 30 August 1916 and the 2nd Australian Division on 29 August 1916.²⁶ In addition, the order was aimed not at medical personnel but at other troops, whose job it was in fact carry on the fight, rather than recover wounded. The order as published to the 1st and 2nd Divisions in fact expressly stated:

In future the Victoria Cross or other immediate award will not be given for the rescue of wounded, *excepting for those whose duty it is to care for such cases* (emphasis mine).²⁷

So, while the order existed, it did not exist at the time of Simpson's service at Gallipoli and, even if it had existed, it would not have precluded him from receiving a VC if he had been recommended for one.

The final technical point is connected with just what a VC can be awarded for. It is a common theme of the Simpson campaigners, amounting almost to a mantra, that one of the main reasons for Simpson missing out on a VC was that he was recommended in the 'wrong category'. A good example of this can be found in the *Sunday Mail* of 13 March 2005, under the heading 'Let's fix that clerical error.' The unknown author of this piece advised us that:

As is now well-known, (Simpson) was denied the VC because his recommendation was for the wrong category of bravery.

²⁴ *The London Gazette*, No. 27986, 15 January 1907, p.325.

²⁵ Curran, p.368.

²⁶ Butler, Colonel A.G., DSO, VD, BA, MB, ChB (Camb), 1943 *The Australian Army Medical Services in the War of 1914-1918 Volume III*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, pp. 1045-1047.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

Well-known? By whom? Doubtless the author based this piece on information gleaned from the writings and statements of Simpson campaigners. The basic argument of these people is that Simpson was recommended for gallantry, rather than for devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy and since the awarding authorities were unable to single out one individual action, the recommendation lapsed. This is absolute nonsense, for two reasons – first, the Statutes for the VC have never laid a restriction on the number of actions that can be recognised, either one or many. This was made abundantly clear in 1881 with the issue of a Royal Warrant that stated quite specifically:

Our will and pleasure is that the qualification shall be "conspicuous bravery or devotion to the country in the presence of the enemy", and that Our Warrant of 29th January, 1856, shall be read and interpreted accordingly.²⁸

So claims to the effect that Simpson's 'recommendation' failed due to the fact that he had performed numerous actions but could only be cited for one are so much nonsense. Similarly, the claims by the anonymous author of the *Sunday Mail* article that Simpson was denied a VC due to 'bureaucratic pecksniffery' are absolute rot. The fact is that Simpson was *never recommended* for a VC and thus there was no chance for the recommendation to be rejected. Had the recommendation actually been made and had it been viewed as weak or poorly written, it would have been returned for further work, with advice on how best to frame it in order to achieve its aim. The fact that this did not happen is not vindication of the *Sunday Mail's* sarcastic jibes aimed at the military mind, rather it is further proof that the recommendation was never made.

Conclusion

To conclude, for reasons beyond his own control, Private John Simpson Kirkpatrick has become an Australian 'icon', the ideal of the gallantry and self-sacrifice of the Digger. However, as Peter Cochrane has so rightly pointed out, all that the growth of the myth surrounding Simpson has done has been to serve to 'hide the man.'²⁹ The myth tells us that Simpson, seeing a need to get the wounded down to the beach as quickly as possible, acted on his own initiative and secured a stray donkey to assist him with his work of carrying out daring rescues of wounded men and bringing them back to medical assistance. His gallantry, for which he was recommended for a Victoria Cross that was ultimately to be denied him, was eventually to cost him his life.

That is the accepted version anyway.

Another version of the story, the one that I believe is closer to the truth, is that Simpson absented himself from unit, refused to report to said unit, and created for himself a job that was far easier and, despite all that has been said about the perils of his job, far safer than carrying wounded men down Monash and Shrapnel Gullies as part of a bearer team, and allowed him to be his own boss. The fact is that Simpson was a stretcher-bearer, not a donkey driver. All of the men he 'saved' were in fact lightly wounded men, walking wounded who could have quite easily have made it down Shrapnel Gully on their own. To my mind Simpson should have been lending his strength and presence where it was needed, in a stretcher-bearer team, not doing his own thing strolling up and down Shrapnel and Monash Gullies with a donkey. It is not a great leap of imagination to actually wonder how many men at Gallipoli died because a stretcher-bearer team was short a man due to Simpson's absence.

²⁸ Royal Warrant. -- Qualification required for the Decoration of the Victoria Cross, issued 23 April 1881.

²⁹ see Cochrane, Peter, 1992 *Simpson and the donkey the making of a legend*, Melbourne University Press, Burwood, Victoria.

Much is made about how brave Simpson was to walk up and down Shrapnel and Monash Gully every day under Turkish fire. To read statements along these lines is to leave one with the impression that Simpson was the only person who did this. This is pure nonsense. The two gullies were major thoroughfares, as busy as Pitt Street at peak hour, and hundreds, even thousands of men, walked up and down them, under enemy fire, every day of the campaign. In this, Simpson was no braver than anyone else at Gallipoli.

The statement that Simpson was recommended for a VC but had it denied for various reasons is totally false. There is no record anywhere, notwithstanding written statements of Lieutenant Colonel Sutton and Captain Fry, that a recommendation was ever made. The so-called 'recommendation' of Colonel Monash, putatively for the award of the VC, is and always was a mention in despatches', the level of award that Simpson's commanders finally felt that he deserved.

No matter how hard they try, the Simpson for VC campaigners cannot change the facts to suit their agenda. Even if they could produce a written recommendation, it could not be acted on, either for the VC or the VCA. For the VC, Australia had its chance to upgrade Simpson's MID to a VC just after the end of the war when calls went out to the Dominion authorities for submissions for the end of war list. No submission was made in the case of Simpson and that door is now well and truly closed. As for the VCA, the regulations governing the award of that decoration are quite precise and unambiguous – without three eye-witness statements (impossible to obtain) there is no chance in the world that a AVC can be awarded, even if this were appropriate.

I will be totally honest here and say that I personally believe that Simpson's place in the Australian psyche is totally undeserved. He was no braver than any other man on the Gallipoli Peninsular. His actions appear to me to have been entirely self-motivated and possibly even self-interested. Let's face it, strolling up and down a gully beside a donkey, with the donkey carrying a lightly injured man on the return trip, would have been far easier than struggling down that gully at one end of a laden stretcher. Not only is the campaign to have a VC or AVC posthumously awarded to Simpson impossible and inappropriate, the award would be, in my opinion, wholly undeserved.

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200701720

WAS THE LAST STRIKE BEFORE OR AFTER THE END OF THE WAR?

Peter Harvey

In his article *The Last Strike* in the June 2006 issue of *Sabretache*, the late Alan Fraser, a pilot with 7 Squadron, RAAF, wrote of the last strike by the RAAF in WW2. 7 Squadron, together with 8 and 100 Squadrons and all flying Beauforts, formed No 71 Wing. On what proved to be the last day of the war, 15 August 1945, the wing was ordered to attack Japanese concentrations in the village of Kiarivu, about 25 miles inland from Wewak on the north coast of New Guinea. The three squadrons, with 100 leading, left Tadjai airstrip near Aitape at 0900 hours local time; all aircraft being airborne by 0935 hours. Alan Fraser flew the last aircraft of the force and believed that he and his crew took the last offensive action by the RAAF in WW2. In his article, he states that, as he made a strafing run over the target after bombing, all aircraft were ordered by the base controller to cease all operations and to return to base because the war had ended with the surrender of Japan.

Official records assert that news of the Japanese surrender arrived from RAAF Command HQ just after the Beauforts had made their attack and implies that the recall was signalled immediately by the base controller. Fraser states that news of the surrender had been known before the first aircraft had taken off. A wireless operator of one of the first aircraft to take off reported to his pilot that just after being airborne he had picked up the news on a different radio frequency to that being used for the strike.

Max O'Neil has another version of the event. 407605 Joseph Max O'Neill is a South Australian who enlisted on 11 November 1940. He was a Wireless Operator/Air Gunner who flew a tour with Bomber Command over Europe with 214 Squadron RAF- in Wellingtons and then Stirlings. He had some very hairy times during his tour before serving as an instructor at an OTU and being commissioned. On being posted back to Australia, he served in 14 Squadron in Western Australia and then was posted to 100 Squadron in New Guinea. He had been promoted to Flight Lieutenant.

O'Neil flew in the first aircraft of the strike as his pilot, John Dewar, was the CO of 100 Squadron. As wireless operator of the lead aircraft, he received all messages from base. His radio logbook shows that his aircraft AG-671 was airborne at 0900 hours and that shortly afterwards he was ordered to stand by for an important announcement. After a short wait, he received the message that the strike was to proceed but that Japan had surrendered. He acknowledged that message at 0905 hours and recorded that at 0950 hours bombs were gone. The writer of this article has a copy of the relevant page of the log.

The log also states that the bomb load consisted of 2 x 500 lbs (for George), 2 x 250 lbs (for Joe) and 1 dozen bottles for the crew. Presumably George was King George VI, Joe was Stalin and the bottles were empty, no doubt having contained beer drunk by the crew. Any Japanese being hit on the head by one of the bottles would have had a headache at least.

It would seem from O'Neil's log that a decision was made at HQ that the strike should proceed despite the Japanese surrender. In the circumstances of the war with Japan that is understandable even if contravening the Geneva Convention. However, it is also understandable that, for political reasons at least, the official records should show that the strike was carried out before news of the surrender was received by RAAF HQ. Max O'Neil was demobbed on 4 December 1945. He was Mention in Despatches and received the 1939-45, Air Crew Europe and Pacific Stars, the War Medal 1939-1945 and the Australia Service Medal 1939-1945.



Obituary

Superintendent Henry Joseph (*Bunny*) Storer

It is with great sadness that the Victorian Branch of the Military Historical Society of Australia reports the passing of long time member *Bunny* Storer on Sunday 11 June 2006.

Born 23rd May 1938 *Bunny* served with his beloved 58th Infantry Battalion in the Citizen Military Forces from an early age. At 21, he joined the Victoria Police Force and went on to serve in various branches of the force including Mobile Traffic, the CIB and as an instructor at the Police Academy. A one time member of the Police Pipe Band he rose to the rank of Superintendent.

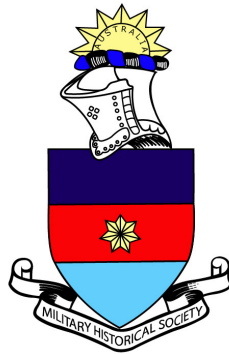
As a boy *Bunny* developed a long and sustained interest in military history and especially the collection of police medals and insignia. *Bunny's* research prowess, attention to detail and enthusiasm was widely known in Australia and overseas.

Bunny had a vast knowledge of military history and related matters in general and boasted an outstanding collection of police memorabilia. He would invariably delight and amaze friends and colleagues at Branch meetings and activities with his huge bank of knowledge which included technical detail and anecdotal information always meticulously researched and admirably presented.

Bunny Storer is much missed by all in the Society and leaves a large gap in our collective knowledge of Australian military and police history. All members of the Society extend their condolences to *Bunny's* wife Jill, his daughter Tina and son David.

Neil Smith

Military Historical Society of Australia
Sabretache



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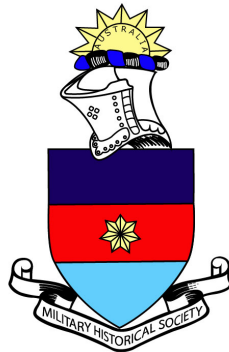
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