

# EPG and NEW ZEALAND WARS FROM 1863

**By Jeanette Lee**

Despite the signing of the Waitangi Treaty in 1840 by the British Government giving the Maori chiefs “full, exclusive indisputable possession of their lands and estates” the problems between the Maori chiefs and the white population’s desire for farm land continued to be a source of conflict which gradually escalated until what is known as the Maori Land Wars.

Great Britain had 10,000 troops stationed in New Zealand at this time but it was felt by the New Zealand Government that additional troops were necessary if they were to defeat a very determined and ferocious foe. In 1863 the New Zealand government sent Lieutenant-Colonel George Dean Pitt and Mr. Dillon Bell on a recruiting mission to Australia who set up depots in Sydney and Melbourne sending agents to the goldfields, Adelaide, Hobart and Queensland. So successful was the recruiting programme it resulted in 2,500 men volunteering for service between

1863 and 1864. The enticements offered to these men for 3 years’ service in the field were army pay for a captain of 11/7 per diem down to 2/6 per diem for a private plus rations and allowances, a free passage for wife and family. After 3 years a private was entitled to a town site allotment of one acre and 50 acres of farmland, officers of field rank were entitled to 400 acres. The men were supposed to be less than forty years of age with a certificate of good health, good character and be of good general fitness. A second recruitment drive was held in 1864 but that was terminated after the Governments of New South Wales and Victoria protested about losing their work force to another country.

The volunteers came from a wide selection of occupations including clerks, sailors, soldiers, farmers, miners, policemen, and labourers. Among the volunteers were some of the pensioners who had come to Western Australia as convict guards and had moved to the Eastern States although only two of them said they were soldiers.

The *Star of India* left Melbourne on 31 August 1863 with the 1<sup>st</sup> contingent of 405 privates and noncommissioned officers. It was followed by another ten ships transporting the men and their families from Australia to

Auckland. The men were accompanied by 1,000 wives and children those leaving their families in Australia were required to sign an undertaking to support them. After their arrival in Auckland they underwent basic military training and were then directed to one of the four regiments of the Waikato Militia.

At least eight of the former convict guards to Western Australia served in the Maori wars, no doubt their previous military experience must have been invaluable in the training of men who had little if any knowledge of warfare although many had served in the Volunteer force in Australia.

1<sup>st</sup> Waikato regiment:

Lewis Murren/Louis Murran (*York*) formerly of the 52nd Regiment, enlisted 17 July 1863. Thomas Maher (*Phoebe Dunbar*) formerly of the 35<sup>th</sup> regiment enlisted Melbourne 6 September 1863.

Job Perkins (*Sultana*) formerly of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> regiments received New Zealand War Medal.

2<sup>nd</sup> Waikato regiment

Nicholas Courtney (*Lincelles*) formerly of the 22<sup>nd</sup> regiment enlisted on 19 October 1863 at Sydney. Was serving with the Auckland Militia at the time of his death on 4 September 1864. He

was awarded the New Zealand War Medal.

Thomas Moody (*Lincelles*) formerly of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dragoon Guards, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> light Dragoons Guard, enlisted 21 August 1863, Sydney. Awarded New Zealand War Medal.

3<sup>rd</sup> Waikato regiment

William A Kerr (*Sultana*) formerly of the 7<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> Regiments private in the Wellington Rangers killed in action at Te-Ngutu-o-te-Manu 21 August 1868. Awarded New Zealand Medal. Memorial Te Ngutu Domain, Ahepaipa.

4<sup>th</sup> Waikato regiment

James Knox (*Robert Small*) Formerly Quartermaster 21 Regiment enlisted 14 March 1864. Land grant of 50 acres East Hamilton. Died 10 September 1894 Auckland, New Zealand. Awarded New Zealand Medal 1871.

Matthias Tuohill (*Stag*) formerly of HEIC Bengal Artillery enlisted 19 January 1864.

There were other Pensioners from Western Australia living and working in New Zealand at this time and they may have served in the Militia.

The land grants awarded to military Settlers were in the Waikato, Tauranga and Taranaki districts on land that

been confiscated from the Maoris during the wars, and further areas were located at Hamilton and Cambridge.

When the land grants were allotted, they were awarded to men of the Imperial regiments who had taken their pension in New Zealand and to those who had served in the Militia providing they had seen active service. Thomas Moody had been allotted a grant in the Waikato area three years after his enlistment but relinquished it to take part in the later stages of the war; he reapplied in 1886 and was granted one at Hamilton East. From the New Zealand Electoral Roll of 1869 it also appears Matthias Tuohill also received a grant at Hamilton.

### **References:**

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Trove Newspapers - various articles Findmypast web site.