

## GISBORNE'S THE THIRD CONTINGENT

25 Jan 1900

### CABLE FROM THE IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT.

WELLINGTON, this day.

The Governor has received the following cable from Mr Chamberlain: "The Secretary for War gladly accepts the third contingent. Her Majesty's Government desire me to express their grateful appreciation of the generosity and patriotism of the subscribers and the volunteers."

27 Jan 1900

Over two hundred applications have already been received from men anxious to join the Wellington portion of the third contingent, to be known as the New Zealand rough riders. Most of them are from men outside the city. It is intended that applicants shall assemble at the drill shed at 11 a.m. on Tuesday and submit themselves to the medical test. Thirteen have offered to provide their own horses.

If the Undaunted is unable to carry the horses of the third contingent, probably the Knight Templar will take men and horses. She leaves Lyttelton on February 12th.

6 Feb 1900

WELLINGTON, yesterday.

The Executive Committee expected the Government would take charge of the Rough Riders if the money were handed over, but this the Defence Department has declined to do. As the men are to go into camp to-morrow and no provision has been made for securing rations the Committee have been taken aback, and has appealed to the Premier to carry out the promise in his telegram of last week. A cheque for £1000 was tendered to the Government to-day, and the funds now amount to close on £2000. Besides this the horses will all be given, and some of the men are prepared to contribute money in addition. To-day.—The contingent leaving by the Knight Templar will be composed of men from the following places:—Christchurch 102, Wanganui, Taranaki, and Fielding 70, Napier 40, Gisborne 10, Westland 10, and Westport 6.

8 February 1900 – Departure of the Contingent

YESTERDAY'S proceedings in the despatch of a body of men to assist the Empire in upholding the rights of the Motherland will serve to mark an epoch in the history of Poverty Bay. Never before was there so much genuine enthusiasm displayed as was in evidence during the time of embarkation of the Gisborne Contingent of Rough Riders, and although it was felt by a great many of the vast crowd who assembled at the wharf to bid adieu to those who had so willingly and cheerfully volunteered for service in the Transvaal that the leave-taking may be a final one for some, as they are bound on very serious business, the proceedings were none the less enthusiastic and cheerful. For a considerable time before 6:30 p.m. Gladstone road was thronged with people, and the large numbers who were already astir were constantly increased by arrivals from all parts of the district. The weather up to a late hour in the afternoon was most unpropitious. However, about 4 o'clock the heavy clouds dispersed and gave place to sunshine.

At half-past six o'clock, the hour at which it was announced the march for the wharf would begin, some hundreds of people assembled at the firebell tower, whilst large crowds lined both sides of Gladstone road and the route to the wharf, and as the procession moved forward the crowds fell in behind, and by the time the wharf, which was already fully crowded, was reached, it was computed there were fully 4000 people assembled. As the procession moved on its onward course the men were cheered lustily and heartily, and it was quite clear the feeling of patriotism in our midst was running very high.

The City Band and the Whataupoko Band headed the procession, the contingent following immediately in their rear. The Selection Committee came next in order, and they were followed by ex-volunteer officers in the district. The Fire Brigade and members of the Foresters, Oddfellows, Rechabites, and Druids Friendly Societies brought up the rear.

On arrival at the wharf it was found that very excellent arrangements had been made for the embarkation of those who intended taking a run off to the Elingamite. The Harbor Board's large goods shed had been barricaded off, and from here the contingent were put on board the Tuna, whilst the general public soon filled the Waihi and Noko, all of which steamers had been kindly placed at the disposal of the Committee by Messrs Dewing (Nelson Bros.), Cargill (Union S.S. Co.), and Kennedy and Evans. The Tuna was also reserved for the accommodation of the Selection Committee, the City Band, and friends of the contingent.

The Mayor (Mr J. Townley) addressed the men on the wharf prior to their going on board the steam launch. He said they had arrived at the point when they had now to bid good-bye to the Gisborne portion of the third contingent. He was very pleased to have the privilege of addressing the men on that great occasion. They would have noticed no doubt that the Boers had stated that the Britishers would be made to hew their wood and black their boots. He hoped those going away from here, instead of doing anything of that kind, would black the Boers. President Kruger had said that every bullet was guided by the Lord for a Britisher. He (Mr Townley) hoped the Lord would guide the bullets past the men of the Gisborne contingent, so that they might return in safety to us again. The present war had shown by the volunteer spirit what Britain and her colonies could do. They had before them that evening the spirit of volunteering such as had never been seen in the British Empire before. All parts of Britain's dominions were sending forth their volunteers to fight for Queen and country. He need say no more than to wish the members of the contingent godspeed, and to trust that they would see the men back again safe and sound, when they would meet them with a crowd three times the size of the present gathering. He then called for three cheers for the Gisborne contingent, which were most heartily given.

Mr W. L. Rees said that the vast crowd which had assembled showed beyond doubt the keen interest which the people of the East Coast took in the South African war and the contingent. The time for parting had come, but all eyes would be upon the Gisborne boys, and he was sure that their conduct would fully justify the selection made. The cause of justice and righteousness claimed their services, and if necessary

even their lives, but he trusted in God's protection. We had given of our best to the cause of Queen and country. We should watch with undying interest every step and every movement, and whether the men now going fell on the field or came back after a glorious conflict, they would be remembered to the time of our children's children as men who had willingly died and given all in the cause of the Queen, the colonies, and the Empire.

Mr C. F. Lewis, secretary of the New Zealand Natives' Association, said he had much pleasure in announcing that Mrs Steele had donated a gold clasped badge to each of the contingent. He addressed a few appropriate remarks to the men, and Mrs Steele then came forward and pinned the badge on the breasts of the men.

After receiving her complement the steamer backed out into the middle of the stream, cheer after cheer being most heartily given for the men. The Tuna's berth was taken up by the Noko, which was speedily filled, as was also the Waihi. A start was then made for the Bay. Every conceivable point of vantage ground was eagerly rushed by the spectators, even to the roofs of the goods' sheds, and from the stock yards down to the Waikanae creek a large crowd gathered, eager to get a last glimpse of the men. Had other steamers been available very many more would have accompanied the contingent into the Bay. Mr Pasley, Collector of Customs, wisely too, no doubt, restricted to a safe number the passengers to be accommodated on each steamer. The Tuna led the way, and was closely followed by the Waihi and Noko. On arrival in the Bay several turns were taken, and after pleasantly cruising round for about twenty minutes the Elingamite was reached, and the contingent transferred. The men, who were in the very best of spirits, on arriving on board, were addressed by Lieutenant-Colonel Porter in a few well-chosen words, in which he exhorted them to cheerfully carry out their duties, no matter how irksome or tiring they might find them. He wished them God speed and a safe return, and heartily took farewell of each member. Major McCredie accompanied Lieut. - Colonel Porter on board and took part in farewelling our Rough Riders. The more intimate friends of the contingent then took leave of their comrades, and a return was made to the Tuna. Meanwhile the Waihi and Noko came up alongside, and in response to the call of Captain Winter three rousing

cheers were sent up for the men, who loudly responded. The launches then cruised round the Elingamite, on which steamer there was a brilliant display of signal lights from the bridge, and as a further demonstration of the importance of the function the steamer continued to give long blasts of her whistle, which were answered by the launches. The City Band (Bandmaster T. Morrison) and the Whataupoko Band (Bandmaster Aston) played a number of selections, including "The Girl I Left Behind Me," "Good-bye, Sweetheart," "Say Au Revoir, But Not Good-bye." The sea was quite smooth, and the brilliant lights on the vessels, the discharge of rockets, and the reflection of the lights on the surface of the water made a fine spectacle. The wharf was reached at 8 o'clock, and the proceedings terminated.

Too much credit cannot be given Messrs A. F. Kennedy, W. Miller, and those gentlemen who so ably assisted them in the matter of shipping the large crowds who accompanied the contingent by the steamers, and happily there was not the slightest hitch or accident to mar the farewell, which was admirably conducted. To His Worship the Mayor a very great deal of credit is due in connection with the successful raising of the contingent. During the past week Mr Townley has been most indefatigable in his effort to bring the matter to a successful issue, and the result must be highly gratifying to him. Mr Robinson, the Town Clerk, ably seconded His Worship in the movement, and he worked most assiduously and rendered invaluable assistance, entailing a lot of extra work. The selection committee, Captain Winter, Colonel Porter, and Mr Macfarlane, undertook one of the most difficult tasks of the movement, and their duties were not by any means of a light nature. It was most important that the best men should be selected from those offering, and to examine some seventy-five men must have been a task of no small magnitude. Major McCredie very considerably lightened their duties by undertaking to examine the candidates in firing, and to this gentleman thanks are due. Messrs A. F. Kennedy and W. Miller also came in for a lot of hard work, which they most cheerfully carried out.

Captain Winter, in referring to the men, said they displayed great intelligence in picking up their drill. On Tuesday they were put through mounted and manual exercises, and yesterday morning they were exercised in riding and changing front;

also in galloping work, which they picked up most readily. The local Bands, especially the City Band, have been most generous in readily and gratuitously rendering their services on all occasions.

A large number of Natives gathered at the fire-bell tower last evening, and took an affectionate farewell of Trooper Poynter, who had almost continuously lived in their midst since childhood.

Mr DesBarres relieved the Committee of a great deal of anxiety by undertaking to supervise the shipment of horses. The work extended from an early hour yesterday afternoon up to 3 o'clock this morning, when the last horse was safely transferred to the Elingamite. The thanks of the Committee are due to this gentleman for the excellent manner in which the horses were handled.

We understand that the fares, which go to the War Fund, realised the handsome total of £30.

14 Feb 1900

As the time for the departure of the third contingent draws near there are busy times in camp. The parade strength for the mounted drill this afternoon was 84, which included ten Gisborne men. The men, under Captain Lindsay, proceeded to the Asylum ground, and were exercised in a large paddock, which, from its undulating character, proved very suitable for the work. The men were put through the usual division movements and formation, with dismounted firing exercises. They were drilled by Captain Lindsay in divisions, wheeling in line, advancing and retiring by extended sections, and concluded with a hard quarter of an hour's fast division movements. The work was excellently done, and the Gisborne men showed up well. While one of the divisions was halting, one of the Canterbury troopers' horses (the same animal which was responsible for the accident last week) started kicking, and a Gisborne man on a horse near to it was kicked on the ribs and on the wrist. Although the kicks appeared to be severe, the trooper was not seriously injured. This morning the Gisborne men were instructed in elementary foot drill and the rudiments of mounted drill. The Lyttelton Times, describing the afternoon's parade, said the Gisborne men, who were out for the first time, kept their places and dressed very well, and they appeared to be a very hard lot.



## OUR SOLDIER BOYS

EAST COAST REPRESENTATIVES  
AT THE FRONT AND WITH DE-  
PARTING CONTINGENTS.

In a recent issue we stated that Gisborne had contributed handsomely to the needs of the Empire both with men and money, and mentioned that the aggregate amount subscribed was likely to exceed £2000, whilst forty-three men have been despatched to South Africa. The financial results of yesterday's assemblies were so satisfactory that we are confident the prediction as to the money will be realised, and as to the men, we find that there are even more than we mentioned at the front or on their way. Yesterday's quota from this district was at the last moment increased by three men, permission having been received from the Defence Department to despatch fifteen instead of twelve young men for the Fifth Contingent, thus

allowing three who had been most anxious to obtain places but had been shut out to proceed, namely, Anthony Webb (son of Canon Webb), H. Driscoll, and R. J. Stevens, the latter being from the Wai-mata. So that thirty men were despatched by the *Flora* last evening. Ten were sent with the Third Contingent from Christchurch, three went by the *Undaunted*, and in addition to the men sent directly from the district by the local Committee there have been several claiming this place as their birth-place who have joined the contingents elsewhere, and one or two who at their own expense have gone to South Africa from this district, in order to participate in the fighting. Mr Kirkman, for instance, threw up his mastership of the Native school at Waio-matani, and went to the Cape early in the war, and is now a member of Roberts's Light Horse, in which he has doubtless seen much fighting. Mr C. Nurse also left the coast and went to Canterbury at his own expense, taking his horse with him, and joined the Canterbury troop with the third contingent. Two young men named Hurrey, sons of a local settler, are believed to have gone to the front from Wanganui, though the name of only one appears in the list of the third contingent, and we are informed that another local resident named W. McKay left Wellington for the front with one of the contingents. The following is a list of 50 Poverty Bay representatives in the war:—

Third Contingent: W. E. Langford, M. Pickett, J. A. B. Phillips, J. Poynter, G. C. Johnstone, R. Richardson, J. Gordon, A. Woods, Graham Johnstone, and A. W. Fowlds.

John Hurrey, from Wanganui; and C. Nurse, from Tokomaru (joined at Christchurch).

On s.s. *Undaunted* with horses: H. H. Fairlie, E. A. Rees, and R. Johnstone.

Fourth Contingent: B. Arthur, F. Barton, G. Bougen, T. Burch, D. Bruce, F. Bruce, J. Davidson, R. Fraser, W. Gannon, J. Langham, T. Peakman, J. Rogers, J. Walker, J. J. Whitehead, and F. G. Sharp.

Fifth Contingent: P. Brady, H. Driscoll, W. J. Brown, G. B. Carter, J. S. Ferris, H. J. Ferris, J. D. Cameron, F. Parker, M. Ryan, G. A. Simpson, W. Taylor, J. P. Thompson, R. J. Stevens, H. Yardley, A. J. Webb.

Left at own expense for South Africa to join troops there: — Kirkman, Waio-matani (joined Roberts' Light Horse). W. McKay (reported to have left Wellington for the front); G. Hurrey (also believed to be on his way to South Africa).

Four other young men who had been excluded from the local contingent left by the *Flora* last evening, with the object of endeavoring to get to South Africa by hook or by crook.

20 March 1900

## THEIR PASSAGE TO ALBANY.

CHRISTCHURCH, this day.

A letter has been received from Captain Finnis, of the s.s. *Knight Templar*, stating that the steamer reached Albany after passage of eleven days eighteen hours, in which a good deal of bad weather was experienced. The horse which was lost had to be destroyed because it went mad. The members of the Contingent are, the captain says, a very jolly lot of fellows and after they had recovered from sea sickness got on very well. After leaving Lyttelton it was discovered that several things supposed to be on board were not there, and it took some days to set matters to rights. It was found that water was coming out of the tanks thick, owing to being constantly disturbed by the rolling of the vessel, and it was intended to condense water for the men after leaving Albany.

## THE KNIGHT TEMPLAR.

### SERIOUS COMPLAINTS.

A slight sensation has been caused in Wellington by the publication of a letter received from a New Zealand trooper from Albany relative to the state of the steamer Knight Templar, which took away the Third Contingent. The writer says that warning was given, but the vessel had to go on February 20. "It was a disgrace to Canterbury to send the men away in a boat like this. She was in an awful state on the day of our embarkation, and is not much better now (March 1st.) I shall not be a bit surprised if some disease breaks out before reaching the Cape. I have not had a drink of anything since leaving Lyttelton. The water is something dreadful. For the first three days on board we had meals on deck. The mess-room is more like a dungeon than anything else. It is a messroom and sleeping compartment combined. Just fancy 240 men sleeping in the same place and having to take their meals in it! There is even less room for the horses than for the men. One horse has gone mad already, and had to be slung overboard. There are two others that way. Had the Premier and the members of the War Committee been sent for the trip in this boat they would have returned sadder and wiser men. There is neither room nor comfort. No room for drill; not even a seat to sit down on. I had to buy my own meals at the store, as one cannot eat the food given out. We shall be very glad to reach land. I have never seen more dissatisfaction than exists here, and I have been among some pretty rough shearers' sheds."

30 March 1900 THE THIRD CONTINGENT LANDED AT EAST LONDON

(Per Press Association.)

WELLINGTON, this day.

The s.s. Knight Templar disembarked the Third New Zealand Contingent at East London.

All are well.

Ten horses were lost on the voyage.

11 April 1900 NZ Third Contingent Despatched to Beira

## DESPATCHED TO BIERA.

### A BOER PEACE EMISSARY.

LONDON, April 10.

The third contingent of New Zealanders have sailed for Beira. The horses and men are very fit.

Lieutenant-General Hutton's Brigade consists of Australians, Canadians, and New Zealanders. The colonials appreciate the honor of constituting a new division, and anticipate much service.

Mr Fischer, a member of the Free State Executive, has been fully empowered to negotiate for peace.

26 April 1900

THE OPERATIONS IN ORANGE FREE STATE  
ENEMY EVERYWHERE DEFEATED  
RETREATING TOWARDS BASUTOLAND  
THEIR RETREAT NORTHWARDS BEING CUTT OFF  
DETERMINED ATTACK ON WEPENER REPULSED  
MISSING DRAGOON GUARDS RETURN  
NATIVE WOMEN ESCAPE FROM MAFEKING

LONDON, April 25.

Generals Pole-Carew and French reached Zweedpluk, five miles south of Leeuwkop, on Monday with little opposition. Heliograph messages were exchanged with General Rundle.

The missing Dragoon Guards, with the exception of two, have returned safely.

(Received April 26, 9.15 a.m.)

When he decided to advance on Sannaspost Colonel Ian Hamilton ordered a detachment of one hundred and forty New South Wales Lancers to occupy a square kopje situated a mile from, and overlooking, Watervaal Drift. The New South Welshmen accomplished the task after some sniping.

One casualty which occurred to Colonel Hamilton's column was the capture of Private Brown, of the New South Wales Mounted Rifles.

The Standard's correspondent estimates that a force of three thousand Boers are entrenched on the hills to the southeast of Bloemfontein.

The Boers when they failed in their determined attempt to storm Colonel Dalgetty's northern position at Wepener recoiled, extending in open order across the flats.

They kept up a heavy rifle fire at long range, the fusillade lasting for hours.

General Brabant lost twenty five wounded in his advance towards Wepener.

In those districts held by the British, the authorities hold lists containing the names of twelve thousand Cape Colony and Natal rebels.

Three hundred native women who were shut up in Mafeking made good their escape through the enemy's lines.

The Boers treacherously lured a number of Fingo cattle raiders out of Mafeking and killed 26.

(Received April 26, 9.35 a.m.)

Colonel Ian Hamilton's division, of which the colonial brigade, under Colonel Hutton, formed a part, advanced eastwards from Bloemfontein, and occupied the waterworks.

As the Boers hold the neighboring hills Major-Generals Smith-Dorrien and Hector Macdonald have been despatched to support Colonel Hamilton.

General Maxwell's 14th brigade, belonging to General Tucker's division, moved eastward from Glensiding, eight miles north of Bloemfontein, and seized the hills covering Kraankraal and the waggon bridge over the Modder river. This movement cuts off the Boers' retreat northwards at that point.

Under cover of a heavy shrapnel fire from our guns, the Boer forces engaged in besieging Wepener yesterday made a determined attack to storm Colonel Dalgetty's northern position. The garrison, the Cape Mounted Rifles, and other South African troops, successfully repelled the Boer attack.

Lord Roberts has prohibited the circulation of the Dutch Afrikaner organ "Ons Land" controlled by Mr Hofmeyer, leader of the Bond.

It is reported that Commandant Snyman's besiegers of Mafeking have been reinforced by Boers from Natal, also from districts to the south of Mafeking.

Trooper L. M. Tarrant, of the New Zealand Mounted Rifles, has died of typhoid fever at Pretoria.

7<sup>th</sup> May 1900

Troopers Johnstone, of the Gisborne section of the Third Contingent, writing to their friends here from East London, under date April 8th, said they had orders to hold themselves in readiness to go to the front at a moment's notice, but were not certain as to where they were going. They were having a very good time, and the people at East London had given them several entertainments. In a later letter they said they had had the sad duty of acting as half the firing party at Colonel Lanning's funeral. The New Zealanders and the Norfolks formed the escort. The

Imperial officers and men said they were very pleased with the marching and volley firing of the contingent. One man stated that he had been to scores of funerals at Home where the escort was formed entirely of regulars, and not one of them went off so evenly as that one. They were tired of knocking about the town. Fifteen members of the contingent were sick in the hospital already, and they thought that if they did not get out of there very soon there would be a lot more ill. All the troops there reckoned the colonials jolly fellows. An exciting experience fell to the lot of the New Zealanders on the 7th. A party had been sent to the beach to bathe their horses, and one trooper managed to get too far out and was washed off his horse; others went to his rescue, and also got into trouble. Finally they all were got ashore more dead than alive. The New Zealand horses had fairly astonished the people.

8 June 1900

#### LETTER FROM CORPORAL LANGFORD

The many friends of Stacy Langford will be glad to hear that writing late in April from Wepener he reports himself well, and as having gained in condition even under the somewhat scanty diet of three biscuits and a pound of bully beef per diem. His company had already been in three engagements, fortunately without casualties, although saddles and horses were hit and bridle reins cut by bullets, one of which was found in a cartridge pouch after penetrating three cartridges without exploding them or injuring the owner. He says it appears simply marvellous how few men are hit whilst the bullets seem like a hailstorm around, and it is much easier to get used to them than to the shells, the shrieking and bursting of which is certainly discomposing. In each encounter with the Boers the latter were routed, and rode off headlong, followed by shells, from which they would endeavor to escape by scattering from time to time. What with picket and outpost duty the time appears to be fully occupied, and no doubt by now the Third Contingent have seen the stern realities of war in all its aspects.

4 July 1900

#### TROOPER GORDON

The following letter, from Trooper Jem Gordon, of the Third Contingent, dated Bloemfontein May 9th, has been received by his parents:—Just a few lines to let you know that I am still living and well. You will have seen by the papers that we have had a "go" at the Boers. Our first fight was on Easter Sunday. We started at eight o'clock in the morning, and it lasted till near nine at night. The big guns began to boom when we were three miles apart. Then the No. 2 Company, all the North Islanders, were ordered to the left wing so as to surround the Boers, but they were too quick for us. They saw our movement, and got their guns to work on us, and I can tell you one feels very funny when we see shells bursting about 100 yards in front, and you going as fast as your horse can take you towards them. The enemy were using pom-poms. My mate's horse and my own got hit with part of a shell, but it was too fast spent to hurt. They put about twenty pom-poms amongst us, but they did no damage, and then one of our gunners put a shell into theirs and burst it up. We then had rifle bullets to contend with. We nearly ran into a trap of theirs. We were making straight for a little hill when word came from our General saying it was held by the Boers. Our Captain said alright we will soon have it, and we did. We charged them in extended order,—that is two horse lengths apart. How it was that some of us did not get shot I don't know

for the bullets fell pretty thick around us. However, they did not kill any of us, but we took the hill. Then it was our turn. We peppered them as they were running to the next hill. It was tip-top fun. When they got out of range we went after them in the same way, but at last they got on to a hill and joined their main column, so we had to content ourselves by taking cover behind some rocks, and take a shot at them when we could, which was pretty often, for every time they shot at us they had to stand up to do so, and to get a shot at them we also had to run the same risk, but we kept potting at each other all the day till about four o'clock things got a bit quite, and we got orders to join the others. We got about 300 yards away from the hill, when you can guess the start we got, for we again heard the roar of the cannon. The first shell landed right amongst us, so close that the clay it sent up fell all over us, but we were all in luck, it did not burst.

If it had thirty or forty of us would have got torn to pieces. We got the order to gallop back to the hill we had just left. The Boers must have had three or four guns, the shells fell so thick. We had good cover but they kept shelling us till it got dark, but before that they made two attempts to take the hill, thinking they would take us prisoners, but each time we proved too many for them. They lost a great many and we none. We got back to camp about ten o'clock and that ended our Easter holidays fight. We found there had been one killed and nine wounded; but what do you think of it, we were out very early next morning but the Boers were all gone. We went over the ground where the fight was. We saw about forty fresh-made graves, and in their hurry they left four unburied. We saw any amount of horses lying about. Then we went on the march to Wepener. Nothing happened till the Tuesday afternoon, when we again fell in with the Boers. The beggars had a trap for us, which we ran into. They let us get within eighty yards of them, and then opened fire. They were in front of us and on each side. We fought our way out. The fighting only lasted four hours, and three horses were hit. They cleared out again. Our loss was, I think, four killed and two or three wounded. We then went to the relief of Wepener, where the British had been in trenches fourteen days. They were glad when we came up. We then came on here to Bloemfontein. This is a grand place, but terrible for fever. We hear we are to march tomorrow for Pretoria, and we will be glad to leave this place. Lord Roberts expects to take Pretoria before the 24th. We get very few chances to write. I have not had my clothes off for three weeks. We sleep beside our horses, no tents, and always on the go before daylight. It is not all beer and skittles here, but we all hope to get home. Kapai New Zealand. Good-bye, father and mother, good-bye. Remember me to them all about Gisborne."

4 July 1900

#### "DICK SEDDON" A STAYER.

At the time the contingents were being despatched from New Zealand Mr J. A. Harding, of Gisborne, presented Mrs Seddon with a horse, and Mrs Seddon in turn presented it to Trooper Frank Wilde, of Kumara, who went away with the third contingent. In a letter to his father, which is published in the Kumara Times, Trooper Wilde says that on the voyage several took a fancy to the horse,



and he was asked to allow one of the officers to have it. However, as it was a gift from Mrs Seddon, he said he could not think of doing so. That he was wise in this conclusion events fully proved. Somewhat disrespectfully, the horse was named "Dick Seddon" by the troopers, and this is the kind of horse it has proved to be. Trooper Wilde says: "Here we are again, back in civilisation after six weeks' journey from Carnarvon district. Since leaving we have done close on 600 miles. Some days we were pretty hard up for tucker, having only half a plate or tin of porridge at 4 a.m. and ditto again at 9 p.m. My horse was one of twenty that went there and back without a spell. The major's, captain's, and all the officers' knocked up. I also had the good luck to be chosen one of the four to escort five rebel leaders down here. We averaged over 30 miles a day on the way down, and kept at it for 230 miles. Not bad, considering the heavy rain and the state of the roads. We knocked up five horses out of the nine that left. When we arrived about 60 miles from here one of the trap horses knocked up, and as mine was the only good one left we had to put him in. We did not know whether he would go in harness, but we chanced it, and he went grand. It was rather rough on him, after doing 170 miles under the saddle, with about 15 stone on his back, but here he is, and good to go another hundred or two miles." Evidently "Dick Seddon" is a "stayer" of the first magnitude.

18<sup>th</sup> July 1900

**ORES DRIVEN BACK VICINITY OF PRETORIA  
THE ENEMY SHORT OF FOOD**

LONDON, July 16.

It is reported that Christian DeWet has imprisoned Steyn, who wished to surrender after leaving Bethlehem.

July 17.—Lord Roberts has despatched a force of troops to dislodge the Boers from the kopjes north and north-west of Pretoria, but the enemy evacuated the position without firing a shot.

The Boers are reported to be so short of food that they allowed most of the Lincolnshires and Scots Greys captured near Pretoria to escape.

CAPETOWN, July 17.

A patrol of Australian Bushmen encountered a party of Boers on the 13th.

WELLINGTON, this day.

Mr Herbert Pilcher, of the South British Insurance Company at Capetown, reports to the Premier to-day the departure of the following New Zealanders for home by the s.s. Persic, via Melbourne: No. 617 Lance Corporal C. A. Wilson; 144 Private J. W. Faherty; 335 Private Philip Shand. The message adds that the following men have gone into hospital, but at what places is not stated: 648 Lance-Sergeant B. L. Hodson; 752 Private J. Stewart; 406 Sergeant B. S. Hay.

The uncertainty as to who the McIntyre is whose death is reported has been removed by receipt of a message stating that it is Private Robert McIntyre, of Little River, a member of the Third Contingent.

The New Zealand Hotchkiss Battery, in which Troopers Allen and Rees, of this district, are members, had its baptism of fire before Kroonstadt, and, writing of the engagement, a member of the corps says:—On Thursday afternoon we saw the Boers for the first time. The Eighth and Fourteenth Hussars in the next brigade formed up and charged. But the horses were about done, and most of the Boers got away. The Hussars got a few of them though with the sword. It was a great sight. We were lying close handy and saw it all. A few bullets were spitting around us, but no one was struck. We were then ordered on to the left flank, and opened fire on some Boers on a kopje some distance off, but they were out of range too soon for us to do any damage. Their Long Tom then starting to shell us, but although their shooting was good it did no damage, as their shells don't burst properly. I saw four or five shells land right in the centre of a crowd of mounted infantry, and quite expected to see a horrible slaughter, whereas no one was even touched. The Boers, when our guns (Horse Artillery) got going on them thought it time to "get," and "got" accordingly. They were evidently a part of a big army engaged with Lord Roberts away on our right. We have heard nothing of that fight, although we could hear the big guns going all day. We saw the balloon up for purposes of observation. Our (the Third and Fourth Cavalry Brigade) object was to get a flank movement on whilst Lord Roberts made the main attack. This was all leading up to the taking of Kroonstad.



Trooper O'Shea, of Nelson, in the First Contingent, writing from Kroonstad on 18th May says :—"The Free State is a far better country than Cape Colony. There are hundreds of miles of plain, well grassed and plenty of water. The farmers here ought to be millionaires, but to see the dirty old mud houses they live in tells one they are a lazy tribe. . . . War is

#### TROOPER D F MORRISSEY

Trooper D. F. Morrissey, with the third contingent, writing to a friend in Gisborne from Kroonstad, says :—"I am having a pretty fair time, so far; can't growl. Without a meal now and again, but I am getting used to it now. I suppose when you used to hear me talk at Makaraka you thought I was not game to come over here, but my British blood started to boil, and I could not stand it any longer, so I thought I would come over and have a cut at the Boers. We have had one go so far at a place called Bushman's Kop, and routed the enemy. We had two chaps killed and fourteen wounded. The whizz whizz and ping ping of the bullets made my hair stand on end for a while, but I soon got used to it. The only thing that breaks me up over here is the marching. We have to carry such loads on our horses that their backs won't stand it. We made a big mistake when we brought the best horses. There are hundreds of fine horse useless, what with sore backs and shoulder knocked out. All the Gisborne boys are all right, except Phelps, and he was left in the hospital at East London."

6 August 1900

#### A LETTER FROM A GISBORNE TROOPER RICHARDSON

Trooper Richardson, of the Third Contingent, writing to his brother on June 18, said :—"We are camped about 8 miles north-east of Pretoria. The battle of Klip river on the way to Johannesburg was a proper artillery duel. The Boer artillery did some good shooting, and put the shells right in the middle of us, but they never burst. Had they done so there would have been very little of the New Zealanders left. We could not do much with our rifles, as the Boer big guns were so far away. There were about 20,000 Boers, and on our side there were the New Zealanders and Canadians, 10,000 colonials, and the Royal Artillery, with 6 15-pounders, 4 pompoms, and 3 Nordenfeldt Maxims. Our cavalry went to make a charge, but the Boer rifle fire was too heavy for them, and

they had to retire. Two lancers were shot and twelve were wounded. After the second day's fighting the Artillery had to retire to another position, as the Boers were too sudden for us, but the New Zealanders had to stay on the kopje when the Artillery retired, and hold the position. At daybreak the Boers shelled us. There was only a few of each contingent left on the hill. After the Boers had been shelling us for a few hours General Hutton gave orders to retire. The Boers rang the pom-poms and three or four big 50-pounders into us, but did very little damage, blowing the head off of one New Zealander and killing several of our horses. Then the Boers advanced on horseback, so we got the order to dismount. No. 3 of each section took our horses under cover, and we laid down behind rocks and anything we could get cover under, and we opened fire on the enemy and drove them back, greatly surprised. I don't know how many we killed; they fell like sheep. Then our cavalry and Lancers came up and thoroughly routed them. We had several fights on the way to Pretoria, where we had a day's spell. Two days' march from Pretoria the Boers made another big stand. We very nearly got into a trap. The Boers opened fire on the left front, right and behind us, so our artillery galloped into position and soon shifted the Boer gun in front of us. The enemy had too good a position on their right, so our guns retired back to a better position and shifted the big gun behind us. The Boers made it pretty warm for a time. Our cavalry and Lancers charged the Boer trenches and killed many. I used to read about bullets going through your clothes and did not believe it, but now I have had a few narrow escapes. Some of us have had our clothes riddled with bullets. A lot of our fellows joined the police to-day. I was going to join but altered my mind. I don't care about the climate. Fever is raging and they are bearing men away every day by the dozens. You are better off in New Zealand."

#### LETTER FROM TROOPER ROBERT JOHNSTONE

A letter received from Trooper Robert Johnstone, of the Third Contingent, at Pretoria, states that they arrived there after fighting all the way from Bloemfontein, and those who had not lost their horses had gone on to the front. The remainder camped in the space lately occupied by the British prisoners at Waterval. It was enclosed with a barbed wire fence. The Boers had mounted guard over the

The Boers had mounted guard over the enclosure night and day, and had had it specially lighted with electricity. The prisoners complained of having been brutally treated by their captors. Pretoria is described by the New Zealander as a pretty place, but the country as a whole is horrid, and he says they are all coming back to New Zealand, which they infinitely prefer. Trooper Johnstone says he had heard that transports were being got ready to bring them back, and that the colonials would be the first to leave. The water supplied them at Pretoria was such as they would not use to wash in at Gisborne, and as to firewood, there was none. They had simply to break up unoccupied houses for lighting their camp fires. The members of the Hotchkiss Battery were with them, and thus the three brothers Johnstone were united. All were well.

20 Aug 1900

### LETTER FROM TROOPER POYNTER.

Trooper Poynter, of the Third Contingent, wrote from Pretoria on June 25 to a friend in Gisborne:—We have had such a very busy time since arriving on South African soil, and the inconveniences have been so great that letter writing has been considered more a luxury than anything else. They took all our kit bags away from us, containing all our goods and chattels. We were only allowed to have the smallest swag for the sake of transport, such as one blanket, one uniform—in fact just one rig out—a towel, and an overcoat. All the articles were enumerated, and nothing else was supposed to be carried. Some of us managed to smuggle a few extras in, in the way of toilet soap, razors, writing paper, pair of shoes, etc. I forgot the paper, and thereby have to answer a goodly number of charges from Gisborne people for not keeping my word. But you wouldn't really believe it, one would think that we have stacks of time, but there's nothing of the sort. I suppose by the time you receive this you will have heard of our career and grand march to Pretoria, so I will content myself with a few events that might interest you. I happened to be No. 1 of a party that had to go ashore to pick out a camping ground at East London, so had the honor of landing first on the wharf. I wouldn't think so much of it, only the correspondent was handy with his camera and "took the blessed lot." I had a good time in East London, staying there for about ten days—quite long enough, and certainly a lump before the Second Contingent camping at Maitland for over a month before proceeding to the front, and then they were behind us, as we were under fire first. Well, since then I have had all sorts of varied ex-

periences, being attached to about half-a-dozen different generals. There are hundreds of them out here. We were with General Brabant at the relief of Wepener. It was our first experience of being under fire. You wouldn't realise the feeling—or sensation, rather—one has under fire. I fought a bit shy at first, but when actually among the bullets and shells I didn't give a d---. They were flying all about us, and we received great credit for our little bit of help. The Boers had to clear. It was like a game of football to me—I mean the sensation. One forgets all the risk, and has his mind fixed on the goal—that is, either beat the Boers out and out or make them retire. We had "scrapping" all along from the Vaal river to Pretoria. We were fortunate in being with the main column on the grand march, only we were attached to General French on the left flank. French is the best general for the Boers, in my opinion. He is very daring and brilliant. There are no half-measures or delays with him. In the fight around Pretoria he went right through a pass on the left, fighting the Boers night and day, and making them retreat in double quick time while Roberts shelled the forts in the front. French only had about 7000, and 20,000 were with Roberts. Anyhow, we got into Pretoria at last after campaigning about South Africa for nearly three months. We went through and camped about five miles further on, and from there went on again in the track of the Boers. I didn't happen to be in it this time, as my horse knocked up. He just carried me far enough to say I rode to Pretoria. There were about seventy or eighty of us that had to walk on account of their horses giving in. Langford and I parted here for the first time, and he went on and had some more scrapping. I went into Pretoria to camp again, awaiting orders, and whilst there got an offer to join the Pretoria Constabulary (mounted), and here I am at present. Things were upside down when we came on duty, as there were no conveniences; things were arranged so suddenly. No beds, have to sleep on the floor, and have our meals on the floor also. Patrols hadn't been arranged satisfactorily, horses not too good, and a hundred other matters not seen to, but now we are getting along swimmingly. We get about four hours' drill every day, and it is just what we colonials want, as they never gave us too much of it in our contingent. We got to be very slovenly, but after a week or two of this we will be as good trained men as you will find anywhere. Our sergeant-major belongs to the Dublin Fusiliers, and

is a very smart drill instructor. We had the honor of being included in a guard of honor to Lord Roberts the first day almost, and were thanked personally by the Captain of the Constabulary for the smart way in which we acquitted ourselves. I intend staying in the force for three months, and then for Merrie England—that is, if some old Boer doesn't snipe at me from some farmyard, which is a usual

method with some of them. I forgot to tell you that we were in one big go at Klip River, or Doorn Kop, which was considered the key to Johannesburg. The Boers reckon they beat us bad there, and no doubt they did, as we couldn't force them to retreat, and they had the best of the position for two days, but we were ordered to hold the position while French gave them a terrible doing on the left flank. We were right among the shells and bullet fire all day. They gave us some peace at night, but weren't idle, as they took advantage of it by shifting their guns and pom-poms to a better position for the morning, and didn't they pelt into us. Their shooting was bad though, as our fellows rode up and down for them to blaze at, and I don't think there were more than a dozen killed. The rifle bullets, however, played the mischief with us, a good many succumbing. The original number of the Gisborne ten are scattered about just now. Gordon, Foulds, and self are here, while the others, with the exception of Philp, are going again to the front, I believe. They were too late to apply. Philp is somewhere in South Africa. We left him behind at East London, sick, to join us when he got well. He started away, and is trying to find us still. He is somewhere in the Orange Free State. There are five of our contingent that have died from fever. Captain Clayton was wounded, but is now well. I am still enjoying good health, and likely to for some time. They say one has to get acclimatised to Pretoria by catching fever first, and if it isn't too bad I'll not mind going through the ordeal I shall have heaps more to tell you about Xmas time, when I expect to be back in good old Gisborne once again. In the meantime remember me to all the boys, thanking them very much for their handsome present.

31 August 1900

#### LETTER FROM TROOPER PICKETT

Considerable interest having been shown in the publication of Trooper Richardson's letter, specially mentioning two of our rough riders, Langford and Pickett, we are pleased to publish a letter to his former employer, Mr D. Watt, of Hangarora, from the latter. Writing from Wett Droit, 47 miles north-east of Pretoria, on July 18, 1900, Trooper Mark Pickett says:—"We have had ten days' fighting, and I am very lucky in not having been shot four or five times over. We lost 100 men, including Captain Brown and Lieut Cameron. Though seventeen of the Third Contingent rough riders and one of the Second Cape lieutenants threw up their hands, some of us would not do so, but made a dash for liberty. The shells and bullets dropped all around us, but we got through without a mark. There were 40 on the kopje; 22 got out, and the rest were lost. There were 570 attacking us, with Maxims, pom-poms, and 15-pounders. We had only our rifles, and lost the position, but one hour later we retook it with 200 men and six guns—one 15-pounder, one naval, and four 40 pounders. The Boers lost heavily. The next day we buried 150 of them. It is awful. The war is in full swing. Forty thousand Boers are in the field, and 180,000 British. Three weeks will make a difference in the numbers. There will be great slaughter on both sides. After the many narrow escapes I have had I am sure I will pull through. I am in good form, and am just as wild as the enemy since we had a beating. They told me to put up my hands. 'Wait a bit, old man,' I said; 'not yet. I am not going to be taken a prisoner if I can help it.' But if ever I am taken prisoner I never will think I am any good in the field. . . . Our numbers are getting smaller. Our captain has gone, and only 60 rough riders are left in the field. The rest have joined the police. I am going to the war until it is over, and then back again to you, although I dread the sea voyage. My horse didn't get over the Klip river fight. A shell that struck him broke his ribs, and I left him outside Pretoria. Just fancy, none of the Third Contingent have any New Zealand horses, and only half of us have a horse of any sort. The land in South Africa is splendid, especially where we are. The grass and crops are equal to anything I have seen, and the cattle, sheep, and ponies are first-class. But it is no country for a man without capital."

6 December 1900 – Reported wounded -  
Trooper Wood of Tuparoa of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Contingent

#### 19 Dec 1900 – COLONIALS RETURNING FAREWELLED AT CAPE TOWN

The Governor has received the following telegram from Sir Frederick Darley, Lieutenant-Governor of New South Wales: "The following telegram has been received from the High Commissioner in South Africa: 'Australian contingent sailed to-day on the Orient after a triumphal march through Capetown. They were inspected on the jetty by His Excellency, who addressed and thanked them for their services.' The troops left amidst much enthusiasm."

The General of Communications telegraphed to the Governor as follows:—"The Orient, which left Capetown on the 13th December, has on board for New Zealand: Captain Smith, Lieutenant Chaytor, Lieutenant Johnston, and sixty men of the Mounted Rifles; Lieutenant Rutherford and twenty-three men of the Rough Riders; also Nursing Sister Peters, and eight men of various colonial corps. These troops will be either transhipped or sent on by the Orient at the option of the Australian Government."

In a later message the Premier received a full list of the returning New Zealanders. We find amongst them the name of 810 Private Gordon Johnstone, Gisborne, Third Contingent.

14 May 1901

A letter received from Trooper Mark Pickett, of the Gisborne section of the Third Contingent, written from Capetown on March 26th, stated that he had gone to Capetown to see his comrades off, and was returning to the front to join the Sixth Contingent. He states that he is thoroughly satisfied with the life, and intends to see the thing through "Sometimes," he says, "we have it a bit rough, but I like it, and if I can get through with the Sixth I will be satisfied to have a turn at something else."

15 May 1901

Mr Yardley, who has been absent in England for five years, has returned to Gisborne, having come out in the White Star liner Afric to Sydney.

During the time our boys were in South Africa the men of the First, Second, and Third Contingents never met those of the Fourth and Fifth.

Corporal Rees states an amusing incident that occurred in South Africa. Some objects were seen on a hill that were supposed to be Boers, and a party was detailed to surround the hill and effect their capture. A cordon was made, and the Tommies, with several New Zealanders, carefully crept up the hill. When they got within close range it was discovered that the enemy consisted of baboons. This, says Corporal Rees, is what you call "gorilla" warfare. Trooper Richardson vouches for the story. He was present.

The stiffest engagement that the Third Contingent were in, Sergeant Langford considers, was at Diamond Hill, north-east of Pretoria.

The Gisborne boys speak in high terms of the kind treatment given them by Mr J. G. Rhodes, of Christchurch, both prior to their departure for and on their return from South Africa. No one could have been kinder.

"Amos" writes: Sir,—I would suggest that each trooper, as a memento of the part he has taken, be presented with a copy of some good history of the Boer War. There are several good histories to choose from, and, to my mind, some enduring souvenir of the kind indicated would be most appropriate and pleasing.

The reception of the troops at Christchurch excelled in enthusiasm that at Dunedin. On the march up from the station the people crowded on the men and broke the ranks, girls clung to them, and actually, says a Gisborne sergeant, he had to be rough to some of the ladies, who were so profuse in the kindness of their welcome.

We learn from the returned troopers that Sergeant Poynter left Capetown for England the day after the boys left for New Zealand. Trooper Philp went back to Pretoria and joined the staff of the Horse Hospital, where his veterinary knowledge should secure his advancement. Trooper Wood remained behind in Sydney to visit his friends. Trooper Pickett was promoted to be sergeant, and went to the front from the Cape; and Trooper Gordon remained in Wellington for a few days to transact some business.

July 1900 – Listed as having joined the SA Police Recruits from Gisborne's section of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Contingent are:

A W Foulds of Hawkes Bay  
J Gordon of Waipiro Bay  
J Poynter of Te Karaka





GISBORNE'S REPRESENTATIVES OF THE THIRD CONTINGENT ROUGH RIDERS.

**GISBORNE'S 3<sup>RD</sup> ROUGH RIDERS**

William E Langford # 806; James Poynter # 813; James A B Philip # 812; James Gordon # 808;  
Rudolphus Richardson # 814; Gordon Johnstone # 810; Graham Johnstone # 809; A W Foulds # 807; M Pickett # 811; Audley Woods # 815.