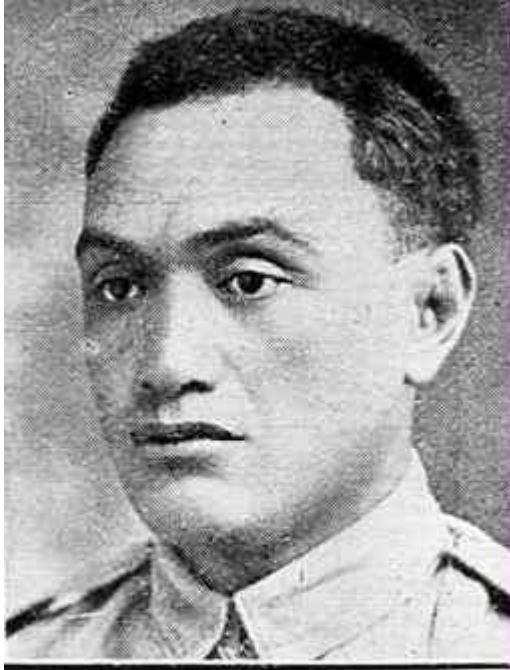


Private DONALD FERRIS
16/519
NZ MAORI CONTINGENT



PTE. DONALD FERRIS.
Killed in action.

30 Nov 1914 - Poverty Bay Herald

Gisborne ranks prominently in the official appointments made by Captain Peacocke in connection with the Maori Expeditionary force now in camp at Auckland. Captain J. B. Poynter, who has charge of "A" section, and Captain W. Pitt, who commands the "B" section, are both Gisborneites. In addition to this Mr J. Ferris (of Wainui) has been granted a temporary lieutenantancy, Mr A. Kaipara (the well-known footballer) is a quartermaster-sergeant, whilst August Paku (also popularly known in local golf circles) has been appointed a corporal. Three additional recruits went north with Captain Poynter on Saturday, viz., Messrs A. Downes, Chas. Honeycomb, and Ray Delarey. A fourth recruit, Donald Ferris, proceeds from Tokomaru Bay by Wednesday's steamer. The East Coast (Gisborne and Waiapu) contingent now numbers 65.

Donald Ferris's Last Letter Home
The Star, Issue 11488, 9 September
1915, Page 3

WITH THE MAORIS. **PLEADING TO SEE ACTIVE SERVICE**

A SOLDIER'S LAST LETTER.

A letter has been received in Christchurch from Private Donald Ferris, of the machine gun section, Maori Contingent. It is dated from Malta on May 26, and the first sentence is pathetic in view of the fact that the soldier was killed in action.

"This may be my last letter home, as we are on the verge of moving off into the firing line," he wrote. "We are certain that it will not be more than three weeks from now, and we are constantly route marching to make ourselves fit for the task before us. When we enlisted for the war we were only to do garrison duty, and that duty was to be done in Egypt. On our arrival in Cairo, we pleaded that we should see active service before General Maxwell, who was in command of all the forces in Egypt, and Sir Ian Hamilton, General Godley, etc. They must have considered our petition, as we were only a week in Egypt, when we came on to Malta. When we arrived here we asked to see active service again, before Lord Methuen, Governor of Malta. He said, while addressing us, that he would write to headquarters, that is, to Lord Kitchener and his staff. A fortnight afterwards he visited the camp again, and confirmed our wishes. Boys who did not want to see active service were given the chance when he gave the command. 'Those who wish to see garrison duty should slope arms.' I am proud to write home and say that not one sloped arms, but all remained at attention. A haka immediately followed, led by Captain Wepiha. Colonel Herbert was so proud of us that he gave us the day off. In his address he said that the day was a great one in the history of the Maori race; and so it was.

"In my spare time I visit the hospitals to get as much information as I can from the wounded. It is a very pitiful sight to see some of them, but not a discouraging sight to those who are about to go into the firing lines. Up to the present I don't think a sounder body of men of the forces has left New Zealand than we are. The wounded say it is hell, and us boys, who are only witnesses of it yet, hear nothing else but praise for the New Zealanders and Australians. Twelve of us were appointed a fortnight ago to form the machine-gun section for the B Company and twelve for the A Company. I am (P. Pewhairangi, since reported as slightly sick) and I are both in, and are doing our best to make ourselves acquainted with the gun. It is essential that a man must have twelve months' training before he is considered competent. At the Dardanelles the machine guns are doing more damage than any of the big guns, and it is the most responsible, risky position in any force.

"We were given a holiday on Empire Day. The day was also celebrated on the Italians joining the Allied forces. Strange to say, while walking up the main street in Valetta I met two New Zealand nurses, both of whom came from Wairoa. I inquired for Sister Taylor, and they say she will arrive very soon. So I'm expecting to see her. I may have another opportunity of writing home again, but if I don't, let us trust to the will of Providence that both of us—in fact all of us—shall see dear mothers, sisters, etc."

28 August 1915, Page 4 – Poverty Bay Herald

To-day Mr. C. W. Ferris, of Wainui, received the sad news from the Minister of Defence that his son, Private Donald Ferris, had been killed in action on August 8. Private Ferris was a second son of Mr. and Mrs. Ferris, and he left with the Gisborne draft of the Maori Contingent, with his brother, Lieut. Jas. Ferris. Both these lads have written interesting letters which have appeared in our columns, describing the doings of the Maori Contingent up to the time they went to Gallipoli. Private Ferris was working on his father's farm at Anaura when he enlisted. He was 25 years of age, and was educated at the Gisborne public school and Te Aute College. He was an all round athlete, and was particularly well-known as a Rugby footballer.



Pte. Donald Ferris's Memorial can be found in the Embarkation Pier Cemetery.

Grave Memorial Reference: SP MEM B 16