

# THE SEVENTH CONTINGENT.

25 Feb 1901 - Poverty Bay Herald

## DESPATCH OF THE GISBORNE SECTION.

Tucker's paddock presented an animated appearance yesterday morning. The aspirants for places in the Seventh Contingent were then put through their tests by Major McCredie. A fine body of men they were, too. From a physical point of view they presented a fine appearance, and on the faces of most of them was most indelibly stamped the impress of a determination which should see them through anything. Some of the candidates certainly looked strikingly youthful, but there was about them all unmistakable evidence of true grit. They were all fairly well mounted, too, and with one or two exceptions sat their horses as if born there. The exceptions were, however, somewhat noticeable, and provided the crowd with an opportunity for rough-and-ready judgment that was freely expressed in good-natured banter, and the antics of one or two candidates when it came to hurdle work, furnished an excuse for more than one hearty laugh. The preliminary work left the men on very even terms. But the stiff jump that was set the men was only negotiated by about three of them, young Jones taking it in the best and cleanest style. Some of the horses had probably never seen a jump before. At any rate, they showed decided ignorance as to how to get over, and a most pronounced unwillingness to try. The capers of one or two of the men were in consequence a trifle more than undignified. One, for instance, raced his horse at the jump as if the performance were a matter of life and death, and as soon as his horse neared the obstacle, strong arms and stout reins did all they could to spoil whatever intention the mount had of jumping. Another, with a most pained expression, gave his horse a check just before the fence was reached, and forgot about the horse stopping, continuing his progress till he landed about midway up the animal's neck. And he was not above embracing the horse most affectionately till he got back again to the "pigskin." But he passed. The jumping, though, was not much of a test. Some of the best hunters in the district were among the mounts, and they absolutely refused to look at the jump. The jumping over, the men were still on sufficiently even terms to make their separation a matter

of extreme difficulty. They were again paced round the paddock, and the selection finally made was: C. J. Denny and Percy Teesdale (passed for Sixth Contingent), E. D. Guilford, Daniel Buckley, F. T. Carlyle, N. Law, William Parker, T. H. Porter, J. Hanlon, and William L. Cato. John R. Taylor and Elias Partridge were selected as emergency men. After the men had lunched, they went under Major McCredie and the Troopers Johnstone to Dr Hughes, all getting through this portion of the examination with the most satisfactory results. Shortness of time precluded the possibility of shooting tests. Why the men were so hurriedly despatched no one seems to know. Major McCredie had no explanation to offer.

At about a quarter to five the men assembled at the Drillshed and formed up, and were marched to Primrose and Leslie's corner, where it had been intimated that the Rev. Canon Webb, of Holy Trinity Church, wished to see the men. He there presented the men with a copy each of the New Testament as a parting gift, following up the practice he had observed in connection with the members of the other contingent. His good wishes, and the form of his recognition of the departure of the men, were much appreciated, and will doubtless serve to keep the kindly pastor in their warmest recollections of "home." The City Band, under Bandmaster Morrison, here joined them and led the march with the patriotic "Red, White, and Blue." A crowd quickly gathered, and the march, as it turned the Post Office corner into Read's quay, presented a fairly imposing spectacle. The strains of the music changed to the even more effective and appropriate "When you're goin' awa', Jamie." Arrived at the wharf, the men broke up, and while the Band filed on to, and took up positions on, the Waihi, took their final farewells. This occupied some time, and finally got on the nerves of Sergeant-Major Finn, who was in charge of the party. "Come on there, you men," he shouted from the gangway head. "You ought to have been here half an hour ago." Still the men lingered. "Come on," again called the irate Sergeant-Major; "come on. Hurry up, there. You can kiss them when you come back," a sally at which those in the immediate neighborhood did not forget to laugh. All on board, the telephone bell rang, and the order was given "easy ahead." As the Waihi with her comple-

ment swang out into mid-stream cheering, hearty and prolonged, rang out from the dense and enthusiastic crowd on the wharf. These were answered by the no less hearty cheering of the "boys" on board, and over all floated the strains of "Auld Lang Syne," pealed out with feeling by the members of the Band. The Waihi had a fairly rough passage out, the southerly wind heaping the waters up sufficiently to expose the vessel's screw repeatedly. Consequently, the trip did not prove any too pleasant for a number of those on board. The transshipping to the Te Anau was fairly exciting, but was accomplished in safety, and with commendable despatch. The men were lined upon the lee-side, amidships, and Major McCredie delivered the following parting remarks. "Now, men, I want, before leaving you, to say that you will be under the charge of Sergeant-Major Finn as far as Napier. He will see you safely on board the train for Wellington in the morning, and then I have appointed Trooper T. R. Porter as acting sergeant to take charge of you from Napier to Wellington. He will receive the despatches from Sergeant-Major Finn at Napier and carry them on, and deliver them to the officer commanding the district, from whom he will take his orders for all future operations. In saying good-bye to you, boys, I don't wish to inflict anything like a lecture on you regarding discipline. You are all in a fair way to learn that. In saying good-bye I feel quite sure that each and all of you will maintain equally the rights of our grand Empire with those who have gone before, and I am quite satisfied that none of you will do anything that will tarnish the good old British flag. I hope nothing will happen to any of you, and that you will all return after a good experience to receive the warm welcome of those whom you leave behind, and who now heartily wish you 'God-speed.'" The last good-byes were quickly said. The Waihi's whistle sounded, and amid hearty cheers, the waving of handkerchiefs, and the band playing "Auld Lang Syne," the shore contingent left "our boys" to start on their great mission.

29 July 1901 - Poverty Bay Herald  
GISBORNE BOYS AT THE FRONT.

#### MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES.

Staff-Sergeant-Major Tom Porter, writing to a friend here from Standerton on June 19th, gives the following interesting particulars of our boys at the front with the Seventh Contingent:—

"Standerton, Transvaal, June 19th.— Just a few lines to let you know how the war is progressing. So far nothing of any importance has been done by the Seventh, but the grit is here. There is only one fault with the men, that is, they are too eager for the fray, too daring, in fact, when in action. Of course you know we are under command of Colonel Gray, who we nicknamed Fighting Grey. He was in the '96 Jameson raid, and I am now on his staff as staff-sergeant-major of the Intelligence Department in command of the heliograph section. The column only numbers about 3000 men of all ranks now—expect to get more. The mater is in command of the New Zealanders, and he has the artillery and pom-pom guns. He was in action the other day for the third time since we have been here. He was in the advance guard of the convoy, and the Boers tried very hard to prevent the convoy from advancing, and made a fierce attack from the front, and not long after another troop of Boers attacked the rear, so we got about four hours of good solid fighting, and the Gisborne boys proved themselves the best men of the day. We killed between 20 and 30 Boers. Two of our fellows were wounded and one killed. Five Queenslanders were wounded, and we buried one; several horses were shot. Of the Gisborne men, J. Hone Waaka (Johnny Walker) was recommended for the Distinguished Service medal for bravery, and Denny, Teesdale and Cato are all mentioned in despatches, and also Willy Parker and Carlyle. All of these of the latest selection were very cool in action. Not a word out of them. They simply fire away, and laugh and talk just as if nothing happened, and told me afterwards, "What a grand sport fighting is," and I had to admit it was a good sport, as long as a man didn't happen to catch a stray pill. Robert and Raymond, my two brothers, came in to get remounts. They were with General Plumer's column. Their horses were shot away from under them, and they were nearly ambushed. They are transferred to us, and also young Law, of Gisborne, is coming to us. Tommy Trotter got fired on the other day by the Queenslanders, who mistook him for a Boer."

Three or four of the Gisborne fellows have been picked out as scouts. Sergeant Collett, the man killed, was alongside of me. He re-engaged from the Fourth Contingent. I forgot to mention young A. Gammon. He took my place as divisional sergeant as soon as he was put on the staff. Very funny—he was out scouting the other day with a couple of fellows named Corporals Matthews and Hardgrave, the latter a Taranaki rep. footballer. As they passed over a spruit, or hole, in which the Boers were in hiding. They up like a shot and covered them with their rifles, and sang out, "Hands up." Gammon fired a shot, but missed, and they held up their hands, and everything was taken from them, four miles from the camp, and they had to walk back. The Boers left their money with them, so it wasn't bad."

23 Nov 1901 - Poverty Bay Herald

## TWO GISBORNE TROOPERS WOUNDED.

WELLINGTON, this day.

The Premier received advice of the following casualties under date November 21:—Sergeant Frank Fittingal, Seventh Contingent, dangerously wounded at Fordwand on October 19; Corporal John Denny, Gisborne, severely wounded, and E. G. W. Parker, Gisborne, slightly wounded.

A cable message received by the Government makes it clear that Nathaniel Paterson, of the Seventh Contingent, whose death was announced earlier in the week, was formerly a resident of Inglewood, where he held a lieutenant's commission in the local Rifles Corps.

[Trooper Charles John Denny, aged 29, went from Gisborne with the Seventh Contingent. He was surveying at Whata-tatu before he enlisted. His mother, Mrs Denny, resides at Bergh Aplon Manor, Norwich, England. There were two Parkers who went from Gisborne with the Seventh Contingent. One, who enrolled as William Parker, was the son of Mrs Parker, of the Masonic Hotel. The other was J. R. Parker, of the Riverside road. The cable refers to the former of the two.]

Corporal C. Denny was severely wounded, and Private E. G. Parker slightly wounded at Pondwaria. All belong to the Seventh New Zealand Contingent.

## 22 May 1902 - RETURNING SOLDIERS

The following New Zealanders returned from South Africa by the Talune last evening: Surgeon-Captain Gabites, Captain Glasgow, Lieutenant Keane, Sergeants Leech, Williams, Porter, Fenwick, Corporals McKay, Turbies, Denby, Privates King, Henley, Gillon, Bosworth, Cowie, White, Lateg, Moonie, Brown, Boshwell, Shannon, Hart, Thompson, Simpson, Matheson, Small, Stewart, Manning, Gawler, Wicke, Turvey, Wilkinson, Gladding, Safford, Games, Creighton, Barrett, Stewart, Popham, Moore, Legnos, Cullen, Wilson, Merry, McNiven, McDonald, Mason, Quelch, Ward, Wilson, and Sievers.

1 July 1902

Four Gisborne members of the famous Seventh Contingent arrived by the s.s. Omapere this morning, namely, Farriers Breingan (Patutahi), and J. R. Parker (Gisborne), and Troopers Teesdale and Taylor. The returned contingenters were met at the wharf by Lieut. Lewis and Sergt. Wakelin (of the Gisborne Rifles) and given a hearty welcome home. The novelty of welcoming back our soldier lads has perhaps worn off by now, but it is as well not to forget that the Seventh Contingent is New Zealand's last contribution to the British' army in South Africa which has taken part in the war. Not only is the Seventh the last to take an active share in the struggle, but it is generally admitted that they are the most renowned of all New Zealand's contin-

Special interest attaches therefore to the home-coming of the quartette of Gisborne members of the doughty Seventh, whose gallant stand at Bothasberg have given them the premier place among the roll of colonial contingents. In order to get an account of the Bothasberg engagement fuller than the meagre description cabled, a representative of the HERALD interviewed the returning troopers on the subject.

Trooper Teesdale in reply to questions said that the New Zealanders on the night of the engagement were included in Colonel Garratt's column, which included 500 of the Seventh Contingent, 200 of the Queensland Imperial Bushmen, and about 300 of the Munster Fusiliers, the latter being infantry. On either side were other British columns operating in the drive. The full brunt of the attack fell on the left wing of the New Zealanders, which was composed of the Canterbury, Otago, and supplementary com-

panies. The Gisborne boys were attached to the right wing, and had a good opportunity of witnessing the fight. Adjutant Clark placed the right wing and Lieutenant (Adjutant) D. Hickey the left wing. It was dull and dark that night in February when the Boers made their great dash at the British lines driving before them their infuriated cattle. They drove the cattle on to the right wing for a start, but diverged on to the left which they struck at with all their force in the wild endeavor to find an opening. Manie Botha was in command, and it was estimated from the captures made after the conflict that the cattle numbered 28,000. Rain had been falling shortly before the attack, and everything was suitable for the midnight dash. The men on the right wing heard the cattle bellowing about two hours before the blow was struck but they were not sure at what point the attack was to be made. Colonel Garratt was in charge of the mounted men, with Colonel Porter directing the New Zealanders. The attack commenced at 10.30 p.m., the left wing of the New Zealanders being brought into action at midnight. This part of the Contingent were stationed in a gully at the time, extending up to the side of a kopje, and practically in front of the remainder of the column. The cattle were not driven right on to the New Zealanders. If this had happened they would inevitably have been overwhelmed, and the Boers have got clean through. The Boers came up under cover of the herd of beasts, leading their horses, barefooted, it was stated afterwards. The first outpost escaped, but the second one was captured. The attack was then developed with fury. The men on the right were only two hundred yards away, but no Boers reached their lines. They were aroused at 10 o'clock by the noise of the cattle, and were kept going until the following night. Nothing could be seen distinctly except the flashing of the rifles as volleys were fired from the trenches. The cattle were being driven by Kaffirs, who were chanting all the time. The Boers were also accompanied by their women, who had charge of the waggons, and who were also singing in their own tongue a song, the burden of which was the prophecy that the British will never cross the Taal." The right wing were busily employed driving the cattle driven on the line. The anxiety of the men was frightful," says Trooper Teesdale. "We did not know what moment we would be at-

ted, and the suspense was unbearable. Six of the men went into hospital over the strain. They broke down altogether, and a number of the left wing who were unwounded went into hospital for rest. Out of the 400 New Zealanders who had left Harrismith a short time before, only 200 were fit for duty after the night. I will never forget it. I was the first fight at such close quarters although we had many brushes previous. Only fourteen Boers were found the best being carried away, according to the custom, as the Boers never leave their dead on the field. Of those well known in Gisborne, Bert Russell, who was killed, had about eighteen wounds. Ted Childs was also wounded. Ted was soon right and out on column. Lieutenant Forsythe was shot in the head. The Boers formed a half-moon after getting through the first outpost. The other Boers were afraid to fire, owing to the likelihood of shooting their own men. If it had not been for the Black Watch who were sent to one of the other columns, who drove their front, a good many more would have got through. They assisted the New Zealanders in getting through the rush. That is why so few got through. The night presented a fearful scene. The trenches, only little drains, hurriedly dug with a spade, earth piled up about 18 inches high as a shelter, and not affording any protection, were filled with British and men. Numbers of Boers were lying with the British, and the struggle had become desperate. It was stated that the order had been given that the Boers charged for their bayonets to fix bayonets, and the New Zealanders had left them to go through so much trouble to get through. It was considered that the Boers would have been much use, as they were so eager to get through, but they were a body. Slaughtered Boers were lying in all directions, killed and bridled. The rifles were found, and the British weapons, and the Boers experienced in getting through. About 200 got through. Trooper Teesdale said the Boers who were one of the best of the Transvaal and the best of the Boers. Five days was spent in any town be-

in any town be-  
were received, ex-  
they were mo-  
nished their term  
left South Af-  
They were enter-  
and arrived home

25 Nov 1910 - The Dominion

## THE " FIGHTING SEVENTH." ANNUAL REUNION.

### CORDIAL MESSAGE FROM "K. OF K."

Battles were refought, and reminiscences of African campaigning exchanged by the scattered remnants of the Seventh New Zealand Mounted Regiment who fore-gathered together at Scott's Rooms, Manners Street, last evening, on the occasion of their annual reunion, which was also the eighth anniversary of the fight at Bothasberg. Colonel Porter, C.B., Officer Commanding the Regiment, presided over a goodly gathering, and Lieutenant Colonel Bauchop, Officer Commanding the Wellington district, who commanded, as major, the right wing which received the onset of the Boer attack at Bothasberg, looked in later on in the evening.

It was the earnest hope of those present that Field-Marshal Lord Kitchener would have been able to have been present for a brief interval, but at the last moment he found it impossible to absent himself from the vice-regal dinner. Colonel Porter, when proposing the health of "Our Distinguished Visitor," read the following letter from Colonel Kirkpatrick, the Field-Marshal's Chief-of-Staff:—

"Dear Colonel Porter,—

Lord Kitchener desires me to say that he regrets extremely his inability to be present at the annual reunion of the Seventh New Zealand Contingent to-night. He remembers well his last meeting with the Seventh on February 27, 1902, after their display of gallantry and valour at Bothasberg. He, equally with you, reveres the memory of the brave men who fell on that occasion, and is quite sure that for all time New Zealand

will do honour to her representatives who did their duty to the Empire with such credit to themselves and to the Dominion which sent them forth.

"(Signed) G. M. KIRKPATRICK,  
Colonel."

After the toast was honoured, cheers were given "three times three."

A very graceful message was that sent along by Mrs. Janet Gillies, Matron-in-Chief of the Army Nursing Reserve—a paper reserve, by the way—who was well known to the New Zealanders in South Africa as Nurse Speed. Her remembrances were received with cheers. Apologies for unavoidable absence were also received from Lieut.-Colonel Abbott and several others.

The evening was a most enjoyable one and everything passed off very well. The roll of those present was as follows:—

Colonel Porter, C.B., Lieut.-Colonel A. Bauchop, C.M.G., Captain Whitely, Captain Richardson, Captain Ross, Captain Clark, Lieut. Wilkinson, and A. Berry, W. Chirside, D. H. M'Diamid, G. S. Jowes, S. Robinson, A. G. Humphrey, R. S. Taylor, H. Rees, Geo. Cooke, H. Hutson, J. Fraser Thompson, Chas. Wood, E. Murphy, S. Munn, A. Leyland, C. J. Denny, G. M. Deck, A. Evans, J. Callan, T. W. Armstrong, F. Willis, D. H. Retter, J. P. Taylor, J. D. Miston, Percy D. Tennant, P. J. Cotton, W. Warne, Agmen G. Smith, J. C. Hary, A. S. Mee, and G. B. Carter.