

## Major Charles Raymond Neale



Family member Chris Neale has kindly provided the following photograph of Charles Neale. The picture shows Charles Neale wearing his 10th Contingent uniform

### **First New Zealand Contingent Veterinary-Lieutenant Charles Raymond Neale**

Charles Neale would be the first New Zealand Veterinary Officer to serve outside of New Zealand on Active Service. Charles also enters the New Zealand history books as being the first New Zealand Veterinary Officer to come under fire in both the South African Boer War and the First World War.

Charles Raymond Neale was born in England on the 31st May 1872. His father (Major Charles Neale of the Scots Greys) managed estates in Scotland, with eight large farms in hand, and Charles used to assist him.

Charles graduated Veterinary Surgeon at Edinburgh University having studied meat inspection under Professor Walley in the public abattoir in Edinburgh, and the inspection of livestock at the port of Leith.

Most of Charles work had been amongst pedigree shire horses, Aberdeen cattle, and Shorthorn and Jersey cattle, pedigree Hampshire Down sheep, and Berkshire pigs. He also had considerable experience of most of the contagious diseases, especially tuberculosis, and was thoroughly conversant with the tuberculin test and the use of anthrax vaccine.

Charles had his own private practice at Henley-on-Thames before being accepted as one of the first six veterinary surgeons for the New Zealand Agricultural Department. (110 applications had been received for the 6 positions)

It appears that initially Charles was attached to the head office in Wellington and then appointed Government special inspector at the Christchurch Meat Company's Smithfield Freezing Works in Timaru.

Charles Neale had served three years with the Yeomanry Cavalry in England and had won prizes in sword competitions, which would have been a big factor for his selection as Veterinary Surgeon to the 1st Contingent.

Interestingly, his uncle, Major Raymond Neale, was the head of the Army Veterinary Department in South Africa around that time.

On the 12th October 1899 Charles was temporarily discharged of his duties at Timaru, and appointed Veterinary Surgeon to the New Zealand Contingent as of the 13th October 1899.

The First New Zealand Contingent sailed from Wellington in the SS Waiwera on the 21st October 1899.

New Zealand's first War correspondent mentions that Charles Neale took a prominent part in the engagement at Arundel on the 13th December 1899, and goes on to state. —

"I have just had a short interview with Lieutenant Neale, of the New Zealand Contingent. Lieutenant Neale states that, judging from appearances, every New Zealander remained as firm as a rock, even when the scouts were surprised by a number of Boers taking shelter in one of the kopjes, and had to stand a heavy fire, which they well returned with good effect. From the commencement the New Zealanders have done splendid work. They have also proved themselves to be raiders, and several bullocks and a very large number of sheep have been secured. They were not the result of a looting expedition. The stock belonged to a renegade Englishman, who, after being brought up under the protection of the British flag, went over to the enemy. The New Zealanders rounded up the stock, consisting of 2500 sheep, and drove them to camp three miles away. We had had bully beef for several days before, but now we have mutton three times per day. The officers were very pleased at the successful results of the New Zealanders expedition, and laughingly said that the Maorilanders were the best boys for that work. To see the colonials driving the sheep along and

yelling and shouting as though demented was very funny indeed. The boys secured several mementos of their raid on the camp, and altogether had a very happy time.”

On the 14th December 1899 Lieutenant Neale was ordered to join General Gatacre's column, but appears to have been sent to Capetown to attend to the incoming transports and was attached to the 'Army Veterinary Department, Field Force, South Africa.”

On the 17th January 1900 Lieutenant Charles Neale sent the following letter to the Commander of the New Zealand Forces. —

“Sir, I beg to report that I remained with the NZ troops up till the 13th December, from which date in accordance with my agreement I was retained for service with the Imperial forces and am now at the Base in Capetown.

I am happy to say that the horses landed in first rate condition and have since done their work better than the Imperial troopers; in fact the horses were reported in the “English Standard” as being the best conditioned and best class horses yet disembarked in South Africa.

I am very sorry you did not see your way to attach me permanently to the force, as for veterinary attendance they have now to depend on the courtesy of Veterinary Surgeons attached to other regiments and I am afraid the horses will have scant attendance if they get badly mauled in a big action.”

Interestingly, the British sent Staff Veterinary Officer Lieutenant Douglas to look after the New Zealand Contingent horses. Lieutenant Douglas just happened to be an ex-New Zealander.

While serving under the command of Colonel Ormelie Campbell Hannay until he was killed at Paardeberg on the 18th February 1900, Charles Neale earned the Queens South Africa war medal clasps – ‘Relief of Kimberly’ and ‘Paardeberg.’

While serving with the Mounted Infantry Brigade, Charles earned the clasp ‘Dreifontein.’

While serving with the 7th Mounted Infantry Corps in General Ian Hamilton's Column, Charles earned the clasps ‘Johannesburg’ and ‘Diamond Hill.’

By the end of October 1900, Charles Neale is recorded by his own admission to have been under fire 54 times.

Charles was discharged from Imperial strength on the 16th November 1900, and returned to New Zealand where he was appointed as Government Inspector of Meat at Gisborne.

Compiled by LMJames (researcher) of Gisborne.

On the 6th January 1901, Charles Neale applied to the Commandant of the NZ Defence Forces for a ‘Combatant Commission’ with the Eight Contingent but was declined.

On the 31st March 1902, Mr Gilruth Chief Veterinarian sent the following letter to Major General Babington Commandant of the NZ Defence Forces. —

#### **Re: Tenth Contingent.**

I beg as requested by your memorandum of 26th., to recommend as Veterinary Officers Mr C. R. Neale, M.R.C.V.S and Mr J. A. Towers, M.R.C.V.S

It would be most suitable for Mr Towers to leave by the first ship.

As the exigencies of this Department will only permit of one of these gentlemen accompanying the Contingent throughout South Africa, I desire that Mr Tower be permitted to return to the Colony on landing the horses in South Africa.”

On the 16th April 1902, Charles Neale was appointed as Veterinary-Captain to the 10th Contingent with the date of acceptance 14th April 1902.

Veterinary-Surgeon-Captain Charles Neale embarked with the South Island Regiment of the Tenth Contingent and sailed from Lyttelton on the 19th April 1902.

(The Tenth Contingent was disbanded in New Zealand on the 23rd August 1902)

#### **Wellington, 30th March 1908**

His Excellency the Governor is respectfully advised to approve of the following appointment: New Zealand Veterinary Corps

Charles Raymond Neale, M.R.C.V.S. England, to be Major, and with effect from 3rd April 1908.

#### **23rd May 1908**

Appointed Veterinary Surgeon-Major, Canterbury district, NZ Veterinary Corps:

New Zealand Gazette **6th March 1913:** — Major Charles Raymond Neale, M.R.C.V.S. Eng, is transferred to the Reserve of Officers. Dated 12th February, 1913.

#### **World War One Service.**

Enlisted:— 23rd December 1914 (5/294)

Reinstated to active list of officers: — 2nd January 1915

Attestation:— Trentham, **12th February 1915**, Service No. 17/294 (5/294)

Embarked: — With the 3rd Reinforcements NZEF on HMNZT 19 (Aparima) on the **13th February**

Refer: NEW ZEALAND MOUNTED RIFLES ASSOCIATION

1915, arriving at Suez, Egypt on the 26th March 1915.

"Major Neale, who went with the A.S.C., was the first New Zealand veterinary officer with the Gallipoli expedition. He was relieved by Major Stafford, D.S.O., who remained on the Peninsula till the evacuation. Events soon proved, however, that horses were of little use on Gallipoli, except for some work at night. The conditions were much more suitable for mules and Egyptian donkeys. Happily the animals were not much troubled by disease, but wounds from shells were plentiful and frequent, and many were killed." (Chapter IX. New Zealand Veterinary Corps. By Dr. C. J. Reakes)

In connection with his work on the Gallipoli peninsula, Charles Neale was mentioned in General Ian Hamilton's (Commander Mediterranean Expeditionary Forces) despatch of **20th May 1915**.

Charles Neale returned from ANZAC (Gallipoli) to Egypt (Sidi Bishr) on the 20th August 1915.

Charles joined No. 1 Company at Moascar, Egypt on **27th January 1916**, and was appointed Captain-Adjutant of No. 1 Company on 30th January 1916.

Colonel Reakes, Director of Veterinary Services and Remounts sent the following letter to the NZEF Quartermaster-Generals office on the **8th June 1916**.

"Major C. R. Neale, NZVC, has returned from service with the Expeditionary Force, owing to the establishment of Veterinary Officers for that Force having been reduced in number. I am recommending him twenty one days leave of absence from tomorrow."

Owing to surplus of NZ Veterinary officers in Egypt, Charles Neale returned to NZ on the Tahiti, departing Suez on the **5th May 1916**, arriving in Dunedin on the 6th June 1916.

New Zealand Gazette No. 78, **20th July 1916**: — Major Charles Raymond Neale is struck off the strength of the NZ Expeditionary Force, and absorbed into the Reserve of Officers. Dated 29th June 1916.

**17 Jan 1921**

During the course of his work on Saturday last, Mr Neale, veterinary surgeon, received a kick from a horse, necessitating his removal to the Hawera Hospital. Mr Neale had some ribs broken and suffered other minor injuries. On enquiry to-day it was learned that Mr Neale is progressing as well as can be expected, but it will be some days before he is able to resume his work.

**19 Feb 1921**

NEALE.—At the Public Hospital, Hawera, on Saturday, February 19th, 1921, Charles Raymond Neale (Major), M.R.C.V.S. (result of an accident); aged 49 years. Deeply regretted.

Hawera & Normanby Star, Volume XLI, 19 February 1921, Page 6

### OBITUARY

MAJOR C. R. NEALE, M.R.C.V.S.

It is with extreme regret that we have to record the death, at the Hawera Hospital this morning, of Major Neale, which followed severe injuries he received a few days as a result of a kick from a horse whilst performing an operation. The late Major Neale graduated at the Edinburgh University, where he was an unusually brilliant student, and easily took the degree of M.R.C.V.S. He then came to New Zealand (May, 1899) to join the staff of Government veterinary surgeons, and nine years ago came to Hawera, where he has since practised his profession. He was generally regarded as a very able and clever practitioner, conscientious and considerate, and good hearted to a degree. He had more than the ordinary record of distinguished military service to his credit. In the South African war he went over with the First Contingent as veterinary surgeon in charge of the horses, and later on took over 561 horses with the Tenth Contingent, establishing a record in the minimum of losses sustained. He was again in charge of the veterinary staff, and notwithstanding the sea voyage all the operations of embarking, disembarking, entraining, etc., the whole contingent reached the front lines with a total loss of only 16 or 17 horses.

Deceased also saw considerable service in the last war, both at Gallipoli and in Egypt, where he was mentioned in despatches and especially congratulated by Dr Reakes for the splendid services he rendered.

The untimely death of Major Neale will be a very great loss to stock-owners in this district, to whom his high qualifications and experienced practice was of very great service. Deceased was unmarried, and, we understand, has no relatives in this country.

The late Major Neale was buried yesterday with full military honours. There was a large following of returned soldiers and citizens, the service at the graveside being conducted by Mr. N. Caplen (in the absence of the Rev. R. Franklin). The funeral marches were played by the Citizens' Band, the firing party and bugler being returned soldiers.