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# *The Boer war through the eyes of Lewis Weston*



*Compiled by Peter Weston .. 2011*

## **CORPORAL L.E. WESTON; S.A. 5174 (1881 - 1949)**

*Introduction. Most of us know nothing about the Boer War, (properly known as the Anglo African war) and certainly nothing about Lew's experience there. I began by reading all books that I could find on the subject, both from the British and the Boer perspective. I found a copy of the official NZ Army records which traced Lew's company, the 8th Contingent. This story was then built from newspaper reports of that company, as well as information from his war records..... Peter Weston.*

Lewis Ephraim Weston was born on August 6th, 1881, the 11th child of Samuel and Sarah Weston, who were then residing at Tutaenui, north of Marton. He was schooled there, and later in Hunterville, where the family moved to in 1893. After leaving school, Lew was involved in establishing the home farm at Vinegar Hill, north of Hunterville.



On 5th January 1902 Lew (*Pictured*) enlisted as Boer war soldier. As he enlisted for Africa, he would be very aware that only six years previously his elder brother William had lost his life in the same country. Lew looked up to Will, and being only fifteen when Will died, and likely would have been drawn to follow his brother's footsteps.

Later on he was to name his son Ray William, the name Ray was from his mother's side, but the name William was after the late Will.

The fact that he was retracing his older brother's footsteps was likely foremost in his mind as Lew landed in Africa. He went on to spend about four months traveling huge distances over the African plains, not in combat, but occupying territory, and seeing the horrors of war.

His contingent was the last to do any maneuvers at all. It is unlikely that they saw any action as they had no loss of life or wounded, other than eighteen who were killed in a train accident.

Interestingly, they still lost 20 men to enteric fever, or typhoid, which in the Boer war killed twice as many men than battle. [Death Roll](#) *Evening Post* 6th October 1902.

## BACKGROUND

The Boers originated mostly from Holland. They had been a breakaway group from the Dutch Reformed Church, who had seen Africa as a God given promised land in which to practise their faith in a way that suited them. What interested the New Zealand farmers, was that this meant scab in sheep, rinderpest in cattle, and locust plagues were regarded by the conservative Boer farmers as visitations from God; therefore it would be sinful to battle them!

The most controversial tenet of their faith was not about plagues though, it was their belief that they as whites had been created to rule over the blacks and coloured folk, who were created to be servants to them.

This attitude was repugnant to the British, who believed that all men had been created as equals. On the other hand the British attitude towards the blacks was equally repugnant to the Boers; so there was no love lost between the two races. The point was well illustrated in this extract from "London to Ladysmith," by Winston Churchill.

*This Boer farmer was a typical character, and represented to my mind all that was best and noblest in the African Dutch character. The spectacle of this citizen soldier, called reluctant, yet not unwilling from the quiet life of his farm to fight bravely in defence of the soil on which he lived, which his fathers had won by all manner of suffering and peril, and to preserve the independence which was his pride and joy, against great enemies of regulars. Surely that would have drawn the most earnest sympathy of the idealist. And then suddenly a change, a jarring note in the duet of agreement.*



*"We know how to treat Kaffirs in this country. Fancy letting the black filth walk on the pavement!"*  
*And after that no more agreement, but a gulf widening every moment.*  
*"Educate a Kaffir! Ah, that's you English all over. We educate them with a stick. Treat 'em with humanity and consideration! - I like that. They were put here by God Almighty to work for us. We'll keep them in their proper places. What do you*

*think? Insist on their proper treatment will you? Ah, that's what we're going to see about now. We'll settle whenever you English are to interfere with us before this war is over."*

The Boers had been in South Africa about 200 years before the British arrived. They were farmers, and were happy enough to be left to themselves, but the British were interested in mining, and sooner or later they wanted control of the territory that the Boers lived in. The Boers gave room to the British by migrating further north. *(Photo; A Boer farmhouse being burnt)*

As the British became the majority and wanted the right to vote and govern, there was a long, drawn out conflict for the territory, with land and cities being won, then lost, then won again. [News Item](#) *Press 30th August 1902.*

The conflict between the Boers and the British worsened until at last the Boers, although greatly outnumbered, had taken an offensive against the British, who were such a thorn in their side. Although outnumbered, they were on familiar territory and fought well. Eventually the Boers conceded defeat. However the British forces had enforced this with a scorched earth policy; they had slaughtered and burned homesteads, arriving and giving the families perhaps ten minutes to grab some food and clothing, before torching the houses. They confiscated mobs of sheep and herds of cows on the Boer small farms. This was to stop the Boer soldiers being supplied with food in their guerrilla type warfare. In effect they starved the Boers into surrender.

As well as being starved into surrender, the Boers were sometimes reduced to wearing scavenged women's clothing or sheep skins as their own clothing wore out. There are many accounts of sieges, where men were eating the horse food, especially the Kaffir support troops. Sometimes to conserve rations, these troops were released home, just to wander out from the forts and starve to death. It was not unknown that horse dung would be picked through just to get the oat seeds.

There are many good books that deal with the battles, sieges, and starvation, blow by blow, so I don't intend to elaborate here. Lew wouldn't have seen this destruction of farms and homes, because of the lateness of his arrival, but he would have possibly seen the results of it, perhaps the poverty of the surrendering Boers.

#### **ENLISTMENT** [Army Record](#)

Lew enlisted at the age of 20, on the 3rd of January 1902 and was discharged on 13th August, 1902. All were volunteers in the New Zealand Boer war contingents, there was no conscription. In fact there was a waiting list to go and at first preference was given to those who could supply their own horse and pay their own way. (All N.Z. troops were Mounted Rifles.)

He enlisted in the 8th Contingent, in number 949 men and 62 officers, who sailed from

Auckland on 1st February 1902 on the S.S Surrey. The South Island battalions sailed on the S.S. Cornwall. The first port of call was Albany, Western Australia, for coaling. While there a possum was caught and tamed, to be kept as a regimental pet.

In rough seas their hammocks would turn bottom up, for many it was easier to sleep on the floor.

One of their major concerns was for their horses, which had endured temperatures of up to 90 degrees on board the ships, were now subjected to extremes of cold, and lack of proper feed. When the horses were transported, either by ship or train, one of the problems faced was leg fatigue. The horse would eventually tire and be forced to lie down. Should it end up in such a position that the tether rope was taut, a horse couldn't regain its footing. The resulting struggle was very likely to injure it badly. It is interesting that often soldiers, when transporting their horses, stood in front of them and allowed the horse to sleep by resting its head on the shoulder of the soldier. That gave them just enough rest to remain safely on their feet. Despite this care, nine or ten horses died en route, through falling in the railway wagons, and couldn't avoid being trampled. It was very frustrating, as it could have easily been prevented.

## DURBAN

The eighth contingent (including Lew) arrived at Durban on 15th March 1902, in a howling gale. They were aroused before daybreak the next morning to unload the horses, kits and saddles. As only about half of the soldiers were fit for work, each man was responsible for two horses. They were lead about half a mile and then loaded on to railway wagons.

The train trip to Newcastle, a distance of 260 miles, was in open wagons, and in the pouring rain. The first stop was at midnight for a bun and a coffee, the first meal since early morning breakfast aboard the Surrey.



On the way to Newcastle they passed through Colenso, the location of a refugee camp. There were several thousand women and children interned there. It was right alongside the

OCCUPANTS AND FURNITURE OF ONE BELL TENT SOON AFTER ARRIVAL FROM THE FARM. NOV. 1900  
*later this family was pitiable in the extreme  
 omitted by Printer*

railway and they could clearly see the prisoners as they passed by. Although the children looked happy enough there was an intensely sad and bitter expression on the faces of the adults. One woman spat at them and looked as though she would have torn them to pieces if she could. Some of them beckoned them towards the Transvaal, then sat down and cried. It was a most pitiful sight. No wonder, they had lost their beautiful country, their promised land.

That camp appeared to be clean and tidy, but many were not, and it is estimated that 26.000 Boers and 14.000 coloured people, lost their lives in those camps, through disease. Twenty percent of all children that were interned, did not survive.

At the harbour in Durban there had been a prison ship moored, with older men and youths detained in it. The soldiers had been very taken with one old Boer who every morning for half an hour would strip off his shirt and pick his body clean of lice.

They had long left the coastal “food belt,” where pineapple and banana plantations abounded, and passed through Ladysmith, the scene of a well known battle against the Boers.

This was the Battle of Colenso on 15 December 1899. The Boer troops had advanced and had besieged Ladysmith. 21,000 British troops, under the command of Redvers Buller, attempted to cross the Tugela River to relieve Ladysmith but 8,000 Transvaal Boers, under the command of Louis Botha, were awaiting them. Through a combination of artillery and accurate rifle fire, the Boers beat off all British attempts to cross the river. After another two attempts in the following weeks, the position was reversed, but at considerable loss of life.

Ladysmith was a natural fortress, it is a wonder that any army could have taken it.

## **NEWCASTLE**

The terrain was increasingly rugged as they approached the Drakensburg Ranges. After a journey of 32 hours they arrived at Newcastle, a “funny little town,” with the shops mostly run by Hindus. They arrived in the middle of the night. They stayed on board the train with their horses until morning, as no preparations had been made for them. During the next afternoon a severe lightning storm arose. The camp was of bell tents and those troops who hadn’t dug a drain around the circumference of their tents were flooded out. Because of the lightning they spent the remainder of the day until 11.00 pm holding their horses to stop them stampeding, which they would have done anyway had the horses been any fitter. At this stage the horses would need a couple of weeks rest before they were much use.

The horses were tied up to lines on the ground, and they stood there night and day with only oats to eat. A few hours at grass did a lot of good, but no-one in charge seemed to take any interest in them. When told that the horses were off their feed, and couldn’t eat oats alone, they generally replied that if the brutes won’t eat oats they could starve! The

average weight of a man plus his kit was sixteen stone. It was no wonder that the life of a horse was measured in weeks only. Throughout the campaign many a soldier was seen to take his emaciated equine friend aside and put it out of its misery.

Normally though, the horses would be inspected by a vet, and if declared unfit, they would be shot and given to the natives for meat. One trooper, seeing a native boy walking past with a horse leg, said, "Hey boy! Where is the rest of your horse!?" Then he noticed the number branded on the hoof.....It was his own horse!

Next they spent a couple of nights guarding passes in the Drakensberg Ranges. To reach them involved a seven miles ride up into the ranges, floundering through swamps and



creeks, and up hillsides, on horses that were weakened by travel and ill feeding. When they had gone as far as the horses could go, they corralled them, and walked another three miles. By 11.00 pm they reached their post, in time for a heavy rain shower. *(Photo above shows all places mentioned)*

The main pass was Moler's pass, which the Boers were expected to make a breakthrough. It was well guarded, perhaps with far more men than necessary, and lit up by a huge searchlight, but no Boers were to be seen, they had moved at a different time and place. An Adjutant and a couple of Tommies narrowly missed being shot, but the only casualty was a horse that got in the way! They returned to camp at 9.00 am, tired but in good spirits. [Letter in Tuapeka Times 4th June 1902.](#)

The area around Moler's pass was good farming country and they commandeered a number of Merino type sheep, belonging to the Boers, which fell victim to the menu. Perhaps a couple of thousand were killed in one night, each sheep feeding five to ten

men.

Returning to Newcastle, they prepared to train through Johannesburg to Klerksdorp, 200 miles in distance. The road from Newcastle to Lang's Nek was strewn with skeletons of dead horses and cattle that had fallen on forced marches. The stench in some places was horrible where the animals had just been pulled out of the way to rot.

### **KLERKSDORP**

On the trip to Klerksdorp, they were transported in open railway wagons. The South Island division had the misfortune to have their train collide with another train going in the opposite direction. Sixteen soldiers travelling in the front wagon were killed, and eleven were injured. Nine horses were also killed. Two men were trapped on top of the locomotive and were scalded by steam, one of them begging to be shot, as the pain was more than he could bear. One man, however, had seen the collision about to happen and had managed to jump clear, he escaped unhurt. [News Report](#) *Wanganui Chronicle* 3rd June 1902.

The carnage was horrific, and the dead were laid out beside the track to be carried to Klerksdorp for burial. It was indeed a dispirited remainder that made Klerksdorp, where over 3.000 troops turned out to bury the dead in the local cemetery.

The North Islanders had travelled through Elandsfontein and Johannesburg. All around this area was the Rand Reef, with the gold stampers in abundance, some lit up and in action. From the train they saw all the signs of the gold rush that had lured Lew's elder brother William, only six years previously.

There were 40.000 troops in the area, ready to finish up the hostilities. The small town of Klerksdorp was changed into a city of bell tents. Every week the camp site was changed for sanitary reasons. All litter was carefully picked up, a right wheel, move for half a mile, then strike camp again.

Beginning on May 17th they assisted the seventh contingent who were hoping to surround the Boer army in a blocking tactic, and ambush them. There were a system of blockhouses and barbed wire fences that together with the natural terrain, should have allowed the British companies to surround and defeat the Boers. Of course it was nowhere near that simple as the area was vast. In practice it was an immense game of chess. The method was to form an huge chain of troopers, from fifty to a hundred miles long, who were to advance and drive the Boers into an ambush. Often though, the enemy was able to easily slip through the line. They moved with their tents from location to location, burning the crops belonging to the Boers. A wandering Boer was captured, wearing a British uniform. He was later executed as a spy. A sheep was also found wandering along the lines. It was executed too, this time for meat.

There were few, if any, times that the 8th contingent engaged with the Boers. Perhaps on just one occasion, while acting as a rearguard to a convoy, they engaged with a troop of



400 Boers. They fired until their ammunition ran out, then retired to the wagons. The day was saved by two companies of Welsh Fusiliers.

Perhaps the only highlight of the exercise was in returning from patrol to Klerksdorp. They paraded before the N.Z. Prime Minister, Hon. R.J. Seddon. He briefly addressed them, letting them know that he was going to England to tell them over there what New Zealand was doing for the Empire.

“How do you like the bully beef and mealies?” he asked the troops. “Have a piece and pass your own opinion, Dick!” someone roared out.

On May 31st, while the 8th contingent was in Klerksdorp, the Boers finally surrendered and then the contingent made their way to Elandsfontein in preparation for their return.

### **ELANDSFONTEIN**

They left the camp at Klerksdorp (June 17th) en route for Elandsfontein, 120 miles in distance. The area was free from any hostile forces, making for an uneventful march across the dry veldt. A match dropped would start a blaze that would spread for miles.

They were now traversing the Rand Reef, the site of the major gold workings of the area. For Lew this would have been the realisation of a dream. Six years previously his older brother William, along with his mate Charles Ingram, had left home in search of their dream. The dream was gold, but instead of gold all they found was thousands of like minded people all scrabbling for work. As happens in a gold rush, most people arrived far too late to do any good. These two young men from the Rangitikei only had one choice left, they were able to enlist with the police force of the British South African Company. This they did at Beira, Mozambique, but on the way to Mashonaland where they were to be based, William, like thousands of others, succumbed to Enteric fever, and died in the hospital at Beira.

Lew had at least made it to where his brother had intended to go, he now would be able to describe the land to the family at home, as he had seen it for himself.

During the hostilities, Johannesburg and this area was under martial law. Most of the British civilians had been evacuated, and the mines were shut down until a more opportune time. There was a chain of these mines reaching for over 150 miles, but they were all off limits to the troops, as were any Kaffir villages.

Four soldiers from the Wanganui district took the chance of being caught and by the light of the full moon went over, bribed the Kaffir watchman with some cigarettes, and inspected whatever was handy. [Letter in Evening Star](#) *9th January 1901.*

They knew nothing about mining, but saw in their travels, a large shed housing ten engines, all of them larger than the engine that drove the plant at the Wanganui Sash and

Door factory.

The mine shaft went down on a 45 degree slope into a 1200 foot deep mine. However as the mine was currently in disuse it was filled up with water to fifty feet below ground level. It had tram lines running down it and had been used to store British ammunition. From a platform by the poppet heads the Kaffir quarters could be seen. It consisted of a rectangle of 300 x 200 yards, roofed by a lean to roof, and divided up into rooms. This could house up to 1,000 Kaffirs, who could only enter through a large iron gate, and were penned in for the length of their contracts, working either day, or night shifts in the mine. In the Kaffir area was a jail, a school and two swimming baths, looking like large sheep dips. These were not for recreational use, but for the Kaffirs to wash themselves after their shifts. There was always a doctor as health was important. The mines, even though not fully operational at the time, had electricity and all modern conveniences.

Kaffir workers were paid about three pounds a month and supplied with their mealies. It was an income source that they couldn't find anywhere else, and they did very well from it. Whites would never work in those conditions, and if they did, they would want to be paid far more than Kaffirs, effectively pricing themselves out of a job.

The only problem at the present time was there were no Kaffirs. The mines, other than some that had been commandeered by the Boers, closed as the British civilians had fled to safety and now the Kaffirs, no longer productive, were a financial liability to the mines. Their rations were cut and many of them were suffering from scurvy.

Much is said about the siege of Mafeking, a village in the wilderness under the command of Col. Robert Baden Powell. Mafeking, of no importance other than its strategic position, was comprised of about 1300 whites, most of whom were part of the armed forces, and about 7,500 blacks, many of whom were mine boys who had been "let go".

On realising that the food would not last, Baden Powell first reduced the rations to the blacks, on the pretext that he suspected them to be hoarding grain. He then diverted rations for the blacks to the whites, and from the horses to the blacks. Then he completely cut rations to any of the blacks who were not native to Mafeking, but made rations available to them at a depot 70 miles away. This had the effect of forcing them, after they had stripped the very bark from the trees to eat, to exit the native compound to attempt a trek through the veldt to their homelands. Hundreds starved on the way, having been reduced to walking skeletons, but a good many did actually make it. Also many starved just staying in Mafeking, as they were finally rationed to "sowen", a thin porridge made from oat husks. This strategy was called Baden Powell's "miraculous solution" to the food crisis. It was later found that the merchants were the ones who were hoarding the grain, in hope of a greater profit.

In fairness we must say that this is not so much a reflection on Baden Powell in person, but rather on the general way that human lives were diced with at the time. Baden Powell was a brilliant and innovative man, and was years before his time in some ways,

especially when he armed 300 of the mine boys to help defend Mafeking, nick-naming them the “Black Watch”. This move absolutely shocked the Boers, to think that natives could bear arms against the white man. Better to lose the town than resort to that! Lew Weston must have been impressed by Baden Powell, as he later became a leader in the Boy Scout Movement.

It was not all that bad however, sometimes responsibility was taken. In October 1899, 7000 mine boys had been trained to fend for themselves. Neither the Mining companies nor the Boers would take any responsibility, neither would the Natal native affairs. In the end it was the director of the Natal native affairs, a Mr. Marwick, who on his own initiative, marched them 740 miles across no man’s land to safety.

They left Johannesburg on 11th October, a motley crew of young and old, sick and well, thirty abreast, playing concertinas and singing. They marched to Hasting's Spruit, where special trains awaited them. Marwick gave up his own pony for one of the sick, and others were pulled on carts. The Boers were reluctant to let them pass through but Mr Marwick persuaded them, and on approaching the border the natives became “*very nervous, and glad to be in Natal, where once again they were under the protection of the Great White Queen*”.

Marwick was officially congratulated by the government for his effort, arriving at Pietermaritzburg on 18th October.

### **THE RETURN**

As the New Zealand troops trekked through the area they were seldom out of sight of the huge chimneys which marked the sites of mines owned by scores of different companies. At Elandsfontein the sight of Buffesdorn mine, all lit up by electricity reminded them of viewing Wanganui on a Saturday night from Flagstaff Hill. [Letter to Wanganui Herald 8th August 1902.](#)

Despite of all criticism against the British, it was obvious that the mining industry was making a huge contribution to the economy of the country.

As they passed Krugersdorp they saw huge blue-gum plantations, which which looked quite out of place where the only natural vegetation was a small thorn bush. Australian hardwoods grew extremely well in this area. They had been planted out previously by the mining companies, to be used to fire the hundreds of steam engines at the mines, and for pit props. There was no natural wood in the area, it all had to be railed in at huge cost unless it could be grown.

On reaching Elandsfontein (June 21st) they handed in their horses and camped. There was well over fifty percent death rate for the horses due to the extremely hard conditions and insufficient food. In fact most of them eventually succumbed.

The small railway settlement of Elandsfontein had also seen action two years previously, as this quote from THE BOER WAR. by Thomas Pakenham tells us.

*29/6/ 1900 Coming from the empty veldt it was odd to find this valley full of mining machinery, bristling with chimneys, winding gear, and blue grey spoil heaps. Odder still, to see that some of the mines were still working. Trains were shunting in and out of the station, smoke from the pumping engines rose from some of the chimneys, and save for an occasional distant thud there was no suggestion of war.*

*Battersby rode up to the great muddy dam built to provide water for the Simmer and Jack mine. Suddenly Henry's MI were pinned down by some Boers firing from behind the spoil heaps, five hundred yards away. The troopers lost a third of their number, the rest found cover behind some prospecting trenches. The firing stopped, the trains continued shunting. Over by the station passers-by thought the battle was over, and gathered on the pavement. The battle was by no means over. Skirts flurried, woman screamed, bullets pattered on the tin roofed houses like the first stones of a hailstorm. In the station people crouched between the wheels of railway trucks. Bullets hissed and shrieked as they smashed through the corrugated iron and bounced off the street.*

*A man lay on the platform pushed up against the wall, with a patch blown out of his thigh where some foul bullet had passed through and a Boer was lying against the white slope of cyanide ash with a fatal head wound.*

It was only seven miles back to Johannesburg, and a pity not to return for a decent look around. They marched back, through the Kaffir section of the town. The main part of the town was a prospering, gold financed boom town, but in the Kaffir area, houses were tin lined and very dirty. Chinese and Hindus were plentiful. The town was preparing for the Coronation of Edward 7th, decorations were being erected. After the evening was over they returned the seven miles to Elandsfontein, arriving dead beat at 2.30 am. From Elandsfontein they travelled by rail back to Newcastle, and then back to Durban.

The time that Lew passed through Durban was when Mahatma Gandhi was living there, struggling against discrimination against Indians. To see the movie of Gandhi is a good way to give some understanding of the racism of the day. That sort of thing, and the prison camps would have repulsed Lew, being very much against his gentle nature. This would be very strange to any New Zealander. [Boer War Photos](#)



There is on record a letter from Lew to the authorities enquiring about his medal entitlements.

*Ohingaiti. 23/4/06*

*Dear Sir.*

*I have been advised that I will receive a clasp I believe for Cape Colony. On service I was Corporal Weston, No 4 troop, B squadron, 8th contingent. If I am entitled to another clasp my*

*present address is L. E. Weston, Ohingaiti.  
Yours Truly, L.E. Weston*

Another form dated June 5th acknowledges the receipt of this clap.

## **HOME**

After only about four months in Africa, Lew left Durban on 4th July 1902 on the S.S. Britannica, and after another five weeks of travel he arrived back home. He was discharged on 13 August 1902. Lew kept his uniform all his life and looked back at those months with some pride. *(Ray wearing Lew's uniform)*

On 24th April 1904, he received his war service medal, the witness to this was Robert McAlley his next door neighbour, later to be his father in law.

On his return, along with his brother Len, he then took over the block at Ohingaiti that their elder brothers Will and Sam had developed in the 1890's. This is the location of Flat Hills Tourist Park today, between Ohingaiti and Mangaweka.

Four years after his return, preparing for a life of peace, he married the girl next door, Nellie McAlley.

With the Boer war behind him, it was with trepidation that fourteen years later he was called up for the First World War, in August 1918. To his relief though, hostilities had ended before he left Trentham, and he was discharged in November. [Army Record](#)

Lew's war experience had prepared his heart to be centred on being part of the answer to hostilities, rather than part of the problem. He was born into a God fearing family, but now life had lead him to a point where he and Nellie wanted to make a definite commitment to the peace of God in their lives. Lew and Nellie, came to faith at an



evangelical rally held at Ohingaiti in the Presbyterian church, so that in turn they could share that peace with others. *(Wedding photo of Lew and Nell Weston)*

Christian Revival began in Bulls in 1877, when a Brethren

evangelist, Mr Gordon Forlong started a series of Christian evangelical meetings. The effect of this lasted for some years and had a flow on that I believe reached even as far as Ohingaiti, affecting Lew and Nell. The faith of Lew and Nell Weston has reached down and influenced many of the next four generations of their descendents. Their nephews and nieces all attested to the love and concern that was shown to them over the years.

To quote his nephew Bert:- *Uncle Lew was of an outgoing nature and chose an outgoing wife. As a child I remember him always ready for a game. One which I vividly remember was being chased and caught and given a stubbly face rub over my little face.*

Not all of us will go to war, but we all have circumstances in life that influence us and make us stop and think. I ask myself if I am like Lew and Nell, taking the chance to respond to the God who is moulding me?

SHOULD THIS PARCHMENT BE LOST OR MISLAID, NO DUPLICATE OF IT CAN BE OBTAINED.

NEW ZEALAND CONTINGENTS FOR SERVICE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Certificate of Discharge of No. *54th Coy L. H. Weston*  
 (Regiment) *1st New Zealand Contingent*  
 born in the Parish of *St. Andrew*  
 in or near the Town of *Wairarapa* in the County of *Wairarapa*  
 Attested at *Wellington* on the *12* January 19*03* at the age of *20* years.

He is discharged in consequence of *Completion of Service and his Character has been very good*

Service towards completion of engagement } years *20* days. Medals and Decorations  
 Service Abroad } years *1* 1/2 days.

DESCRIPTION ON DISCHARGE.

Age *20* Height *5* 10" Complexion *Fair*  
 Eyes *Brown* Hair *Black* Trade *None*  
 Intended place of Residence *Wairarapa*

Discharge confirmed at *Wellington N.Z.*

Signature *Robert Lewis*  
 Commanding Officer, 1st Cont. 1903  
 Date *19th August 1912*

*Payment of Army Order No 1900 gratuity £20.0 is made this day August 10th 1903 Cooney A.O.*

The two quotes are from Sir Thomas Pakenham and Sir Winston Churchill. Other sources are from N.Z. Army Boer War records and from the Papers Past Website. The term "Kaffir" used within this story is not intended in any way as a racial term, but just to reflect the terminology of the day as it was quoted. Perhaps that shows us how much times have changed. .... Peter Weston 2011

(Discharge Paper)