



## Patriotism, Mateship & Dashing Uniforms

Although the establishment of any professional army was quite beyond the infant colony of New Zealand, both constitutionally and economically, self-defence was a significant issue from the start. The Kororaraka Association for Self-Defence was formed in 1834, the Militia Ordinance came into force in 1845, followed by the Militia Act in 1858. Two years later, in 1860, Volunteering began in Otago. It was the Volunteer Act of 1865, however, that created an official framework for voluntary military service — a framework that largely survived until the 1909 Defence Act replaced the Volunteer Force with a Territorial Force from 28 February, 1910.

**D**URING the half-century covered in this Bulletin, hundreds of local corps became established throughout New Zealand, responding to what Stan Slocombe, in *The Riversdalians*, has called '...the appeal of volunteer service, patriotism, adventure, dashing uniforms (at a time when men's dress was drab), manoeuvres, mateship, competitions and community service.' No civic function, official visit, fête, wedding, funeral or community picnic was complete without Volunteers adding colour to the occasion.

The force always had its critics, and units varied widely in strength, efficiency and enthusiasm. As both time and money were generally required for a man to become an efficient corps member, it was mainly the better-off artisans, clerks, business and professional men who provided the bulk of the force.

As the likelihood of war between Britain and Russia fluctuated, so did the importance and enthusiasm of our Volunteer Forces and harbour defences. The foundation stone of Dunedin's Garrison Hall was laid in 1878 as a major scare developed, serious enough for New Zealand to purchase 22 RML coastal defence guns. Another scare in 1885 saw the Volunteer movement almost double in strength. Even so the effectiveness of the Volunteers didn't always impress Regular Army inspections.

In August 1904, the destruction of the Vladivostok Squadron by Admiral Togo, followed by a second crushing Russian defeat nine months later, significantly altered the international map. After half a century of Russophobia, the last few years of the Volunteer era found the British Empire focusing its attention on the rising power of Germany.

The Hocken Library contains a wide range of relevant material, a selection of which is listed below:

### General publications

Barratt, Glynn. *Russophobia in NZ, 1838–1908*, 1981.

Corbett, D.A. *The Regimental Badges of NZ*, 1970; contains much general and detailed information, including dates of unit formation.

McGibbon, Ian. *The Path to Gallipoli: Defending NZ*, 1991.

McGibbon, Ian ed. *The Oxford Companion to NZ Military History*, 2000; this comprehensive and scholarly guide includes a splendid overview of the 'Volunteer Force' by John Crawford.

### Cyclopedias & Directories

Anon. *Cyclopedia of NZ. Vol.4, Otago & Southland*, 1905;

'Military', pp.126–35, covers history, personalities and units, including Colonel A.W.Rubin, Officer-Commanding the Otago District and the best-known Otago military figure of his time.

Anon. *Stone's Otago & Southland Directory*, 1886; p.370 lists all units formed under the Volunteer Acts of 1881 & 1883.

Anon. *Stone's Otago & Southland Directory*; 1896; lists all units including Cadets and rifle clubs.

Anon. *Stone's Otago & Southland Directory, Vol.I*, 1911; lists the 78 units—including Bands, Cadets, Volunteers & Defence Rifle clubs — existing up to the close of the Volunteer Era.

### Local & District Histories

Bowman, H. *Port Chalmers, Gateway to Otago*, 1948; chap.XII.

Chisholm, Alex. *Growing Up in West Taieri*, 1977; chap.20



Kaitangata Rifles, winning team in the Ladies' Challenge Shield, 1899. Standing, G.Aitchison & G.Duncan; seated, Lt McLaren & Capt Rutherford; in front, T.Frazer & G.Frazer. [Neg.E1221/26]

Church, Ian. *Port Chalmers and its People*, 1994.

Cowan, J. *Down the Years in the Maniototo*, 1948; photo of Naseby Volunteers c.1900.

Herd, Joyce & Griffiths, G.J. *Discovering Dunedin*, 1980.

Kirk, W.R. *Pulse of the Plain. A History of Mosgiel*, 1985.

Knight, Hardwicke. *Dunedin Then*, 1974; 7 photos & notes from the Volunteer era.

Knight, Hardwicke. *Otago Cavalcade, 1901–1905*, 1983.

Knight, Hardwicke. *Otago Cavalcade, 1906–1910*, 1983.

Knight, Hardwicke. *Otago Peninsula*, 1978; p.44.

McCraw, John. *The Golden Junction. Episodes in Alexandra's History*, 2002.

McDonald, K.C. *White Stone Country, the Story of North Otago*, 1962.

Malloch, D. *Early Waikouaiti*, 1940; includes a wonderfully detailed account of the formation and function of a small-town volunteer unit, the Waikouaiti Troop of the Otago Hussars, with photographs.

Mayhew, W.R. *Tuapeka — The Land and Its People*, 1949.

Miller, F.W.G. *Beyond the Blue Mountains. A History of the West Otago District*, 1954.

Moore, C.W.S. *Northern Approaches... Waitati, Waikouaiti, Palmerston, Dunback, Hampden and surrounding districts*, 1958.

Muirhead, Syd. *Historic North Otago*, 1990; Hampden Volunteers.

Olszen, Erik. *Building the New World; work, politics & society in Caversham, 1880s–1920s*, 1995.

Parcell, J.C. *Heart of the Desert... Cromwell & Bannockburn districts...*, 1951.

Rutherford, Alma. *The Edge of the Town — Historic Caversham*, 1978; see under 'Halls'.

Shaw, M.S. & Farrant, E.D. *The Taieri Plain — tales of years that are gone*, 1949.

Slocumbe, Stanley. *The Riversdalians*, 1973.

Stewart, Peter J. *Days of Fortune — A history of Port Chalmers*, 1973; p.43.

Sumpter, D.J. & Lewis, J.J. *Faith and Toil. The Story of Tokomairiro*, 1949; chap.XII.

Thompson, H.M. *East of the Rock and Pillar... Strath Taieri & Macraes Districts*, 1949; chap.X.

Waite, Fred. *Pioneering in South Otago*, 1948; chap.15.

### New Zealand Gazette

Various Volunteer appointments were published throughout the currency of the *Gazette*. Two useful references are:  
*NZ Gazette*, 1 Mar.1860, pp.48–49: Governor in Council. The formation of the Dunedin and Invercargill Militia Districts.  
*NZ Gazette*, 6 May 1861, p.118: Order in Council. Dunedin Regiment constituted.

### Newspapers

Both the *Otago Daily Times* and the *Otago Witness* intermittently ran a column headed 'Our Volunteers', and in all newspapers of the period there are frequent reports of rifle matches and other activities in which Volunteers took part. As examples of what may be found:  
*Otago Witness*, 29 Apr.1865: an extensive review of the Volunteer Force in Otago just five years after its creation.  
*Otago Witness*, 16 Oct.1869: an account of a postal rifle match between the Dunedin Volunteer Artillery and the Honourable Artillery Company, London — our gunners won!  
*Otago Witness*, 9 Sep.1887: a stinging attack on the state of local Volunteer Forces.

### Periodicals

*Illustrated NZ Herald*, 'Volunteer Column' of 1 Mar., 1 Apr., 1 May, 1 Jun., 1 Jul., 1868. A supplement entitled 'The

Representative Volunteers of Otago' has 10 detailed illustrations of the uniforms of officers, NCOs and other ranks, photographed by Burton Bros.

*Illustrated NZ Herald*, 11 Feb.1878, p.1, has an engraving of the 'Review and Sham Fight of the Otago Volunteer Force'

### Manuscript Collections

Misc – Ms - 0187. Archibald Hill Jack Papers include his commissions in the Volunteer Artillery, 1867–1888.  
 Misc – Ms - 0230. Gwen Herbert ephemera, including Kaitangata Rifle Volunteers.  
 Ms - 0307. Garrison Hall Trustees Letterbook, Feb.1905–May 1913.  
 Misc – Ms - 0558. Port Chalmers Naval Volunteers, 'Rifle Shoot Match Book', 9 Mar.1901 to 9 May 1914.  
 Misc – Ms - 0671. Commission of William Murcott as Lieutenant in the Hampden Rifle Volunteers.  
 Misc – Ms - 1444. Dunedin Naval Artillery Volunteers Minute Book 1891–1913, with a number of unsourced newspaper cuttings pasted in.  
 Misc – Ms - 1510. Hampden Rifle Volunteers Nominal Roll 1905–1910.

### Thesis

McLay, G.N. 'N.W.A.Wales — Architect', Postgraduate Diploma thesis in History, October 1985. Nathaniel Wales joined the Dunedin Volunteers in 1862 and for 28 years put much of his time and enthusiasm into Volunteer activities. In 1886 he was appointed Lieutenant Colonel of 1 Bn Otago Rifle Volunteers, and shortly afterwards Commander of the Dunedin District. Chapter 4 of the thesis gives a comprehensive picture of his involvement.

### Pictorial

The reception desk for Hocken Photographs is on the first floor. Consult the main index for specific envelopes such as: Otago Volunteers, Otago-B Battery-Otago Field Artillery, Otago Hussars, New Zealand Army, Port Chalmers-Garrison & Naval Artillery, Kaitangata Volunteers. Also towns or districts where Volunteer Units were located: Green Island (Rifles, 1906 & 1907); Hampden (Volunteers); Naseby (Volunteers c.1900); Waitati (Otago Hussars Easter Encampment, 1894).

Hocken Pictures also has a reprint copy of Christopher Aubrey's well-known painting of the 'Easter Encampment, Oamaru, April 1886'.

### Appendices to the Journals

Of all the sources, perhaps the most fruitful are the *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives*, even if the information varies from year to year in detail and style. From 1874 the reports are to be found in 'Section H — Miscellaneous'. The following selection gives some idea of what may be found:

1864: Section G-1— Petition of the High School, Dunedin, asking to be recognised as a portion of the Volunteer Force of the Colony.  
 1868: D-4 — Report of the inspection of the Volunteers of Otago.  
 1870: D-8a — The state of the Otago Volunteers.  
 1871: A-4 — Harbour defences, Dunedin & Port Chalmers; long letter from Lt Col J.Cargill presenting views on the defence of Dunedin & Otago Harbour, latest weapons and equipment. G-5b — Comprehensive report on Militia and Volunteers, Cadets, equipment and finance. H-9 — Colonial defence, including Volunteers.  
 1872: G-14a — Report of Inspector of Militia & Volunteers, the Otago report concluding, 'During my inspection the town corps frequently expressed a hope that the Government would assist them in providing a drill-shed to enable them to



*Otago Hussars and their Maxim gun c.1890 , the first active trial in Otago [Guy photo, 530/14]*

attend parades in bad weather and at night, when the best musters can be obtained during the winter months'. [It was at this time that architect N.Y.A.Wales began planning the Garrison Hall, and the 'Drill-Shed Commissioners' (Wales being one of them) began raising the considerable sum needed for its construction].

1874: H-24 — Inspector reported a very unsatisfactory state of affairs and recommended that the commissions of three officers lapse or be cancelled.

1878: H-20 — Mostly devoted to numerical strengths; Otago has 13 corps and 12 school units.

1879: H-15a — Inspection includes Dunedin and Invercargill Districts and Queenstown, much improved since 1874. [Garrison Hall now in use]

1880: H-10a — Dunedin had the only drill-shed (of 5 in Otago-Southland) of adequate size; Oamaru found to be well below standard.

1881: H-23 — Details of small arms, ordnance, ammunition and corps strengths.

1882–84: Similar to 1881.

1885: H-4a — Major-General Sir George Whitmore presents a comprehensive report at the time of the last of the major Russian scares.

1886: H-12 — Whitmore reports comprehensively on the 'Oamaru Encampment', a major exercise involving 2551 officers and men. H-13 — Whitmore also comments extensively on all forces, and Major Beddam reports on defence works, particularly harbour defences.

1887: H-12 — Further detailed reports by Whitmore and Beddam.

1888: H-5 — Whitmore remarks that the Garrison Hall was completely filled for his Dunedin inspection and that the physique of the southern Volunteers at both Dunedin and Invercargill was 'magnificent'. He concludes that '...were the 8,064 Volunteers called out for active service they would, after a few weeks of full time training, be formidable in the field.' Arthur Bell, resident engineer, reports on harbour defences.

1889: H-16 — Col. C.A.Humfrey reports on the impact of new Volunteer Regulations. The inspection report has interesting comments on Volunteers electing their officers, and much variation in the standards of NCOs. Bell's report on harbour defences comments on the use of prison labour. Comprehensive returns on harbour defence expenditure and Volunteer numbers. H-35 — Reports on the exposure of Wellington, Dunedin and Christchurch to high-angle ships' fire.

1890: H-10 — Maj.Gen. Bevan Edwards reports on military forces and defences. H-15 — Humfrey comments on the Armament Court at the Dunedin Exhibition. Lt Col Hume, Inspector of Volunteers '...was much struck with the superior class of horses in the ranks of the Dunedin & North Otago Hussars'. Cadets inspected included Queenstown, Dunedin H.S., Lawrence H.S., Arrow, Cromwell, Palmerston & Outram. Further report on harbour defence with detailed comments on prison labour.

1891: H-24 — Lt Col Hume's report mentions the Bluff Navals, B Bty Artillery, Dunedin Engineers, North Dunedin, Waikari, Dunedin Highland & South District Rifles. The Otago District Encampment drew men from 21 units. H-52 — A very detailed summary of 'Enrolled Volunteers by District

and Corps'. [There were then 44 units south of the Waitaki, the Port Chalmers Naval Artillery being largest with 82, and Dunedin Ordnance Band smallest with 20. The Naseby Rifles, with 60 enrolled, were 12 over strength].

1892: H-12 — Col. Hume asserts that '... an increase in efficient Volunteers confounds the sceptics who continually claim the movement is dying out...' Bell notes that the sums voted for harbour defences fell from £200,000 in 1885–86 to £7000 in 1891–92.

1893: H-9 — Reports by Col. F.J.Fox on Permanent and Volunteer Forces and their reorganisation are the most extensive and detailed shown in the Appendices to that date. The Dunedin report alone, covering six pages, gives detailed inspections of every unit. It recommends the disbanding of several units, Fox commenting on the Dunedin Irish Rifles, 'Officer Commanding not fit to command; NCOs indifferent; uniforms and belts old & very dirty; this company is in a bad state.' Other units such as B Battery, North Dunedin Rifles, Otago Hussars (under Capt Robin) and East Taieri Rifles received excellent reports. [Though the 90 pages on military matters suggest that Fox had earned every penny of his £700 annual salary, his naming of inefficient officers ('Fox's Martyrs') and corps eventually got him into so much bother that he sought release from his contract with the Government].

1894: H-24 — 'Report of the Conference held at Wellington (21 Sept to 1 Oct) to deliberate upon the best means of placing the Volunteer Force on a sounder and better basis'. The conference, chaired by Whitmore, made 26 recommendations on equipment, command, formations, efficiency, districts, uniforms etc. The Dunedin District now to have a total strength of 779 officers, NCOs and men.

1895: H-19 — Fox again reports comprehensively on defences and defence forces. Reorganisation well under way. Detailed notes on the Otago District — the Dunedin Irish Rifles no longer appearing on the list!

1896: H-19 — Fox comments that '...there has been no uniform improvement in the force available for the defence of Port Chalmers and Dunedin and in an emergency the men of North Otago and Southland must be drawn upon.' H-35 & 36 — Corps strengths.

1897: H-19 — In an extensive report, Col A.P.Penton recommends (as others had done previously) that officers in the Volunteer Force should be appointed by the military and not by election of the men.

1898: H-19 — Another comprehensive report from Penton, especially keen to see a move to 'kharkee'. Dunedin Cycle Corps Volunteers were one of five corps accepted this year; Hampden, Alexandra and Owaka were rejected because their districts were already up to strength.

1899: H-19 — Penton's report shows the Otago District Volunteer Establishment as: 2 companies of naval artillery; 4 companies (1 battalion) of mounted rifles, 1 battery of field artillery; 1 company of engineers, 16 companies (2 battalions) of infantry, 1 cycle corps and 1 bearer corps. He considers the Volunteer Force has made a marked improvement.

1900: H-19 — Following the start of the Boer War in October 1899, Penton notes that the Otago District has been increased to 7 companies of mounted rifles and 20 companies of infantry; numbers overall had risen dramatically from 4,200 to 11,500, and another 90 corps (mostly mounted) were now offering their services which could bring the Volunteer strength to over 18,000. There is still no single standard of dress throughout the country.

1901: H-19 — In an atmosphere of patriotic fervour Penton reports the strength of the Volunteers now standing at 17,057. Otago now has 12 companies of mounted rifles and 28

companies of infantry. A national khaki uniform is fast becoming a reality, along with entrenching tools, water-bottles and haversacks.

1902: H-19 — Maj.Gen. J.M.Babington, Commandant of Defence Forces, much preoccupied with South Africa. The Otago District, with 13 companies of mounted rifles and 31 of infantry, now has 3,536 officers and men on strength — more than Auckland.

1903: H-19, 19a — Babington inspected 167 corps during the year, but the end of the Boer War has seen a noticeable decline of interest in the Volunteers. Otago's figures held up well, falling by only 172. Otago was commended for inaugurating instruction classes for officers and NCOs, and was named second (after Wellington) most efficient district in the country. New corps included Taieri, Kelso, Murihiku, Wallace, Popotunoa, Winton and Colac Bay. Detailed information provided on every corps.

1904: H-19 — Number of Otago units remain on a par with 1902.

1905: H-19 — Still over 3000 Volunteers in Otago, and a field hospital is based in the district for the first time. Of 4,150 mounted rifles in New Zealand, 839 are in Otago. Babington, noting the draw on horses for the Boer War, suggests that in future the number of mares sent out of the country should be limited. Otago Rifle Volunteers come in for special mention.

1906: H-19 — Total strength in Otago remains high at 3,304, well ahead of Auckland, Canterbury and Nelson districts. Commenting on the difficulty in obtaining suitable officers, Babington remarked '...no leisured class — as in England — practically exists, and every Volunteer Officer has his own private business to attend to'.

1907: H-19 — On 5 January the control of all forces came under a Council of Defence, which reported extensively to the Governor the following August on all aspects of defence. It concluded that if the public were in earnest as to defence, either the Volunteer system would need sufficient men and regular attendance, or the alternative would be compulsory training.

1908: H-19 — The Council of Defence, in a second comprehensive report, decides the Volunteer system is to continue.

1909: H-19 — Col. R.H.Davies, after inspecting 43 adult and 15 cadet units in the Otago Military District, expresses concern that less than half of the enrolled Volunteers had 'done any work in the field in day-light during the year'.

1910: H-19, 19a — The Defence Act 1909, which provided for a Territorial Force and a system of compulsory military training, had hardly come into operation when Field-Marshal Kitchener inspected New Zealand's defences and forces. Maj.Gen Sir Alexander Godley becomes Commandant of the NZ Military Forces and begins the task of creating a homogeneous army out of the hotchpotch of 200 or more Volunteer corps.

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*Written for the Friends of the Hocken, PO Box 6336, Dunedin,  
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