

## Chapter 1

# The Māori Offer for Service Abroad

With centuries of military traditions behind him, it was natural that the Māori should have been eager to shoulder rifle alongside his *Pakeha* compatriots in the Great War. He knew what it was to give up all for a cause, an idea. In the olden Māori polity, the tribe came first; the tribe had first claim on the strong arm of the clansman, and the tribe stood behind every one of its members. No freeman of the *hapū* [clan] or *iwi* [tribe] could suffer injury from a member of another clan and appeal in vain to his kinsmen for help in exacting justice. The whole strength of the collection of families which formed the tribe was at the disposal of the paramount chief and the war captains once a certain line of policy had been decided upon. Here was Empire in miniature. It was easy for the modern Māori to appreciate the importance of united action in defence of the congeries of great families called the British Empire. He was quick to perceive



The Forgotten Maori Contingent.

the truth of the motto that unity is strength, and to realise that his duty as a citizen of the Empire was to come into alignment with his white brothers and cousins against the common danger. But a still more powerful impelling force was the thought that flashed from tribe to tribe that here at last was the great opportunity of showing what the present-day Māori could do in the field of battle.

For many years after the end of the last New Zealand wars, the Māori had regarded his race as a dying one, doomed to extinction, as he phrased it, like the huge moa bird of his ancestors' days – *Ka ngaro i te ngaro o te moa* [likely to become extinct like the moa]. Government statistics for a time went to support this melancholy belief. But the tide turned; the census showed an unexpected increase in native population. This increase became more marked each year under the new health regime established by the State health officers, notably Dr Pomare and Dr Te Rangihiroa, and the Māori took up heart again. In 1914, the Māori people numbered approximately 50,000, and the latest estimate of population is over 54,000. The Māori is adapting himself to the requirements of the *Pakeha* civilisation, and being socially and politically the full equal of the *Pakeha* his confidence in himself and his future is reinforced by a determination to acquit himself like a man in company with his British fellow-citizens.

There were those who, in their ignorance of the race, professed to doubt whether the modern young Māori was as good a man as his fighting father and grandfather. The Māori we used to see, the tall, straight-backed old athlete, tattooed to the height of the *moko* art, alert and active even in his old age, the old scout and bush warrior skilled in all the work of entrenchment, ambush, fort-storming and forest tactics, was for all purposes a perfect fighting man. A very few of these survive, in the villages of the King Country, the Urewera, the Bay of Plenty Coast. But the modern Māori, reared in a semi-*Pakeha* environment, college-bred, interested more in the new ways, new tasks and new amusements, thinking too little of his ancestral traditions – would he acquit himself as well as his grandfather on the field of battle? Some said no. But we who had known the Māori from earliest years, who had had Māori playmates at school and had lived and worked and travelled with native friends, knew better, knew that the hereditary love of war and the national traits of pride and courage had not been extinguished by a few years of non-necessity for exertion in ways military.

That the young Māori was no degenerate, softened by the peaceful life, was quickly made manifest when the First Contingent went into action at Gallipoli in 1915. Not merely were the native New Zealanders superior to all the coloured troops – a distinguished General said that the famous Ghurkas were but children as compared with the Māori – but they proved superior to many of the white troops in directions which suited the genius of the race. They were as grim and thorough as any Highland regiment in attack work with the bayonet, and they proved themselves equal to the tremendous nerve-test of sustained shellfire, the greatest test of all. They were the only native troops

who hung out the whole of the bitter trench work in France in 1916–18. They were fully the equal of their forefathers in fortitude and endurance as in dash and energy. They were most willing workers. A New Zealand officer who watched them in France said: “They did everything with a rush and immense determination; everything seemed a pleasure to them”.

Coming of a race of fort-builders, the Māori soldier was a natural military engineer, and he entered into his work of entrenchment-making in France with the utmost interest. Not only did he work more quickly at the toil of digging-in than any other soldier of the King – this was the observation made by British officers – but he took a scientific pride in the construction of his field works. This was to have been expected of a people famous for their skill in pa-building in the olden wars. The grandfathers of some of these men had constructed the great stockades in the Bay of Island country, which had withstood British artillery – such as it was in the Forties – the kinsmen of some had laid out the elaborate system of trenches which had baffled General Cameron at Paterangi, in the Upper Waikato, in 1864; those works, by the way, were pronounced by a British officer to be stronger than the Redan in the Crimea. There is a field-work at Puraku, near Rotorua, built in 1867 by a Ngāti-Raukawa war-party [Ngāti – belonging to and is normally used in conjunction with a tribal name], which bears a most remarkable resemblance in the details of trenches to the fighting-saps and communication trenches cut by our men in France and Flanders in 1916–1918. Field-engineering, in fact, came easy to the Māori; he could and did in many cases improve on the work of the British Army men.

With the exception of the Waikato, Taranaki and Urewera districts, the Māori tribes were denuded of their young men during the war. As in the Highland glens, the English shires and on the New Zealand farms, the native villages were deserted by the able-bodied; it was a matter of shame to be found lagging behind. Alike on the cocksfoot-grass slopes of Akaroa and the maize paddocks of Auckland, the women and girls at harvest took the place of the men. In Rotorua, there were scarcely any but the older people, the women and the children; every Arawa who could pass the doctor and look fit to carry rifle and swag went into camp to train for the great adventure. The age limit was liberally construed. There is a young Māori at Matata who enlisted with the Arawa in the First Māori Contingent, fought at Gallipoli in 1915, was invalided home, married an Arawa girl, and volunteered for further service abroad, when his wife stopped his wandering by informing the authorities that he was only seventeen. But it was the custom of the Māori to enter the firing line in the early teens. Many a man of the old generation went on his first war trail at the age of twelve. Rihara Kou, a venerable Ngapuhi warrior at Kaikohe, who farewelled his youthful kinsmen – 29 young men went from Kaikohe to the Front – was only thirteen when he helped to defend Ohaeawai and Ruapekapeka stockades against the British troops seventy-one years before. In some cases, father and son joined the Contingent. One of the grandsons

of the early-days Danish trader Philip Tapsell and the chieftainess Hine-i-turama of Maketu, Bay of Plenty, took his two sons with him when he enlisted and the three fought in the bayonet charges on the blood-reddened slopes of Sari Bair. That celebrated pair of Maketu, by the way, founded quite a tribe; their descendants number about a hundred, and of this little halfcaste clan, called Te Whanau-a-Tāpīhana ("The Offspring of Tapsell"), 28 men served in the Great War. Another small clan of the Arawa, the \*Ngāti-Manawa, living at the Rangitaiki river, on the western border of the Urewera country, lost five young men in the war. The Ngāti-Manawa had ever been noted for their pluck and enterprise in war. In the Sixties of last century, when they fought gallantly on the Government side under the Mair brothers and their own chiefs against the Hauhaus, they could muster only about forty fighting men, and some of these were young lads, but they were all reliable and fearless fellows. The young and able-bodied of Ngāti-Porou, too, joined practically to a man.

Many times there had been suggestions to send Māori overseas for military service on distant shores. The military genius of the race was recognised a full century ago, and this recognition was first manifested in a very curious way in the days when the Māori was, in war-time, a ferocious and dreaded raider who not only killed but ate his enemy; his principal item or commissariat was his foe's body. In the year 1829, according to Mr James Bonwick in his book, "The Last of the Tasmanians", a project was brought forward by Mr Horace Rowcroft and seconded by Major Gray, at Hobart, to introduce a number of New Zealanders into Van Diemen's Land, as Tasmania was then called. It was contended that as the Māori would sell slaves for a musket each they would be quite willing to catch blackfellows at the same rate. "Their great intelligence, their crafty policy, and their warlike bearing, with the use of weapons better adapted than 'Brown Bess' to forest contests, made the plan acceptable to many." Mr Rowcroft added a plea of "benevolence," as Mr Bonwick called it. It was truly Pecksniffian benevolence. The Māori were then regarded as about the greatest savages and cannibals that the world could furnish; so, without reflecting upon the consequences of contact to the Tasmanians, he declared that "much good would result to the New Zealanders by their intercourse with us, and would probably sow the germ of civilisation among an energetic and enterprising people." But the humane Colonel Arthur feared the massacre of his black subjects and rejected the proposals. The colonists and officials of Tasmania, in the end, succeeded in exterminating the poor aboriginals without the help of Māori musketeers.

Nearly thirty years later, there was another Māori Contingent suggestion. Governor

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\* The losses of the Ngāti-Manawa tribe in the war out of twenty-one who served were three killed and two died of sickness; two were wounded. Besides those who enlisted in the Pioneer Battalion (twenty), Trooper J.H. Bird served in the Third Auckland Mounted Rifles, and was killed on Gallipoli, 8 August 1915.

Gore Browne, in 1858, gave approval to a proposal made by Captain Charles Brown, of New Plymouth, that a Royal Māori Corps of from 300 to 600 men should be raised to serve at the Cape of Good Hope against the Kaffirs. The Governor sent the proposal to the British Government, but it was discouraged by the War Office and nothing more was heard of it. It is not likely that many Māori were eager for such an enterprise; indeed, I believe Captain Brown's pretty scheme was really put forward and supported by a number of colonists because, if accepted, it would comfortably dispose of some hundreds of fight-loving brown neighbours who would otherwise be a possible source of trouble in New Zealand.

In a despatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1849, Governor Grey said that the Māori, in the opinion of experienced officers, was infinitely superior to the North American Indian in weapons, in knowledge of the art of war, and in skill in planning and perseverance in carrying out the operations of a long campaign. The Natives were, in fact, even better equipped than the British corps for the warfare of the country. That was written after experience of three small campaigns – the war with Ngapuhi at the Bay of Islands, the fighting at the Lower Hutt and at Pauatahanui and Horokiwi, Wellington, and the Whanganui war of 1847. More formidable campaigns were to come, the wars that began in 1860 and lasted for more than ten years, and the experience of these wars, in which the Imperial and Colonial troops far outnumbered their opponents, thoroughly justified Sir George Grey's early respect for the Māori as a soldier and a tactician and strategist.

On several occasions, Britain's wars, during the last forty years, inspired the Māori with a desire for overseas service. One of these offers had a touch of comedy. The news that an Australian contingent of troops was being despatched to Suakim, on the Red Sea, to aid the British forces in the Soudan War, in 1884, prompted a Ngāti-Haua warrior, Hotē Tamehana, to volunteer the services of himself and a party of his tribe to fight the *iwi mangu mangu* [black-skinned people] in North Africa. Hotē was the son of a celebrated patriot, Wiremu Tamehana Tarapipipi, the Māori "Kingmaker," and brother of Tupu Taingakawa, the present head of Ngāti-Haua and leading man in the old Kingite cause. Hotē had fought against the Queen's troops in the Waikato and Taranaki wars. Fired by new-born loyalty, he rode in from his *rauipo*-thatched village at Korakonui and, entering the telegraph office at Kihikihi township, on the King Country frontier, wrote a telegram to the Government offering himself and twenty of his young men of Ngāti-Koroki and Ngāti-Haua for the Soudan campaign. "Twenty men!" said a settler to whom he showed the message before handing it in; "Why not make it two hundred?" "*Ka pai, ka pai!*" Hotē exclaimed, "That's good, very good. I'll make it two hundred men", and two hundred the telegram made it. The Government did not accept the offer, but Hotē got into trouble with the members of his tribe for committing them to foreign service without consulting them.



In the year 1896, the Arawa tribesmen, who had fought gallantly for the white Queen against the Hauhaus in the campaigns of the Sixties and the 1870-72 expeditions, discussed the matter of volunteering for service in South Africa. It was in the days of the Anglo-German crisis following on from the invasion of the Transvaal by the Chartered Company's force under Dr Jameson, and its defeat and capture by the Boers. A meeting was held in the tribal meeting-house "Tama-te-Kapua" at Ohinemutu to consider the question of "the difficulty which has arisen between the Queen of England and other tribes" and many speeches were made for England and against all England's foes. Several speakers exhorted the Arawa to enlist for South Africa but, as there did not appear to be any call for their services, the tribe contented itself with expressions of loyalty to the Crown. "My country right or wrong" was the sentiment of the meeting.

During the South African war, there were many offers from Māori volunteers, but although numerous men of part Māori and part English blood served in New Zealand Contingents, it was not thought necessary to enlist a Māori Contingent. Conspicuous among those who were eager to serve was the Ngāti Porou chief, Tuta Nihoniho, a man of true soldierly instincts and training, who had fought against the Hauhaus on the East Coast from 1865 to 1871. To relieve his disappointment, he sent a present of a greenstone *mere* [hand-held club] to Lord Roberts. In the mid-eighties, when there were alarms of possible war with Russia, Tuta raised and commanded a Māori volunteer corps, the Ngāti-Porou Rifles, which was in existence for four years.

### **In the Great War**

The Māori Contingent, reorganised as a Pioneer Battalion after its Gallipoli service, consisted of the following:

First Māori Contingent, 14 February 1915	518
Second Draft, 19 September 1915	312
Third Draft, 6 February 1916	110
Reinforcements to 18 October 1918	1,287
<b>Total of all ranks</b>	<b>2227</b>

The South Sea Islands troops enlisted for service with the New Zealanders were:

Niue (Savage Island) natives: 6 February, 1916	148
Rarotonga and other Cook Islands natives:	
First draft, 6 February, 1916	50
Rarotongans: Second draft, 16 November, 1916	115
Rarotongans: Third draft, 3 June, 1918	145
<b>Total</b>	<b>458</b>



A group of Ngati-Tuwhareta soldiers.

### **The Māori Roll of Honour**

The following is the official list of deaths in the Māori Contingent and the Pioneer Battalion, on active service, 1915–1918:

	<i>Officers</i>	<i>Other Ranks</i>
Killed in Action	8	122
Died of Wounds	4	62
Died of Sickness	2	130
Other Causes	1	7
Totals	15	321

**Grand total, all ranks: 336 dead**

In addition to these casualties, 734 members of the Māori force were wounded, making the total casualties 1070, or nearly 50 per cent of the total number of men sent overseas.\*

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\*See Appendices for a complete list of the fatal casualties in the Māori force during the war.

## *Chapter 4*

# The Battle of Sari Bair (Gallipoli, August 1915)

The beginning of August saw the completion of the commanders' plans of battle for a great general assault on the Turkish positions. The enemy had been sapping forward and gradually establishing themselves in advanced lines, and with the arrival of their reinforcements it was expected that they would launch an attack. A supreme effort was therefore to be made by our combined forces, all along the line. Huge supplies of ammunition had been collected at Anzac Cove, additional guns were landed, fresh British (13th Division) and Indian troops were landed. A great store of water was brought from the ships. The Māori, with other troops, carried out a very large amount of laborious preparation for the big offensive. They made new roads, improved the old ones, dug communication trenches and made terraced bivouacs for the new troops.



Walker's Ridge.



Practically all this heavy toil had to be done at night. Describing those preparations, General Sir Ian Hamilton wrote in his despatch:

The local preparations [Anzac] reflect the greatest credit not only on General Birdwood and his staff but on the troops, who toiled like slaves to accumulate food, drink and munitions. The accommodation of the extra troops to be landed entailed immense work in repairing concealed bivouacs and making interior communications. The Australians and New Zealanders worked entirely at night without complaint. The efforts of these much tried troops are as much to their credit as their heroism in the following battles.

The reinforcing troops, to quote Sir Ian Hamilton's report, were shipped into Anzac Cove very quietly. "They were tucked away from the enemy aeroplanes and observatories in prepared hiding places ... I much doubt whether a more difficult enterprise than landing so large a force under the very eyes of the enemy and keeping it concealed for three days is recorded in the annals of war." General Birdwood's troops at Anzac, 37,000 rifles and 72 guns, were supported by two cruisers, four monitors (these monitors mounted 14-inch guns) and two destroyers. The enemy's left and centre were slowly bombarded for three days and then the assault on the Lone Pine entrenchment was ordered for 6 August, with the object of withdrawing the Turkish reserves from the grand attack.

On 5 August, orders were issued for the grand attack. The Māori Contingent was in the right covering force under Brigadier General A.H. Russell, with the New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade (four regiments), and New Zealand Field Engineers. The duty of this force was to commence the attack and seize the lower slopes, Big Table Top, Old No. 3 Post, and Bauchop's Hill, with the object of covering the initial advance of the assaulting column. The Māori Contingent, which was the strongest and freshest of the five regiments, instead of being given a section of work as the men desired, was broken up to reinforce the four Mounted Rifles regiments; these, owing to losses through sickness and casualties in the field, were barely half strength. These regiments were reinforced by platoons from A Company, while B Company was kept in reserve between No. 2 and No. 3 Posts. There were two platoons of Māori with the Wellington Mounted Rifles Regiment, one with Otago, one with Auckland, and one with Canterbury. The orders included the following instructions:

By night the bayonet only will be used by troops attacking the enemy. Magazines will not be charged by troops of the assaulting columns, they will only be charged by troops left as pickets and garrisons of posts. As soon as the main objectives are reached troops will dig in. Trenches will be traversed and communication trenches made. Heavy hostile artillery fire is to be expected when it becomes light.

No officer, non commissioned officer or man is to fall out to rush to the rear to wounded men; to do this is a serious military offence. Stretcher parties will follow all columns and will attend to the wounded.

The terrain which was the scene of the great attack has been described in detail by many writers, but none gives so vivid a picture of Sari Bair as Mr John Masefield in his epic "Gallipoli" He explains that Sari Bair begins at Gaba Tepe, to the south of the Anzac position, and stretches thence north-easterly towards Great Anafarta in a rolling and confused mass of hills, with peaks ranging from about 250 ft to 600 ft, its chief peak, Koja Chemen Tepe, is a little more than 900 ft. Nearly all of it was trackless, waterless, and confused, with brushwood and forest trees in places, a rough savage country. The south-western part of it made the Anzac position; the north-eastern and higher half was the prize to be fought for. It is the watershed; the deep deres or gullies on its south side go down to the Helles point; those on the north to the flat land south of Suvla Bay. The three northern gullies nearest to the Anzac position were rugged defiles, dry water courses (subject to floods in the rainy seasons) running west or northwest from the hill bottoms. The three gullies nearest to the northern end of the Anzac positions were Sazlia Beit Dere, Chailak Dere, and Aghyl Dere. The New Zealanders saw much too much of the ravines of death in the August fighting. They led up into the hills, up to the summits of Sari Bair; and up there it would be possible to look down on the whole Turkish position facing Anzac.

"One can see," Mr Masefield wrote, describing the strategic picture from Sari Bair top, "only three miles away, the only road to Constantinople, and, five miles away, the little port of Maidos, near the Narrows. To us the taking of Sari Bair meant the closing of that road to the passing of Turkish reinforcements and the opening of the Narrows to the fleet. It meant victory and the beginning of the end of the Great War, with home and leisure for life again, and all that peace means. Knowing this, our soldiers made a great struggle for Sari Bair, but fate turned the lot against them".

Of Sari Bair's several peaks and knolls, the small plateau of Pine, and Lonesome Pine (400 ft), were held by the Anzacs. The Turks held the heights called Baby 700 and Battleship Hill, and the difficult peak of Chunuk Bair (about 750 ft).

The plan of the attack was that a strong force at Anzac should attack the right wing of the Turks, seize the heights and drive the enemy south towards Kibr Bahr, so capturing a dominating position on the narrow part of the peninsula. At the same time there was to be a landing of British troops in great force at Suvla Bay to attack the Turks on the hills behind Anafarta, and then to go in from the north and west in the great assault on Sari Bair. As we know now, the much discussed failure of the British troops under General Stopford at Suva – a failure due to faulty staff work, not to the poor brave Tommies – lost us the key of the position, and lost Gallipoli and the

campaign. The operations began at 2100 hours on the night of Friday, 6 August, with a bombardment of Old No. 3 Post by a destroyer. This shelling lasted for half-an-hour and then the attack began. Some of the Māori were sent out ahead to destroy barbed-wire entanglements. At 2130 hours, the destroyer opened fire on Table Top to prepare the way for the Wellington Mounted Rifles. When night came on, the Māori, like the old Scottish Covenanters and Cromwell's soldiers, gathered for a religious service on the eve of battle. They mustered silently at the "Māori Pa" as their camp at No. 2 was called, and there Captain Henare Wainohu, chaplain, addressed them. His brief earnest exhortation breathed the spirit of the warrior chief quite as strongly as that of the spiritual leader.

"Whatever you do," said the Padre, "remember you have the *mana*, the honour and the good name of the Māori people in your keeping this night. Remember, our people far away in our native land are watching you, waiting eagerly, anxiously to hear how you have behaved yourselves in battle. In a few minutes, perhaps many of us may be dead. But go forward fearlessly with but one thought. Do your duty to the last and, whatever comes, never turn your backs on the enemy. Go through with what you have to do, to the very utmost of your powers. Do your duty, uphold the ancient warrior name of the Māori.

The reverberating thump and crash of artillery, the noise of shells overhead, the bursting of shrapnel, gave the touch of deadly realism to the Padre's speech. And it was with full hearts, thrilling to the call of imminent action, that the soldiers sang their favourite hymn,

Au, e Ihu, tirohia,

Arohaina iho ra

(The Māori version of "Jesus, Lover of my Soul")

Many "Tommy" soldiers gathered around to hear the New Zealanders.

Hipokina iho au

Raro i ou parirau.

("Cover my defenceless head with the shadow of Thy wing.")

The sweet and solemn beauty of the Māori singing pleased the listening *Pakeha*. They thought it was a native "sing-song," perhaps, for they applauded when the hymn ended.

The task before the Māori was to advance with empty rifles against a foe entrenched in seemingly impregnable positions on the grim dark heights above. The work had to be done with the point of the bayonet. The orders were that not a shot was to be fired; the enemy trenches must be taken by surprise attack. Officers as well as men carried rifle and fixed bayonet. They had no steel helmets; those came later, in France. They wore shirt and trousers only; tunics were an encumbrance.

The 1st Australian Infantry Brigade with desperate gallantry captured the Lone Pine entrenchments. The great assault from Anzac Cove by the Anzacs and the 13th Division

and the Indian troops, was up the three deres leading to the peak of the Sari Bair.

Sir Ian Hamilton, in his graphic reports of the Gallipoli operations, described succinctly thus the opening of the grand attack:

... the real push... was the night attack on the summits of Sari Bair. Our object was to effect a lodgement along the crest of the main ridge with two columns of troops. We planned that two assaulting columns should work up three ravines, to storm the high ridge. These were preceded by two covering columns, of which the first was to capture the enemy's positions covering the foothills, and the other was to strike out northwards, until from Damakjelic Bair it could guard its left flank of the column assaulting Sari Bair from the enemy on Anafarta valley. The whole of this big attack was made under General Godley. A warship had been educating the Turks how to lose a redoubt near Table Top. Every night at 9 o'clock, the warship threw a searchlight and bombarded the redoubt for ten minutes. Then followed a ten minutes interval and a second illumination, the bombardment concluding precisely at 9.30. The idea was that the enemy should take the searchlight as a hint to clear out until the shelling was ended.

On the night of the 6th the searchlight was switched off at 9.30, and instantly our men poured out through the scrub and jungle into an empty redoubt at Table Top, a whole series of entanglements being carried by 11 o'clock.

Simultaneously the attack on the Table Top was launched under cover of the warship's heavy bombardment. The banks are so steep that the Table Top gives the impression of a mushroom summit bulging over the stem, but as faith moves mountains, so valour carries them. The Turks fought bravely. The angle of the Table Top's ascent is recognised in the regulations as impracticable for infantry, but neither Turks nor angles of ascent were destined to stop Brigadier-General Russell and his New Zealanders that night. There are moments in battle when men become super-men, and this was one of those moments. The scarped heights were scaled, and the plateau was carried at midnight.

With this brilliant feat the task of the right covering force ended. The attacks were made with bayonet and bomb only, the magazine being empty by order. No words can do justice to the achievements of General Russell, and the New Zealand Rifles, especially the Otago Rifles, the Māori, and the New Zealand Field Troop.

The Māori indeed went into that splendid attack, their first battle with the bayonet, in a mood of savage determination and delight. This was their chance for fame. They went grimly for those Turks, bayoneted them in their lines, they burst into a tremendous *haka* when they had cleared the trenches – “*Ka mate, ka mate, ka ora, ka ora!*” – then silence as they pressed on to the next point.

At Chailak Dere, its attackers had had a very difficult task. They were held up by barbed wire of uncommon height, width, and intricacy, closing up the ravine. “Here, a splendid body of men” wrote Sir Ian Hamilton, – “the Otago Mounted Rifles – lost some of their bravest and best, but when things were desperate a passage was forced with most conspicuous cool courage by Captain Shera and a party of New Zealand Engineers, supported by Māori, who are descendants of the warriors of the ‘Gate Pa’.”

When the order to advance was given, the Māori, in their several companies and platoons, some with the various *Pakeha* units, moved silently off towards their objective on the dark ridges above.

A Company’s great adventure may be followed in most detail. The Company was not attached to any *Pakeha* body. There were 70 men under Captain Roger Dansey and Captain Pirini Tahiwī. They started at 2100 hours, with a *Pakeha* captain guiding them. They had not gone far up the gully towards No. 3 Post when they came under Turkish shell fire, and had to return and shelter awhile. After waiting under cover for some time, they went forward again, in single file. The shell fire increased in intensity; the hills shook with it. The Māori pressed up a steep ridge until they came to the first enemy barbed-wire entanglements at Old No. 3 Post. The wire-cutters sent out in advance had not got through this formidable obstruction, and it held the attackers up for some time. Here, one of Tahiwī’s lads, Private Ropata (of Otaki), batman to Captain Ennis, the Adjutant, was caught in the wire, shot through the body and killed. By this time, the Māori were under a very heavy rifle fire as well as shrapnel shells and machine-guns. Charging on, A Company came to a section of trench and were proceeding to clear out its inmates when they found that it had just been taken by the Auckland Mounted Rifles. Further on, the trench was still held by the Turks and Captain Dansey offered to clean up the position if Major Chapman, the officer in command of the Aucklanders, would give him some men. Chapman could not spare him any, so Dansey and Tahiwī pushed on to do the job. About a hundred yards further on up the difficult slope of the ridge, they were confronted by a long crescent-shaped trench. Captain Dansey, Captain Tahiwī, Lieutenant Hiroti, and one or two men (including the bugler, Corporal H. Tahiwī) jumped into this trench and worked down it in advance of their men; it was impossible to keep closely in touch in the darkness. The Turks still held this trench further on, and the Māori could hear their voices. The advance party worked towards them, and Captain Dansey said, “Let’s charge them!” This the little party did. They yelled as they went, with bayonets at the charge,

*Ka mate, ka mate!*

*Ka ora, ka ora!*

the ancient Māori battle-song.





*Maori Haka*

It was taken up with tremendous voice by the men following them. On they went for those Turks; there was no breath to finish the chant; they needed it to push the bayonet home. The lads hurled themselves at the foe like a band of destroying angels; with bayonet and rifle butt they cleared the trench; only the dead and dying remained. Some Māori fell, but the victory was with them.

“*Ka mate, ka mate!*” the Māori shouted like mad when the terrible work was done. “*Hupane, Kaupane! Whiti te ra!*” they yelled. And from their unseen comrades away along the range they heard the same war-cry above the crackling of Turkish rifles.

That first dash of Dansey and Tahiwī and their companions into the Turkish nest was a daring bit of work. The enemy fired at them at a distance of only two or three yards but strangely, the only one

hit, a Taupo man, Private Whatu, was behind the others. Many stories have been told in the *kaingas*, about that famous war-shout on the Gallipoli hills; it was Dansey and Tahiwī who started it, and it was with a fierce wild delight that the New Zealanders, *Pakeha* as well as Māori, heard it taken up all along the line as Turk trench after trench was rushed.

After clearing the Turks out of the trench, A Company consolidated the position, sandbagged it wherever needful and held on till the morning. When daylight came, they found that from their position they could see the operations at Suvla Bay, and they watched the whole movement of the British troops there, after the tardy landing. It was a beautiful bright morning, and the battle for Chocolate Hill, the hopeless advance of the British under the heaviest of artillery and rifle fire, was clearly visible.

The crash of battle for the Gallipoli summits was now at its terrible zenith. The Māori, as they crouched in their captured trenches, saw the cruisers all bombarding the ridges, heard British and Turkish shells scream overhead; shrapnel burst over them; rifles and machine-guns maintained a continuous crackling fire. They had but slight shelter, those Anzacs who held the broken slopes and ridges, for the ultimate summits of Sari Bair and Table Top were still above them.

At 1000 hours the Māori received orders to go on to Table Top. A Company and those near them had to cross an intervening gully and ascend a sharp razorback ridge to gain their objective. Under rifle fire they ran down into the valley, singly, and began to climb to the formidable summit; up the way was very steep over rock and hard clay, with low bushes. Many dead Turks lay in the valley and about the slopes. The Māori reached this

top and lay low hanging on to scrub about the precipitous hill-brow. They watched a new “Tommy” regiment working its way up to Little Table Top under heavy fire.

Presently orders came to return to the foot of the hill and reassemble. The Māori descended, and found comparative shelter behind a small hill. There the men greeted their comrades, and compared notes of the great night’s work. The cover here was scant; the place was under rifle fire, as a remarkable casualty proved. Captain Pirini Tahiwī was in the act of drinking from his water-bottle when a bullet fired from the hill above went through the upraised bottle, entered his neck, just missing the jugular vein, and passed down through the right side of his body, close to the spine. Tahiwī’s brother Henare caught him as he was falling, paralysed with the shock. That ended the young Ngāti-Raukawa captain’s service on Gallipoli; but he made a good recovery in hospital, and joined his comrades in France.

Captain Buck (later Major, with the decoration of the DSO) had a most strenuous time, in the thick of it as medical officer. The following are extracts from his diary:

6 August (Friday). The Wellington Mounted Rifles moved in here to Major Todd’s old camp to attack Table Top. Happy Valley on our left, is full of troops; and men have been moving all night round to No. 2. Our men are distributed out with other regiments of Russell’s brigade, two platoons with Wellington, one with Otago, one with Auckland, and so on.

In the evening at 7 o’clock, we moved round between No. 2 and 3 outposts. Other troops were there thick. Divisional and Brigade Headquarters moved round, also the A.P.M.S. Major Holmes is using Otago’s aid post. Otago and Canterbury moved out, and some of our men with them. A destroyer commenced the bombardment of old No. 3 Post at 2100. for about 30 minutes, and the general attack commenced then. Lieutenant Coupar and No.1 Platoon were sent out to destroy barb-wire entanglements. At 2130 the destroyer shelled Table Top to prepare the way for the Wellington Regiment. B Company of the Māori Regiment was held in reserve. News came through that Colonel Findlay, of the Canterburys, was wounded; I offered for service and went out with my stretcher-bearers. We met Findlay on the way, shot through the thigh. I sent him in and went to pick up the Canterbury wounded on the left of our position (Walden’s Point). Saw the Australian infantry passing through in the valley near Canterbury Ridge. They had captured half-a-dozen Turks who had been left behind and had them ringed round with bayonets. We passed to the foot of Walden’s Ridge and picked up several Canterbury wounded. Some were very bad, shot through the lungs, some with broken legs. We did our best for them and sent some in with our stretcher bearers. Saw five or six dead lying about, including a Turk. We went up the ridge to the Turkish trench captured and saw two wounded and two killed; did what



Little Table Top.

we could. There was a captured machine-gun in the trench. Came down, saw the Canterbury stretcher-bearers, and located Captain Guthrie, who had established an aid post in the same gully but had been working the other ridge. Meanwhile Ghurkas and other troops were passing through the valley and passing inland. We went thoroughly over the ridge that we had partly done, and whilst exploring it for wounded we were nearly shot at by the Ghurkas; the General considered there was nobody on their left.

Before this we could hear our men doing splendidly. Rattle of musketry, then silence, and the loud English cheer, followed by a Māori *haka*. Owing to the Māori being distributed, the *hakas* came from every ridge. Everybody is pleased with our men.

Handed over wounded Canterbury Yeomanry Cavalry to Captain Guthrie and went back to join the Contingent in the early morning of the 7th. All along troops were pushing on, and over to the left the transports were thick landing on the Salt Lake section (Suvla). All along the track the wounded lay thick, and in many places the dead also. I found B Company reduced to two platoons, the rest having gone out to reinforce the other regiments.

Summarising the results of the first great attack, Captain Buck wrote:

The Auckland Mounted Rifles took Old No. 3 but dug-in without cleaning it out. Captain Dansey, with 70 Māori, asked Major Chapman (Auckland Mounted Rifles) to give him another 50 men and he would clean up the position. This was refused, and Dansey did it with his 70 men, losing only seven killed and several wounded. Major Chapman was killed. The Wellington Mounted Rifles, under Colonel Meldrum, took Big Table Top, but Rhododendron, a little further on, delayed the infantry who were advancing while these operations were going on. The Otago Mounted Rifles, under Colonel Bauchop, with the Canterbury Regiment, under Colonel Findlay, cleared up Bauchop's Hill. Colonel Bauchop was mortally wounded through the chest whilst leading his men; he died the next day. One of the last things he said in the clearing station [to Lieutenant Colonel Herbert, O.C. Māori Contingent] was: 'Herbert, the Māori have done splendidly'.

There were innumerable incidents of daring in that terrible and glorious night's work. Captain Roger Dansey, whose dash has already been mentioned, himself killed three Turks with the bayonet. An anecdote of his alertness and dash in those August days and nights was narrated in New Zealand by one of his men long afterwards. "Captain Dansey," he said, "is as good a fighter as he was a footballer. Once a big Turk jumps up ahead of him and levels a rifle at his head. But Dansey just ducks and goes for that Turk low down; the bullet goes over his head and the Turk goes to heaven."

"We got our blood up that night," said the same soldier, describing the Friday night assault. "We went right up and into it with the steel. Hand-to-hand fighting was the thing. It was like the days of our forefathers."\*

7 August was a day of exhaustion, the troops lying on the hills, in scant cover, under terrible artillery, bomb and rifle fire, holding on, gratified with their advance and preparing for a still more desperate advance that night. Captain Buck wrote in his diary of his day's work:

August 7th (Saturday). Set to work to help wounded, who were lying thick between Nos. 2 and 3 Posts, and giving the few men under Major Holmes all they could do. Several of our men came in wounded, and I helped to dress some and label them. Could hardly get away from them, then collected as many as possible

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\* "A platoon of Māori, led by a Wellington officer, also crept quietly up the Chailak Dere in order to get round the back of Table Top to co-operate with the Wellingtons. In the gully between Bauchop's Hill and Old No. 3 a party of Turks fired on the Māori, who saw red and slew the Turks to a man. Chasing the enemy up the gully the Māoris never stopped until they were round the back of Table Top, and were only with great difficulty restrained from tackling Sari Bair by themselves!" (Major F. Waite, in "The New Zealanders at Gallipoli", p. 210.)

of our stretcher-bearers and set off up the gully. Camped in the afternoon under a small spur leading down on the left of Old No. 3. Near us was an old Turkish bivouac. Went up into the trenches and got three of our wounded; buried seven of our dead. One man was wounded badly through the stomach. They had been seen by Dr McCormac. Five of our men were wounded here, including Captain Tahiwī (in the neck) and my orderly, A. Simeon. Captain Tahiwī was in the act of having a drink out of his water-bottle; the bullet skidded down into the neck, otherwise it would have gone through his head. A lieutenant sent down as guide was also hit before we moved out at 2 a.m. I sent the wounded back to the Australian Light Horse First Aid Post. We were short of stretchers, owing to congestion in the evacuation on the beach, or rather at No. 2. This was due to the fact that the wharf erected in front of No. 2 for the evacuation of wounded had to be abandoned because of Turkish machine gun fire dominating it. The men had to be carried round to Walker's Ridge wharf, and the congestion of wounded led to the stretchers being kept on the beach.

### **The Capture and Loss of Chunuk Bair**

Sunday 8 August, saw the Māori in the fiercest fighting of all, the desperate attack on Chunuk Bair, as a preliminary to the general assault of Kojā Chemen Tepe, the apex of the range held by the Turks. The attacking force was organised in three columns. The Māori were in the column on the right, under Brigadier General F.E. Johnston, which was timed to assault Chunuk Bair at dawn. With them in the right column were the 26th Indian Mountain Battery, the New Zealand Infantry Brigade, the Auckland Mounted Rifles, and two British regiments, the 8th Welsh Pioneers, and the 7th Gloucesters (from the 13th Division, in reserve). The centre and left columns, under Major General H.V. Cox, were comprised of an Indian Mounted Battery, the 4th Australian Infantry Brigade, the 29th Indian Infantry Brigade, and portions of four British regiments, Warwicks, Worcesters, North Staffords and South Lancashires. The troops moved out in the grey dawn, and with splendid dash gained a footing on the ridge and started to dig in. The Māori were in the thick of it here, and in common with their *Pakeha* comrades lost heavily. It was the most deadly, yet the most glorious day of the campaign, glorious because of the countless deeds of valour and self-sacrifice that attended the splendid lost-endeavour. The episode of the Māori machine-gun taken up the ridge is worthy of record on canvas by some great artist; it is a subject for an understanding battle painter like the artist of "Rorke's Drift" and "The Roll Call". Lieutenant Waldren, a *Pakeha* officer of the Contingent, had a machine-gun taken up the hill with great difficulty. When it was set up, a heavy fire was concentrated on it by the Turks, higher up the range, and one after another of the crew was shot down. Lieutenant Waldren was shot dead while working the gun. Corporal Ferris took his place and he also was



shot down. A bullet was the certain fate of any man who attempted to use the gun, and Māori after Māori was hit until seven men were wounded. Then anyone operating the machine-gun had to crawl cautiously up and work it lying down. At last the gun, the only one on this flank, had to be withdrawn.

The troops who gained the top won a deathless name that day. Time and again they repelled Turk assaults. They suffered heavily under artillery, bomb, machine-gun and rifle fire, but they held on, and they repelled repeated attacks with the bayonet. Many a gallant New Zealander fell there; most gallant of them all was that fine soldier from Taranaki, Lieutenant Colonel Malone, who was mortally wounded while he was marking out the line to be entrenched on the crest of the knoll. All that day of terrific fire, suffering from heat, thirst, and the effects of great physical effort, the Māori (sent out more to the left) and their splendid comrades retained the positions gained, and entrenched themselves as well as they could in the hard, stony soil.

Captain Peter Buck, describing the day's work as he experienced it, wrote in his diary:

August 8th (Sunday). Snatched a few winks of sleep and moved up the valley at 2 a.m. The infantry had passed Table Top and Rhododendron Hill and on to the region of Chunuk Bair. Went up gully and rested for a while at the foot of the hill. A Turkish overcoat came in very handy, as it was very cold. Went up the hill in the early morning. Passed the Otago Aid Post, then an Indian mountain battery, getting busy. We established an aid post in a watercourse at the side of the track. Our men were a little higher up, waiting to go into the firing line. One machine-gun section with us was put on the ridge, and the Turks got on to it. European officer, Waldren, and Ferris were killed and seven were wounded. Dressed most of them at our station. Some were wounded by shrapnel. Saw Frank Statham (Major) waiting with Otagos to go into action. Did up several men at our post, including a man hit on the shoulder with a shrapnel case; it only bruised him. Our men were sent into section on the left of Auckland with ammunition for the Gloucesters. Several were shot going across the ridge, including H. Tahiwī, badly in the leg. He was carried in by an Otago man under fire. There was trouble through lack of stretchers, and I sent all who could walk down the hill. Had to make a stretcher for Tahiwī with a Turkish coat and two rifles. R. Morgan came back over the ridge to the left, saying some wounded were there in a gully. Went up the hill and saw Brigadier General Johnston, who said the Māori had gone into the firing line on the left. I left the Chaplain at the dressing station, and guided by Morgan and accompanied by Rangī Otene went over the ridge to the left below our aid post. We ran down the hill into the creek bed and worked up to a little flat at the convergence of two small watercourses. There we found heaps of wounded, who had come down the watercourse to the right,

Māori, *Pakeha* New Zealanders, and Gloucesters. Adjusted bandages, gave them water, and those who could walk were directed over the hill to the left. One New Zealander was very bad, leg shot off by a shell; so with others, wounds severe. Was assisted by Q.M.S. Mete Kingi; he came over to see his brother, but he was dead; also Corporal Geary, Lance Corporal Manuel and Private Tuite higher up the creek, very bad abdominal wounds. The Padre and others came over, and after doing what we could and sending word to the F.A., went over the ridge to the left again, to our men; and found them there next to the 10th Ghurkas. We had come too far to the left, evidently, and so as not to interfere with the Ghurkas' lines we had to go on into the next small gully, where we dug out an aid post. We had three wounded, whom we sent off in the evening under stretcher-bearer escort, as they could walk.

This is Sunday night, and we have had to rely on the food we brought with us on Friday, and we are still in our shirt sleeves. We have had a severe strain on the water supply for the wounded. The Padre took a tin of water from a unit beside our first-aid post; he took it by force and asked them to report him. Tonight we got some water, and also a ration of rum, which was very acceptable.

The Ghurkas keep flitting about in twos, and one cannot but admire their neat appearance and fit condition. They stop or sit down for a moment, and then blend with the scrub and the shadows as they flit away. One smuggled into our first-aid post during the night and had a good sleep.

The Infantry Brigade at this period of the battle held the trenches on the slopes of Chunuk Bair to the right of the highest point. To the New Zealanders' left were the Gloucester and Warwick regiments and then the 5th Ghurkas. The Māori were to the left again just under the "Farm" where they occupied trenches dug with their entrenching tools. The machine-gun and shrapnel fire was very severe all day. The Royal Irish Rifles, the East Lancashire, Wilts and Hants regiments came up beside us. To the left again was Cox's Indian Brigade.

August 9th (Monday). Shifted our aid post about 10yds lower down in the gully, and dug in a little as it was liable to shrapnel from the left. A whole lot of Tommies were advancing up into the firing line, but owing to taking the wrong gully they arrived three hours late and started their attack in the daytime. It was slaughter. The regiments passing up were the Royal Irish Rifles, East Lancs, Wilts, Hants, and others. The Royal Irish lost heavily and they came scrambling down the gully to our post. We had the place crowded, and plenty of work. I could not locate the aid posts of these regiments, or get hold of their stretcher-bearers. Had East Lancashires, one abdominal and broken arm and another with a broken thigh, with us all day. All the wounded came down asking for water. Had some of our own wounded, and fortunately they were able to get away down the gully.

Sergeant Major Hill, of A Company Māori, was carried over by Sergeant Jacob, but was practically dead when he arrived, shot through the spine with shrapnel. Rawhiti, an East Coast man, carried several wounded men down to us on his back. Rawhiti received the Military Medal for his fine deeds. My men worked very hard. We had a very bad time with shrapnel, which burst all about our gully. Only the fact that we were dug in saved us. Even then we were afraid of our projecting feet, as the shrapnel bursts were only a few feet beyond us. Once, while I was dressing a wounded Ghurka, I had to lie down beside him as the shrapnel was striking the ground just beyond us. We had half a dozen Ghurkas in our aid post, but they were the only people who had stretcher-bearers constantly moving about, and we never had to keep a Ghurka long. One of them, hit in three places, came up the gully minus putties, hat and equipment but with a naked Khukri knife in his hand, evidently looking for anyone in the way. Another, shot through the abdomen, asked for '*pani*' – water – but on my pointing to the wound and shaking my head he laid his head back with an air of resignation. When I offered him a little to moisten his mouth, he pushed the bottle away, but finally, when I rubbed my lips, he understood, and took just enough to moisten his mouth and voluntarily withdrew his lips from the bottle. The Tommies, through ignorance, drew fire on us several times by exposing themselves. They are strange to this kind of country, and wandered round a good deal. Some of their officers had swords and leather trappings that would delight the snipers. Up here we had a good view of the sea, and could hear the warships sending shells into the hill above us. The roar of bursting shells and the rattle of musketry and machine-guns went on incessantly. The pressure slackened off in the afternoon. A subaltern of the Royal Irish Rifles came into our aid post and had a yarn. He said he was waiting for a cup of tea before going up on duty. Both the Padre and I turned on him simultaneously. 'What! A cup of tea! We haven't had one since Friday.'

We had a terrible job to get rid of the Tommy wounded. A Royal Irish Rifles man, wounded in the back, whom we had had all the morning, was at last carried off by two of his regiment on a hand seat. The only two stretcher-bearers I had seen never came back for the other wounded man of their regiment. I kept asking the officers and men of the Tommy regiments where their stretcher-bearers were, and they all united in cursing them. Finally, I was left with two Lancashire men, and after sending out innumerable men of that regiment to hunt up their stretcher-bearers, I put a Lancs on guard over them to await arrival of a party to carry the men away. We were without stretchers, and I had sent our own bearers away with our own cases. The one or two who were left were absolutely exhausted after three days' hard work.

In the evening we got word to move out with B Company, as the Wilts were

to take over our trenches. We were to go out and have a spell; and we heard the *Pakeha* New Zealanders were doing likewise. They had been badly cut up. Colonel Malone, Major Statham and others killed. A Company were to remain until the Wilts men took over the trenches. We moved off to the right, and passed Lieutenant Hiroti waiting to take the Wilts over to our trenches. Captain Pitt had been very sick, and I had sent him away with one of the men in the early evening. Lieutenant Ferris was commanding B Company. We moved down the hill and went down Aghyl Dere (where dead men were lying about in several places) and back to No.1 Post.

Chunuk Bair was won but for a short space. Under an awful fire, the troops hung on with desperate tenacity, until the night of 9 August, when it became absolutely necessary to withdraw the defenders for rest and food. Their places were taken by two fresh battalions, the 6th North Lancashires and the 5th Wiltshires; there was only space for these two corps in the limited shallow trench line. The Turks made a tremendous assault on these Englishmen at daybreak on 10 August, and drove them off the ridge, or rather wiped most of them out. So Chunuk Bair was lost, and never again did our troops set foot on it.

General Sir Ian Hamilton's despatch must be quoted here, for its vivid summary of the Chunuk Bair battle. Describing the fighting on the hill on the 9th – after the troops had gained a portion of Chunuk Bair – he wrote:

The Turks were now lining the whole crest in overwhelming numbers. The enemy, much encouraged, turned their attention to the New Zealand troops and the other battalions holding the south-west of Chunuk Bair. Their constant attacks, with fanatical persistence, were met with sterner resolution, and, although our troops were greatly exhausted, at the end of the day they still kept their footing on the Summit, which covered the Narrows themselves and the roads leading to Bulair and Constantinople. Eight hundred men held the crest of Chunuk Bair in slight trenches hastily dug, but the fatigue of the New Zealanders and the fire of the enemy prevented solid work, the trenches being only a few inches deep and unprotected from fire.

The First Australian Brigade were now reduced from two thousand to one thousand. The total casualties to the evening of the 9th were 8500. The troops, however, were still in extraordinary good heart, and nothing could damp the keenness of the New Zealanders. The new army of Chunuk Bair was relieved after a night and a half. They were dead with fatigue, and Chunuk Bair, which they had so magnificently held, was handed to the 6th North Lancashires and the 5th Wiltshires.

The Turks delivered a grand assault at daybreak on the 10th, and the North Lancashires were simply overwhelmed in the shallow trenches by sheer weight of numbers, whilst the Wilts, who fought in the open, were literally almost annihilated. The assaulting column consisted of a full division, plus three battalions, and it swept over the crest and swarmed over General Baldwin's column, which only extricated itself after the heaviest of losses. Now it was our turn. The warships and New Zealand and Australian artillery got the chance of a lifetime, and an iron rain fell on the successive solid lines of the Turks, while ten machine-guns of the New Zealand infantry played on their serried ranks at close range until the barrels were red-hot. Only a handful of the enemy straggled back to their own side of Chunuk Bair. By the evening of the 10th, General Birdwood's casualties were twelve thousand, including the largest proportion of his officers. The grand coup had failed to come off, as the Narrows were beyond field-gun range.

It was not General Birdwood's fault or the fault of any of the officers and men under his command. General Birdwood had done all that mortal man could. General Godley also handled his two divisions with conspicuous ability.

The casualties among the Māori were heavy, and Captain Buck and his lads had their hands literally very full. The following are extracts from the M.O.'s diary:

August 10th (Tuesday). This morning we shifted higher up the hill to where the Wellington Mounted Rifles had been. We had two wounded here. Curiously, one was wounded in the cheek with the tip of the bullet sticking out and no other wound. I found he had been hit while asleep with his mouth open! The wound of entrance was on the inside of the cheek. It was a spent bullet. The arrangements for the despatch of sick and wounded were much better. There were a British staff and R.A.M.C. at No. 2. The jetty in front had been abandoned for shipping wounded, owing to snipers' and machine-gun fire. The wounded were now being taken to No. 4 Supply Depot and shipped from the wharf opposite. Colonel Maunder, A.D.M.S., was killed by a stray bullet while standing outside his dug-out.

On the morning of the 10th the Turks made a vigorous counter-attack with bombs, etc., and drove the Tommies out of the trenches and they fell back, leaving all the country under the Farm clear. The attack on the left, which was to take Hill 971, having failed, the trenches on Chunuk Bair offered too great a salient and the men had to be withdrawn, and the position at the Apex straightened. This was very bitter (to us), as the New Zealand Infantry Brigade had held the slopes of Chunuk Bair for 48 hours. However, the Apex was strengthened with machine-guns and when the Turks attacked in force they were slaughtered. The warships also got on to them with their big guns. A watercourse down the side



of the highest point of Chunuk Bair, just above the Farm, was absolutely choked with Turkish dead.

The Māori casualties were severe in the four days' fighting – the first battle in Europe in which Māori were ever engaged. During August 6th-10th, they had 17 killed, 89 wounded, and two missing, out of 400 men, total strength.

Major J.H. Wallingford, who distinguished himself in command of the New Zealand machine-gun section, wrote to Sir Maui Pomare as follows:

As regards the Māori, two of the machine-guns under my command were manned by them. On August 8th, one of them lost in less than twenty minutes, nine men out of sixteen and still they fought on. I have seen them lie in the open at the foot of Chunuk Bair, mixed with Ghurkas, for two days and nights, when at least thirty percent were either killed or wounded. On sentry at night, when the safety of the army depended on their vigilance, at general fatigue work, and in the digging of trenches – in fact I have seen them under all conditions of warfare, except the actual charge, and I am satisfied that better troops do not exist in all the world.

Captain F.M. Twisleton (of the Legion of Frontiersmen, Gisborne) also wrote from the Front as follows:

Twice I had Māori under me, and in ticklish places. I have also seen a lot of them in action, and I must say they are good stuff. A man need not wish to lead better material into action, no matter how desperate the fighting may be. I should say they are amongst the best bayonet fighters in the world. They are perfect sentries. As trench fighters you cannot beat them. I have not seen them under shellfire in the open, but with a leader they trusted, I am quite sure they would stand anything. As soldiers, officers and men, they are a credit to the race and to their country, and I, for one, hope to see a strong unit kept at fighting strength till the end of the job.

Lieutenant Colonel J.G. Hughes, commanding the Canterbury Battalion, wrote from the Apex, Gallipoli Peninsula, regarding the Māori, 40 of whom had been attached to his battalion:

General Godley was here and asked how they were getting on. I told him that I was very pleased indeed to have the Māori in my battalion, as they are always cheerful, keen to be taught, wonderfully alert in the trenches, willing workers when on fatigue (and God knows there are fatigues in plenty), in fact they were an object lesson to us white Māori. The General said, write and tell them in New

Zealand. Sir James, I am glad of the permission, and hope you will let the New Zealand people, particularly their Māori people, know how splendidly these gallant fellows are doing their bit for King and Empire.

### Official Correspondent's Narrative

The following message from the New Zealand official correspondent, Captain Malcolm Ross, was received in the Dominion on August 26th, 1915:

“The Hour – and the Men”

....The Australians and New Zealanders braced themselves for a desperate night attack. They had long been waiting for this hour, marking the end of monotonous days of sitting in the trenches. They were confident they would carry the enemy's works on their immediate front. Strict orders were issued that not a shot was to be fired; they were to rely on the bayonet alone.

Exactly at 10 o'clock on the night of August 7th the brigade of New Zealanders clambered out of their trenches and charged furiously on the Turkish lines with loud cheers, bayoneting all who came in their way.

The Turks were apparently taken unawares and fired wildly, being quite unable to check the New Zealanders' advance. In a few minutes all the enemy's positions nearest the sea were in our hands, and the way was thus cleared for the main advance.

The New Zealanders only stopped for a 'breather'; then they pursued their victorious career, and rushed successively the old No. 3 Outpost, Bauchop's Hill and other Turkish positions.

The Māori's entered upon the charge with great dash, making the darkness hideous with their wild war cries, and striking terror into the Turks. With the awful vigour of their onslaught using bayonets and rifle butts with equal effect, the Māori's forged another link in the chain of the Empire.

The darkness of the night, the broken nature of the ground, and the skill with which the enemy had smothered every available bit of dead ground with deadly snipers, delayed the main advance. After these preliminary positions had been rushed successfully, every hill and spur had to be picketed to keep down the fire of marksmen remaining in the rear of our advancing columns.

Fighting was continuous throughout the night. In the gloomy ravines the Turks were resisting courageously but despairingly, and many bloody encounters, the details of which will never be known, filled the dark hours preceding the more eventful dawn.

Throughout the 8th the struggle continued without intermission. The New Zealanders gained some ground, but were finally held up by its enemy's

machine-guns and rifle-fire.

Our men began a renewed advance on the 9th, up the steep slopes. The Turks then gallantly charged from both ends. Many Turks fell, but the survivors closed with the intrepid colonials, bayonets and rifle butts being used. This was just the form of fighting the colonials liked, and their magnificent physique proved its value. Although numerically few they closed with the Turks, and furiously using their rifles as clubs, they swung them round their heads, laying out several Turks at each sweep. The Turks could not stand this rough treatment, and all those not killed or wounded fled.

The New Zealanders then began hastily to dig themselves in.

So far this was the finest feat of fighting and the highest point any troops had yet gained on the Peninsula. The Turks fought with the utmost bravery, but their efforts were in vain. Soon not a single Turk remained.

Our artillery, assisted by the cruisers and monitors off shore, checked Turkish counter-attacks, inflicting losses.

Upon the left of the New Zealand advance the Australians, assisted by Indian units, fought splendidly and achieved splendid successes.

The New Zealand advance resulted in the capture of a Nordenfeldt and two machine-guns, with many trench-mortars, and 600 prisoners were taken.

### **Sir Ian Hamilton's Praise**

General Sir Ian Hamilton, in a special order, 7 September 1915, said, regarding the fine feat of arms by Lieutenant-General Birdwood's troops during the battle of Sari Bair:

The fervent desire of all ranks to close with the enemy, the impetuosity of their onset, and the steadfast valour with which they maintained the long struggle, these will surely make appeal to their fellow-countrymen all over the world. The troops under the command of Major General Sir A.J. Godley, and particularly the N.Z. and Australian Division, were called upon to carry out one of the most difficult military operations that has ever been attempted – a night march and assault by several columns in intricate mountainous country, strongly entrenched, and held by a numerous and determined enemy. Their brilliant conduct during this operation and the success they achieved have won for them a reputation as soldiers of whom any country must be proud. To the Australian and N.Z. Army Corps, therefore, and to those who were associated with that famous Corps in the battle of Sari Bair – the Māori, Sikhs, Ghurkas, and the other troops of the 10th and 13th Divisions from the Old Country – Sir Ian Hamilton tenders his appreciation of their efforts, his admiration of their gallantry and his thanks for

their achievements. It is an honour to command a force which numbers such men as these in its ranks.

The following appreciation (by the present writer) of the Māori' share in the first battle appeared in a New Zealand paper on arrival of the news of the Sari Bair battle:

The casualty lists show that the Māori Contingent took its fair share of the Turkish bullets on the Gallipoli hills in this month's fighting, and it is not difficult to picture the pride and elation with which the news would be received in the Native villages throughout the Dominion, for the Māori's has always gloried in the honourable scars of war. The little Native force certainly appears to have fully justified the hopes of those who expressed the opinion that four decades of peace and more had by no means extinguished the fighting fire of the race, and the people who have long laid down the gun and tomahawk and who are one now with the *Pakeha* will feel that their ancient warrior *mana* is safe in the hands of the young men fighting by the side of their white brothers in the country of the Turk. How thoroughly the Native race is represented in the Contingent may be gathered from the casualty lists. Among the wounded Māori there are young fellows from the Ngapuhi and Rarawa tribes, in the far north of the Auckland province, and one came from Colac Bay, on the shore off Foveaux Strait. Taranaki has one or two wounded men, one from the shores of Lake Taupo has died of wounds, and a number of Rotorua and East Coast soldiers have also been set down in the roll of honour. There are famous names among them too. Two of the wounded are descendants of the King Country chief Wahanui, who was the power behind the throne in the disaffected districts of the Upper Waikato forty years ago, and who strenuously opposed the white Government, up to as late a date as 1880. He was wounded in the Waikato war by a *Pakeha* bullet, and now the young King Country soldiers who carry his noted name will bring back to their Rohepotae homes, if they ever return, the marks of wounds received in Britain's cause. If anything was needed to heal forever the old racial animosities in the Dominion this war in which our white and brown New Zealanders are fighting and dying together against a common foe will furnish it.