

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

‘A Most Creditable Production’: *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.* (New Zealand Expeditionary Force), 1916-1919: Their Publication and Utility for Historical Research

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of
Master of Philosophy
in
Defence and Strategic Studies
at Massey University, Palmerston North
New Zealand



Carolyn Jane Carr

2011

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.* (New Zealand Expeditionary Force) that were published during World War I from August 1916 until January 1919, and their usefulness for historical research. The thesis explores how they were published, their purpose and the role of the editor Clutha Mackenzie. The content for a sample of issues that cover New Zealand's participation in the First Battle of the Somme (1916) and the Third Battle of Ypres (1917), also known as Passchendaele, is analysed and the contributors and correspondents identified. The same sample of issues are studied in detail and compared and contrasted to ascertain how these battles are written about in the *Chronicles* and how useful this material might be for historical research.

The thesis finds that the *Chronicles* mostly succeeded in meeting its three aims. These were to be a means of communicating with the New Zealand troops in all theatres of the war and in the United Kingdom as well as with the people back in New Zealand, to provide a record of how the money raised in New Zealand to support the troops was being spent, and to be a medium for the literary efforts of the troops. Assisted by some influential supporters, both civilian and to a lesser extent the military authorities, the editor played a key role in starting the *Chronicles* and in all aspects of their production, including funding, content and distribution, which ensured their continuous publication for more than two years.

As a source for historical research the thesis finds that they do not add to the existing battle narratives about the New Zealanders' part in the Somme and Passchendaele. However the variety of detail on army organisation and everyday life at the front provides a rich and largely under-utilised source of material for social and cultural studies. They also offer a window through which to view the thoughts and feelings of the New Zealand soldier in the First World War.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the staff of the National Library of New Zealand, the Alexander Turnbull Library, Archives New Zealand and the Kippenberger Military Archives and Research Library for their assistance in making available a range of primary source material for my research.

My thanks to Mrs Ros Cole-Baker for generously allowing me full access to a large trunk containing the papers of her grandfather, Clutha Mackenzie. Ros and her husband Hugh provided wonderful hospitality during my stay at Tidesong, near Whangarei, while working on the papers.

I owe special thanks to my supervisor Professor Glyn Harper at the Centre for Defence Studies, Massey University, for his expertise, encouragement and patience during the last two years.

Many people have helped me in the course of this work in both a professional and practical way. In particular I wish to acknowledge Dr Ian McGibbon, my colleagues John Crawford and Zane Kidd, my dear friend Dr Antonia Davin for translating the French, and my husband, daughters and family who gave me the encouragement and space to undertake this research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Chapter 1: The <i>Chronicles</i> : Their Purpose, Publication and Readership	8
Chapter 2: The Editor: Clutha Mackenzie	26
Chapter 3: Content including Prose, Poetry and Cartoons	43
Chapter 4: Contributors and Correspondents	67
Chapter 5: First Battle of the Somme (1916): ‘The Anzacs are “Somme Fighters” ’	85
Chapter 6: Third Battle of Ypres (1917)	119
Chapter 7: Comparison between coverage of the First Battle of the Somme (1916) and the Third Battle of Ypres (1917)	153
Conclusion	165
Bibliography	179

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS, MAPS, PHOTOGRAPHS

Figure 1	Advertisements	13
Figure 2	Cartoon: H. Simon, 'After the Push – Pleasure'	17
Figure 3	Insert: 'Specially Resurrected Edition in the War Zone ...'	21
Figure 4	Photograph: 'Blinded at Gallipoli'	42
Figure 5	Front Cover: <i>Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.</i> , J. H. Gilmour	58
Figure 6	Front Cover: <i>Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.</i> , H. Rountree	58
Figure 7	Cartoon: F. R. Alex, ' ... (With Apologies to Bairnsfather)'	59
Figure 8	Cartoon: T. H. Kelsey, ' "We Missed Christmas ...!" '	60
Figure 9	Photograph: 'Boys off on a Bus Ride, Walton'	61
Figure 10	Map: Somme September 1916	87
Figure 11	Map: Flanders June – December 1917	122
Figure 12	Cartoon: ' "Say, Mate, the Man who Christened this place 'Ypres' must have been a Prophet ..." '	147

ABBREVIATIONS

H.C.N.Z.	High Commissioner for New Zealand
N.Z.E.	New Zealand Engineers
N.Z.E.F.	New Zealand Expeditionary Force
N.Z.F.A.	New Zealand Field Artillery
N.Z.R.B.	New Zealand Rifle Brigade
N.Z.W.C.A.	New Zealand War Contingent Association
O.I.R.	Otago Infantry Regiment
R.S.A.	Returned Soldiers' Association
V.A.D.	Voluntary Aid Detachment
Y.M.C.A.	Young Men's Christian Association

INTRODUCTION

The *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.* (New Zealand Expeditionary Force) was published in London from 30 August 1916 until 24 January 1919 by the New Zealand War Contingent Association (N.Z.W.C.A.). The Association itself had been formed at a meeting called by Sir Thomas Mackenzie, the High Commissioner for New Zealand (H.C.N.Z.), in London, on 14 August 1914, the same month that war was declared. At that meeting Sir Thomas proposed that an organisation be set up to assist New Zealand soldiers who were in hospital or convalescing in England, as well as to provide some support for those at the front, and be a means of communicating with soldiers and their relatives.¹ According to their subtitle the *Chronicles* was intended as ‘records of matters concerning the troops and gazette of patriotic effort’.

Clutha Mackenzie was appointed to be the editor, prior to which he had served as a New Zealand soldier at Gallipoli where he was blinded. He was the son of Sir Thomas, mentioned above. In the first issue Clutha Mackenzie made a statement about the publication’s purpose. It was to ‘gather and dispense matters of interest from the High Commissioner’s Office, from the N.Z.W.C.A. and from the men themselves’.² The editor hoped that the efforts of those who were working for the well-being of the troops, including New Zealanders and the Allies, together with people in need in Britain and other wounded soldiers would be acknowledged. Cecil J. Wray, the Organising Secretary of the N.Z.W.C. A., in his foreword to the first issue, endorsed these intentions and hoped that the

¹ L. O. H. Tripp, ‘War Relief and Patriotic Societies’, in *The War Effort of New Zealand*, H. T. B. Drew, (ed.), Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1932, p. 185.

² Clutha Mackenzie, ‘Editorial’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 1 (1916): 3.

Chronicles would also be an ‘outlet for their [the New Zealand troops] literary aspirations’.³

This thesis will examine the circumstances that led to the publication of the *Chronicles*, its aims, the production arrangements, and the role of the editor, his background and the extent to which he shaped the publication. There will be an analysis of the content, including the editorials and the various contributors, for two specified subsets of the *Chronicles* covering the period of the New Zealand Division’s fighting in the First Battle of the Somme in 1916 and the Third Battle of Ypres (also known as the Battle of Passchendaele) in October 1917. Finally, the material written about the two battles during the specified time periods will be studied in detail. That study will assess the significance of this body of work as a source for historical research, to determine how it might add to the known facts about the battles and the way in which the troops viewed the experience.

The main information sources are the 61 issues of the *Chronicles* themselves, in their entirety, but those published around the time of the First Battle of the Somme (1916) and Passchendaele (October 1917) are studied more closely. Some histories of World War I in general, and the two battles in particular, are consulted. Key publications include *The First World War* by John Keegan; *Passchendaele: The Untold Story* and *The Somme* both by Robin Prior and Trevor Wilson; *The Somme* by Gary Sheffield; *The Oxford Illustrated History of the First World War* edited by Hew Strachan; and *The Road to Passchendaele* and *The Western Front 1914-18* both by John Terraine. From the extensive body of writing on this period those works that include some detail of the part the New Zealanders played are also consulted. Lyn Macdonald’s *Somme* and *They Called it Passchendaele* are two examples. For a New Zealand perspective some of the semi-official histories written following the end of World

³ Cecil Wray, ‘Foreword’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 1 (1916): 4.

War I are studied, including *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919* by Hugh Stewart, and *The New Zealand Medical Service in the Great War 1914-18* by Andrew Carbery. Other subsequent published work on New Zealand's part in these battles is studied to analyse and compare the sources and findings with those discovered in the *Chronicles*. These include the work of Glyn Harper in *Dark Journey: Three Key New Zealand Battles of the Western Front* and *Massacre at Passchendaele; Behind the Lines: the Lives of New Zealand Soldiers in the First World War* by Nicholas Boyack; *On My Way to the Somme: New Zealanders and the Bloody Offensive of 1916* by Andrew Macdonald; and *On the Fringe of Hell* by Christopher Pugsley.

The New Zealand Army files relating to the *Chronicles* and publications in general, and the New Zealand Defence Force personnel files for the editor and contributors, all of which are held by Archives New Zealand, have been consulted. Some of Clutha Mackenzie's personal papers and those of his family are held in the Alexander Turnbull Library and the Auckland Museum. Clutha Mackenzie's family holds a collection of his unpublished writing, newspaper clippings and photographs. These documents were also examined.

There have been some studies on the way in which the war has been written about by the participants and correspondents of the time. Paul Fussell in his influential work *The Great War and Modern Memory* explored the literature of World War I by studying contemporary newspapers and magazines as well as the diaries and letters of soldiers. He studied the way in which the combatants experienced the war and how they expressed that experience.⁴ This work formed the basis of what

⁴ Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.

is now termed the 'history of memory'.⁵ J. G. Fuller in *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918* and Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau in *Men at War 1914-1918: National Sentiment and Trench Journalism in France During the First World War* have researched the way in which soldiers' writing from the front or close to it affected morale and helped them make sense what was happening.⁶ Jay Winter and Blaine Baggett in *1914-1918: The Great War and the Shaping of the 20th Century* explored this period from a cultural history perspective.⁷ Winter in *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* also wrote about cultural history and World War I using examples from literature, art and architecture to show how the war was remembered and commemorated.⁸

Malcolm Ross, the New Zealand official war correspondent whose dispatches were sent to New Zealand and British newspapers such as *The Times* and *Daily Telegraph*, wrote regularly for the *Chronicles* as well. His contributions included some original work specifically for the *Chronicles*, and copies of some dispatches he wrote for New Zealand and British newspapers.⁹ These dispatches are consulted to assess any differences in writing for the various publications and whether censorship might have influenced their content.

⁵ Stephen Badsey, 'Ninety Years on: Recent and Changing Views on the Military History of the First World War', in *1918 Year of Victory: The End of the Great War and the Shaping of History*, Ashley Ekins, Auckland: Exisle, 2010, p. 251.

⁶ Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *Men at War 1914-1918: National Sentiment and Trench Journalism in France During the First World War*, Helen McPhail (tr.), Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1992.

⁷ Jay Winter and Blaine Baggett, *1914-1918: The Great War and the Shaping of the 20th Century*, London: BBC Books, 1996.

⁸ Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

⁹ Ron Palenski, 'Malcolm Ross: A Forgotten Casualty of the Great War', MA Thesis in History, University of Otago, 2007, pp. 96-7.

The methodology used includes an historical analysis of the documents to discover the background to their publication, their purpose, editorial policy, contributors and readership. There is some qualitative analysis of the actual content of the *Chronicles*. Published material, including contemporary newspapers and books, about New Zealand's part in the two battles are consulted in order to compare the way in which they were treated in the *Chronicles*.

The thesis contains seven chapters. Chapter one considers the factors that led to their commencement, their aims, how they were funded, produced and distributed. Before the *Chronicles* there was no regular magazine written solely for members of the N.Z.E.F., who were in England or serving at the front. Chapter two examines the role of Clutha Mackenzie as the editor of the *Chronicles*, and the editorial aims and content of the editorial writing.

Chapter three studies the content in broad terms and whether it met the aims of the *Chronicles*. For the purposes of this chapter the issues studied are limited to those that cover the reporting of the First Battle of the Somme and the Third Battle of Ypres in which the New Zealand Division fought. The extent to which the *Chronicles* conformed to military censorship as required by the editor and the Public Censor is considered.

Chapter four identifies the contributors, other than the editor, in terms of who they were and what they contributed. The majority was New Zealand servicemen but some civilians including two war correspondents and a few women were noted. There were also a number of cartoonists.

Chapters five and six focus on the New Zealanders' part in the First Battle of the Somme and the Third Battle of Ypres and how all the contributors wrote them about in the *Chronicles*. Chapter seven then compares and

contrasts the way in which the two battles were considered in the *Chronicles* and assesses their value as an historical source. This is a key question that the thesis will attempt to answer. The writing about these two battles is analysed to discover if it adds to the known facts about them and how it matched the reality of the soldiers' experience. In comparing the war correspondents' reports at the time with their later writing, some differences were apparent which reveal censorship restraints plus the luxury of having time to reflect, free from the pressure to produce copy and the limitations imposed by the immediacy of the battlefield. A comparison with reports from the Australian correspondent, Charles Bean, is also made. In the soldiers' writing it is possible to draw some conclusions about how the troops felt about reporting on the battles and their own experiences. This thesis considers the extent to which the content changed and the style and mood differed or developed over the time of the two battles.

Whether the *Chronicles* add to the facts about the two battles, or offer anything of value for military historians is appraised. How they contribute to an understanding of the period in the area of social history and cultural studies, in terms of what was written and what was omitted is also assessed.

In summary, by studying the *Chronicles* it is intended to answer some key questions. These are: why and how the publication was started, what was its purpose and was it met, and how useful it is as a source for military historians?

This research is important because the *Chronicles*, representing the soldiers' viewpoint from August 1916 until the end of the war, in one continuous publication, is a source of historical material that has been largely ignored. It was popular and successful at the time and it is unique among New Zealand publications of the time for servicemen, in terms of

its length and consistency of publication, the diversity of its contributors and contributions including the wide range of topics traversed which went beyond the immediate war experience. Although its primary readership was the troops, it was widely distributed in Britain and New Zealand. It had a deeply committed editor who believed that it would provide a permanent record of the war and source material for New Zealand's official histories to be written after the war. A publication containing the views of the New Zealand soldier and read by so many of them should not be lost to historians.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Private Papers

Held by Mrs R. Cole-Baker (Clutha Mackenzie's grand-daughter).

Mackenzie, Clutha. *Diary*. Unpublished Typescript.

Mackenzie, Clutha. *Draft Book*. Unpublished Typescript.

Mackenzie, Clutha. *Writings by C. N. M.* Unpublished Typescript.

Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington

Burton, Ormond Edward. *Autobiography: A Rich Old Man*. ca1890s-ca.1960s. Unpublished Typescript. MS-Papers-0438-059.

'Correspondence Relating to Publication of the New Zealand Division, 1916-1919', in 'Papers Relating to World War One'. Hugh Stewart. MS-Papers-9080-29.

Richardson, George S. 'Notes on the Administration of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, 1918-1919', in 'Papers Relating to World War One'. Hugh Stewart. MS-Papers-9080-24.

Ross Family Papers, 1915-1917, 1953. MS-Papers-8108.

Archives New Zealand

Allen, J. and W. F. Massey. Correspondence. File ADBQ 16145. Box 9. Miscellaneous Files and Papers. September 1, 1916-August 1, 1919.

Army Department. File D39/189. Series 1. Box 886. New Zealand War Contingent Association London. October 26, 1914-1920.

Army Department. File D51/727. Series 1. Box 1006. Regimental Histories N.Z.E.F. 1918-1919.

Department of Defence. File D51/217. Box 996. War Correspondence (Official) with N.Z.E.F. 1914-1930.

Department of Defence. File D51/573. Publication – Chronicles of N.Z.E.F. November 22, 1916-September 13, 1919.

Department of Defence. File D51/669. Popular History of the War – N.Z. – General File. October 2, 1911-March 13, 1919.

War Archives. File 10/3. Box 1. ZMR 1/1/4. NZEF Miscellaneous Records. Publicity, Articles, Cables from War Correspondent, Letters Forwarded by the Publicity Department to New Zealand. July-November 1918.

War Archives. File 252/3. 1/NZEF. Letters of Col. Hon. Sir James Allen, Minister of Defence and General Sir Alexander Godley, Commander 1/NZEF, 1st World War 1916.

Personnel Files

Lea, Donald Henry. 8/2037, 1915-1916.

Lee, John Alexander. 16560, 1916-1919.

Lennard, Guy Barrett. 13/1021, 1914-1917.

Mackenzie, Clutha Nantes. 11/171, 1914-1917.

Defence Library, Wellington

Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F. London: New Zealand War Contingent Association. 1 no. 1 (1916) – 5 no. 61 (1919).

The Great War, 1914-1918: New Zealand Expeditionary Force: Roll of Honour. Wellington: Govt Printer, 1924.

New Zealand. Army. *Nominal Roll of New Zealand Expeditionary Force.* 4 vols. Wellington: Government Printer, 1917-1919.

New Zealand Biographical Clippings, 1890-1988. Wellington: Alexander Turnbull Library, 1996.

National Library of New Zealand

Rhodes, R. Heaton '... On His Mission to the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in Malta, Mudros, Gallipoli, and Egypt, as the Representative of the Government'. *Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives*, 2 no. H-19b (1916): 1-23.

Newspapers

- Advertiser*. Adelaide: F. B. Burden and J. L. Bonython, 1889-1931.
- Algemeen Handelsblad*. Amsterdam: P. den Hengst en Zoon, 1828-1970.
- Argus*. Melbourne: Argus Office, 1848-1957.
- Auckland Star*. Auckland: Auckland Star, 1887-1991.
- Auckland Weekly News*. Auckland: Wilson and Horton, 1934-1964.
- British-Australasian*. London: British Australasian Ltd., 1910-1944.
- Clutha Leader*. Balclutha: South Otago Newspapers, 1874-.
- Dominion*. Wellington: Wellington Newspapers, 1907-2002.
- Evening Post*. Wellington: Wellington Newspapers, 1865-2002.
- Evening Star*. Dunedin: J. G. Moody, for the Evening Star Co., 1863-1979.
- New Zealand Free Lance*. Wellington: H. E. Geddis and Co., 1900-1960.
- New Zealand Herald*. Auckland: Wilson and Horton, 1863-.
- New Zealand Observer*. Wellington: H. G. Baulf and J. L. Kelly, 1890-1954.
- New Zealand Times*. Wellington: Times Newspaper Co., 1874-1927.
- New Zealander: Home News for New Zealand Troops on Active Service*. London: G. H. Scholefield, 1916-1919.
- Otago Daily Times*. Dunedin: Otago Daily Times, 1861-.
- Press*. Christchurch: Fairfax Media, 1861-.
- Scotsman*. Edinburgh: J. Ritchie, 1860-.
- Sydney Morning Herald*. Sydney: [s.n.], 1842-.
- TLS: The Times Literary Supplement*. London: Times Newspapers, 1902-.
- The Times*. London: R. Nutkins, 1788-.

Newspaper Articles

Advertiser [Adelaide]. Bean, C. E. W. 'Breaking the Foe: A Significant Feature'. October 20, 1917: 9.

Advertiser [Adelaide]. Bean, C. E. W. 'Too Good for the Germans: Australians Crumple up the Enemy'. October 8, 1917: 6.

Algemeen Handelsblad. 'Van Dag tot Dag: Lichte in ae Duisternis' [From Day to Day: Light into Darkness]. November 2, 1917: [unnumbered]

Argus. Bean, C. E. W. 'Exhausted Australians: Too Tired to Hold Some Gains'. October 12, 1917: 5.

Auckland Star. 'The Soldiers' Chronicle: Doings of the N.Z.E.F.' April 30, 1917: 6.

Auckland Star. 'Visiting New Zealand: Mr Clutha Mackenzie'. April 30, 1917: 5.

Auckland Weekly News. Baker, Mabel M. 'He Dreamed of a Different Future'. August 1, 1962: 7.

Clutha Leader. 'Clutha Mackenzie: Chat About the Future'. June 5, 1917: 3.

Dominion. 'Civic Reception: To Returned Soldier'. May 15, 1917: 7.

Dominion. 'In the Thick of Battle: Heroic Days of September 15 and 16: Gallant Stand by Men of Canterbury'. November 21, 1916: 5.

Dominion. Ross, Malcolm. 'The Battles of September: With the New Zealanders on the Somme'. November 21, 1916: 9.

Dominion. Ross, Malcolm. 'In the Thick of the Battle: Heroic Days of September 15 and 16'. October 10, 1916: 5.

Dominion. Ross, Malcolm. 'Thrilling Story of New Zealand Heroism: Men Crown Themselves with Glory'. October 17, 1917: 5.

Dominion. 'Trench Journals: Literary Diversions at the Front'. September 25, 1916: 5.

Dominion. 'Trooper Mackenzie Entertained: Guest of the Soldiers' Club'. May 14, 1917: 3.

Evening Post [Wellington]. 'Local and General'. May 10, 1917: 6.

Evening Star [Dunedin]. 'Returned Soldiers' Association'. May 28, 1917: 3.

- New Zealand Free Lance*. '... About People'. May 4, 1917: 4.
- New Zealand Free Lance*. '... About People'. May 18, 1917: 4.
- New Zealand Free Lance*. 'This War-Correspondent: Who Will the Government Appoint? – and Why?' February 27, 1915: 9.
- New Zealand Free Lance*. 'Trooper Mackenzie: Arrival in Dunedin'. May 25, 1917: 15.
- New Zealand Free Lance*. [Untitled]. March 30, 1917: 4.
- New Zealand Herald*. Ross, Malcolm. 'Canterbury Men Engaged in Night-Long Combat: ...Counter-Attack Repulsed With Loss to the Enemy'. September 25, 1916: 6.
- New Zealand Herald*. Ross, Malcolm. 'Heroism of New Zealanders in a Trying Time: Advance Stayed by Appalling State at the Front: ... Individual Acts of Daring at Gravenstafel'. October 17, 1917: 7.
- New Zealand Herald*. Ross, Malcolm. 'How the New Zealanders Stormed the Ridge'. October 9, 1917: 5.
- New Zealand Herald*. Ross, Malcolm. 'New Zealanders Engaged in Monday's Attack'. September 29, 1916: 7.
- New Zealand Herald*. Ross, Malcolm. 'New Zealanders Excel in the Somme Battle: More Than Fulfil Expectations Formed of Them'. October 10, 1916: 7.
- New Zealand Herald*. Ross, Malcolm. 'Otago and Canterbury Regiments in New Attack'. October 7, 1916: 9.
- New Zealand Herald*. Ross, Malcolm. 'Superb Heroism of the New Zealand Troops: Officers Fearlessly Reconnoitre Enemy Positions'. October 22, 1917: 5.
- New Zealand Herald*. Ross, Malcolm. 'Veterans of Gallipoli Pursue the Offensive'. October 3, 1916: 7.
- New Zealand Herald. Supplement*. Mercutio. 'Local Gossip'. March 10, 1917: [1].
- New Zealand Observer*. '... About People'. May 12, 1917: 4.
- New Zealand Observer*. Gunner. [Letter]. February 16, 1918: 5.
- New Zealand Times*. 'War Correspondent: Conditions of the Appointment Issued'. March 2, 1915: 7.

Otago Daily Times. Palenski, Ron. 'The Elusive War of Malcolm Ross'. April 19, 2008: 51.

Otago Daily Times. 'Trooper Mackenzie: Arrival in Dunedin'. May 25, 1917: 3.

Press. Bean, C. E. W. 'Press Work at the Front: The Australian War Correspondent'. September 11, 1915: 13.

Press. 'Chronicles of N.Z.E.F.'. May 19, 1917: 14.

Press. Ross, Malcolm. 'The Ypres Battle: New Zealanders' Glorious Achievement'. October 9, 1917: 7.

Press. 'Trooper Mackenzie: Civic Reception'. May 19, 1917: 3.

Scotsman. 'Beaten Enemy Keeps Quiet: Fine Work by New Zealanders'. October 8, 1917: 5.

Sydney Morning Herald. Bean, C. E. W. 'Australasians: Centre of the Attack'. October 8, 1917: 7.

The Times. 'N.Z.E.F. Chronicles: The Last Number on This Side'. January 31, 1919: 6.

The Times. Lord Fraser of Lonsdale. 'Sir Clutha Mackenzie'. April 2, 1966: 7.

TLS: The Times Literary Supplement. 'Trench Journals'. October 13, 1916: 481.

Journal articles

Mackenzie, Clutha. 'How it Strikes Me', *Union Annual for South Africa*, Christmas 1917: 52-3.

_____. 'The New Zealand War Contingent Association'. *New Zealand Journal of Education*, November 15, 1916: 240.

Service Publications

The Anzac Book. Written and Illustrated by the Men of Anzac. London: Cassell, 1916.

Mackenzie, Clutha. (ed.). *Ye Ancient Athenian: Ye Maritime Trials and Tribulations of Ye 27th N.Z. Reinforcements*. Capetown: His Majesty's New Zealand Transport "Athenic" Magazine Committee, 1917.

New Zealand at the Front. Written and Illustrated by Men of the New Zealand Division. London: Cassell, 1917.

New Zealand at the Front 1918. Written and Illustrated by Men of the New Zealand Division. London: Cassell, 1918.

Wipers Times: A Complete Facsimile of the Famous World War One Trench Newspaper. London: P. Davies, 1973.
[Facsimile of *Wipers Times*. Published at the Front, 1916-1918]

SECONDARY SOURCES

Books

Aitken, Alexander. *Gallipoli to the Somme: Recollections of a New Zealand Infantryman*. London: Oxford, 1963.

Aldington, Richard. *Death of a Hero*. London: Hogarth Press, 1984.

Audoin-Rouzeau, Stéphane. *Men at War 1914-1918: National Sentiment and Trench Journalism in France During the First World War*. Helen McPhail. (tr.). Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1992.

Badsey, Stephen. 'Ninety Years on: Recent and Changing Views on the Military History of the First World War', in *1918 Year of Victory: The End of the Great War and the Shaping of History*. Ashley Ekins. Auckland: Exisle, 2010, pp. 243-59.

Black, Jeremy. *Rethinking Military History*. London: Routledge, 2004.

Boyack, Nicholas. *Behind the Lines: The Lives of New Zealand Soldiers in the First World War*. Wellington: Allen and Unwin, 1989.

Brophy, John and Eric Partridge. (eds.). *Songs and Slang of the British Soldier: 1914-1918*. 3rd ed. London: Eric Partridge, 1931.

Brown, Lesley. (ed.). *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.

Burton, Ormond E. *Our Little Bit: A Brief History of the New Zealand Division*. Norwich: Empire Press, 1918.

_____ *The Silent Division: New Zealanders at the Front: 1914-1919*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1935.

- Byrne, John Richard. *New Zealand Artillery in the Field, 1914-18*. Auckland: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1922.
- Carbery, Andrew Dillon. *The New Zealand Medical Service in the Great War 1914-18*. Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1924.
- Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War*. J. J. Graham. (tr.). London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1911.
- Dawson, A. J. *Somme Battle Stories*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1916.
- Dennis, C. J. *The Moods of Ginger Mick*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1916.
- Dennis, Peter and others. (eds.). *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*. 2nd ed. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Drew, H. T. B. (ed.). *The War Effort of New Zealand*. Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1932.
- Easthope, Antony. *Literary into Cultural Studies*. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Eksteine, Modris. *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age*. London: Bantam Press, 1989.
- Fuller, J. G. *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.
- Fussell, Paul. *The Great War and Modern Memory*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.
- _____ *The Great War and Modern Memory*. 25th anniversary ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Gallipoli Correspondent: The Frontline Diary*. Selected and annotated by Kevin Fewster. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1983.
- Gammage, Bill. *The Broken Years: Australian Soldiers in the Great War*. Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1974.
- Gibbs, Philip. *Adventures in Journalism*. London: Heinemann, 1923.
- _____ *The Battles of the Somme*. London: Heinemann, 1917.
- _____ *From Bapaume to Passchendaele*. London: Heinemann, 1918.
- _____ *Realities of War*. London: Heinemann, 1920.

Hansen, Penelope. 'Mackenzie, Clutha Nantes 1895-1966', in *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*. vol. 4, 1921-1940. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1998, pp. 314-15.

Harper, Glyn. *Dark Journey: Three Key New Zealand Battles of the Western Front*. Auckland: HarperCollins, 2007.

_____. *Images of War: World War One: A Photographic Record of New Zealanders at War, 1914-1918*. Auckland: HarperCollins, 2008.

_____. *Kippenberger: An Inspired New Zealand Commander*. Auckland: HarperCollins, 1997.

_____. *Massacre at Passchendaele*. Auckland: HarperCollins, 2000.

Henderson, Alan, David Green and Peter Cooke. *The Gunners: A History of New Zealand Artillery*. North Shore: Raupo, 2008.

Hynes, Samuel. *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture*. 1st American ed. New York: Atheneum, 1991.

Keegan, John. *The Face of Battle*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1976.

_____. *The First World War*. London: Hutchinson, 1988.

Kent, David. 'Introduction', in *Kia Ora Coe-ee: The Magazine for the ANZACS in the Middle East, 1918*. Australia: Cornstalk Publishing, 1981. [Facsimile of the *Kia Ora Coe-ee, Official Magazine of the Australian and New Zealand Forces in Egypt, Palestine, Salonica & Mesopotamia*. Cairo: Australian Imperial Force Headquarters, 1918], pp. vii-xv.

Klein, Holger. (ed.). *The First World War in Fiction: A Collection of Critical Essays*. London: Macmillan, 1978.

Lea, Donald Henry. *Stand down!* London: Elkin Mathews, 1917.

Luxford, John Hector. *With the Machine Gunners in France and Palestine: The Official History of the Machine Gun Corps in the Great War 1914-1918*. Auckland: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1923.

Macdonald, Andrew. *On My Way to the Somme: New Zealanders and the Bloody Offensive of 1916*. Auckland: HarperCollins, 2005.

Macdonald, Lyn. *Somme*. London: Michael Joseph, 1983.

_____. *They Called it Passchendaele: The Story of the Third Battle of Ypres and the Men Who Fought in it*. London: Macdonald and Jane's, 1979.

- Mackenzie, Clutha. *The Tale of a Trooper*. London: John Lane, 1921.
- McGibbon, Ian. (ed.). *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Military History*. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- McLintock, A. H. (ed.). *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*. 3 vols. Wellington: Government Printer, 1966.
- Marshall, S. L. A. *Bring Up the Rear: A Memoir*. San Rafael, Calif.: Presidio, 1979.
- Montague, C. E. *Disenchantment*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1939.
- Moore, Darren. *The Soldier: A History of Courage, Sacrifice and Brotherhood*. London: Icon, 2009.
- Moran, Charles McMoran Wilson. *The Anatomy of Courage*. London: Constable, 1946.
- Myers, B. E. 'New Zealand Hospitals in the United Kingdom', in *The War Effort in New Zealand*. H. T. B. Drew. (ed.). Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1923, pp. 108-26.
- Olssen, Erik. 'Lee, John Alfred Alexander 1891-1982', in *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*. New Zealand. Department of Internal Affairs. vol. 4, 1921-1940. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1998, pp. 284-6.
- Orsman, H. W. (ed.). *The Dictionary of New Zealand English*. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Paris, Michael. *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850-2000*. London: Reaktion, 2000.
- Parker, Peter. *The Old Lie: The Great War and the Public-School Ethos*. London: Constable, 1987.
- Phillips, Jock, Nicholas Boyack and E. P. Malone. (eds.). *The Great Adventure: New Zealand Soldiers Describe the First World War*. Wellington: Allen & Unwin, 1988.
- Platts, Una. *Nineteenth Century New Zealand Artists: A Guide and Handbook*. Christchurch: Avon Fine Prints, 1980.
- Ponsonby, Arthur. *Falsehood in War-Time*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1928.
- Powles, C. G. *The History of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles, 1914-1919*. – Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1928.

Prior, Robin and Trevor Wilson. *Command on the Western Front: The Military Career of Sir Henry Rawlinson*. Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military Classics, 2004.

Passchendaele: The Untold Story. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996.

The Somme. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.

Pugsley, Christopher. *The Anzac Experience: New Zealand, Australia and Empire in the First World War*. Auckland: Reed. 2004.

Gallipoli: The New Zealand Story. Auckland: Hodder & Stoughton, 1984.

On the Fringe of Hell: New Zealanders and Military Discipline in the First World War. Auckland: Hodder and Stoughton, 1991.

Quinn, Patrick J. and Steven Trout. (eds.). *The Literature of the Great War Reconsidered: Beyond Modern Memory*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001.

Ross, Malcolm and Noel Ross. *Light and Shade in War*. London: Edward Arnold, 1916.

Ross, Malcolm. 'On the Western Front', in *The Empire at War*. Charles Lucas. (ed.). vol. 3. London: Oxford University Press, 1924, pp. 319-69.

Sanders, James. *Dateline-NZPA: The New Zealand Press Association, 1880-1980*. Auckland: Wilson & Horton, 1979.

Sheffield, Gary. *Leadership in the Trenches: Officer-Man Relations, Morale and Discipline in the British Army in the Era of the First World War*. New York: St Martin's Press in association with King's College, 2000.

The Somme. London: Cassell, 2003.

Stewart, Hugh. *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919: A Popular History Based on Official Records*. Wellington: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1921.

Strachan, Hew. (ed.). *The Oxford Illustrated History of the First World War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Terraine, John. *The Road to Passchendaele*. London: Leo Cooper, 1977.

The Western Front 1914-18. London: Arrow Books, 1964.

Thomson, Alistair. *Anzac Memories: Living With the Legend*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Tripp, L. O. H. 'War Relief and Patriotic Societies', in *The War Effort in New Zealand*. H. T. B. Drew. (ed.). Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1923, pp. 176-96.

Veeser, Aram. (ed.). *The New Historicism*. New York: Routledge, 1989.
Wavell, Archibald Percival. *The Good Soldier*. London: Macmillan, 1948.

Weston, C. H. *Three Years With the New Zealanders*. London: Skeffington, 1918.

Williams, John Frank. *ANZACS, the Media and the Great War*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1999.

Winter, Jay. *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Winter, Jay and Blaine Baggett. *1914-18: The Great War and the Shaping of the 20th Century*. London: BBC Books, 1996.

Wyatt, Horace. *Malice in Kultureland*. London: The Car Illustrated, 1915.

Journal Articles

Hirst, Megan. 'Narrative in the War Histories of C. E. W. Bean'. *History*, 2 no. 2 (1999): 65-70.

Nelson, Robert L. 'Soldier Newspapers: A Useful Source in the Social and Cultural History of the First World War and Beyond'. *War in History*, 17 no. 2 (2010): 167-91.

Palenski, Ron. 'Malcolm Ross: A New Zealand Failure in the Great War'. *Australian Historical Studies*, 39 no. 1 (2008): 19-35.

Thomson, Alistair, 'Anzac Stories: Using Personal Testimony in War'. *War and Society*, 25 no. 2 (2006): 1-21.

Thesis

Palenski, Ron. 'Malcolm Ross: A Forgotten Casualty of the Great War'. MA Thesis in History. University of Otago, 2007.

Internet sources

'Bairnsfather Cartoons'.

Retrieved July 9, 2009 from:

<http://www.geocities.com/neveahfs/Bairnsfather.html?20099>

'Break of Day in the Trenches'.

Retrieved June 10, 2009 from:

http://www.whatalovelywar.co.uk/war/2003/01/jessie_pope.html

Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. 'Hanna, George Patrick 1888-1973'.

Retrieved May 5, 2009 from:

<http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/dnzb/Essay>

_____ 'Mackenzie, Clutha Nantes 1895-1966'.

Retrieved July 27, 2009 from:

<http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/dnzb/Essay>

MacCallum-Stewart, Esther. 'Feature Articles: Satirical Magazines of the First World War: Punch and the Wipers Times'.

Retrieved March 24, 2009 from:

www.firstworldwar.com/features/satirical.htm

McGibbon, Ian. 'Something of Them Is Here Recorded: Official History in New Zealand'.

Retrieved February 18, 2009 from:

<http://www.nzetc.org>

Moran, Carmen and Margaret Massam. 'A "Trace of History": Cartoons From the Australian War Memorial Christmas Books of the Second World War'.

Retrieved April 24, 2009 from:

<http://www.awm.gov.au/journal/j39/cartoons.asp>.

New Zealand. Ministry for Culture and Heritage. 'The Passchendale Offensive'.

Retrieved March 25, 2009 from:

<http://www.nzhistorynet.nz/war/new-zealanders-in-belgium/passchendaele>.

'Old Poetry: Jessie Pope'.

Retrieved June 10, 2009 from:

http://oldpoetry.com/oauthor/show/Jessie_Pope_10_June_2009

'Who's Who: Sir Philip Gibbs'.

Retrieved June 30, 2009 from:

<http://www.firstworldwar.com/bio/gibbs/htm>

CHAPTER 1

The *Chronicles*: Their Purpose, Publication and Readership

This chapter considers the factors that led to the *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.* being published. It examines their purpose, how the *Chronicles* were funded, produced, distributed and their readership. Once the war was over the editor had plans for their continuation when he returned to New Zealand in early 1919, but this did not eventuate. In reality when the war ended their purpose also ended.

On 14 August 1914, just ten days after World War I started, Sir Thomas Mackenzie, (H.C.N.Z.), convened a meeting of expatriate New Zealanders living in London. As a result of that meeting the New Zealand War Contingent Association (N.Z.W.C.A.) was formed with the aim of helping New Zealand soldiers. The troops would be assisted by ‘providing them with comforts, visiting them in hospital, securing accommodation for convalescents after they had passed through the hospitals ... also by keeping in touch with the soldiers and their relatives’.¹ In broad terms these activities were to help maintain morale. While some of the wounded from Gallipoli went to the United Kingdom it was after the New Zealand Division was sent to France that the N.Z.W.C.A. came into its own.

The *Chronicles* were another outcome of the work of the N.Z.W.C.A. with the first issue being published on 30 August 1916 by that Association. One of the functions of the *Chronicles* was to communicate the condition and progress of the sick and wounded. The Hospital Comforts Committee of the N.Z.W.C.A. was responsible for visiting the New Zealand troops in

¹ Tripp, p. 185.

hospitals and convalescent homes and the reports from the volunteers, who worked with that committee, were published in detail in the *Chronicles*.

Clutha Mackenzie, the son of the N.Z.H.C. was appointed to be the editor of the *Chronicles*. The Mackenzie family was very involved in the war effort, and in particular the N.Z.W.C.A. of which Sir Thomas was the Chairman. In addition, his daughters Mary and Helen both worked for the N.Z.W.C.A. for almost three years, as volunteers. The latter was on the organising committee and she was the Honorary Secretary of the Hospitality Committee, later called the Hospital Comforts Committee.²

Trooper Clutha Mackenzie was wounded and lost his sight during the battle for Chunuk Bair, at Gallipoli, in August 1915. While convalescing from injuries sustained there he trained at St Dunstan's Hospital for Blinded Soldiers. This hospital, founded in 1915 by Sir C. Arthur Pearson, was specifically for soldiers blinded during World War I. It was there that Clutha Mackenzie learnt to type and use braille thus enabling him to prepare his own copy for the *Chronicles*.³

Sir Arthur Pearson had started a publishing business and owned a number of newspapers. He purchased the *Morning Herald*, which he merged into his own newspaper in 1900 and it became the *Daily Express*. Sir Arthur lived upstairs at 21 Portland Place in London, where downstairs accommodation was provided for blind officers. Clutha Mackenzie lived there and he wrote, ‘‘21’’ remained my main home until February, 1919, when I finally sailed for New Zealand, that is to say except for such times as I lived with my people in London or the country

² ‘The New Zealand War Contingent Association’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 1 (1916): 2.

³ *New Zealand Free Lance*, ‘... About People’, May 18, 1917: 4.

or stayed with friends throughout Britain.⁴ Sir Arthur was actively involved in the rehabilitation of those living there. He appeared to have ‘taken a great interest in Clutha Mackenzie’s case’.⁵ Indeed Sir Arthur acted as his mentor and after initial misgivings supported Clutha Mackenzie in his venture into journalism.⁶ He seemed well satisfied with the outcome and is reported as having said:

Considering that he had had no journalistic experiences whatever before he was blinded, and that he has edited the “Chronicles” with very scanty and entirely amateur assistance, it has been, I think, a most creditable production.⁷

In the inaugural issue of the *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.: Records of Matters Concerning the Troops and Gazette of Patriotic Effort*, to give the magazine its full title, the editor set out the purposes of the publication. As the word chronicle suggested they were to be a ‘continuous record of events in order of time’.⁸ They were intended for New Zealanders in Britain, France and at home in New Zealand as:

a record of all that transpires in Britain, both in connection with the troops and their entertainment, the expenditure of funds and other matters of patriotic interest ... Setting forth also personal and social news, general information and items from the troops themselves ... accounts of happenings, other than military and philanthropic, of interest to the folk back home.⁹

⁴ Mackenzie, *Draft Book*, Unpublished Typescript, pp. 2-3. Held by his grand-daughter Mrs R. Cole-Baker.

⁵ *New Zealand Free Lance*, ‘... About People’, May 4, 1917: 4.

⁶ *New Zealand Observer*, ‘... About People’, May 12, 1917: 4.

⁷ *New Zealand Free Lance*, ‘... About People’, May 4, 1917: 4.

⁸ Lesley Brown, (ed.), *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993, p. 397.

⁹ Mackenzie, ‘Editorial’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 1 (1916): 3.

The editor explained in detail that he expected the *Chronicles* would provide an account, to those people both in New Zealand and Britain who were working for the welfare of the troops, of where their money was being spent, and acknowledge their work for the New Zealand troops, and via the Red Cross, for other wounded men. The sources were to be the H.C.N.Z.'s Office and the N.Z.W.C.A., together with the men, and 'a great deal of space ...[was] to be occupied with the reports of progress of men in hospital, collected weekly by the official visitors.'¹⁰ This latter information was considered so important that the publication date of the magazine was arranged to coincide with the mail going to New Zealand, so that it would reach home as promptly as possible.¹¹

Mr Cecil J. Wray signed himself as the 'Lately Organising Secretary of The War Contingent Association' and in his Foreword in the first issue, he claimed to be the originator of the idea to publish the *Chronicles*.¹² It was his vision that the paper should perform the purpose of giving New Zealand soldiers 'information concerning matters of interest to them' as well as somewhere to publish their literary efforts, and 'give the public of New Zealand an insight into the work of the New Zealand War Contingent Association.'¹³

The N.Z.W.C.A. was the publisher of the *Chronicles* and until 1916 private donors and the New Zealand patriotic societies mainly funded it. On the initiative of Lady Liverpool, the wife of the then Governor of New Zealand, women at home were encouraged to form war relief and patriotic societies whose purpose was to fundraise to provide comforts and luxuries to the troops. In 1915 the N.Z.W.C.A. established Walton Hospital for New Zealand war casualties at Walton-on-Thames. It was

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 2.

¹¹ Clutha Mackenzie, 'The New Zealand War Contingent Association', *New Zealand Journal of Education*, November 15, 1916: 240.

¹² Cecil Wray, 'Foreword', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 1 (1916): 4.

¹³ Ibid., p. 4.

later taken over by the N.Z.E.F.¹⁴ Almost as soon as men were admitted to any of the New Zealand hospitals in the United Kingdom visits were arranged and regular progress reports made by the N.Z.W.C.A. which also cared for those convalescing and on leave, by arranging activities. Clubs including the Soldiers' Club in Russell Square, London and in Codford, Hornchurch, Torquay and Brockenhurst were set up and later some recreational huts were built and operated by the N.Z.W.C.A. at Walton and Oatlands Park.¹⁵ It was all these activities that were reported on and acknowledged in the *Chronicles*.

With regard to funding for the *Chronicles*, neither the government nor the military accepted them as an official publication. Clutha Mackenzie made a request for financial assistance towards their publication on 13 July 1917 to Sir Joseph Ward, who was New Zealand's Finance Minister at the time. But Cabinet did not approve it.¹⁶ The editor offered the *Chronicles* to the military more than once in the belief that it would be simpler administratively and more importantly that it would give him access to regimental funds. This offer was never accepted.¹⁷

So funding was the responsibility of the editor. A big initial financial outlay was not necessary in order to get started. The editorial group took over an empty room at 11 Southampton Row, London, where the headquarters of the N.Z.W.C.A was also located. The office of the Hospitality Committee of the N.Z.W.C.A. and the Club Room, operated

¹⁴ B. E. Myers, 'New Zealand Hospitals in the United Kingdom', in *The War Effort of New Zealand*, H. T. B. Drew, (ed.), Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1923, pp. 117-19.

¹⁵ Tripp, pp. 185-90.

¹⁶ Sir James Allen to Clutha Mackenzie, September 12, 1917, D51/573, Publication - *Chronicles of N.Z.E.F.*, November 22, 1916-September 13, 1919, Department of Defence, Archives New Zealand.

¹⁷ Mackenzie, 'Chrons and its Work: A Review of Two and a Half Years' Life', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 5 no. 57 (1918): 206.

by the Association, were both at the same address. It is very likely that office space was provided free of charge for the staff of the *Chronicles* by the N.Z.W.C.A. Initially a table and chairs were borrowed. The printers, Messrs Odhams Limited, had not required a guarantee and volunteers did much of the writing and distribution. St Dunstan's Hospital for Blinded Soldiers paid for the secretarial staff and contributed towards some expenses. So the operation was run in a very frugal way, though not without its 'various little ups and downs' which the editor noted.¹⁸

There was advertising in each issue that provided some revenue. Military outfitters including Gamages and Simpson & Edwards advertised regularly.

Figure 1: Advertisements. *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 2 no. 20 (1917): 191-2.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 206.

There were also advertisements for goods such as cigarette papers and whiskey. Shipping companies including the Cunard Line, New Zealand Steam Shipping, and Shaw Savill and Albion advertised in almost every issue. However, because the latter two transported the *Chronicles* back to New Zealand, without a charge, their space was probably free or at a discounted rate.¹⁹

The editor was very clear that the *Chronicles* would be produced as cheaply as possible and they were not to be sold for profit. They cost sixpence a copy to subscribers, other than the military. This price was ‘conceded to be cheap, apart from any sentimental considerations’.²⁰ The troops could buy it at cost, which was threepence and a number were distributed free to men in hospital.²¹ The price remained the same during the life of the magazine and the mention of a possible increase in May 1918 did not eventuate.²² By way of comparison, Wellington’s morning newspaper, *The Dominion* sold for one penny until 2 April 1917 when it increased to two pennies a copy.²³ *The British-Australasian*, a weekly that was published in London and included some material relevant to New Zealand troops, sold for sixpence a copy throughout the war.²⁴

While the *Chronicles* did not have any financial support from public funds, and they were not considered to be a military publication, they did have moral and other practical support from the authorities. It was reported that the *Chronicles* were ‘produced under the sanction and with

¹⁹ Mackenzie, ‘The “Chronicles” Reviews Itself’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 10 (1917): 220.

²⁰ *Clutha Leader*, ‘Clutha Mackenzie: Chat About the Future’, June 5, 1917: 3.

²¹ Mackenzie, ‘Editorial’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 1 (1916): 2.

²² Mackenzie, ‘Notes from the Editorial Bivvie’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 4 no. 43 (1918): 148.

²³ *Dominion*, March 31, 1917: [1]; April 2, 1917: [1].

²⁴ *British-Australasian*, January 1, 1914: 1.

the support of the New Zealand Headquarters in London'.²⁵ The office for the *Chronicles* was located at 11 Southampton Row and the New Zealand military headquarters was conveniently close at 8 Southampton Row. Brigadier-General G. S. Richardson, the Commanding Officer of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in the United Kingdom, permitted some unfit men to work on the publication, including Lance-Corporal G. B. Lennard who, following gunshot wounds at Gallipoli in August 1915, lost a leg.²⁶ Corporal A. L. Williams, whose brother Dr Harold Williams was the Special Correspondent for the *Daily Chronicle* in Petrograd at the time, was another member of the team.²⁷ Sergeant C. Ive was appointed the manager. In response to a query from Mr G. C. Rodda, the Officer-in-Charge of War Expenses, regarding the payment of a billeting allowance to an unnamed soldier unfit for active service, who was working on the *Chronicles*, Richardson pointed out that if the magazine were not distributed free to the hospitals the cost would be more than six times that of the allowance.²⁸ There was no more correspondence on the matter on the file.

From their beginning, the *Chronicles* had the approval of very senior commanders. In its second issue there were letters of appreciation from Lieutenant-General Sir William Birdwood thanking the editor for sending him a copy and wishing him the 'best of success' in the belief that the *Chronicles* 'will be much appreciated throughout the contingent'. A

²⁵ *Auckland Star*, 'The Soldiers' Chronicle: Doings of the N.Z.E.F.', April 30, 1917: 6.

²⁶ Guy Barrett Lennard, Personnel File, 3/1021, Army, Archives New Zealand.

²⁷ *Daily Chronicle*, 'Triumph over Blindness: The Fine Example of Mr Clutha Mackenzie', October 13, 1917: 2.

²⁸ Richardson to HQ, NZ Military Forces, Memorandum Wellington, November 21, 1918, File D51/573, Department of Defence, Archives New Zealand.

note from General Sir Ian Hamilton followed and read, 'Bravissimo! Tell your manager to book me as a subscriber—a regular subscriber.'²⁹

Clutha Mackenzie spent four days at the front in the week immediately before Christmas 1917. General Sir Alexander Godley, in a New Year message, referred to this visit: 'We were all glad to see Clutha Mackenzie again at the Front and, and I would like to take this opportunity of saying how much the Force is indebted to his pluck and enterprise in so ably conducting its CHRONICLES.'³⁰

The initial print run was 1500 copies.³¹ From their outset, the *Chronicles* appeared to be very popular because by mid-October 1916 the editor wrote that he was encouraged by the positive response of 'the boys [who] say they like it'.³²

In the same issue the Codford correspondent reported:

"Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F." find a ready sale, as indeed they should, for it is a very successful publication, and the information about sick and wounded at the hospitals is very useful. It is quite inspiring to hear a voice calling through the evening mists, "Chron - ---i-----cles of the -----" and the rest dying away in a mysterious and inviting murmur.³³

²⁹ 'Letters of Appreciation', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 2 (1916): 36.

³⁰ Alexander Godley, 'New Year Messages,' *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 nos. 34/35 (1917): 5.

³¹ Richardson to HQ, NZ Military Forces, Memorandum Wellington, November 21, 1918, File D51/573, Department of Defence, Archives New Zealand.

³² Mackenzie, 'Editorial Notes', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 4 (1916): 76.

³³ 'Codford Letter', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 4 (1916): 82.

In a report from the New Zealand Engineer Depot in Boscombe, Hampshire, the correspondent concluded by observing that ‘the last number of the “Chronicles” went off like hot cakes, and we are to increase our order, so your bright little paper is properly appreciated in this quarter.’³⁴ By issue number five, only ten weeks after it first appeared, circulation had grown to 12,000.³⁵



Figure 2: H. Simon, ‘After the Push – Pleasure.’
Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F., 1 no. 8 (1916): 184.

³⁴ Wiremu, ‘Engineers’ Doings’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 2 no. 13 (1917): 9-10.

³⁵ *Clutha Leader*, ‘Clutha Mackenzie: Chat About the Future’, June 5, 1917: 3.

It was popular in the Middle East too. In a news item it was noted that: ‘A Sergeant in the N.Z.M.R. writes from Palestine: “The arrival of the CHRONICLES N.Z.E.F. is keenly looked forward to here, and is the next best thing to a letter from home.” ’³⁶ Copies also went to New Zealand sailors and in letter Captain Green of the *H.M.S. New Zealand* thanked the editor and wrote that: ‘they are most excellent and have been distributed and are very much appreciated’.³⁷

Before long the publication was being reviewed favourably in contemporary newspapers. Seven months after it started, the *Daily Express* in London declared it ‘the most wonderfully produced paper in the world with its editorial articles and racy sketches of life.’³⁸ Two years later in 1919 the *New Zealand Observer* described it as: ‘Cheerful, personal, intimate and literary [and] is a paper one sincerely hopes will stay. The blind editor himself writes nicely.’³⁹ Its achievements were not only reported in English speaking countries. *Algemeen Handelsblad*, a liberal daily newspaper published in Amsterdam wrote of the ‘extraordinarily good journalism’ in the *Chronicles*.⁴⁰

The Young Men’s Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.) undertook a lot of the distribution work. The *Chronicles* were available in canteens, orderly rooms and from their editorial office in London.⁴¹ A correspondent with the Canterbury Regiment, a few miles from the front, wrote of the difficulty of getting copies because there was no Y.M.C.A. presence close

³⁶ ‘Mostly About the Boys’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 2 no. 22 (1917): 229.

³⁷ John F. E. Green, ‘From Our Senior Service’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 2 no. 16 (1917): 82.

³⁸ *New Zealand Free Lance*, [Untitled], March 30, 1917: 4.

³⁹ *New Zealand Observer*, ‘... About People’, May 12, 1919: 4.

⁴⁰ *Algemeen Handelsblad*, ‘Van Dag tot Dag: Lichte in ae Duisternis’, [From Day to Day: Light into Darkness], November 2, 1917: [unnumbered pages].

⁴¹ Haggis, ‘N.Z. Discharge Depot’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 29 (1917): 109.

by. He asked if each battalion could be supplied fortnightly, where they 'would be eagerly bought and much appreciated by the boys here, and ... the means of getting many new correspondents.'⁴²

The readership included people outside the military, in Britain and in New Zealand. Within a year of their starting they had an established British readership. There was a report of 'one enthusiastic lady reader, who every second Friday, crosses two fields, one with a bull in it, in order to anticipate the arrival of the postman bearing the paper.'⁴³

On a return visit to New Zealand, between April and September 1917, when Clutha Mackenzie travelled from Auckland to Balclutha (including stops at Hastings, Palmerston North, Lower Hutt, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin), he was fêted by civic leaders and gave public lectures at venues such as Soldiers' Clubs. This was ostensibly to seek funds for St Dunstan's Hospital for Blinded Soldiers but at the same time he promoted the *Chronicles*. At a civic reception in Christchurch the Mayor said that the *Chronicles* should be 'in the home of everyone who had a relative at the front, as it was designed to keep parents and others in touch with their boys or friends'.⁴⁴ Subscribers could be signed up through Gordon and Gotch, the New Zealand agent's office in Wellington and they were also retailed through booksellers.⁴⁵ By January 1918 readers could place orders for bound volumes and back issues.⁴⁶ Clutha

⁴² W. H. P., 'With the Canterbury Regiment', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 4 no. 43 (1918): 151-2.

⁴³ A. L. Williams, 'From the Editorial Bivvie', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 2 no. 24 (1917): 268.

⁴⁴ *Press*, 'Trooper Mackenzie: Civic Reception', May 19, 1917: 3.

⁴⁵ Mackenzie, 'The "Chronicles" Reviews Itself', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 10 (1917): 220.

⁴⁶ "'Chronicles" Affairs', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 nos. 34/35 (1918): 10.

Mackenzie also had plans to produce a colonial edition but this did not eventuate.⁴⁷

A complete file of the *Chronicles* was forwarded to Base Records in Wellington, by the Director of Equipment and Ordnance Stores.⁴⁸ Copies also went to the Chief of the General Staff, Colonel C. M. Gibbon in Wellington.⁴⁹ So the *Chronicles* were readily available to the New Zealand public and were retained on file by the military authorities.

By March 1917 the editor was flagging some difficulties in keeping to regular deadlines with both labour and paper in short supply. He predicted that they might have to use lighter paper but he never anticipated that they would have to cease publication.⁵⁰ Every month the cost of paper increased and it was in shorter supply.⁵¹ Nevertheless the *Chronicles* were published fortnightly and occasionally within three weeks, when there were unavoidable delays.

In early 1918 the *Chronicles* themselves became a casualty of the war. The issues of 2 January and 16 January were printed together as a special edition because the offices had been bombed destroying both issues which were in preparation. By way of explanation and apology the editor wrote an insert that was included at the front of that edition.

⁴⁷ Mackenzie, 'From the Editorial Bivvie', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 28 (1917): 74.

⁴⁸ Director of Equipment and Ordnance Stores to Director Base Records, Memorandum, Dec 4, 1916, File D51/573, Department of Defence, Archives New Zealand.

⁴⁹ Gibbon to Richardson, January 21, 1918, File D51/573, Department of Defence, Archives New Zealand.

⁵⁰ Mackenzie, 'From the Editorial Bivvie', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 2 no. 14 (1917): 27.

⁵¹ 'Mostly About the Boys', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 30 (1917): 131.

**SPECIALLY RESURRECTED EDITION
IN THE WAR ZONE.**

THE "CHRONICLES"—A CASUALTY.

(An explanation.)

In this short note the Editor hastens to explain—he cannot apologise—the reason for this irregular presentation of two issues, January 2nd and 16th, in one reduced number.

'Twas a wonderful winter's night not so long ago when the disaster befel. It was that sort of night, with a glorious full moon drowning all but the brightest stars, which makes eerie and beautiful in its soft light the old buildings, the modern offices, the tall spires and the factory chimneys of the dirty old City. The streets were busy, for it was still early, and crowds thronged the pavements, passing now into black shadow, now into the full light of the moon.

Suddenly a harsh discordant rasping burst forth loud above the musical rumble of the traffic, and in a second vanished the poetic glory of the night. The placid passers-by nervously hastened their steps, and many fled precipitately. The harsh warning echoed along the emptying streets, and policemen whistled shrilly and shouted "Take Cover!"

Minutes passed slowly by.

Then away in the east sounded the hollow popping of the anti-aircraft guns, and those who looked from upper windows saw the flashing pin-points of the bursting shells. Guns in other directions and nearer came into action in turn. A few minutes more, and the guns in the vicinity burst forth with a crashing and a bellowing which echoed weirdly down the empty streets. Shells soared heavenwards with a whistling shriek, exploding in threes, fours and half-dozens with hollow resonance. The pale pillars of the searchlights slanted across the heavens. In a short silence came the ringing tones of the falling shrapnel as the jagged pieces of metal struck the stone pavement. Sometimes a slight crash told of a shattered sky-light, and sometimes a resounding whang close at hand made one jump a foot or so, and sent one's heart too fast for comfort.

The guns cracked and roared spasmodically, here, there and everywhere. In the quieter moments drifted down that irritating, unperturbed, droning of the invading planes, and now and then the rattle of machine guns in action. Then came a cr-r-r-rump some distance away . . . then another . . . and another . . . closer! . . . closer!! . . . and another closer still . . . just a couple of blocks away . . . and then a terrific, stunning crash, a dazed moment of awful terror, a blinding flash—and the two editions of January 2nd and January 16th were no more.

Figure 3: 'Specially Resurrected Edition in the War Zone: The "Chronicles" – A Casualty.'
Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F., 3 nos. 34/35 (1918): [2].

At the end of 1918, after hostilities had ceased, the editor turned his attention to when the publication would cease in Great Britain and the staff could pack up to return home. He was optimistic at this stage of its continuing in New Zealand since ‘many thousands of the diggers have suggested it should carry on’.⁵² The idea of starting a publication for returned soldiers or using the *Chronicles* as the official organ of the Returned Soldiers’ Association (R.S.A.) was being raised in New Zealand as early as 1917.⁵³ Clutha Mackenzie met with the Executive of the R.S.A. and thought they agreed to launch a colonial edition of the *Chronicles*. But this did not eventuate and the R.S.A. started its own paper. However, Clutha Mackenzie believed that he had enough support to continue publishing when he returned home and that the attitude of the R.S.A. would change once the troops arrived back.⁵⁴ This was not to be.

Clutha Mackenzie was a key figure in the publication of the *Chronicles* and his role will be examined in detail in chapter two.

The original purpose for producing the *Chronicles* appears to have been met and more besides. In his review of the publication when it was nearing its final issue, the editor summarised the aims that he believed had been met:

The primary objects of the paper were to keep the scattered units of the N.Z.E.F. in closer touch with each other, to keep men in the field aware of the whereabouts and state of health of their cobbles in hospital, to provide a fortnightly record of the life of the Division, and to form a handy paper for the perusal of folk in New Zealand.⁵⁵

⁵² Mackenzie, ‘Chron and its Work: A Review of Two and a Half Years’ Life’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 5 no. 57 (1918): 206.

⁵³ *Evening Star* [Dunedin], ‘Returned Soldiers’ Association’, May 28, 1917: 3.

⁵⁴ Mackenzie, ‘The Chrons’ Future: Negotiations With the Returned Soldiers’ Association’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 5 no. 60 (1919): 276.

⁵⁵ Mackenzie, ‘Chron and its Work: A Review of Two and a Half Years’ Life’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 5 no. 57 (1918): 206.

The *Chronicles*, by all accounts, met the aim to communicate between the various units in Europe and the Middle East and keep them informed of each other's activities. They included material from all theatres of the war on a variety of subjects and formats, some of it personal and some general facts and observations, as well as the comprehensive hospital reports. On the first anniversary of their publication the acting editor reviewed the previous year and asserted that the Hospital Reports alone justified their continuation.⁵⁶ This was because they provided men at the front with news of their comrades who had been wounded or taken prisoners of war. Importantly, the information appeared in a timelier manner than other sources, as Farrier Alex Blackwood noted in a letter to the editor.⁵⁷

They were important to the home front readership as a unique source of news. The *New Zealand Free Lance* reported that they included 'internal doings of the force, even its sports, and interests, information which does not reach home otherwise.'⁵⁸ In publishing material that was not regularly found elsewhere they succeeded in their aim of keeping in touch with home.

Another aim expressed by the Secretary of the N.Z.W.C.A. was that the *Chronicles* would be a vehicle for the literary aspirations of the troops. The acting editor, in his review, went so far as to say that the *Chronicles* had 'brought to light much literary and artistic talent which, without a troop paper, would perhaps never have found expression'.⁵⁹ While there was some original prose, and a lot of verse and illustrations, this assessment may have overstated the case. It is probably fair to say that the content

⁵⁶ A. L. Williams, 'From the Editorial Bivvie', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 2 no. 24 (1917): 169.

⁵⁷ Alex S. Blackwood, 'With the Mounted', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 2 no. 18 (1917): 136.

⁵⁸ *New Zealand Free Lance*, '... About People', May 18, 1917: 4.

⁵⁹ A. L. Williams, 'From the Editorial Bivvie', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 2 no. 24 (1917): 169.

included a mixture of talent, which was nevertheless popular amongst readers. The content is examined in some detail in chapter three.

In the final issue of 24 January 1919 the editor wrote that he hoped they had ‘brought interest and pleasure to many in the Expeditionary Force, and [produced material] which may be of value in the future’.⁶⁰ This latter sentiment was something that he had not foreseen in the beginning as a purpose for the *Chronicles*. However, the same view was also expressed in one of the regular reports from the Military Publicity Department of New Zealand War Records where it was noted:

... “The Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.” have long established themselves in our life ... and when the war is over they will make very interesting reading and will provide a valuable record of our life over here. Early in the war the British Museum authorities recognised the unusual historical interest that would be attached to such documents.⁶¹

The *Chronicles* also performed a welfare function that was acknowledged by Richardson. In a letter, which he wrote in December 1916, on behalf of the N.Z.E.F. to the N.Z.W.C.A., he thanked the staff for their work. He wrote that the N.Z.W.C.A. ‘filled a gap which military organisation does not provide for, and you have done so with great success.’⁶² While not enlarging on what he meant by ‘gap’, welfare matters particularly in relation to caring for the wounded and convalescing was more than likely

⁶⁰ Mackenzie, ‘The Last Number’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 5 no. 61 (1919): 300.

⁶¹ [Malcolm Ross], Letter 8, October 28, 1918, War Archives, File 10/3, Box 1, ZMR 1/1/4, NZEF Miscellaneous Records, Publicity, Articles, Cables from War Correspondent, Letters Forwarded by the Publicity Department to New Zealand, Archives New Zealand.

⁶² George S. Richardson, ‘Appreciation’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 9 (1916): 196.

an area that he considered the military had not resourced adequately. Richardson would have included the *Chronicles* in his acknowledgement since they were published under the auspices of the N.Z.W.C.A. and were heavily involved in welfare support for the troops. This included being a medium for communication on a variety of levels, a means for the authorities to communicate with the troops, and a way to boost morale.

The emphasis that the editor placed on contributions from the troops, other than letters to the editor, secured the relevance of the magazine to the troops and their continued readership. Certainly the *Chronicles* maintained a committed enthusiastic readership at all levels until the end of the war. The fact that they had to be purchased by some groups of readers did not appear to erode their popularity and actually underlined their success. Rather remarkably, considering that the authorities did not fund them and it was wartime with its attendant shortages of supplies, including paper, they were published fortnightly for almost 29 months. Fuller, in writing about service publications, observed that: 'Journals that did endure showed a tendency to increase their circulation [and] often progressively enlarged their constituency ... [to] extraordinary [large] figures'.⁶³ This was indeed the experience of the *Chronicles*.

Once the war had ended their real purpose also ended. While Clutha Mackenzie, very much wanted to continue publishing the *Chronicles* as a magazine for the troops, albeit now returned troops, this did not eventuate. This was not a reflection on the editor and his team but rather an indication that the war environment in which they had prospered and served a useful purpose had changed.

⁶³ J. G. Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991, p. 9.

CHAPTER 2

The Editor: Clutha Mackenzie

This chapter examines the *Chronicles* in terms of the extent to which the editor contributed to their success and the content and tone of his editorials. Clutha Mackenzie edited the series for its duration, except for a period from May until September 1917 when he was in New Zealand. He was the key person in the production of the *Chronicles*, not only in terms of his writing but his organisational skills and leadership in motivating others to assist him. In the absence of Clutha Mackenzie, for five months in 1917, Lance Corporal A. L. Williams was the acting editor. Editorials covered a wide range of topics, not all of which were directly related to the war. There were some constraints on what could be published, for censorship reasons, but aside from that Clutha Mackenzie was not too concerned about causing controversy. For the purposes of this chapter all the issues of the *Chronicles* are studied.

Clutha Mackenzie was educated at Otago Boys' High School and Waitaki Boys' High School where it was reported that he 'did not excel scholastically' and preferred the outdoors to academic pursuits.¹ He wanted to join the Navy when he left school but for financial reasons his family were unable to send him to train in Great Britain so instead he became an agricultural cadet at Weraroa Experimental Farm near Levin, and later at Ruakura Animal Research Station.² On his military personnel file, when he enlisted, his occupation was recorded as 'farmer'.³

¹ *Auckland Weekly News*, Mabel M. Baker, 'He Dreamed of a Different Future', August 1, 1962: 7.

² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³ Clutha Nantes Mackenzie, Personnel File, 11/171, Army, Archives New Zealand.

In the first editorial Clutha Mackenzie stated the aims of the magazine as outlined in chapter one. He invited correspondence and contributions from soldiers, with the proviso that all material would be subject to censorship by himself and the Public Censor.⁴ The editor alluded to some early complaints about military matters, which were not published, and made it clear that the *Chronicles* were ‘not for the purpose of airing military grievances’ and he reminded writers that such behaviour was contrary to military regulations. He emphasised that the *Chronicles* were ‘intended solely for entertainment.’⁵ The matter must have been resolved because later he wrote that ‘grouses are few, and letters on the subject of inhuman military injustices find their way, if worthy of reparation, to the General ; if not to the same destination as the poor contributions.’⁶ Presumably that destination was the rubbish bin.

The relationship between the *Chronicles* and the N.Z.W.C.A. was somewhat ambivalent. In only his second editorial Clutha Mackenzie defended criticism, from unnamed sources, of the N.Z.W.C.A and perhaps by inference, the *Chronicles*, for doing too much for New Zealand troops in England. He gave an effusive account of the benefits of the work of the Association and its volunteers and wrote, ‘In the cheery atmosphere of the Soldiers’ Club at Codford one realises what a boon such an institution is to our good fellows.’⁷ In the next issue he included a disclaimer to the effect that, while the N.Z.W.C.A. was officially the publisher and the paper might be closely associated with the N.Z.H.C.’s office, it was independent of both.⁸ However, in view of the fact that the

⁴ Mackenzie, ‘The Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 1 (1916): 3.

⁵ Mackenzie, ‘Editorial Notes’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 5 (1916): 99.

⁶ Mackenzie, ‘The Diggers’ Magazine’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 nos. 34/35 (1918): 6.

⁷ Mackenzie, ‘Editorial’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 2 (1916): 27.

⁸ Mackenzie, ‘The Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 3 (1916): 51.

editor's father was Chairman of the N.Z.W.C.A. and also the N.Z.H.C. and the office of the *Chronicles* was in the same building as parts of the N.Z.W.C.A., complete independence would probably have been difficult to maintain.⁹

Clutha Mackenzie was very keen to publish contributions from the troops, particularly from the trenches in France and he worked hard to obtain written material from men at the front. In his 'Editorial Notes', dated 16 October 1916 he wrote that the editorial staff were 'longing' for some copy from the trenches.¹⁰ Two issues later he wrote again that: 'we are longing for the boys to come to light with some of their tales ... we are not wanting school essays. Just sit down and write straight ahead as your thoughts run.'¹¹

Four issues later he was still soliciting material from the front. He noted that while he had been sent much verse, not all of which was suitable to be published, prose was harder to obtain, especially from the trenches.¹² He restated the magazine's purpose, adding that, in a parody of Abraham Lincoln's words, 'it is a "magazine of the boys, by the boys and for the boys."' ¹³ In response to a letter complaining that there was too little news from France, the editor said 'we are doing our best to make the thing a real record of the doings of the Force'.¹⁴ Ten months later the editor was still hoping for more material from the front and wrote that: 'the

⁹ The Editorial Office of the *Chronicles*, the Club Room run by the N.Z.W.C.A., and the Hospitality Committee of the N.Z.W.C.A. were all located at 11 Southampton Row, London.

¹⁰ Mackenzie, 'Editorial Notes', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 4 (1916): 76.

¹¹ Mackenzie, 'To the Boys: Send Along Sketches, Poems and Articles', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 6 (1916): 124.

¹² Mackenzie, 'The "Chronicles" Reviews Itself', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 10 (1917): 219.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

¹⁴ Mackenzie, 'Mostly About the Boys', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 8 (1916): 183.

magazine wishes to be thoroughly representative of the whole N.Z.E.F., and though the camps and hospitals in England must have sufficient notice, France and Egypt must have the lion's share.¹⁵ By November 1918 he believed that the magazine had developed into something of a fortnightly record of the life of the Division and was keeping the scattered units of the N.Z.E.F. in closer contact with each other.¹⁶

Clutha Mackenzie did not only advertise for copy in the *Chronicles*. In the middle of 1917 he returned to Great Britain from New Zealand, on the troopship *Athenic*, with the 27th Reinforcements. During this voyage he edited a troopship magazine named *Ye Ancient Athenian* in which he invited soldiers on board to send contributions to the *Chronicles* and support it financially.¹⁷

Editorials regularly referred to what was happening at the front. Some of Clutha Mackenzie's first comments on battle were written about the Somme, in September 1916. He wrote in fulsome terms of glorious patriotism and victorious defeat of the enemy, continuing a tradition begun in the Dardanelles and Egypt. There was only a brief mention of heavy casualties.¹⁸ Words like splendid, victorious, heroic, valour and courage were used liberally. But over time the editor's tone changed somewhat with the inclusion of more forthright comments about the actual conditions. After Passchendaele there was a sombre reference to

¹⁵ Mackenzie, 'To the Fellows', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 30 (1917): 124.

¹⁶ Mackenzie, 'Chron and its Work: A Review of Two and a Half Years' Life', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 5 no. 57 (1918): 206.

¹⁷ Mackenzie, 'A Personal Letter', in *Ye Ancient Athenian: Ye Maritime Trials and Tribulations of Ye 27th N.Z. Reinforcements*, Clutha Mackenzie, (ed.), Capetown: His Majesty's New Zealand Transport "Athenic" Magazine Committee, 1917, p. 8.

¹⁸ Mackenzie, 'New Zealand's Part in the Somme Battle', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 3 (1916): 51.

the large number of casualties and the ‘terrible conditions’.¹⁹ By Christmas 1917 he wrote about making the ‘best of a bad job’²⁰ while still emphasising the positive and patriotic with the assertion that ‘at times we failed; but never through causes which courage, physique or endurance could overcome.’²¹ In October 1918, the editor, in a muted piece, wrote that the war seemed to be over: ‘The long weary days of grim struggle, when often we had reason for depression, even if we did not give way to it, appear to be definitely past.’²²

Clutha Mackenzie did not confine his remarks to the Western Front. Indeed, mindful that one of the intentions of the magazine was to communicate with all New Zealanders serving in the war, it was distributed beyond the Western Front. In June 1917 the *Clutha Leader* newspaper reported that the *Chronicles* reached ‘the most advanced trenches in the western front, and into the sand-burrows and “bivvies” of Palestine and Mesopotamia.’²³ From time to time in his editorials Clutha Mackenzie wrote about New Zealand’s military engagements in Egypt, Palestine and Turkey.

Subjects of editorials went beyond military matters and were broad ranging including issues that were being discussed in the wider community. They included the origin of the word Anzac and its use in reference to New Zealand and Australian troops. Clutha Mackenzie wrote:

¹⁹ Mackenzie, ‘Brave Fellows’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 30 (1917): 123.

²⁰ Mackenzie, ‘Christmas’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 33 (1917): 202.

²¹ Mackenzie, ‘1917’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 34 (1918): 231.

²² Mackenzie, ‘From the Editorial Bivvie’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 5 no. 54 (1918): 123.

²³ *Clutha Leader*, ‘Clutha Mackenzie: Chat About the Future’, June 5, 1917: 3.

In a paper recently I saw Australians and New Zealanders referred to as “Anzacs and New Zealanders.” ... We like to be linked with our good cobbles the Australians by this war-worn name. We remember how well we worked together out on the Peninsula, and what good mates we were, and we want to keep the name Anzac in memory of these times. So we hope the British Press will not forget that its second and third letters mean those weather-scarred islands twelve hundred miles east-sou-east of Australia.²⁴

The same concern was the subject of a letter to the editor²⁵ and a poem reprinted from *Punch* with the title ‘The Real Anzacs’.²⁶ This discussion was continued in the body of the magazine and in several following issues. It was also being canvassed in other newspapers of the day.²⁷ The *New Zealand Herald* noted that: ‘The origin of the word Anzac still seems to puzzle some people.’²⁸

Political matters were also traversed in editorials. In 1917, for instance, Clutha Mackenzie warmly endorsed the British Prime Minister’s view that ‘more complete consideration of Overseas opinion in Imperial government’ should be recognised.²⁹ He reported on the Imperial Conference in March 1917³⁰ and the New Zealand Prime Minister’s

²⁴ Mackenzie, ‘Editorial Notes’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 6 (1916): 124.

²⁵ H. L. Taylor, ‘The Term “Anzac”’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 6 (1916): 127.

²⁶ *Punch*, ‘The Real Anzacs’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 6 (1916): 127.

²⁷ ‘ANZAC Legend’, in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, Peter Dennis, (ed.), Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 37-40; Harry Orsman, (ed.), *The Dictionary of New Zealand English*, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 11-12.

²⁸ *New Zealand Herald, Supplement*, Mercutio, ‘Local Gossip’, March 10, 1917: [1].

²⁹ Mackenzie, ‘From the Editorial Bivvie’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 12 (1917): 267.

³⁰ Mackenzie, ‘From the Editorial Bivvie’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 2 no. 15 (1917): 51.

speech at the Allied War Conference in Paris in late 1917.³¹ By the end of November 1917 he wrote about the future and wondered whether the idea of a League of Nations would work to ensure peace.³²

There were several discussions about a Gallipoli Medal including the following:

The final word on the subject of the New Zealand medal which is to correspond to the 1914 Star, has not yet been uttered. The suggestion so far put forward by the military authorities is that it is to be awarded to those who, leaving New Zealand before December 31st, 1914, landed some time or other in Gallipoli. Some think that these should not be the terms, and that more justice would be done were the medal, with an additional bar for the Main Body, [be] granted to all those who landed at the Dardanelles.³³

In his editorials home was often mentioned. It was missed and remembered nostalgically in idealised terms such as ‘land of sun, joy and freedom.’³⁴ Clutha Mackenzie looked forward to returning to New Zealand at the end of the war. In one particularly flowery and sentimental piece he wrote:

We have seen good and bad in these old countries ... we shall hereafter seek to encourage the good and banish the evil in the land

³¹ Mackenzie, ‘Notes From the Bivvie’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 32 (1917): 175.

³² Mackenzie, ‘Peace: Peace and the Future’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 5 no. 57 (1918): 195.

³³ Mackenzie, ‘Editorial Notes’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 36 (1918): 279; Other references: ‘The Gallipoli Medal’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 4 no. 44 (1918): 171; ‘From the Editorial Bivvie’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 5 no. 53 (1918): 99.

³⁴ Mackenzie, ‘From the Editorial Bivvie’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 9 (1916): 195.

of our ideals. Far across the sunlit plains the rich green foothills rise gently, and beyond, the blue, glistening ranges stand out clearly against the cloudless sky. Never must human selfishness clash with the glory and purity of the scene ...³⁵

There were hints of disagreements over the content of the *Chronicles*. Early in 1917 Clutha Mackenzie wrote that while he had tried not to offend readers there seemed to be ‘endless toes on or about to be trodden on - the military authorities, the Press Bureau, fond mothers, the Church and lots of people without any sense of humour’ and he had become ‘more inured’ to criticism.³⁶ In the very next issue a quotation from the *Morning Post* of 22 January 1917 reassured the editor ‘... that he need not worry ; he is doing very well, and the CHRONICLES are worthy of an audience wider than that for which they were primarily intended. The paper is really one of the cheeriest and workmanlike of the soldiers’ journals.’³⁷ By ‘workmanlike’ the author presumably meant competent or even ‘showing practised skill; [or] well executed’.³⁸

While Clutha Mackenzie did not take himself or the paper too seriously, its content was a theme to which he returned in his editorial on 27 March 1918. Here he restated that while it was impossible to please everyone, he had endeavoured to ‘steer the course of philosophical content, exploding mildly under extreme provocation, applauding those who deserve it, reviewing entertaining events, and when nothing better offers, talking eyewash.’³⁹

³⁵ Mackenzie, ‘Ideals’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 4 no. 39 (1918): 51.

³⁶ Mackenzie, ‘The “Chronicles” Reviews Itself’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 10 (1916): 219.

³⁷ Mackenzie, ‘From the Editorial Bivvie’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 11 (1917): 243.

³⁸ Brown, p. 3720.

³⁹ Mackenzie, ‘Notes from the Editorial Bivvie’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 4 no. 40 (1918): 75.

Generally the prevailing tone of Clutha Mackenzie's writing was light-hearted, self-effacing and optimistic, in accordance with one of the purposes of the magazine, which was to amuse and in doing so help boost morale. From late November 1916 the editor usually wrote under the heading of the 'Editorial Bivvie'. At times he was very funny. Referring to writer's block he wrote, 'each with a wet towel round his fevered brow, the Editorial Staff sits, seeking inspiration for learned subjects ... silence ... "Can't any of you come to light with a brain-wave?" "What about the war?" asks the S.-E., with a huge tidal brain-wave.'⁴⁰ Clutha Mackenzie amusingly personified the magazine at times when it became 'Private N.Z.E.F. Chronicles, /o (bar none), 1st Anyold Regiment ... He's just an old digger ... he always looks forward to the day when he will dodge back again to old N.Z., where, re-educated and re-civilised, he will take to himself a bride, and become an excellent ex-soldier.'⁴¹

In spite of his often self-deprecating style, the editor did see the *Chronicles* as having a more serious purpose. While he was back in New Zealand he wrote to Army Headquarters urging staff to commence a history of the war in terms of 'a classic work, which will make for future New Zealanders the most accurate and most humanly realistic account possible.' He advocated the inclusion of 'ungarnished records' written by the men themselves to round out an official account.⁴² This is the very material he was keen to publish in the *Chronicles* so clearly he regarded these accounts as having some lasting value.

⁴⁰ Mackenzie, 'From the Editorial Bivvie', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 2 no. 13 (1917): 3.

⁴¹ Mackenzie, 'Private N.Z.E.F., Chronicles', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 5 no. 49 (1918): 3-4.

⁴² Mackenzie to Director of Base Records, Wellington, July 13, 1917, File D51/669, Department of Defence, Archives New Zealand.

Although he reported and commented on political events he acknowledged that this could be problematical. Referring to the politics involved in the formation of an association for returned soldiers, he wrote 'Politics ! Politics ! Look at this article – no sooner has the blanky subject been mentioned than we are all arguing about it. Politics among New Zealanders means dissension, and old CHRONS. even now wishes he had never mentioned the matter. He himself is going to keep clear of such tangle-footed subjects in future.'⁴³

There had been some censorship issues. It was reported that the censor was 'always sniping bits out' and had warned the editorial staff about 'making statements contrary to ideas of good discipline, for evading the Censor, and for treading on people's toes.'⁴⁴ It is true that over some matters Clutha Mackenzie was quite outspoken. He did not agree with the decision that the findings of the Dardanelles Commission were not to be made public.⁴⁵ He criticised a decision by the Defence Department to transfer experienced officers from the Division to the Imperial Force and bring in new recruits from New Zealand.⁴⁶ In February 1918 he was quite scathing about yet another visit to Britain by William Massey and Sir Joseph Ward, for a meeting of the Second Imperial War Cabinet. He believed that it was unnecessary for 'either ... much less both, to come so long [sic] and expensive a journey.'⁴⁷ These may have been the problem issues to which he referred.

⁴³ Mackenzie, 'Political or Non-Political?', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 4 no. 50 (1918): 27-8.

⁴⁴ Mackenzie, 'Private N.Z.E.F. Chronicles', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 4 no. 49 (1918): 3-4.

⁴⁵ Mackenzie, 'Editorial Note', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 36 (1918): 279.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 279-80.

⁴⁷ Mackenzie, 'Editorial Notes: Another Ministerial Tour', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 4 no. 37 (1918): 3.

From May until September 1917, while Clutha Mackenzie was in New Zealand, Lance Corporal A. L. Williams was the acting editor with responsibility for eleven issues, eight of which included an editorial. There was no perceptible change of editorial direction over this period.

In most issues, following the editorial, there were a series of 'Editorial Notes' in paragraphs. These covered a diversity of topics ranging from the construction of a war monument in Wellington,⁴⁸ tanks in battle,⁴⁹ social events such as the Lord Mayor's Show and other entertainments,⁵⁰ and meat and wool contracts between New Zealand and Britain.⁵¹ This latter was very likely one of the briefs by the editor's father in his capacity as the N.Z.H.C. Visits by dignitaries were reported including one by King George V and Queen Mary to the Walton-on-Thames Hospital, established by the N.Z.W.C.A.⁵² In addition to editorial material Clutha Mackenzie contributed some articles including seven with the running title 'Peregrinations of a Trooper'.

As well as writing for it, Clutha Mackenzie was deeply involved in every aspect of the publication of the *Chronicles*. In view of the scarcity of resources available, he must have exercised some shrewdness and ingenuity to get the *Chronicles* started. Clutha Mackenzie acknowledged the support of both his father and his mentor Sir Arthur Pearson. He wrote, 'My father and Sir Arthur Pearson gave their warm support and I

⁴⁸ Mackenzie, 'Editorial Notes', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 2 (1916): 28.

⁴⁹ Mackenzie, 'Editorial Notes', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 3 (1916): 51-2.

⁵⁰ Mackenzie, 'Editorial Notes', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 6 (1916): 124.

⁵¹ Mackenzie, 'Notes From the Editorial Bivvie', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 8 (1916): 172.

⁵² Mackenzie, 'General Notes', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 32 (1917): 176.

always remain grateful.’⁵³ But he had other influential connections including Lord Plunket, a former Governor of New Zealand, who chaired the Executive Committee of the N.Z.W.C.A. and Lady Islington, the wife of another previous Governor chaired the Ladies’ Committee. Indeed, the members of the N.Z.W.C.A. saw the magazine as a way to promote the work they were doing. Other prominent people whom Clutha Mackenzie knew included military commanding officers and politicians such as Sir Joseph Ward, who gave Clutha Mackenzie a farewell luncheon before his return visit to New Zealand.⁵⁴ On the way home he travelled via the United States where he was entertained at the British Embassy in Washington.⁵⁵ After his death in 1966 a contributor to *The Times* wrote, ‘He knew better than anyone I have met how to make friends and influence red carpets!’⁵⁶

As well as writing and fund raising, Clutha Mackenzie took responsibility for the collection of material for inclusion, the printing arrangements and their distribution. In the beginning the staff comprised only the editor and Lance Corporal G. B. Lennard without a secretary. The editor claimed that he did ‘the “making up” on the pages of the previous number.’⁵⁷ These two were joined by Sergeant C. Ive, as the manager, who before the war had worked on the *Southland Daily Times* ⁵⁸ and Lance Corporal A. L. Williams, who was acting editor as has been noted. Later Sir Arthur Pearson arranged for secretarial assistance.⁵⁹ It was

⁵³ Clutha Mackenzie, *Writings by C.N.M.*, Unpublished Typescript, Chapter 13, p. [18], Held by his grand-daughter Mrs R. Cole-Baker.

⁵⁴ *Auckland Star*, ‘Visiting New Zealand: Mr Clutha Mackenzie’, April 30, 1917: 5.

⁵⁵ *New Zealand Free Lance*, ‘... About People’, May 18, 1917: 4.

⁵⁶ *The Times*, Lord Fraser of Lonsdale, ‘Sir Clutha Mackenzie’, April 2, 1966: 10.

⁵⁷ *New Zealand Free Lance*, [Untitled], March 30, 1917: 4.

⁵⁸ *Otago Daily Times*, ‘Trooper Mackenzie: Arrival in Dunedin’, May 25, 1917: 15.

⁵⁹ Mackenzie, *Diary*, Unpublished Typescript, July 16, 1917, p. 4.

reported that the editor had ‘a bright woman secretary who reads to him’⁶⁰ and this would have included proofreading.

The reliability and frequency with which the *Chronicles* were published must have meant long working hours for the small editorial team. On one occasion when an issue was three days late because of paper and labour problems, Clutha Mackenzie described taking a taxi to the printers to uplift copies. Then he travelled by train and car to personally deliver them, over three days, to various camps in England.⁶¹ On the evening that the offices were bombed, destroying two issues that were being worked on, he was at work. There was no hint that his presence in the building at that time was remarkable, suggesting that regular eight-hour days at the office were not usual.⁶²

Clutha Mackenzie, the man, was admired and respected for his courage and cheerful resilience despite being blind. His fellow workers were reported as saying that he was too modest about his achievements after being blinded.⁶³ His tour of New Zealand in 1917 seemed to have captured the imagination of the people. As the guest of honour at various public meetings and civic receptions his achievements and courage were lauded. In Wellington one speaker hoped ‘that Trooper Mackenzie’s dauntless spirit would be a bright and shining example of fortitude to all others. (Applause).’⁶⁴

⁵⁹ *New Zealand Observer*, ‘... About People’, May 12, 1917: 4.

⁶¹ Mackenzie, ‘A “Plain” Week-end’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 2 no. 14 (1917): 28-9.

⁶² Mackenzie, ‘The “Chronicles” – a Casualty’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 nos. 34/35 (1918): [2].

⁶³ *Dominion*, ‘Trooper Mackenzie Entertained: Guest of the Soldiers’ Club’, May 14, 1917: 3.

⁶⁴ *Dominion*, ‘Civic Reception: To Returned Soldier’, May 15, 1917: 7.

Clutha Mackenzie appeared to be down to earth, personable and self-aware. He was quoted:

Of course, I did not go [to Gallipoli] knowing that I would lose my sight. ... If I had known that - I would have funk'd it. A shell got me, and that settled it. ... I have received a great deal of sympathy, more than usual, perhaps, because I happen to be the son of a well-known public man. I have had a great deal of sympathy and honour that I do not deserve.⁶⁵

Commenting in his diary in 1916 about his blindness, Clutha Mackenzie seemed to have no self-pity but rather gratitude for the assistance he had received when he wrote:

there is no reason why the future, if any, should not promise the same cheery jolly life that has been mine in the past. I am satisfied with things as they are, and I have little reason to regret my wound. In reality, the goodness, honour and assistance I get are more than my reward.⁶⁶

Later, in the *Chronicles* he wrote matter of factly that he preferred to be treated as though he could see because he disliked being referred to 'as being in a sad plight'.⁶⁷ Others admired those same qualities in him. When he was about to leave London at the end of the war *The Times* reported that he was, 'an example of how an indomitable spirit can

⁶⁵ *Press*, 'Chronicles of N.Z.E.F.', May 19, 1917: 14.

⁶⁶ Mackenzie, *Diary*, Unpublished Typescript, August 9, 1916.

⁶⁷ Mackenzie, 'A Blind Soldier's Point of View', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 33 (1917): 213.

triumph over the severest physical penalties of a soldier's lot. He makes very little of the suffering that he has undergone.'⁶⁸

Clutha Mackenzie saw himself as central in creating the *Chronicles* and ensuring their on-going publication until the end of the war. In a letter to Army Headquarters in Wellington he wrote of his return to England 'to resume control of the paper.'⁶⁹ It is probably fair to say that he held the magazine together. Indeed Corporal Lennard, one of his helpers, remarked that 'Trooper Mackenzie's editorship was not a sinecure by any means, in fact, the paper would not get along without him.'⁷⁰

There is a sense that, for Clutha Mackenzie, the editorship of the *Chronicles* was a vocation rather than just a job. He described the 'Editorial Bivvie' acting as a 'general information bureau' where visitors were welcomed.⁷¹ He was, in his word, 'elated' to have the opportunity to visit the front for four days in December 1917 and despite the dismal conditions saw it as an opportunity to add depth to his work of editing the *Chronicles*.⁷²

An assessment of his later work, as the Director of the Jubilee Institute for the Blind in Auckland from 1923 until 1938, gives an insight into his character. He was the Director at a time of significant expansion and was personally responsible for a large fund raising campaign.⁷³ He was

⁶⁸ *The Times*, 'N.Z.E.F. Chronicles: The Last Number on This Side', January 31, 1919: 6.

⁶⁹ Mackenzie to Director of Base Records, Wellington, July 13, 1917, File D51/669, Department of Defence, Archives New Zealand.

⁷⁰ *Press*, 'Trooper Mackenzie: Civic Reception', May 19, 1917: 3.

⁷¹ Mackenzie, 'The "Chronicles" Reviews Itself', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 10 (1917): 220.

⁷² Mackenzie, 'The Front Revisited', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 35 (1918): 14.

⁷³ Penelope Hansen, 'Mackenzie, Clutha Nantes 1895-1966', in *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, vol. 4, 1921-1940, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1998, p. 314.

credited with running the institute ‘as efficiently as possible ... But all was not perfect. The dictatorial style that seemed to make Clutha Mackenzie’s fund-raising efforts so successful was often resented in the day-to-day running of the institute.’ His efforts have been described as ‘pivotal in the development of the Blind Institute in the 1920s and 1930s and the development of a universal Braille system.’⁷⁴ While seemingly not displaying a ‘dictatorial style’ when editing the *Chronicles*, he showed single-minded determination, and he was key to their success, in a similar way with his subsequent work for the blind in New Zealand and internationally.

Through his influential connections he was able to gather resources and encourage contributors. He successfully captured the support of the diverse readership with the content, which appealed to the different groups of readers in Britain, at the front and at home. As a former serviceman who had been seriously wounded and overcome the resulting personal handicap, he had credibility with and continued support from those differing audiences.

Without Clutha Mackenzie as their editor the *Chronicles* probably would not have succeeded. In view of his educational background Clutha Mackenzie’s writing may have lacked polish but he had no difficulty articulating ideas for publication in the *Chronicles*. It was his total commitment that saw their sustained publication, to the extent that he very much wanted them to continue in New Zealand after the war. His motivational leadership and personality ensured support for, and the popularity of, the *Chronicles*. In his book *The Tale of a Trooper*, the experiences of the central character, Mac, are based on those of the author. Mac lost his sight in the war and Clutha Mackenzie, speaking through him, wrote that he then ‘worked among them [men of the

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 315.

N.Z.E.F.] to the best of his limited powers ... war had brought them no good; but it had had many grand moments, power to strengthen character and inspiration towards great thought, art and unselfishness.⁷⁵ What he may have lacked in formal education he more than compensated for in his passion for, and belief in, what he was attempting to achieve in the *Chronicles*.



Figure 4: 'Blinded at Gallipoli', Clutha Mackenzie (L) and L. S. Jackson (R).
The New Zealand Free Lance, May 18, 1917: 4.

⁷⁵ Mackenzie, *The Tale of a Trooper*, London: John Lane, 1921, pp. 199-200.

CHAPTER 3

Content including Prose, Poetry and Illustrations

This chapter examines the content of the *Chronicles*, other than the editorial content. It considers the various contributions, which appear in prose, poetry and illustrations. This chapter will not be an exhaustive analysis of the entire body of the *Chronicles* as only a selection of issues is studied. These are the ones that cover the time when the New Zealand Division was engaged in the First Battle of the Somme (1916) and the Battle of Passchendaele (1917). In particular they are the issues from number one, 30 August 1916, to number ten, 17 January 1917, and number 29, 17 October 1917, through to number 37, 13 February 1918. In later chapters, the way in which these two battles were dealt with in the *Chronicles* is examined in detail. The extent to which censorship might have influenced the content is considered. There are also questions about whether interest in the *Chronicles* was short lived or whether they would become a more permanent record of events. How the content related to the stated aims of the publication is examined as well.

The *Chronicles* included an editorial or editorial notes and sometimes both, in almost every issue, as described in the previous chapter, as well as sketches and articles on a range of subject matters, by a variety of contributors in prose and verse, and illustrations. The topics covered in the editorials were replicated in the magazine itself. There were also camp and hospital notes, including casualty lists and news of individuals and units. Some features appeared in every issue while others were regularly included but not necessarily every time. One New Zealand newspaper described the *Chronicles* as containing ‘much delightful

reading, amusing sketches, photographs, records of actions, camp life, and sports.’¹

Regular sections were presented under headings. One of these was ‘Notes from the High Commissioner’s Office’, which contained information from the New Zealand Prisoners-of-War Department on prisoners in Turkey and Germany. The lists detailed names and locations, prisoners’ conditions if known, contact addresses and regulations for the forwarding of mail or food parcels. There was also a section on New Zealanders serving in other units of the British Army (other than the N.Z.E.F.), and occasionally in Australian Forces. By the time of Passchendaele the H.C.N.Z invited those who had not already done so to forward ‘full particulars of their rank and the unit to which they are attached, together with the names and addresses of their next of kin ; also any news as to promotion, transfer, etc.’ for inclusion.² In addition, the ‘High Commissioner’s Notes’ recorded news from meetings of the N.Z.W.C.A. and reports about its work.

Another regular section was ‘News From France’, which started in April 1917 and continued through the Passchendaele period. This section was mostly comprised of reports from Malcolm Ross, covering battles and conditions at the front in France. Fighting on the Somme, Passchendaele and Gravenstafel for instance was covered together with quieter times and Christmas celebrations. The content of these will be studied in detail in chapters five and six.

The Middle East was not forgotten with columns under the headings ‘Palestine News’, ‘Palestine Notes’ or ‘Our Palestine Epistle’. The editor’s series under the running title of ‘Peregrinations of a Trooper’ recorded, in

¹ *Evening Post* [Wellington], ‘Local and General’, May 10, 1917: 6.

² ‘Notes From the High Commissioner’s Office’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 29 (1917): 106.

a light-hearted way, his travel experiences mostly in Egypt. Lunch with Hussein I, the Sultan of Egypt, was the subject of one such article.³

The section 'Camp, Club and Hospital News', subtitled 'The Doings of the Fortnight by "Those on the Spots"', was included from 29 November 1916 onwards. In this section, letters⁴ written by designated correspondents at the various hospitals and convalescent homes were published. The content was a chatty mix of day-to-day happenings, gossip, rumour, the weather, food, official visits, entertainments, outings, sports and occasionally servicemen's deaths. The Salisbury Club correspondent, typically, wrote:

Dear EHOA, - There is little to tell you about this week, except accident and sickness.

On Tuesday of last week we were doing our usual trip to Codford Hospital, when we met with a very unpleasant motor accident about a mile this side of the Australian lines, with the sad result that one of our official visitors received a broken arm ...

We had two dances last week. Although we had told our boys that the dance was to be postponed until the Wednesday night, quite a few turned up, so we had to send a message to our pianist, and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the impromptu hop ...

We saw our first falling of snow on Saturday, and though lovely to look upon, it is distinctly unpleasant to be obliged to go about in. However, my grouse is very unbecoming, when one remembers what the trenches must be like in France ...

We hear amusing little things as we go about our daily round ... One of our staff was told quite solemnly that "Your Tommies (meaning our N.Z. boys) are really quite nice." You can guess the difficulty that was experienced by the hearer at repressing a possibly very sharp retort.⁵

³ Mackenzie, 'Peregrinations of a Trooper- I', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 2 (1916): 30.

⁴ 'Letter' in this context is defined as, 'an article, report, etc., describing the social, political, or cultural situation of the correspondent, especially for a newspaper. L18' [late eighteenth century], Brown, p. 1570.

⁵ He Kainga Mo Katoa, 'Salisbury Club Letter', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 7 (1916): 157.

From 2 May 1917 a short section under the heading 'Something About the Girls', or 'About Sisters, Nurses and Others' appeared infrequently. These sections comprised lists of names of new appointees, transfers and occasionally news of family or weddings. The lists almost always referred to nursing personnel but sometimes V.A.D. workers and hospital visitors were included.

Sports were an important part of army leisure and were officially encouraged, particularly rugby which was regarded as character building.⁶ Fuller suggested that 'football surpassed even race meetings in popularity ... The Dominion troops at least matched this enthusiasm for sport.'⁷ John A. Lee acknowledged the importance of rugby football when he wrote in the *Chronicles* that: 'Football at present provides much entertainment, and its place out here would be hard to fill. It is not only physically, but mentally stimulating.'⁸

In the *Chronicles* rugby, soccer, hockey, golf and boxing matches between N.Z.E.F. units and other countries' units were regularly reported, in every issue after the first two. Accounts appeared under 'Club, Camp and Hospital News' or in the case of football, which was the most popular, in its own column, often in great detail. The correspondent from N.Z.F.A. (New Zealand Field Artillery) in Ewshott, in a typically understated way, reported that: 'we secured victory by 44 points to nil' in a rugby football match between the New Zealand A Team and an unbeaten Sandhurst Military College Team, with the team record now '11 matches won, points for 488, against 6'.⁹

⁶ Ian McGibbon, (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Military History*, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 426.

⁷ Fuller, pp. 85, 87.

⁸ John A. Lee, 'The Division Treks Again', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 33 (1917): 210.

⁹ 'Notes From N.Z.F.A. Ewshott', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 32 (1917): 184.

One of the purposes of the *Chronicles* was to communicate the condition of troops who had been wounded, including those who later died from their wounds, were missing or killed in action. These lists were provided by both the N.Z.H.C.'s office and the N.Z.W.C.A. The 'Hospital Lists', grouped together by hospital, and 'Casualty Lists', appeared at the back, in every issue, except the 16 January 1918 which was an exception, being combined with the 2 January 1918, after the editorial office was bombed. The former included a list of 2000 or 3000 names of men in hospital, together with reports on the progress of individuals.¹⁰ In the beginning, these lists often gave detailed descriptions about the condition of individuals but after the battles of the Somme and Passchendaele the notes were abbreviated, probably as a consequence of the large numbers admitted.

Publishing these reports was a priority and at times they were included at the expense of other material. The editor reported in July 1917 that 'owing to pressure on our space caused by large casualty lists and hospital reports, many reports are crowded out. Addresses of Prisoners of War in Germany will appear in the next issue. We regret that these have had to be held over.'¹¹ While some casualty lists were also published in the *New Zealander*,¹² and newspapers back in New Zealand, friends may well have first learned of the condition or even death of comrades, from reading the *Chronicles*, because they were published fortnightly, in England and in some detail. There was an early plea from M.M., in a letter to the editor, for the hospital lists to be put in alphabetical order.¹³ But this was not generally acted on until over a year later.

¹⁰ *Auckland Star*, 'The Soldiers' Chronicle: Doings of the N.Z.E.F.', April 30, 1917: 6.

¹¹ 'Held Over', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 2 no. 22 (1917): 220.

¹² *New Zealander: Home News for New Zealand Troops on Active Service*, London: [G.H.Scholefield], 1916-1919.

¹³ M. M., 'Well-Timed Criticism', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 8 (1916): 182.

Richardson advised Defence Headquarters in Wellington that the casualty lists in the *Chronicles* contained a number of errors and that the public ought to be told that only official information from the government should be relied on, to avoid unnecessary anxiety.¹⁴ Almost every list printed a few corrections such as ‘previously reported killed now reported died of wounds’, ‘previously reported missing now reported killed’, ‘previously reported wounded now reported not wounded’ and names were occasionally misspelled. Such corrections were not necessarily the result of mistakes by *Chronicles*’ staff as they also occurred in the official records and were inevitable in the circumstances. As more information came to hand updates were published.

The *Chronicles* were also used to communicate news of appointments, and enquiries from family and friends for information on the location or health of individuals. This type of material was in regular columns such as ‘Mostly About the Boys’, ‘Notes’, ‘Personal’ and ‘On Dit’.¹⁵ From time to time there were lists of men who were departing for New Zealand and gallantry award citations. Obituaries of varying length appeared in most issues, separate from the hospital and casualty lists. Importantly, all these items kept people connected with relations and friends.

There must have been some comment from the readership about the amount of space devoted to camp and hospital reports. The editorial response was the wish ‘that the boys at the Front would shut up talking about their [sic] being too little concerning themselves in these pages, and too much of camps and hospitals, and sit down with paper and pencil to supply the deficiency’.¹⁶ In a further effort to encourage prose contributions, particularly first-hand accounts by diggers of their

¹⁴ Richardson to Defence Wellington, Cable, April 18, 1916, File D51/573, Department of Defence, Archives New Zealand.

¹⁵ ‘On Dit’ in this context translates as, ‘people say, it’s just talk, hearsay, chat’, Dr. Antonia Davin.

¹⁶ ‘Troop Journals’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 5 no. 50 (1918): 37.

experiences in action, the *Chronicles* offered two prizes of £5 each. However, the second section of the competition, in which grammar and spelling was not taken into account, only attracted one entry.¹⁷ This was in 1918, some 48 issues after the 1917 review where more writing in prose had been sought.¹⁸ So first hand experiences in prose were difficult to obtain for the duration of the publication.

Contrasting with prose, original contributions in verse were more forthcoming. In the tenth issue of the *Chronicles*, in a review of its progress, the editor noted that contributions from the troops were mostly poetry. He wrote:

Poetry – oh! Help! Why will Pig Islanders run so much to verse? It may be a sign of the depth of soul, but all the same, the Editor wishes they wouldn't do so much of it ... the fellows are so backward with prose contributions ... trench stuff is the hardest to get. There are so many sides of ditch life that would go very well if run into articles.¹⁹

The editor of the *Wipers Times*, a British trench magazine, had exactly the same experience. In its fourth issue there was a notice:

We regret to announce that an insidious disease is affecting the Division, and the result is a hurricane of poetry ... The Editor would be obliged if a few of the poets would break into prose as the paper cannot live by "poems" alone.²⁰

¹⁷ ' "Chronos." Prizes', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 5 no. 58 (1918): 228.

¹⁸ Mackenzie, "The "Chronicles" Reviews Itself", *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 10 (1917): 219.

¹⁹ Mackenzie, "The "Chronicles" Reviews Itself", *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 10 (1917): 219.

²⁰ John Ivelaw-Chapman, 'Notices', *Wipers Times*, 2 no. 4 (1916): 45.

Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau has suggested that: 'Far from being an academic or artificial exercise, poetry was often used by the most cultivated soldiers to describe more fully the unbearable, to render more "acceptable" the depiction of certain atrocities.'²¹ Referring to the literature that came after the Somme, John Keegan wrote that: 'Much of it was poetic in form, and it was the poetry which was published soonest, a great deal of it while the war was in progress'. He went on to say that: 'Its effect was transitory; or rather, it was to require for a prolongation of its effect some form of verification in prose ... But a silent majority of the war-generation probably perceived in their verse a truthfulness in which they could assent.'²² While Audoin-Rouzeau and Keegan were referring to the war poets who were usually middle class officers, some of their observations about writing poetry, as opposed to prose, are relevant in the context of the *Chronicles*. Seemingly it was somehow easier to put the experience into verse but the editor wanted to publish more prose.

Verse appeared in every issue of the *Chronicles* that were studied for this chapter, with the exception of number 35. Some items were signed and included a regimental number and unit while others were signed with initials only such as Corporal Donald H. Lea (8/2037) of the Otago Infantry Battalion who signed himself D. H. L. He was quite a prolific writer in verse having six poems published in the first three issues. There were other contributors of verse who were not members of the N.Z.E.F., such as F. M. Bouillet and Horace Wyatt, and two women, Jessie Pope and Dorothy Benton. They will be studied more closely in the following chapter.

The poetry is often now regarded as jingoistic with simple rhyme schemes similar to those used in nursery rhymes or ballads. As in other trench

²¹ Audoin-Rouzeau, p. 76.

²² John Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1976, p. 281.

magazines, the style of popular poets of the time such as Lewis Carroll, G. K. Chesterton, Omar Khayyam and Rudyard Kipling were parodied or copied.²³ A poem signed by L.C.P. with the title ‘Then’ has a subtitle in bracket ‘With Apologies to Mr Kipling’.²⁴ ‘The O.C. and the Adjutant’, subtitled ‘With Sincere Apologies to the Authors of “Alice in Wonderland” ’ by B.B.W.M.,²⁵ ‘The Lay of the Orderly Sergeant: (With Apologies to Omar Khayyam)’ by Sgt. G. D. Hunter²⁶ and ‘The Promised Land’ by Ephraim,²⁷ written as a parody of the ‘Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam’, were other examples.

When mentioned, the war at the front was often described in optimistic tones of glory, patriotism, valour and duty. This is illustrated by an extract from a poem by D. H. L.:

“Stand-to!”
 And twilight falls on No-man’s Land,
 As down the trench from man to man
 The word is passed ; the sentries waken weary men
 From slumber, watched and broken, all too brief ...
 Yet, that white flame men call the soul
 Burned bright and clear within them,
 Warming their hearts to high resolve ;
 Thus, they came,
 To stand to arms, and carry on.²⁸

²³ *Dominion*. ‘Trench Journals: Literary Diversions at the Front’, September 25, 1916: 5.

²⁴ ‘Then: (With Apologies to Mr Kipling)’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 1 (1916): 12.

²⁵ B.B.W.M., ‘The O.C. and the Adjutant With Sincere Apologies to the Authors of “Alice in Wonderland” ’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 7 (1916): 152.

²⁶ G. D. Hunter, ‘The Lay of the Orderly Sergeant: (With Apologies to Omar Khayyam)’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 7 (1916): 158.

²⁷ Ephraim, ‘The Promised Land’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 33 (1917): 204.

²⁸ D. H. L., ‘Stand-To!’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 2 (1916): 33.

In earlier issues there was a certain understatement in writing about the actual fighting. Stylistically, what is not said or cannot be verbalised, can have more impact on the reader. Audoin-Rouzeau asserted that ‘paradoxically, such extreme reserve probably adds to the impression of distress ... but such restraint was not always the norm, and the trench newspapers did not hesitate to describe the wretched scenes after battles: the suffering of the wounded, the corpses strewn on the ground.’²⁹ This assessment applied to the *Chronicles* also, where more graphic descriptions came in later issues. Delver wrote:

We’ll stand ‘is flamin’ shrapnel, what he lobs all round about...
Machine guns makes yer anxious, and the sniper puts you out,
But one thing worse upon yer patience tells.
It’s the mud, the blindin’ mud,
Clingin’, draggin’, downing mud
With lakes an’ pools and puddles far and wide ;
Grave of débris, dead, and dud,
Black and brown, and tinged with blood
The soil where heroes struggled, fought, and died ...³⁰

There were almost hints of subversion creeping in. An officer new to the front insisted that he knew how to break through wire entanglements. The writer commented ‘Well, ’taint no manner o’ good to waste breath on a cove³¹ like that, but it don’t go down with privates wot has fought from the Somme to Ypres.’³² There were echoes of the language and sentiments used by C. J. Dennis in *The Moods of Ginger Mick*, a verse–

²⁹ Audoin-Rouzeau, pp. 76-7.

³⁰ Delver, ‘Mud’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 36 (1918): 288.

³¹ ‘Cove’ is defined as a slang term, meaning, ‘fellow, bloke, chap’, Orsman, p. 174.

³² ‘Advising the New ’And’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 36 (1918): 286.

narrative about an Australian larrikin who, against the odds, became a hero. In 'The Call of Stousch' he wrote:

An' 'aughty scorn uv blokes like Ginger Mick –
I sez to them, put sich crook thorts aside.
An' don't lay on the patronage too thick.
Orl men is brothers when it comes to lash ...³³

The poetry was not always serious. There were cheerful, amusing poems such as 'Where I've Slept – Since Joining the Army' by Batman, 4th Field Co.³⁴ or 'Little Lady' by L.F. where it transpired that the subject was a cigarette personified. An extract from 'Little Lady' follows:

Little lady, straight and slender,
With your dear heart as true as steel ...
Your heart is burning, hot with fire,
While I caress your body white ;
And now is stilled my one desire ...
Be the road, eh, my cigarette ?³⁵

The sentimental or maudlin never seemed too far away:

They tell me I am going home ...
I'll taste the old home comforts,
I'll feel the old home joys ...
The little boy, now grown a youth
Will act as eyes for me.³⁶

³³ C. J. Dennis, 'The Call to Stousch,' in *The Moods of Ginger Mick*, C. J. Dennis, Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1916, p. 33; 'Lash' is defined as, 'violence', *Ibid.*, p. 149.

³⁴ Batman, 4th Field Co., 'Where I've Slept Since Joining the Army', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 32 (1917): 185.

³⁵ L. F., 'Little Lady', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 36 (1918): 286.

Home was often idealised and romanticised, such as in ‘The Promised Land’ by Ephraim:

But I’m dreamin’, dreamin’, dreamin’,
Of the golden broom that’s gleamin’,
On the hills of windy Wellington, the promised land for ME ...
And the landscape’s ever green.³⁷

The romantic depiction of home in terms of a rural and unified country, representing patriotism, purity, beauty and strength, was similarly noted in the editor’s writing and described in *Punch* and the *Wipers Time*, with reference to Great Britain.³⁸

The amount and style of verse published was probably an indication of the literary preference of the troops. While it was unsophisticated it could be lyrical and at times sadly evocative with a sense of honesty and realism in its immediacy. Sometimes sentimental, it was also entertaining and amusing. Seemingly most of the work written by the troops was for this time and publication only. Just a few, such as Donald Lea, had work published outside of the *Chronicles*. This was in common with other trench newspapers.³⁹

³⁶ 3rd Reserve, ‘Going Home’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 7 (1916): 160.

³⁷ Ephraim, ‘The Promised Land’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 33 (1917): 204.

³⁸ Esther MacCallum-Stewart, ‘Feature Articles: Satirical Magazines of the First World War: *Punch* and the *Wipers Times*’.

Retrieved March 24, 2009 from:

www.firstworldwar.com/features/satirical.htm

³⁹ David Kent, ‘Introduction’, *Kia Ora Coo-ee: The Magazine for the ANZACS in the Middle East, 1918*, Australia: Cornstalk Publishing, 1981. [Facsimile of the *Kia Ora Coo-ee: Official Magazine of the Australian and New Zealand Forces in Egypt, Palestine, Salonica & Mesopotamia* (March to December 1918)], p. xiii.

The prose contributions in the *Chronicles* were free ranging and sometimes material beyond the actual war was introduced. They included fuller articles on matters alluded to in editorials and editorial notes. There was a mix of items from the editor, signed and unsigned contributions, on topics ranging from the entertaining or frivolous to the more serious. ‘Visitors and Their Treatment’⁴⁰ is an example of light-hearted writing where categories of hospital visitors were described in an entertaining way. ‘Mainly About Hats’⁴¹ and ‘Hut Arguments’,⁴² both by Chris H. Read, were amusing sketches about army life. Humour in war publications has been seen in various ways, including a means of coping and a medium for communicating ‘concerns that might otherwise have been taboo, especially fear and uncertainty.’⁴³

Writing about the New Zealand Division at the Battle of the Somme, Stewart said that the New Zealand infantry were keenly aware of what was happening around them, in contrast to ‘the boyish insouciance of the English soldier’.⁴⁴ Even the French, it has been said, ‘took very little interest in the unfolding of the war as a whole ... more distant events aroused only widespread indifference.’⁴⁵ But in New Zealand where education was free to everybody it ‘nurtures the seed of independence’, so that everyone felt they could be leaders and, as a consequence, the men in

⁴⁰ P. P., ‘Visitors and Their Treatment’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 4 (1916): 90.

⁴¹ Chris H. Read, ‘Mainly About Hats’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 3 (1916): 55.

⁴² Chris H. Read, ‘Hut Arguments’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 6 (1916): 133.

⁴³ Carmen Moran and Margaret Massam, ‘A “Trace of History”: Cartoons From the Australian War Memorial Christmas Books of the Second World War’.

Retrieved April 24, 2009 from:

<http://www.awm.gov.au/journal/j39/cartoons.asp>.

⁴⁴ Hugh Stewart, *The New Zealand Division, 1914-1919: A Popular History Based on Official Records*, Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1921, p. 73.

⁴⁵ Audoin-Rouzeau, p. 159.

the ranks exhibited 'a native inquisitiveness ... they seem to want to know all about their surroundings, and to have the intelligence to grasp the situation. A certain mental restlessness will not leave them content with only sufficient information to carry out their duties; they find out more.'⁴⁶

This may explain, to some degree, the variety of topics beyond the immediacy of war that were reported. For example a letter and discussion flowed from an article in *The Times* on relations between Britain and the Dominions after the war.⁴⁷ A column headed 'Government Contracts' covered wool and meat production and negotiations to sell the New Zealand goods to the Imperial Government. This followed a paragraph in the 'Editorial Notes' in the same issue.⁴⁸ By the Passchendaele period less was being written in this vein. One reason advanced for this is that more space was taken up with casualty lists and hospital reports. However, there was reference to the formation of a Returned Soldiers' Association back in New Zealand;⁴⁹ a piece called 'Martial Sentiment' reminiscing about battle, war and the future at home;⁵⁰ the wearing of chevrons for overseas service;⁵¹ and 'The Poilu'. The latter was a three-column piece comparing the Poilu (the French equivalent of the Tommy) to other Allied soldiers, which recognised a number of differences peculiar to the French, but concluded with 'a very high opinion of him'.⁵²

⁴⁶ C. H. Weston, *Three Years With the New Zealanders*, London: Skeffington, 1918, pp. 249-50.

⁴⁷ *The Times*, 'A New Zealander's Peace Views', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 9 (1916): 208-9.

⁴⁸ 'Government Contracts', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 8 (1917): 183.

⁴⁹ Mackenzie, 'The Returned Soldiers' Association of N.Z.', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 29 (1917): 112.

⁵⁰ 'Martial Sentiment', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 33 (1917): 207.

⁵¹ 'War Service Oversea [sic]: A Chevron for Each Year', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 nos. 34/35 (1917): 6.

⁵² Lance Captain, 'The Poilu', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 33 (1917): 214.

In general the enemy was not referred to in hostile terms. In a series of three articles with the title 'A Short Autobiography of a Hun',⁵³ the author posed as one Ludwig Wunderhässlichkeit (translates as Wondrous Ugliness), who had been captured by the New Zealanders. In a parody, he is described as 'weighing only 80 lbs., having a deformed limb, four toes missing from the right foot, blind in one eye, and walking sideways and in a crouching manner.'⁵⁴ 'Fritz' is an amusing piece where the writer described the German trench fighters almost affectionately.⁵⁵ This confirmed the view that broadly speaking the armies of the British Empire did not hate the enemy.⁵⁶ Richard Aldington, in a fictionalised account, wrote that: 'If the German soldiers were like the men we had seen on the boat that morning, then we liked and respected them too.'⁵⁷

Every issue contained illustrations. G. H. Gilmour designed the front cover until 28 March 1917 when Mr Harry Rountree an Auckland designer and artist produced the design.⁵⁸

⁵³ 'A Short Autobiography of a Hun', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 5 (1916): 102-3; 1 no. 7 (1916): 159-60; 1 no. 8 (1916): 178-9.

⁵⁴ 'A Short Autobiography of a Hun', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no 8 (1916): 178-9.

⁵⁵ 'Fritz', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 29 (1917): 113.

⁵⁶ Fuller, p. 40; Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years: Australian Soldiers in the Great War*, Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1974, p. 224.

⁵⁷ Richard Aldington, *Death of a Hero*, London: Hogarth Press, 1984, p. 258.

⁵⁸ Mackenzie, 'From the Editorial Bivvie', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 2 no. 15 (1917): 51.

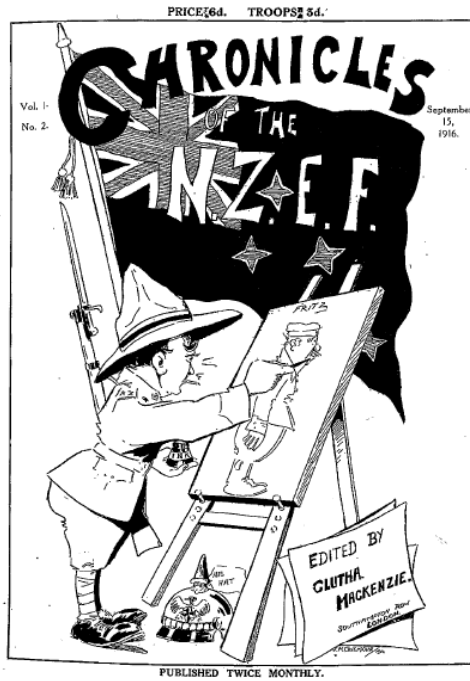


Figure 5: G. H. Gilmour, Front Cover.
Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F., 1 no. 2 (1916).

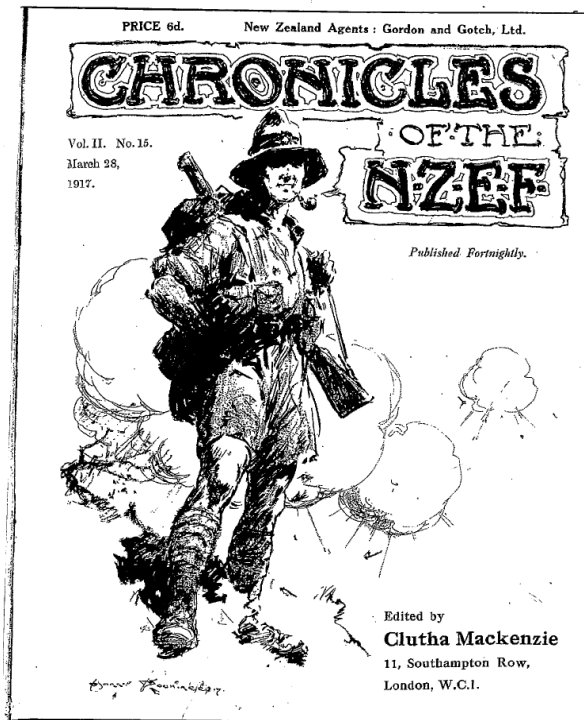


Figure 6: H. Rountree, Front Cover.
Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F., 2 no. 15 (1917).

There was at least one cartoon or caricature and sometimes there were photographs of personnel and places. The drawings were almost always signed and the regular illustrators, such as W. Bell, W. Dobson, J. H. Gilmour, G. P. Hanna, E. F. Hiscocks and T. H. Kelsey, were enlisted men. While some cartoons depicted a darker humour, 'most ... show the stoical and cynical humour of ordinary soldiers enduring the trenches.'⁵⁹



Figure 7: F. R. Alex, 'What the H-- ! Is it Going To Be Three Castles (With Apologies to Bairnsfather).' *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 27 (1917): 55.

Some were seen as 'real Bairnsfathery pictures'.⁶⁰ Bruce Bairnsfather has been described as the 'most famous cartoonist of the Great War' who was

⁵⁹ McGibbon, (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Military History*, p. 575.

⁶⁰ *New Zealand Free Lance*, [Untitled], March 30, 1917, p. 4.

credited for 'telling it like it was'.⁶¹ One cartoon by E. R. Alex went so far as to include a sub-text 'with apologies to Bairnsfather'.⁶²

Many were very funny, such as Kelsey's cartoon that referred to the old joke about the turkey dreading Christmas while also alluding to the Turks and Gallipoli.⁶³



Figure 8: T. H. Kelsey, '“We Missed Christmas, but Now We're Done!”'
Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F., 3 nos. 34-35 (1918): 5.

Photographs included snaps of sports teams. An example had as its caption, 'The All Black Team which beat Plymouth, October 28'.⁶⁴ Other

⁶¹ 'Bairnsfather Cartoons'.
Retrieved July 9, 2009 from:

<http://www.geocities.com/neveahfs/Bairnsfather.html?20099>

⁶² E. R. Alex, 'What the H--! Is it Going To Be Three Castles (With Apologies to Bairnsfather)', [Caption], *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 27 (1917): 55.

⁶³ '“We Missed Christmas, But Now we're Done!”', [Caption], *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 34 (1918): 233.

⁶⁴ 'Football', *Chronicles N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 7 (1916): 153.

photographs showed a spotless hospital ward at Walton without a sign of any seriously ill patients, presumably to reassure the readers at home,⁶⁵ some convalescing patients on an outing,⁶⁶ a trench,⁶⁷ and two that accompanied a report from the Mounted Rifles with captions ‘Unloading Stores’ and ‘Laying Cables’, which pictured camels being used by the troops.⁶⁸

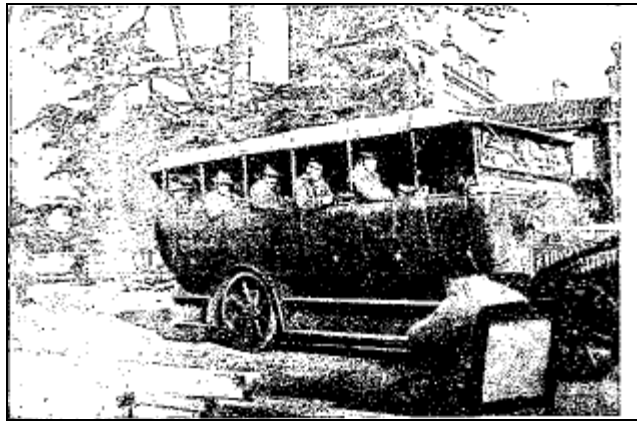


Figure 9: ‘Boys off on a Bus Ride, Walton.’
Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F., 1 no. 8 (1916): 186.

There was a note at the beginning of every issue about all material being subject to censorship by the editor and the Public Censor and the editor referred to censorship being in place.⁶⁹ The aim of military censorship was ‘to suppress any information about military operations or likely to be

⁶⁵ ‘A Ward at Walton’, [Caption], *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 5 (1916): 108.

⁶⁶ ‘Boys off on a Bus Ride’, [Caption], *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 8 (1916): 186.

⁶⁷ ‘A Trench View’, [Caption], *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 9 (1916): 210.

⁶⁸ C. M. R., ‘Some Lines from the Crusaders’, *Chronicles N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 29 (1917): 105.

⁶⁹ Mackenzie, ‘The Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 1 (1916): 3.

harmful to morale'.⁷⁰ Indeed this was one reason advanced to explain the lack of material from the front because 'everything one particularly wants to scribble about is liable to censorship.'⁷¹

In the *Chronicles* officer-men relations were referred to in a benevolent way and criticisms of superiors or disciplinary matters were not generally published, probably in deference to military regulations including censorship. With regard to trench journals in general, the *Dominion* newspaper reported that: 'There is, again, the same measure of relaxation, in print, of the restraints of discipline; nearly everybody, except the C.O. and the second-in-command, is gently "chaffed."' ⁷² This same finding was noted in a study of the memoirs, diaries and letters of British soldiers when it was found that: 'It is rare indeed to find a blanket condemnation of officers ... A furious denunciation of one officer is likely to be followed by a complimentary reference to another.'⁷³ In French trench magazines there was much the same attitude. Audoin-Rouzeau observed that there was 'the concern of many newspapers to sustain respect for command and military regulations' even though reality may have been somewhat different at times.⁷⁴ These views also applied to the *Chronicles*.

An extract from 'I wonder', written by D. H. L., illustrated the same observation about the officer-men relationship. He wrote:

⁷⁰ McGibbon, (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Military History*, p. 81.

⁷¹ 'A Footslogger's Dilemma', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 2 no. 20 (1917): 176.

⁷² *Dominion*, 'Trench Journals: Literary Diversions at the Front', September 25, 1916: 5.

⁷³ Gary Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches: Officer-Man Relation, Morale and Discipline in the British Army in the Era of the First World War*, New York: St Martin's Press in association with King's College, 2000, p. 106.

⁷⁴ Audoin-Rouzeau, pp. 56-7.

I wonder if the Sergeant-Major
Really is a god ;
Otherwise his loud behaviour
Seems extremely odd...

But most I wonder if you wonder
What the private's for
Well, he's the bloke who, while they thunder,
Wins the bloody war.⁷⁵

But generally censorship restrictions seemed to operate quite liberally. It has been asserted that troop magazines 'were allowed considerable freedom to speak outside the matters of military intelligence.'⁷⁶ Indeed, it has been observed that over time 'censorship and self-censorship could not prevent the trench newspapers from responding little by little to the concerns, grievances and hopes of their readers,' or risk failure.⁷⁷ In order to be successful the *Chronicles* (and other similar publications such as trench magazines) had to be responsive to their readership and relate to them immediately. In addition they often needed to sell enough copies to cover costs. There was no scope 'to be "discovered" by future audiences like works of great literature'.⁷⁸ With this in mind the *Chronicles* were clearly populist in tone.

The *Chronicles* were intended to assist in maintaining morale. In his editorial column in *Ye Ancient Athenian*, Clutha Mackenzie stated that 'magazines, concerts and sports are just some of those small pleasantries which go so far towards making that splendid cheerful *morale*, which has stood the British soldier in such good stead through the weary monotony,

⁷⁵ D. H. L., 'I Wonder', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 5 (1916): 104.

⁷⁶ Fuller, p. 20.

⁷⁷ Audoin-Rouzeau, pp. 33-4.

⁷⁸ Patrick J. Quinn and Steven Trout, (eds.), *The Literature of the Great War Reconsidered: Beyond Modern Memory*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001, p. 26.

hardships and dangers of these three years.’⁷⁹ His reference to magazines would have included the *Chronicles* together with troopship publications, since by this time he was already editing the former.

Fuller concluded that there was more to troop newspapers than just a magazine of ephemeral items for the present. He believed that the men wanted their experiences to be recognised back home and so they wrote not only with friends and relatives in mind but also with an awareness that they were taking part in great events. Fuller believed that the troops themselves ‘wanted to preserve a record of their thoughts and experiences, both for themselves and for history. The value of the magazines as souvenirs is constantly emphasized.’⁸⁰ It is what Audoin-Rouzeau described as a ‘guarantee against oblivion’ because although it was ‘only a description by soldiers and for them, true, but nonetheless a description, one which would, moreover, take on the significance of proof.’⁸¹

The New Zealanders were no exception and they too wanted to preserve some sort of narrative of events and keep copies of the *Chronicles* after the war. The editor noted that: ‘There are many requests from men of the Expeditionary Force for the whole series of back numbers ... converted in due course into bound volumes for them ... Realising the desire of the men for these records, everything is to be done to collect and supply the greatest number of volumes.’⁸²

The editor also regarded them as a record of events and was looking ahead to the preparation of the official war histories. In 1918 he wrote:

⁷⁹ Mackenzie, (ed.), *Ye Ancient Athenian*, p. 3.

⁸⁰ Fuller, pp. 12-15.

⁸¹ Audoin-Rouzeau, p. 45.

⁸² Mackenzie, ‘Bound Volumes’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 5 no. 60 (1919): 289.

It steadily becomes a more and more complete record of the life of the Expeditionary Force in the field, in hospitals and base camps, and some of these simple reports of our life ... will be fine old relics to have in the years to come ... these pages are invaluable for the future.⁸³

The competition, run in the *Chronicles* to encourage more prose articles for publication, was also done with the view that such writing would be 'of great service as war records'.⁸⁴

Referring to trench journals, Fuller observed that 'sometimes they were clearly concerned to produce a journal which was a message to those at home ... This motive seems to have had a particular force with the Dominion troops, cut off from home more than their British fellows.'⁸⁵ The *Chronicles* can be seen in this way as well. A New Zealand newspaper reported at the time that: "Through the "Chronicles" much information would be gained by the New Zealand public of the life of the men on active service, and of many other things that were more or less unknown at the present time.'⁸⁶

The rich variety of content in the *Chronicles* reflected their purpose as stated at the start of their publication and developed over time. They contained items of interest to the troops including hospital and casualty lists, the inclusion of which was regarded as a primary function, they kept the various elements of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in contact with each other and those at home, and they were a medium for the troops to have their own contributions published. They were intended to assist in

⁸³ Mackenzie, 'Chronicles Affairs', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 5 no. 53 (1918): 111.

⁸⁴ ' "Chronos." Prizes', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 5 no. 58 (1918): 228.

⁸⁵ Fuller, p. 12.

⁸⁶ *Dominion*, 'Trooper Mackenzie Entertained: Guest of the Soldiers' Club', May 14, 1917: 3.

boosting morale and censorship was possibly relaxed, consciously or unconsciously, in order for these publications to fulfil this role. The overall impression of the content is one of humour by way of boyish joking and high spirits, and what has been referred to as ‘old, cold courage ... and an absolute faith in the victory of the Allies’.⁸⁷

The *Chronicles* were similar to trench journals and troopship magazines in terms of their subject matter and style of writing. But the *Chronicles* went further. They had a longer publication life and they informed as well as amused. The more serious content, beyond the immediate sphere of army life, and in particular in the trench or on board the troopship, was probably a reflection of the situation in which the New Zealanders were placed. With them being further away from home than any of the other allied forces, there was sense of being in a special, if not unique position, which created a stronger desire to maintain contact with, and reassure those who were left behind. Later, with the future in mind, the content of the *Chronicles* was considered to be an important record of events for the participants to keep, as well as primary source material for the writing of the official histories.

All these elements were incorporated into the *Chronicles* to produce what was a combination of troop publication and newspaper. The content and tone, which was a mix of bright and light writing while not shying away from the reality of conditions at the front or even some criticism of the authorities, seemed to meet the approval and expectations of the various categories of readers because the magazine was popular at the front, with the troops in England and back in New Zealand, and endured for 61 issues from August 1916 until the end of the war. This is crucial evidence of its success.

⁸⁷ *TLS: The Times Literary Supplement*, ‘Trench Journals’, October 13, 1916: 481.

CHAPTER 4

Contributors and Correspondents

This chapter examines the contributors and correspondents, (other than the editor, who is the subject of chapter two) and their work in more detail. While a number of writers used their full names, including regimental number, many only used initials or pseudonyms, or wrote anonymously, making them very difficult to identify. Servicemen and civilians, some of whom were women, were among the contributors. Sometimes articles and poems were reprinted from other publications. Reports from two war correspondents, Malcolm Ross and Philip Gibbs, an accredited British wartime correspondent who had been posted to the Western Front were also published. In addition to writers there were a number of illustrators who contributed. As in the previous chapter the same selected issues of the *Chronicles*, which cover the reporting of the First Battle of the Somme (1916) and the Battle of Passchendaele (1917), are studied so it will not be an exhaustive analysis of the entire magazine.

Leaving aside the regular columnists from the H.C.N.Z.'s office and the clubs and hospitals, about half of the contributions were signed, sometimes with the unit and location appended and occasionally a regimental number. About another quarter of writers signed with just their initials. Some of these were easily identified such as C. N. M for Clutha Mackenzie and Corporal Donald H. Lea, who signed off as D. H. L. Just under a quarter used pseudonyms and the remainder were completely anonymous. Sometimes the author's unit, place and date were added to unsigned material.

D .H. L. was a prolific contributor from the second issue on, in the Somme period. In this and the next three issues he had eight poems

published and his contributions continued for the life of the *Chronicles*. Lea enlisted in February 1915 and served in Egypt and France with the Otago Infantry Regiment. After contracting a fever in July 1916 he was admitted to the London General Hospital in Chelsea and later transferred to Brockenhurst and Hornchurch Hospitals. He sent material to the *Chronicles* while he was hospitalised. When he was discharged as being unfit for further service, as a result of gas poisoning, he moved to Birmingham in December 1916, where he continued writing for the *Chronicles*. At the end of the war he returned to New Zealand and took up a lecturing position at the Engineering School at Canterbury College (which later became Canterbury University) so he was a well-educated man.¹ He continued writing and had two books of poems published in 1919 and another in the 1930s.²

In 1917, *Stand Down*, a book of his poems was published, with a foreword written by the H.C.N.Z. This book included many poems that had first appeared in the *Chronicles*.³ It was claimed that there were ‘some striking poems amongst his collection – striking because they portray the real thing simply, and because, although the theme is necessarily, at this time, one of war, there runs through it ... that dainty thread of imagination ...’⁴ Some of his poetry was written in ballad metre and he regularly wrote about hospital life. ‘How They Come’ illustrates both these aspects:

The Doctors come by two, by two,
An aide-de-camp, an’ an orderly who

¹ Donald Henry Lea, Personnel File, 8/2037, Army, Archives New Zealand.

² Donald Henry Lea, *Dionè: A Spring Medley*, Birmingham: Cornish Brothers, 1919; *Number of Things: In Verse*, Birmingham: Cornish Brothers, 1919; *Verse*, Otaki, N.Z.: D. H. Lea, 1935-1938.

³ Donald Henry Lea, *Stand down!*, London: Elkin Mathews, 1917.

⁴ P. W., ‘A Poet of the N.Z.E.F.’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 27 (1917): 53.

Would look very well in a suit of “blue”
(At four o’clock in the mornin’) ...
The Sisters come by three, by three,
Lookin’ as trim an’ neat as we,
For they’ve been round the wards to see
(At four o’clock in the mornin’)...⁵

Lea wrote the occasional article in prose as well. ‘Hospital Haverings’ is an amusing piece, written from his hospital bed in England, on different accents and in particular the use of the letter ‘h’ in speech.⁶ But he also wrote in a more serious vein. In ‘Stand-To!’ he vividly described being at the front in ‘No-man’s Land’ as:

Walking as though in nightmare sleep
Upon the narrow, never-ending track,
Which writhes and twists in torture as it runs
Close set on either side with slimy foetid walls ...
Where nameless horrors lie⁷

Another of Lea’s poems, ‘Gold Stripe’ described in shocking terms the mental trauma some men suffered:

I don’t suppose yer ever saw them jumpin’ “ marionettes,”
The blokes who flap their feet about? I tell yer, yer forgets
There’s things that’s worse than bein’ killed. Them twitchin’ bodies
greet
Yer eyesight in the “shell-shock” wards. I’ve heard it called
“cold feet.”⁸

⁵ D. H. L., ‘How They Came’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 3 (1916): 61.

⁶ D. H. L., ‘Hospital Haverings’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 8 (1916): 184-5.

⁷ D. H. L., ‘Stand-To!’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 2 (1916): 33.

⁸ D. H. L., ‘Gold Stripe’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 8 (1916): 173.

Other named contributors of articles included John A. Lee (regimental number 16560) of the Wellington Regiment. He was awarded a Distinguished Conduct Medal at Messines when he charged a German machine gun post and took forty prisoners. He was wounded in March 1918 and as a result had his left arm amputated.⁹ After the war he became involved in New Zealand politics and by chance, Clutha Mackenzie and Lee stood against one another in the 1922 New Zealand parliamentary election for the seat of Auckland East. Mackenzie was the sitting member but he lost to Lee, the Labour candidate.¹⁰ In 1940 Lee was expelled from the Labour Party but he remained in Parliament until the 1943 general election when he was not re-elected.¹¹ He then went on to form a small printing company and wrote a range of political pamphlets and a number of books.¹²

In the *Chronicles* Lee was billed as ‘our special correspondent’¹³ and ‘one of our own correspondents’.¹⁴ He was noted as a man ‘who writes such realistic accounts of life at the front for the CHRONICLES’.¹⁵ He was a regular writer from the front and proved to be ‘articulate, quick-witted

⁹ McGibbon, (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Military History*, p. 275.

¹⁰ Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, ‘Mackenzie, Clutha Nantes 1895-1966’.

Retrieved July 27, 2009 from :

<http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/dnzb/Essay>

¹¹ McGibbon, (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Military History*, p. 275.

¹² These included *Children of the Poor*, London: T. Werner Laurie, 1934; *The Hunted*, London: T. Werner Laurie, 1936; *Civilian into Soldier*, London: T. Werner Laurie, 1937; *Socialism in New Zealand*, London: T. Werner Laurie, 1938; *Shining with the Shiner*, Hamilton: F. W. Mead, 1944; *Rhetoric at the Red Dawn*, London: Collins, 1965; *Mussolini’s Millions*, London: Howard Baker, 1970; *Political Notebooks*, Wellington: A. Taylor, 1973; *Soldier*, Wellington: Reed, 1976.

¹³ John A. Lee, ‘Reflections of Things Seen at the Front’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 27 (1917): 54.

¹⁴ John A. Lee, ‘In the Ypres Salient’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 4 no. 37 (1918): 6.

¹⁵ ‘Mostly About the Boys’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 27 (1917): 59.

and clever'.¹⁶ His articles, in prose, were generally upbeat and often very amusing observations of army life.

On a more serious note Lee wrote to the editor to bring some balance to extravagant claims made by politicians back in New Zealand over the part the New Zealanders played in the Battle of Messines. He wanted to set the record straight as to the extent of the Australians' contribution, which he acknowledged as significant. He concluded: 'Certainly the boys here do not prompt these politicians, and generally condemn them in fierce and forcible language.'¹⁷

While it appears that the majority of contributors were servicemen there were some civilians also. Horace Wyatt contributed a poem named 'A Famous Victory' which was reprinted from a contemporary journal *The Key of the House of Selfridge*.¹⁸ He was the author of a book called *Malice in Kultureland*, published in 1915, which was a political version of *Alice in Wonderland* with a number of references to World War I.¹⁹ F. M. Bouillet of Bournemouth, wrote a poem in French, where he praised New Zealand soldiers in somewhat fulsome terms for their heroism and gallantry in fighting for France's freedom. A translated verse conveys a sense of the poem:

They come as mighty champions,
In order to rush at buccaneers.
You come to us without being asked,
You hurry over here, noble knights

¹⁶ Erik Olssen, 'Lee, John Alfred Alexander 1891-1982', in New Zealand. Department of Internal Affairs, *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, vol. 4, 1921-1940, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1998, p. 284.

¹⁷ John A. Lee, 'Misplaced Remarks', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 30 (1917): 123.

¹⁸ Horace Wyatt, 'A Famous Victory', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 7 (1916): 155.

¹⁹ Horace Wyatt, *Malice in Kultureland*, London: The Car Illustrated, 1915.

Soldiers from New Zealand!²⁰

There was the occasional contribution written by women including at least one prose piece by a nursing sister, Staff Nurse Josephine Holton (regimental number 22/454). Purported to be true, it described a cross that had been embroidered on to a soldier's tunic by a French woman. It's metal backing was credited with saving his life.²¹

A couple of civilian English women had their work published in the *Chronicles*. These included Jessie Pope, a British woman poet who was popular at the time. She had verse and also a short prose piece satirising New Zealanders' attitudes with respect to sport, home, discipline and the local weather, published in the *Chronicles*.²² The editor explained the background to the latter piece which was written after Jessie Pope's visit to the office of the *Chronicles*, when she rather unwisely commented on English sport. At the time she was widely published and a regular contributor to papers such as *Punch*, *Daily Mail* and *Daily Express*. Her writing is now regarded as trivialising war, partly because of her simple rhyme schemes, and she often wrote what might be regarded as propaganda, to encourage recruiting.²³ She lacked credibility because she was rather pro-war, although she had never experienced conditions at the

²⁰ F. M. Bouillet, 'Les Soldats de la N.Z.', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 37 (1917): 13.

²¹ J. Holton, 'The Red Crucifix', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 7 (1916): 162.

²² Jessie Pope, 'What I Think About the New Zealanders (Or What I Don't Think)', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 10 (1916): 223.

²³ 'Break of Day in the Trenches'.

Retrieved June 10, 2009 from:

http://www.whatalovevlywar.co.uk/war/2003/01/jessie_pope.html

front.²⁴ Two poems, published in the period studied, were inoffensive and light and suited one of the aims of the *Chronicles*, which was to entertain. In 'Coo-ee!' she urged London girls not to steal the Anzacs' hearts from 'the other girl who coo-ees from 'down under'' while extolling 'The Anzac Spirit [which] never can be broken'.²⁵

Dorothy Benton was another woman who contributed the occasional poem. 'Friendship' is a short nine-line poem, which is not particularly memorable, about friends being 'born not made'.²⁶ In 'Anzac Alphabet' her use of language suggests that while she was writing in England she had a strong association with New Zealand. She wrote:

D was the day he left Maoriland ...
Z's for the land he returned to once more,
Glad to be back, so Kia Ora Katoa.²⁷

Other wartime writers used this format, where each letter of the alphabet introduced rhyming lines of verse. *The Anzac Book* published 'An Anzac Alphabet' by J. W. S. Henderson, complete with illustrations and 'Another Attempt at an Anzac Alphabet' signed by 'Ubique'.²⁸

Some contributors had work, which appeared in other papers of the day, reprinted in the *Chronicles*. 'The Sentry's Lullaby to the Empire's Shirker',

²⁴ 'Old Poetry: Jessie Pope'.

Retrieved June 10, 2009 from:

http://oldpoetry.com/oauthor/show/Jessie_Pope_10_June_2009

²⁵ Jessie Pope, 'Coo-ee!', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 9 (1916): 199.

²⁶ Dorothy Benton, 'Friendship', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 3 (1916): 66.

²⁷ Dorothy Benton, 'Anzac Alphabet', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 8 (1916): 179.

²⁸ *The Anzac Book*, Written and Illustrated by the Men of Anzac, London: Cassell, 1916, pp. 115-8, 146-7.

was reprinted from the *Wairarapa Daily News*,²⁹ and ‘Only One More Kit Inspection ...’ from the *News of the Week* in Geelong, Australia.³⁰ Sir Charles Christopher Bowen’s poem ‘The Battle of the Free’, written in 1861, was another which was reprinted in the *Chronicles*.³¹

As war correspondents Ross and Gibbs contributed to the *Chronicles*. Ross had been a parliamentary reporter since 1897 and in August 1914 he went as a correspondent with the New Zealand troops, when they took Samoa from Germany. In 1915 he was appointed the official New Zealand war correspondent and in April 1916 made an honorary captain. Ross was friendly with a number of prominent people including the Prime Minister, William Massey,³² and Sir Thomas Mackenzie with whom he shared an interest in tramping. They had explored parts of New Zealand’s Southern Alps together before the war.³³

Ross went to Gallipoli in June 1915 and then to the Western Front in June 1916, from where he filed reports about New Zealand’s participation, until the end of the war.³⁴ However, under the conditions of his appointment, set by the government, Ross was ‘subject to the direction of the New Zealand Government and the High Commissioner for New Zealand’ and under section six he was not to send material by cable to New Zealand. Instead his dispatches were to be posted to the High Commissioner in London and only those ‘of special and urgent importance’ could be sent by

²⁹ ‘The Sentry’s Lullaby to the Empire’s Shirker’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 5 (1916): 120.

³⁰ ‘Only One More Kit Inspection ...’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 9 (1916): 210.

³¹ Charles Christopher Bowen, ‘The Battle of the Free’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 7 (1917): 163.

³² McGibbon, (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Military History*, pp. 452-3.

³³ Kenneth Ross, Ross Family Papers, 1915-1917, 1953, MS-Papers-8108, Alexander Turnbull Library.

³⁴ McGibbon, (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Military History*, p. 453.

telegram. They were then transmitted to New Zealand.³⁵ His dispatches for the *Chronicles* also went through the High Commissioner. The ban on cabling was to keep costs down but it put Ross at a disadvantage because it resulted in delays and as a result some papers even withdrew from the arrangement.³⁶

Complaints about the timeliness of Ross's reports were investigated as early as 1915 by Lieutenant-Colonel R. Heaton Rhodes, a member of the New Zealand Parliament. Once it was realised that the dispatches by Bean, the Australian war correspondent, were sometimes received ahead of those by Ross, the latter was granted permission to cable 'news of important engagements or events'.³⁷ However, this proposed solution did not really work. Cables were still brief because of cost and longer dispatches were usually sent by post.³⁸ Seemingly there were not enough subscribers to cover the costs of cabling.³⁹

Criticism of Ross's work continued after Gallipoli, when he was in France. A deputation from the United Press Association, in March 1917, told Allen, who was at times Acting Prime Minister as well as Defence Minister, that Ross's dispatches were unsatisfactory in terms of delivery time back to New Zealand. Allen cabled Massey who was in England and Massey in turn consulted Godley and Russell who said that they wanted Ross to

³⁵ *New Zealand Times*, 'War Correspondent: Conditions of the Appointment Issued', March 2, 1915: 7; War Correspondents (Official) with N.Z.E.F., File D51/217, Department of Defence, Archives New Zealand.

³⁶ McGibbon, (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Military History*, p. 579.

³⁷ R. Heaton Rhodes, '... On His Mission to the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in Malta, Mudros, Gallipoli, and Egypt, as the Representative of the Government', *Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives*, 2 no. H-19b (1916): 14.

³⁸ Palenski, 'Malcolm Ross: A Forgotten Casualty', p. 119.

³⁹ James Sanders, *Date-line-NZPA: The New Zealand Press Association, 1880-1980*, Auckland: Wilson & Horton, 1979, p. 49.

continue as the war correspondent. They both believed that New Zealand troops would suffer if he were replaced.⁴⁰ Massey himself wrote in January 1917:

New Zealand soldiers have been given a good deal of publicity, but unfortunately the public in many instances mix them up with Australians, and think they are one and the same. New Zealand itself is hardly ever mentioned and the country suffers accordingly.⁴¹

Richardson, in his report on the administration of the N.Z.E.F., which was written after the war, stated that he firmly believed that the work of N.Z.E.F. troops in the war had not been given the publicity it deserved, in the English press. He wrote that: 'While frequent reports of the doings of the Canadians and Australians appeared in the daily papers, rarely ever was the N.Z.E.F. referred to.'⁴² That New Zealand was not afforded as much attention is probably not unusual for a secondary, smaller partner in any similar relationship.

Ross also sent articles to British newspapers and the *Chronicles*, in the last two years of the war. While he had some difficulty getting material published in the English press, in the *Chronicles* he had a willing publisher. Some of his contributions in the latter were also written for New Zealand newspapers but others were written specifically for the *Chronicles* and these continued for the duration of that publication. In the

⁴⁰ Palenski, 'Malcolm Ross: A New Zealand Failure in the Great War', pp. 28-9.

⁴¹ Allen, J. and W. F. Massey, Correspondence, January 2, 1917, pp. 3-4; File ADBQ 16145, Allen 1/9, Miscellaneous Files and Papers, Archives New Zealand.

⁴² George S. Richardson, 'Notes on the Administration of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, 1918-1919', p. 7, in 'Papers Relating to World War One', Hugh Stewart, MS-Papers-9080-24, Alexander Turnbull Library.

Chronicles he was writing for a captive audience, and he appeared to be largely free from the constraints of mainstream journalism.

It was thought that the material Ross collected would be used later in writing the official war histories.⁴³ In view of his writing ability and the time he spent at the front he seemed a likely choice to write the popular account of the New Zealand soldiers' history of the war. Strengthening his case was the fact that he had the support of Godley, the Commander of the N.Z.E.F.,⁴⁴ and Massey.⁴⁵ However, 'there was a strong determination among the military authorities in Wellington that he should not be employed for this purpose'.⁴⁶ Ross was passed over as the author, in favour of several military appointees.

Gibbs also had work published in the *Chronicles*. He was an English journalist and novelist who served as one of five official British reporters in World War I. Samuel Hynes described him as, 'probably the most widely read, and most influential, of English journalists.'⁴⁷ He was posted to the Western Front early in the war, but before long the War Office in London decided that they would 'manage' war reporting⁴⁸ and he was recalled over censorship concerns by the authorities in London. When Gibbs refused to leave the front he was arrested and sent home. But he was soon appointed

⁴³ McGibbon, (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Military History*, p. 579.

⁴⁴ Godley to Allen, April 4, 1919, File D51/727, Department of Defence, Archives New Zealand.

⁴⁵ Massey to Allen, February 12, 1919, File D51/217, Department of Defence, Archives New Zealand.

⁴⁶ Ian McGibbon, 'Something of Them Is Here Recorded: Official History in New Zealand'.

Retrieved February 18, 2009 from:

<http://www.nzetc.org>

⁴⁷ Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture*, 1st American ed., New York: Atheneum, 1991, p. 283.

⁴⁸ 'Who's Who: Sir Philip Gibbs'.

Retrieved November 11, 2009 from:

<http://www.firstworldwar.com/bio/gibbs/htm>

as an official war correspondent and became a prolific writer, having articles published in the *Daily Telegraph* and *Daily Chronicle* and in New Zealand newspapers. As a condition of the appointment Gibbs had to agree to censorship being applied.⁴⁹ However, after the war, unfettered by censorship, he published a fuller account of events and his own personal experiences of the war in *Realities of War*, including a chapter with the title 'Psychology on the Somme'.⁵⁰

The material published by Ross and Gibbs will be studied in detail in the following chapters, particularly in relation to the way the First Battle of the Somme and the Battle of Passchendaele were covered in the *Chronicles*.

A few of the contributors used pseudonyms. Some were predictable, such as 'By a Wounded Anzac' together with the place and date, 'London, August, 1916'.⁵¹ Others were more original and clever such as 'Spook', from the N.Z.F.A. who wrote an article with the title 'Any Old Murky Night'⁵² and Molar who wrote a humorous piece called 'The Misadventure of Billy's False Teeth'.⁵³ 'Random Recollections'⁵⁴ and 'How to Get to Blighty'⁵⁵ were both signed by Spun Yarn. An entertaining story about the Army Cooking School's instructions on how to camouflage food so as to render it

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Philip Gibbs, *Realities of War*, London: Heinemann, 1920. The American edition was published with the title *Now it Can Be Told*, New York: Harper, 1920.

⁵¹ 'Impressions of English Weather', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 2 (1916): 40.

⁵² 'Any Old Murky Night', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 35 (1918): 19.

⁵³ 'The Misadventure of Billy's False Teeth', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 4 no. 37 (1918): 10.

⁵⁴ Spun Yarn, 'Random Recollections', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 36 (1918): 280.

⁵⁵ Spun Yarn, 'How to Get to Blighty', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 4 no. 37 (1918): 4.

barely recognisable or edible, was signed in Maori, by Mango Maroke⁵⁶ which was roughly translated as Dried Shark.⁵⁷

Some writers added details such as a unit or location to their signature or initials. The author of 'A Dream' signed himself as 'T. A. Clark, 10th (North) Otago'⁵⁸ and later as 'Lieut. T. A. Clark, O.I.R.'⁵⁹ for the Otago Infantry Regiment. The author of 'Auckland Memories' signed his poem 'P.A.E., N.Z.E., Flanders 20.8.17',⁶⁰ his unit being the New Zealand Engineers. 'Where I've Slept – Since Joining the Army' was just signed by 'Batman, 4th Field Co.'⁶¹ At the time, those writers who used their initials or inserted other clues as to their unit or location could probably have been identified relatively easily.

Illustrations in the form of cartoons, caricatures, and sketches appeared in every issue. They were almost all the work of enlisted men some of whom went on to make careers in this field after the war. G. H. Gilmour (regimental number 9/1841) who designed the first cover also had a number of cartoons published. He was a caricaturist and cartoonist who started his career working on the *Canterbury Times*, where he succeeded David Low in 1910. For many years after the war, Gilmour was the cartoonist for the *New Zealand Free Lance, Truth* and *Christchurch Star*.⁶²

⁵⁶ Mango Maroke, 'T'e Education', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 33 (1917): 205-7.

⁵⁷ 'Glossary', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 2 no. 16 (1917): 79.

⁵⁸ T. A. Clark, 'A Dream', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 3 (1916): 65.

⁵⁹ Clark, 'He Gives his Beloved Sleep', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 7 (1916): 147.

⁶⁰ P. A. E., 'Auckland Memories', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 27 (1917): 52.

⁶¹ Batman, 'Where I've Slept – Since Joining the Army', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 32 (1917): 185.

⁶² *New Zealand Biographical Clippings, 1890-1988*, Wellington: Alexander Turnbull Library, 1996, vol. 4, 1950-51, p. 13.

From issue 15 Harry Rountree (a commissioned officer of His Majesty's Volunteers) designed the cover. In introducing Rountree to the readers, the editor described him as 'one of the most capable and original of the black and white artists of the world. The dramatic power of his pictures is striking. He has the added virtue of being a New Zealander.'⁶³ Rountree went on to work for *Punch* in London.⁶⁴

Another cartoonist, Driver Ecildoune Frederick Hiscocks (regimental number 2/314), was employed by the *New Zealand Times* before the war, as New Zealand's earliest newspaper cartoonist. He had four books of caricatures published prior to the outbreak of World War I.⁶⁵ Lieutenant George Patrick Hanna (regimental number 1/547) had also been a cartoonist for the *New Zealand Free Lance* prior to enlisting.⁶⁶ In addition to drawing, Hanna wrote at least one poem with the title 'St Peter: A Dinkum Puts His Wind Up'.⁶⁷

Other servicemen who provided illustrations included Corporal William Frederick Bell, (regimental number 25/1209) whose occupation in the *Nominal Rolls* was recorded as artist,⁶⁸ Private Noel Wilfred Cook (regimental number 18764), Gunner William Dobson (regimental number 35352), Private Thomas Herbert Kelsey (regimental number 12/3068), and Sergeant Charles Raymond Towle (regimental number 26/37).

⁶³ Mackenzie, 'From the Editorial "Bivvie"', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 2 no. 15 (1917): 51.

⁶⁴ McLintock, vol. 1, p. 317.

⁶⁵ Una Platts, *Nineteenth Century New Zealand Artists: A Guide and Handbook*, Christchurch: Avon Fine Prints, 1980, p. 125.

⁶⁶ Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, 'Hanna, George Patrick 1888-1973'.

Retrieved May 5, 2009 from:

<http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/dnzb/Essay>.

⁶⁷ George Patrick Hanna, 'St Peter: A Dinkum Puts His Wind Up', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 10 (1917): 222-23.

⁶⁸ New Zealand. Army, *Nominal Rolls of New Zealand Expeditionary Force*, Wellington: Government Printer, 1917-1919, 2 roll 24 (1916): 14.

In the second issue of the *Chronicles* named correspondents from the clubs, hospitals and canteens were listed. They were to collect written contributions from these institutions and forward them to the editorial office. Correspondents included medical staff such as Private Christopher Horace Read (regimental number 3/85A) at Hornchurch Hospital and Staff-Sergeant Albert Henry Westwood (regimental number 11/396) at the Soldiers' Club in Russell Square. Some of these correspondents were women who appeared to be volunteers from the Soldiers' Club or the New Zealand Soldiers' Canteen rather than nursing personnel.⁶⁹

By December 1917, other correspondents were added to the list including two Chaplains, Captain John Robert Burgin (regimental number 18/29) at Brockenhurst Hospital and Captain Sullivan (New Zealand Reserve Group) at Sling Camp. But more were sought, particularly in France and Egypt.⁷⁰

While some regular club, hospital and canteen correspondents wrote under their own name, there were a number who used pseudonyms. Examples of the latter were the 'Codford Letter' signed 'Yours as B4', 'Paddy', or 'Aotearoa'. The 'Convalescent Camp Letter' from Hornchurch was signed by 'A.W.J.M.'; 'Engineer Depot' by 'Neutral'; 'N.Z. Discharge Dept' by 'Haggis'; 'No. 3 N.Z. General Hospital' by 'General' or 'Pakeha'; 'Notes from the Tunnelling Company' by 'Detonator'; 'Salisbury Club Letter' by 'Te Kainga mo Katoa' (translates as 'The Home for Everybody') and 'Walton Hospital Letter' by 'Waltonian' or 'Felix'.

Amongst the writers who could be identified, whether as contributors or correspondents, the majority were members and former members of the N.Z.E.F. or New Zealanders overseas. Others used initials but identified

⁶⁹ 'To the Boys', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 2 (1916): 28.

⁷⁰ 'List of Correspondents', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 9 (1916): 207.

New Zealand units in which they served. The cartoonists were much more likely to sign their work, perhaps indicating a greater belief in their ability, particularly since some had careers in the field prior to enlistment and others went on to make careers in this area after the war.

It seemed that no material was sent from New Zealand but the occasional piece was reprinted from New Zealand or Australian newspapers. From the tone, language and content it is probable that the majority of writers, whether contributors or regular correspondents, were New Zealanders. In view of the fact that the *Chronicles* were edited and produced by New Zealanders, for enlisted New Zealanders serving overseas, expatriates in the United Kingdom or family and friends back home they were more than likely written by New Zealanders. It appeared that almost all the writers were Pakeha males, with a few pseudonyms that suggested Maori writers.

Contributors and correspondents living in England, away from the front, sent in a significant proportion of material. It was probably easier in purely practical terms such as access to facilities for writing and the means of delivery, as well as having different priorities and the time, for this group of people to contribute a greater proportion of work for the publication. But it is also likely that servicemen serving at the camps and hospitals in England, such as medical and chaplaincy personnel, were more inclined, as a group, to writing.

Pseudonyms and anonymity do not appear to have been used as a cover for controversial or subversive material. Perhaps there was an element of modesty or reticence about appearing in print, which made contributors feel more comfortable about not signing their own names. This possibly had more to do with a lack of belief in their ability as writers than concern about any controversial sentiments expressed because subservience to

authority was not a particular characteristic of the New Zealand soldier.⁷¹ Pseudonyms were more commonly used by the club, hospital and canteen correspondents, who may have been collating work from a number of people and so preferred to use a pseudonym to represent the group.

From the number and variety of contributors and correspondents it is clear that the *Chronicles* were successful as a vehicle for the means of entertaining and communicating. While the editor was constantly soliciting contributions from the front, there was sufficient material to produce an issue every two weeks, almost without fail. The designated correspondents from the various clubs, hospitals and canteens conscientiously filed reports, which provided a personal and human face in their content. The popularity the *Chronicles* enjoyed is an indication of the extent to which contributors considered them to be a publication worthy of their support and appropriate for their literary and artistic efforts. A reviewer in the *Clutha Leader* was of the opinion that ‘for months the “Chronicles” has been the most authoritative journal circulating among our troops, and it has been as varied and bright as it has been trustworthy and sane’.⁷²

Among those who could be identified there was a wide range of contributors. They were not limited to one particular group of people such as reporters or poets. Writers included military and civilian, war correspondents, officials, established writers and artists together with those for whom the *Chronicles* were their first and often only place of publication. It is noteworthy that this was the medium where some people, who later became well known, such as John A. Lee, had some of their early writing published. Others, particularly artists continued careers when the

⁷¹ McGibbon, (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Military History*, pp. 146-7.

⁷² *Clutha Leader*, ‘Clutha Mackenzie: Chat About the Future’, June 5, 1917: 3.

war was over. Contributors were not limited to New Zealanders although the *Chronicles* were written largely for a New Zealand readership, whether serving members of the N.Z.E.F. or family and friends at home. They included some British, at least one French person and both men and women although the latter were a small minority.

After noting the number and variety of contributors it has to be acknowledged that the *Chronicles* were remarkable in drawing them all together in a long running publication in the context of the war years, particularly as there was no evidence that anyone was paid for their contribution.

CHAPTER 5

First Battle of the Somme (1916): “The Anzacs are “Somme Fighters” ’¹

This chapter examines how New Zealand’s participation in the First Battle of the Somme (1916) was portrayed in the *Chronicles* and the way they could be used as a source for historical research. The value of the *Chronicles* as a source for military historians is one of the key questions raised in this research. The Somme offensive began on 1 July 1916 and in September the New Zealand Division was committed to fight. On 3-4 October, the Division withdrew, after 23 days, but the New Zealand gunners stayed until 25 October when they too withdrew. This was the bloodiest battle of the war for New Zealand with 7959 serious casualties, 2111 of which were men killed in action or died of wounds. About 53% of those who took part became casualties.² For the purposes of this chapter, issues of the *Chronicles* from number one, 30 August 1916, just before the New Zealanders entered the battle, to number ten, 17 January 1917, which covers the post battle period, are studied.

On 1 September 1916, the New Zealand Division was told to prepare to take part in the Somme offensive that had begun on 1 July. Haig believed that the German resistance was about to crumble. His plan was for a big offensive in the middle of September by the Fourth Army, which by then included the New Zealanders, who had been training for about a month near Abbeville. On 5 September the New Zealand Division’s field engineers and artillerymen were the first to return to the front. The infantry followed and on 11 September took their place between High Wood and Delville

¹ ‘On Dit’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 2 (1916): 47.

² Andrew Macdonald, *On My Way to the Somme: New Zealanders and the Bloody Offensive of 1916*, Auckland: HarperCollins, 2005, p. 245.

Wood. New Zealand was part of the XV Corps, which captured the villages of Flers and Gueudecourt, and took three German trenches of Switch Line, Flers Line and the Gird Line on their way. The task of the 2nd and 3rd (Rifle) Brigades of New Zealanders was to capture the trenches opposite them and occupy Grove Alley which was a trench connecting the Flers and Gird Lines.

On 15 September at 0620 hours the 2nd Brigade attacked along a front of about 900 metres behind a heavy artillery bombardment and within half an hour the Switch Line was overrun. The 3rd (Rifle) Brigade then advanced towards the Flers Line and the New Zealanders assisted the British capture the village of Flers. In a new initiative, tanks were used that day, to help overcome the enemy opposition in the village. While they were late arriving and therefore missed the initial action, they were part of the advance later in the morning.

The next morning, on 16 September, 1st Brigade led the capture of a section of Grove Alley. Heavy rain started that evening and fell for the next three days, turning the battlefield into a swamp. There were further small gains made after 19 September, when the weather improved. On 25 September the New Zealanders played a small part in the Battle of Morval when 1st Brigade secured a line from Goose Alley to Factory Corner-Goose Alley and formed a northwest facing defensive flank for the remainder of XV and XIV Corps, and at Gird Line on 27 September, which was partially successful but with serious losses to 1st Otago. But there was no conclusive break-through and they were withdrawn on 3-4 October and once again the weather broke. Under very bad conditions the New Zealand gunners stayed until 25 October, when they too withdrew.³

³ McGibbon, (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Military History*, p. 602; McLintock, (ed.), *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, vol. 3, p. 562.

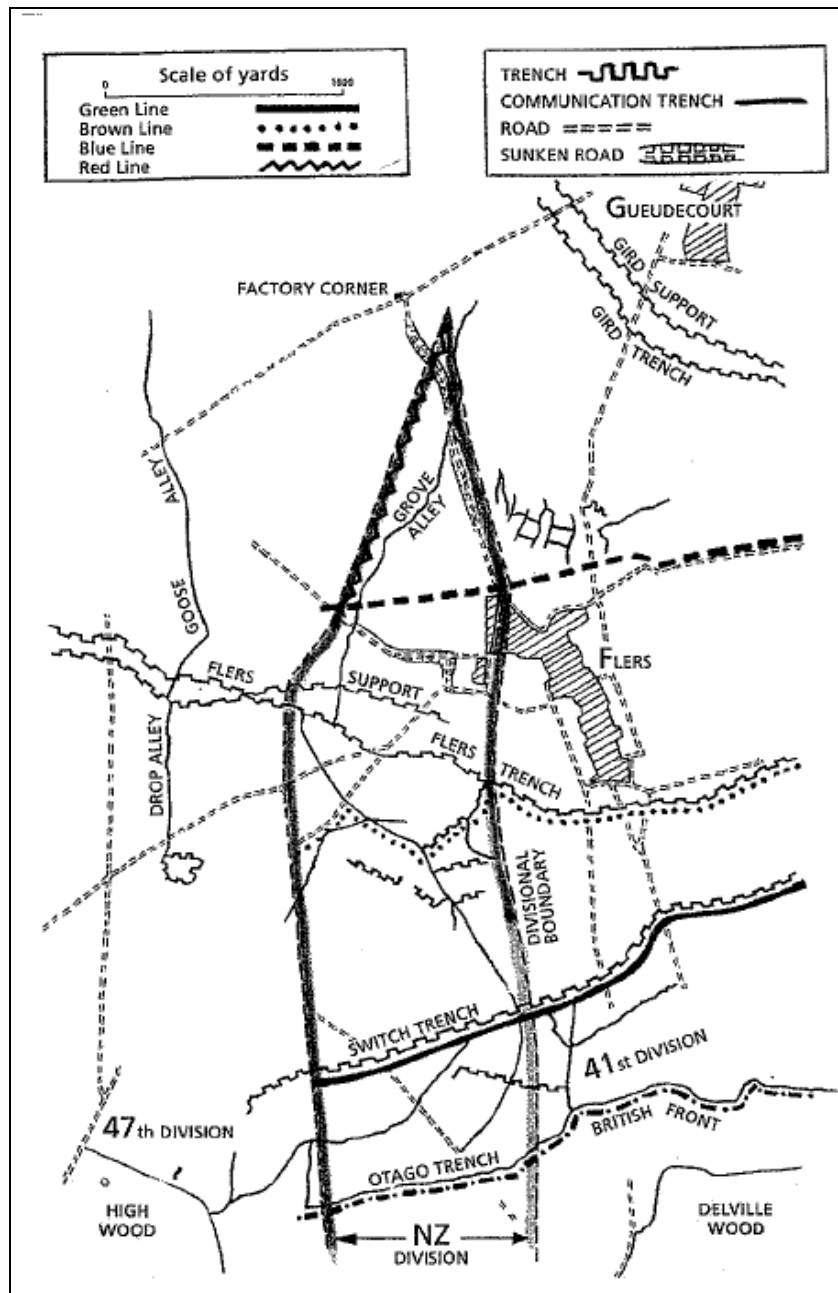


Figure 10: Somme September 1916.
 Andrew Macdonald, *On My Way to the Somme: New Zealanders at the Bloody Offensive of 1916*, p. 92.

Accounts of the battle are reported in the issues of the *Chronicles* that cover this time period. They are found in reports from the New Zealand

war correspondents Ross and Gibbs. While these reports provide some campaign narrative, the battle is also written about or referred to by the editor, in contributions from the troops, and in the camp, club and hospital news.

Ross's first dispatches for the *Chronicles*, about the New Zealand Division's part in the First Battle of the Somme, were published under the headline, 'On the Eve of the Great Battle', on 16 October 1916.⁴ The attack between Delville and High Woods on 15 September 1916 was the Division's first major action on the Western Front. The fighting was very different to that at Gallipoli especially in terms of the scale of artillery on both sides. The New Zealanders rapidly captured the Switch Line, but showed some of their inexperience by twice advancing into the British barrage. The progress of the 47th Division on their left flank was slower and as a result the German machine-guns from the High Wood caught the New Zealanders 'in enfilade.'⁵ As Andrew Macdonald noted:

The advance on 15 September provided a steep learning curve for the New Zealand Division: the roles of infantry and artillery had to be closely aligned and their objective realistic ... a multi-divisional push required tactical co-ordination and effective communication throughout. The lessons were clear. There was plenty that could go wrong in an attack of this scale, and if it did, the result was heavy casualties.⁶

Ross's account in the *Chronicles* described the 'Great Battle' in terms of glamour and glory. Reporting from the New Zealand Camp on 14 September, the day before the advance, he painted a word picture of the

⁴ Ross, 'On the Eve of the Great Battle', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 4 (1916): 80-1.

⁵ Gary Sheffield, *The Somme*, London: Cassell, 2003, p.120.

⁶ Macdonald, *On My Way to the Somme*, p. 114.

men of two New Zealand Brigades having a jolly time: 'Some had added to their comfort with a little grass that they had cut for a mattress [and] they had evidently come to the war prepared to play football as well as to fight.' All this was happening within sight and sound of shells 'bursting on the German trenches not very far away' and 'a New Zealand band was playing a lively tune.' Ross declared that: 'Men were begging their company commanders to let them go into the line'.⁷

This report was followed by Ross's dispatches dated 15, 16, 18, 21, 22 and 24 September, all of which were received as cablegrams through the H.C.N.Z. In the first of these he wrote of being 'privileged to witness preparations for momentous battle just commenced ... Cannonade was terrific. Spectacle was more wonderful even than July bombardment.' Also in this dispatch and the following one for 16 September, Ross wrote about the new weapon, in the form of tanks, which was used in the battle that day. He described tanks in metaphorical terms:

With this dawn the Boche saw for the first time approaching across his trenches our newest and most wondrous war invention, slowly creeping like some saurian across deep trenches and shell craters, as if they did not exist. They were monsters that spat fire and lead, yet turned enemy's lead from their own hard skins.⁸

Ross made no attempt to analyse the tanks' usefulness or impact on the battlefield. Haig had introduced them at the first opportunity, hoping that they would provide the means to break out of the trenches. This proved to be premature. On 15 September some 49 tanks were deployed but 17 broke

⁷ Ross, 'On the Eve of the Great Battle', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 4 (1916): 80.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

down before they reached the front lines and only 18 entered No Man's Land. They moved more slowly than men walking and made easy targets for the German artillery. It was not until the next year that proper tactics and a greater number of tanks would be able to have an impact on the battlefield.⁹

The infantry advanced ahead of the tanks but they were then exposed to enemy fire from strongholds that were supposed to have been destroyed by the tanks before the infantry went forward. It had been decided to leave gaps in the barrage so that the ground in No Man's Land would be clear for the tanks to move across. As a consequence of that decision, parts of the German line were untouched by shelling from the New Zealanders. In addition, in other parts that were bombarded, the Germans survived because they were protected in deep dugouts. As a result the New Zealand troops suffered heavy losses from enemy machine-gun fire.¹⁰

At High Wood, on the 47th Divisional Front, the tanks had actually been an impediment. Only one had been able to move forward and before long it too got stuck and its crew fought on with the infantry. One tank was even responsible for New Zealand casualties when it strayed out of the wood, and confused by the geography of the land and unsure of its position, it opened fire on what turned out to be friendly troops.¹¹ This was to be a common occurrence throughout the war because the technology to communicate with tanks had not yet been developed.

Ross reported none of these adverse facts. Nor did he report that tanks had assisted the New Zealanders when they advanced into Flers Trench to

⁹ Winter and Baggett, p.188.

¹⁰ Robin Prior and Trevor Wilson, *Command on the Western Front: The Military Career of Sir Henry Rawlinson*, Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military Classics, 2004, p. 239.

¹¹ Lyn Macdonald, *Somme*, London: Michael Joseph, 1983, pp. 284-5.

the west of Flers, and were pinned down at uncut wire. Two tanks arrived on the scene and broke through the wire.¹²

Ross also mentioned the deployment of aircraft in the battle. He wrote of, 'Planes, still holding the mastery of the air, and dropping messages as to how the tide of battle was going'.¹³ Once again he did not elaborate or analyse their usefulness on the battlefield.

Ross described everything in grand, heroic hyperbole. On 16 September he wrote that the New Zealanders had, 'The honour of being in [the] new phase of Somme advance' and that:

This was for them a supreme moment. For the first time in war they experienced the glorious sensation of fulfilling true functions of field artillery. Their shooting had been splendid. Switch trench which infantry captured so brilliantly was in many places obliterated.¹⁴

There was more. On 21 September he reported that the New Zealanders fought with 'dash and bravery' and 'one's greatest admiration must be for the splendid heroism and dash of infantry. They went unflinchingly through all the terrors of modern battle ...'¹⁵ Not even the impact of the atrocious weather that had broken on the evening of 16 September was mentioned by Ross until 21 September and then in understated terms as 'adverse weather' with mud and rain merely noted.¹⁶

¹² Prior and Wilson, p. 241.

¹³ Ross, 'On the Eve of the Great Battle', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 4 (1916): 80.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

The last of this group of dispatches, dated 24 September, contained still more fulsome accounts of heroic actions where the New Zealanders were described as having ‘... greatly assisted in the capture of Flers ... a splendid effort ... the Canterburys have continued fighting with dash and great gallantry ... the men charged forward with magnificent élan.’¹⁷

The reports, all about gallantry and heroism, echoed the messages of congratulation telegraphed by the Commander-in-Chief to thank the New Zealanders for ‘their successful attacks, adding that they showed fine fighting spirit, admirable energy, and dash.’¹⁸ It seemed that Ross was supporting the official line, almost to the point of actively promoting it.

There was only a brief mention of New Zealand casualties. Ross wrote, ‘Losses, though severe, [were] not so heavy as might have been expected, considering the extent of ground won’, while in fighting all night around 21 September he reported 350 German dead and 22 prisoners.¹⁹ There was no mention of 2nd Canterbury’s casualties. But in fact by midnight on 21 September 45% of the 541 New Zealand soldiers who went into that action were casualties.²⁰ Obviously Ross was not on the front line but it was as if he had not even witnessed returning troops, let alone spoken to them, although he claimed to quote those who had been there. ‘“My word !” said one man, “I wouldn’t have missed this for anything in the whole wide world...”’.²¹

The next dispatch from Ross and published in the *Chronicles*, appeared in the issue of 13 December.²² Once more he praised the New Zealand soldier

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 81.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 81.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 81.

²⁰ Macdonald, *On My Way to the Somme*, p. 159.

²¹ Ross, ‘On the Eve of the Great Battle’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 4 (1916): 80.

²² Ross, ‘Trench Notes’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 8 (1916): 187.

and wrote that ‘for sheer pluck and grit they are hard to beat. On the Somme they were absolute stoics.’²³

The appalling conditions were mentioned but in no great detail. He wrote, ‘in places in the trenches it would take you fifteen minutes to walk 100 yards, [about 91 metres] so deep and sticky was the mud.’ He did however make a note of the fog at the end of September, which meant ‘all observation was impossible and the aeroplanes stayed at home’.²⁴

The enemy’s use of tear gas was downplayed, it being no more than an ‘inconvenience [which] is only temporary’.²⁵ In fact, the use of gas, as noted by Ross after the war, affected the men to the extent that ‘they could not go on’.²⁶ Sergeant James Holmes in a letter dated 13 October 1916 described the effects of gas as something that: ‘Mainly affects the eyes, and if inhaled very strongly will cause coughing bronchitis... [if] the eyes are exposed to it for any length of time; then it would be unbearable. The phosgene gas mainly affects the heart, and anyone who gets it must on no account do anything requiring exertion.’²⁷

In the same article Ross described the difficulty in seeing enemy shells in the foggy conditions and concluded, ‘All you can do is put your trust in Providence’ while he noted the sound of ‘our own shells whistling overhead’.²⁸ He made no reference to New Zealand casualties, caused by friendly fire.²⁹

²³ Ibid., p. 187.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 187.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 187.

²⁶ Ross, ‘On the Western Front’, in *The Empire at War*, p. 142.

²⁷ Quoted in Macdonald, *On My Way to the Somme*, p. 163.

²⁸ Ross, ‘Trench Notes’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 8 (1916): 187.

²⁹ Lyn Macdonald, *Somme*, p. 284.

In the *Chronicles* there were no further reports by Ross, about the remainder of the New Zealander's time at the Somme. The Battle of Morval for example was not even mentioned although his despatches about it were published in New Zealand newspapers. These newspaper reports, while giving a brief summary, were short on detail and the overall tone was the same as the earlier reports in the *Chronicles* - that all had gone well.³⁰ Nor were there any reports of the attack on 1 October, in the *Chronicles*, although it was reported by Ross in the *New Zealand Herald* and published in New Zealand six days afterwards.³¹

Ross's reports generally glossed over the grim reality of the experience for the soldier on the front line. By way of contrast, Private Howard Karl Kippenberger (regimental number 11682), who served in World War II with the rank of Major General, wrote after his three weeks of active service on the Somme that it was:

... pretty rough on coming out. Ten day's beard and a month's dirt, clothes encrusted with mud ... an oilskin coat drawn open from armpit to waist, pants as bad or worse, pocket ruined carrying bombs etc and worst of all without my mates.³²

After Kippenberger was wounded on 10 November 1917 and taken to the 2nd General Hospital at Chelsea, he wrote, 'Things bloody awful out there for wet and mud [sic] – thankful to be hit.'³³ The way in which soldiers

³⁰ *New Zealand Herald*, Ross, 'New Zealanders Engaged in Monday's Attack', September 29, 1916: 7; *New Zealand Herald*, Ross, 'Veterans of Gallipoli Pursue the Offensive', October 3, 1916: 7

³¹ *New Zealand Herald*, Ross, 'Otago and Canterbury Regiments in New Attack', October 7, 1916: 9.

³² Glyn Harper, *Kippenberger: An Inspired New Zealand Commander*, Auckland: HarperCollins, 1997, p. 38.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

regarded the newspaper coverage of the war was not particularly flattering. For instance, Kippenberger wrote in a letter, after the action at Flers, 'we are looking forward to hearing what we did, and I suppose there'll be a lot of kidney-pie written'.³⁴

In the *Chronicles* this very matter is referred to in harsh terms in a poem, 'To the War Vultures' where D. H. L. wrote:

And the papers duly patronise...
I know the filthy noxious flow
Of words that hide the truth
That cast a glamour and a glow
O'er war that murders youth ...
Did they tell you aught of shattered thighs
And the sickening, crashing fall?
Can you hear the moans for water rise?
You hear them not at all !³⁵

After the armistice in 1918, the British Army's wartime press censor, Charles Montague wrote about the effect war correspondents' stories had on men at the front. He believed that in the dispatches of the 'average war correspondent':

... there ran a brisk implication that regimental officers and men enjoyed nothing better than "going over the top" ; that a battle was just a rough, jovial picnic ... This, the men reflected in helpless anger, was what people at home were offered as faithful accounts of what their friends in the field were thinking and suffering... They fought in a battle or raid, and two days after they read, with jeers on

³⁴ Macdonald, *On My Way to the Somme*, p. 115.

³⁵ D. H. L., 'To the War Vultures,' *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 3 (1916): 72.

their lips, the account of “the show” in the papers ... Men who had lived through the massacre read the stuff open-mouthed.³⁶

In comparison with that of Ross, the writing of Charles Bean was described as being ‘sober and painstakingly accurate’.³⁷ On the Western Front he was at every significant event, or very soon afterwards, in which the Australians were engaged and a number of his journalist contemporaries shared the view that Bean was a careful and accurate reporter.³⁸ It was reported that Bean was never at ease with the style of Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett from Great Britain, who wrote in ‘more highly coloured and sensational terms’.³⁹ Presumably Bean would have felt similarly about Ross’s writing style, at this stage of the war.

In response to criticism about the content of Ross’s articles, Heaton Rhodes, in his report, commented on censorship and wrote that: ‘As regards censorship of war correspondents’ articles, I learned that, if any discrimination existed, it was certainly in favour of New Zealand, on account of its distance from the theatre of operations.’⁴⁰ This was not a view held by his newspaper colleagues. Heaton Rhodes seemed keen to confirm the official line that the public was being kept informed. But, in fact, dispatches were subject to military censorship at their source and then again in London, Sydney, and Wellington.⁴¹ With reference to Ross, the *New Zealand Free Lance* wrote, ‘Any smart reporter could do the work this correspondent will be permitted to do. Men above the reporter class

³⁶ C. E. Montague, *Disenchantment*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1939, pp. 101-2.

³⁷ Dennis and others, (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, p. 80.

³⁸ *Gallipoli Correspondent: The Frontline Diary*, Selected and annotated by Kevin Fewster, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1983, pp. 15-16.

³⁹ Dennis and others, (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, p. 80.

⁴⁰ R. Heaton Rhodes, p 14.

⁴¹ Palenski, ‘Malcolm Ross: A Forgotten Casualty’, p. 118.

will not relish the idea of writing matter to be sub-edited by the Hon. Thomas Mackenzie [the H.C.N.Z.].'⁴²

In his dispatches from the Somme, in the *Chronicles*, Ross had presented some facts, and glossed over the heavy casualties and details of what had been a terrible 23 days. His reporting of the Division's losses and difficulties were generally understated, without any critical comment, to the point of almost being misleading. The language was all about heroism, valour and glorious patriotism, implying that the battle had gone relatively well, if not splendidly, which of course was not the case. He was criticised for not reporting what was in fact happening at the front or even reflecting the views of soldiers correctly or fairly.⁴³

Interestingly, Ross himself believed that he had been careful not to unduly commend the New Zealanders' fighting abilities. With reference to the Somme he wrote:

Being myself a New Zealander, I have been somewhat careful not to unduly praise the fighting qualities of our force. So far as the second great effort in the Somme battle is concerned, I am quite convinced that in anything I have written I have understated the case.⁴⁴

Censorship regulations had an impact on how much Ross was able to write. When he was appointed war correspondent, W. H. Atack, the manager of the New Zealand Press Association, noted that: 'It would

⁴² *New Zealand Free Lance*, 'This War-Correspondent: Who Will the Government Appoint? – and Why?', February 27, 1915: 9.

⁴³ Palenski, 'Malcolm Ross: A Forgotten Casualty', pp. 81-6.

⁴⁴ *Dominion*, 'In the Thick of Battle: Heroic Days of September 15 and 16: Gallant Stand by Men of Canterbury', November 21, 1916: 5.

require almost a genius to do good work under the censorship conditions which take all the marrow out of a war correspondent's copy'.⁴⁵

Censorship aside, presumably there would have been limitations on what correspondents were told, and where they could go. Even those briefing them would have had their particular view of events rather than the full picture. This is all part of the condition described as the fog of war.⁴⁶ As Ross himself noted: 'The nearer you are to the front the less news you get, and the later you are in getting it. But you see more and hear more, though what you see cannot altogether be recorded for enemy information, and what you hear is largely inarticulate'.⁴⁷

In contrast, correspondents from other countries, such as Bean and Ashmead-Bartlett from Great Britain, operated under the same censorship restrictions but, because their reports were cabled, they had material published in a much timelier manner. Ross's reports have even been described as supplements to those of Bean and the official military dispatches.⁴⁸

While Bean had to work within the boundaries imposed by censorship, he believed that his purpose was to 'convey, within the limitations imposed on him, something of the experience of Australian's at the front.'⁴⁹ He also self-censored his work and wrote that at times news was too 'risky' to report and he needed to keep to 'safe subjects'.⁵⁰ Bean recognised that the

⁴⁵ Sanders, p. 49.

⁴⁶ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, J. J. Graham, (tr.), London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1911, vol. 1, pp. 105-6.

⁴⁷ *Dominion*, Ross, 'The Battles of September: With the New Zealanders on the Somme', November 21, 1916: 9.

⁴⁸ Palenski, 'Malcolm Ross: A Forgotten Casualty', p. 63.

⁴⁹ Dennis and others, (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, p. 80.

⁵⁰ *Gallipoli Correspondent*, p. 16.

truth could be hard to reach and in a letter to the *Press* he wrote that he needed to:

guard against many stories – mostly the best ones – which turned out to be pure fiction... Troops at the best of times get a very partial view of a fight, and anything outside their own actual horizon has to be supplied from the yarns passed along the trenches.⁵¹

In 1916 Ross co-authored a book called *Light and Shade in War*, with his son Noel, who by this time had joined *The Times* as a journalist, following his medical discharge from the army.⁵² This book was presumably written largely free from the restraints of censorship. But the over-riding tone was still optimistic. In describing British troops going through a barrage at La Boisselle, they wrote that: ‘ many fell but none wavered. It was an exhibition of dauntless courage and self-sacrifice ... Some dropped, but there was no flinching, no turning back. ... it made the pulses thrill.’⁵³

Perhaps it was just written too close to the events to be a more thoughtful and balanced view. After the war, Ross had material about the New Zealand Division’s part on the Western Front, including the First Battle of the Somme, published in greater detail in a chapter in Charles Lucas’s book, *The Empire at War*.⁵⁴ Here, free from censorship and in hindsight, he wrote in a more measured style with some reflection about the events. For example a lot more attention was given to describing the weather

⁵¹ *Press*, C. E. W. Bean, ‘Press Work at the Front: The Australian War Correspondent’, September 11, 1915: 13.

⁵² McLintock, (ed.), *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, vol. 3, p. 119.

⁵³ Malcolm Ross and Noel Ross, *Light and Shade in War*, London: Edward Arnold, 1916, pp. 230-1.

⁵⁴ Ross, ‘On the Western Front’, in *The Empire at War*, pp. 317-69.

conditions and the affect it had on the battle.⁵⁵ He also wrote more fully about the use of aircraft.⁵⁶

Ron Palenski has defended Ross and noted that: ‘as Ross began on Gallipoli, so he continued on the Western Front for the rest of the war, bedeviled by the government-imposed restrictions and reduced to writing “timeless” stories rather than “hard” news.’ Palenski asserted that the latter had already been conveyed in communiqués or by correspondents who had more efficient ways of filing their reports.⁵⁷

Philip Gibbs had one article in the *Chronicles*, in this time period, written from British Headquarters in the field with the title ‘New Zealanders in the Great Offensive: Wonderful Valour’.⁵⁸ It was an extract from the *Daily Telegraph* and was later republished with the title, ‘The Splendid New-Zealanders’, as a chapter in his book *The Battles of the Somme*. The latter was a collection of the wartime dispatches Gibbs had written over three months from 1 July 1916.⁵⁹

In the article, ‘New Zealanders in the Great Offensive’, Gibbs reported on the fighting from 15 September until around 24 September, which is the same time period that Ross covered in his dispatches published in the previous fortnight. Gibbs was reasonably explicit, considering the censorship restrictions, with regard to the location of the fighting and ground taken, identifying the line which was held as running from ‘north

⁵⁵ Ross, ‘On the Western Front’, in *The Empire at War*, pp. 327-8.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

⁵⁷ *Otago Daily Times*, Ron Palenski, ‘The Elusive War of Malcolm Ross’, April 19, 2008: 51.

⁵⁸ Philip Gibbs, ‘New Zealanders in the Great Offensive: Wonderful Valour’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 3 (1916): 55-56.

⁵⁹ Philip Gibbs, *The Battles of the Somme*, London: Heinemann, 1917.

of Courcellette across the Bapaume Road, above Martinpuich, and so on to the north of Flers.⁶⁰

In the article Gibbs reported the advent of the tank in the battle.⁶¹ But it was not until later, in 1917, that he attempted any insights into the use of tanks on the battlefield at that time and the acknowledgement that these ‘motor-monsters’, while they had saved many casualties, did not in fact deliver the expectation that ‘future infantry attacks would be a walk-over behind the Tanks ... It would require thousands of Tanks to do that and we had only a few.’⁶²

In the article in the *Chronicles* Gibbs wrote that ‘the New Zealanders have gained a greater name for themselves (it was already a great name since Gallipoli)’ and that he had ‘a heart very full of admiration for the valour of these men, who have fought in these great battles’ with particular praise reserved for the ‘finest heroism [which] was shown by the New Zealand stretcher-bearers.’⁶³ The tone was very much one of the sentimentalist and patriot. Some of the action is reported in fairly explicit terms but with an heroic overtone:

It was a confused mass, isolated bodies of men struggling around shell craters and bits of trench, single figures fighting twos and threes ... and a night horrible with the crash of bombs and the cries of the dying. One New Zealand officer, a very splendid, heroic man, was the life and soul of this defence and counter-attack. ... He put new fire into them by the flame of his own spirit ...⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Philip Gibbs, ‘New Zealanders in the Great Offensive: Wonderful Valour’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 3 (1916): 55.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁶² Gibbs, *The Battles of the Somme*, p. 19.

⁶³ Gibbs, ‘New Zealanders in the Great Offensive: Wonderful Valour’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 3 (1916): 55-6.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

The true extent of the horror of the battlefield, such as numbers killed in action and casualties, was glossed over. In hindsight, Gibbs explained that, while he was aware of the nature of conditions on the battlefield, he did not feel able to describe them in their terrible entirety in his dispatches. He wrote that: ‘It would be impossible for an honourable correspondent to tell some things within his knowledge – our exact losses in a certain action, failures at this or that point of the line, tactical blunders ...’ He went on to explain that while the despatches told the truth:

they do not tell all the truth. I have had to spare the feelings of men and women who have sons and husbands still fighting in France. I have not told all there is to tell about the agonies of this war, nor given in full realism the horrors that are inevitable in such fighting.⁶⁵

Later he reasoned that if the true picture were known or told ‘more nakedly than I have told them ... no man or woman would dare to speak again of war’s “glory,” or of “the splendour of war”, or any of those old lying phrases which hide the dreadful truth.’⁶⁶

In 1929, in his book *Realities of War*, Gibbs expanded further on his earlier writing. In the chapter ‘Psychology on the Somme’, he focused on the effects of the fighting on the troops and the responsibility of censorship. The ‘realities’ for him were the details of death and horror which censorship suppressed while the war was being fought. He wrote:

These studies of mine of what happened on both sides of the shifting lines in the Somme must be as horrible to read as they were

⁶⁵ Gibbs, *The Battles of the Somme*, p. 17.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

to write. But they are less than the actual truth, for no pen will ever in one book, or in hundreds, give the full record of the individual agony, the broken heart-springs [sic], the soul-shock as well as the shell-shock, of that frightful struggle...⁶⁷

Gibbs refuted the impression that war correspondents were provided with material for their dispatches from General Headquarters. He wrote that the brief bulletins provided by the General Staff were complemented by 'getting into touch as soon as possible with the battalions actually engaged ... For we have a pass enabling us to go to any part of the front at any time and get the facts and points of view from every class and rank, from the trenches to G.H.Q.' Writing again about the question of censorship, he recognised that it was a balance between 'allowing the British people to know the facts about their fighting men save those which would give the enemy a chance of spoiling our plans or hurting us.'⁶⁸

He also believed that it was not the job of the war correspondent to analyse the situation. In *The Battles of the Somme* he decided to include his articles without any editing, just as they were written at the time. He thought that: 'They may hold some qualities that would be lost if I wrote them with more coldness and criticism of words and phrases.'⁶⁹ The correspondents, in his view, were to be 'chroniclers of the fighting day by day, trying to get the facts as fully as possible and putting them down as clearly as they appear out of the turmoil of battle.'⁷⁰

In contrast, S. L. A. Marshall, a journalist and later an influential military historian who had been a United States Army officer in 1917, had a different view. He wrote that there were two essentials for the war

⁶⁷ Gibbs, *Realities of War*, p. 363.

⁶⁸ Gibbs, *The Battles of the Somme*, pp. 16-17.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

correspondent. They were: 'The personal ones of getting along and cultivating the productive contacts, and next, describing the nature of the struggle while estimating the prospects for both sides and what will finally come out of the conflict.' He believed that it was the duty of the war correspondent to do more than see war as 'a feature story and ... pound out hot copy', but rather to inform by using his knowledge and experiences to analyse what he had seen.⁷¹

Contemporary newspaper reports of the Division's part in the Somme were similar to those in the *Chronicles*. They published little about the horrors the troops endured, or the number of casualties sustained, and they contained very little about the war that was adverse. An example is the report in the *New Zealand Herald*, after the Division had withdrawn from the Somme. Ross quoted unnamed but 'competent judges' as saying the Division's 'valour, dash, initiative, and endurance have been unexcelled ... one could not but wonder at their undaunted spirit.' Ross continued that: 'These hillsides will for ever be sacred to the memory of a great and successful advance.'⁷²

Writing in the *Dominion* about the 15 and 16 September 1916, Ross went into a lot more detail about the weather. In the *Dominion* it merited a full paragraph together with more detail on the desolation of the battlefield, the stream of walking wounded and those being carried plus lines of dead soldiers.⁷³ The latter were not referred to in the *Chronicles*. Ross's dispatches for the 21 and 22 September in the *Chronicles* were reported in

⁷¹ S. L. A. Marshall, *Bring Up the Rear: A Memoir*, San Rafael., Calif.: Presidio, 1979, p. 33.

⁷² *New Zealand Herald*, Ross, 'New Zealanders Excel in the Somme Battle: More Than Fulfil Expectations Formed of Them', October 10 1916: 7.

⁷³ *Dominion*, Ross, 'In the Thick of the Battle: Heroic Days of September 15 and 16', October 10, 1916: 5.

the *New Zealand Herald* on 25 September with identical text.⁷⁴ Perhaps this is an indication that censorship was at work in both publications. However, the two dispatches were reversed so that the paragraph for the 22 September preceded the 21 September, a pointer to the difficulties of reliable reporting in wartime. But, generally speaking, all newspapers operated under the same constraints and produced very similar copy.

The public, together with the troops, must have become suspicious of the press coverage. The long casualty lists being published were in sharp contrast to the upbeat dispatches filed by the war correspondents. Sanders, in writing about the press at this time, declared that: 'There was, of course, much censorship of news' and he quoted Attack, who referred to 'the war [which] has introduced us to the nuisance of military censorship'.⁷⁵

In the *Chronicles*, the editorials during this period were similarly given to exaggerated descriptions, glamorising and idealising the battlefield. Here was Clutha Mackenzie, a former soldier who had been blinded at Gallipoli, playing down the horror of it all. In his editorial of 29 September, headlined 'New Zealand's Part in the Somme Battle', he wrote that the New Zealand troops had been mentioned several times in Haig's official dispatches. He gushed, '... our troops ... fight with the supreme satisfaction of gripping the throat of the archenemy himself... they know they are wearing the Hun down, that he is haunted with fear of them, and that victory is gone from him for ever.' The cost to the New Zealand Division was completely glossed over. 'Light-hearted and happy they come from the field, and the tales they so blithely tell speak only of great victory.' The enemy fled 'terror-stricken and appalled'. He ended this

⁷⁴ *New Zealand Herald*, Ross, 'Canterbury Men Engaged in Night-Long Combat: ...Counter-Attack Repulsed With Loss to the Enemy', September 25, 1916: 6.

⁷⁵ Sanders, p. 46.

patriotic outburst by exclaiming that they had copied ‘the glorious achievements of their ancestors of Britain, and found for themselves a great and wondrous tradition’.⁷⁶

These editorials were more fulsome even than the war correspondents’ reports. Perhaps this was because the *Chronicles* were only in their third issue and influenced to some degree by their supporters and sponsors including the H.C.N.Z., members of the N.Z.W.C.A. and military authorities. The full extent of the cost in terms of casualties had not yet been realised and the patriotic ideals, which were part of Clutha Mackenzie’s military and social background, still prevailed. Michael Paris discussed this subject, in relation to fiction written about this period by men who had served in the trenches and in whose writing he found ‘no lessening of the romance of war’. He speculated as to whether it was ‘simply a denial of reality, or was it a deliberate distortion for propaganda purposes?’⁷⁷ In Clutha Mackenzie’s writing there were probably elements of denial but also an effort to boost morale.

The editorial of 16 October was largely full of sentimental idealisation of New Zealand and loyal patriotism for Britain, but there was the first of more sober observations and recognition that: ‘Individually and collectively we are sadder and wiser. We have learnt many lessons deep and tragic, and, to retain our Empire’s strength, little more remains but to remember and practise those lessons’.⁷⁸ By 29 November, the editor wrote that: ‘Perhaps insufficient credit has been given to some of the fine units who went through the gruelling days of the retreat, the bitter attacks at ...

⁷⁶ ‘New Zealand’s Part in the Somme Battle’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 3 (1916): 51.

⁷⁷ Michael Paris, *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850-2000*, London: Reaktion, 2000, p. 144.

⁷⁸ ‘Editorial’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 4 (1916): 75.

the Somme ... We pay high tribute to these men.’⁷⁹ In the issue for 13 December, Clutha Mackenzie reminisced on the jolly Christmas of 1914 in Cairo with its ‘boisterous revelry ...[and] tall, lithe, slouch-hatted figures ... [with] their cheery, sparkling, laughing faces’ but in contrast he continued:

War had taken toll of many great, fine fellows who had gone into the chaos of battle and had passed to the serene victory beyond ... Thousands were in hospitals in places far apart ... Those who are left fight on still in the same old way, though they have grown perhaps a trifle more serious, and regard war more as a deadly business than a pastime.⁸⁰

The editor found it exceptionally difficult to get first hand accounts from the battlefield to publish, although it was not for want of trying. In October 1916 he wrote that: ‘We are longing for some of the chaps out in the “ditches” to send us some copy.’⁸¹ He was criticised for this matter in a letter by M. M. from France who asked: ‘Are there no correspondents with the forces out here to tell you the news? ... the Somme must simply teem with deeds of heroism, which fellows in hospital could relate’.⁸²

The editor noted ‘trench stuff is the hardest to get’ but he thought it would make good copy.⁸³ On 29 September he wrote that: ‘Particulars of the Battle of the Somme are not many’ but with specific reference to the Rifle

⁷⁹ ‘From the Editorial Bivvie’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 7 (1916): 147.

⁸⁰ ‘Christmas, 1916’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 8 (1916): 171-2.

⁸¹ Mackenzie, ‘Editorial Notes’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 4 (1916): 76.

⁸² M. M., ‘Well-Timed Criticism’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 8 (1916): 182.

⁸³ Mackenzie, ‘The “Chronicles” Reviews Itself’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 10(1917): 219.

Brigade, also known as the Dinkums or Dinks and Lord Liverpool's Own, he went on to write that it had been tested and 'acquitted itself in a manner which Lord Liverpool expected of it'.⁸⁴

So first hand reports were few and brief. A soldier who had been assigned to 'write the operation' described events of 12 to 15 September, until 'the notes were ended by a German shell'. He wrote of preparations for the attack of 15 September, and made amusing comments about life in a dugout.⁸⁵ There was one brief unsigned report with the title 'New Zealanders at the Front Line', in which reports of the 1st and 4th Battalions of the Rifle Brigade action on the front line, where they manned a section of trenches between High Wood and Delville Wood, were recorded. Details were few, although there had been some shelling and of course 'they were eager to get to grips with the enemy'. The writer had walked up the slopes towards Delville Wood and observed the 'two communication trenches dug by the Maoris and the Engineers, who had come on some time in advance of the main body. They had done splendid work ... [but not] without casualties.'⁸⁶

There was one fairly detailed unsigned account, whose authorship was claimed by someone who said he had survived the whole experience without even a scratch. While dates were blanked out, places were named and the account described taking Switch Trench, moving on to Grove Alley, Goose Alley and then to Gird Trench when the enemy fled. The weather and conditions for the men were described, the work of the artillery praised but casualties were only briefly noted with nothing to indicate the high numbers of those killed or wounded. This is quite a

⁸⁴ 'Editorial Notes', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 3 (1916): 52.

⁸⁵ C. T. L., 'Loose Leaves From the Somme', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 8 (1916): 185.

⁸⁶ 'New Zealanders in the Front Line', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 4 (1916): 90.

useful first hand account, without the exaggerated heroics found particularly in the reports from the war correspondents and editor.⁸⁷

In addition to information on the battle contained in the dispatches, reports, editorials and articles in the *Chronicles*, there were also snippets of information in letters and notes from the 'Camp, Club and Hospital News: The Doings of the Fortnight by "Those on the Spot" '. Mostly these were about mundane matters and did not contain any reflections on the war. They were generally a chatty mix of day-to-day events, outings, and entertainments, food and gossip. However, there were the occasional, quite explicit, references to the actual conditions at the front, such as those contained in a letter signed by someone calling himself A Pig Islander. He wrote:

We have some very pretty (ugly) scenery round about here, such as shells of all calibre, Huns, rats, bugs, duds, and our greatest friend, lice. You may be shocked, but I have just caught 30 ... There is only one thing one of our bullets won't face, and that is a dog biscuit, or "emergency rations." ... The shirt I am wearing now has been turned ten or eleven times, and been in constant use for seven weeks.⁸⁸

Several extracts from letters were published, which described conditions:

We have had an awful time of it, but I am thankful to say I am out again and safe ...I cannot describe to you what we looked like when we came out. We were absolutely one mass of clay and mud, and we had not washed for three days. ... it is simply pouring with rain at present, so I suppose we are probably in for another mud bath.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ 'Somme Experiences', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 6 (1916): 128.

⁸⁸ A Pig Islander, 'Home Comforts in France', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 6 (1916): 128.

⁸⁹ 'Extracts from Letters', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 9 (1916): 208.

Included in the *Chronicles* was news of individuals and some specifically from the Somme. 'Lieut. John Massey, R.F.A. is in London on furlough after having been buried by a shell in the early days of the Somme battle ... Capt. Harley, of Nelson was killed recently at the Somme.'⁹⁰ There were occasional obituaries, generally of officers.

Messages of congratulation to the New Zealand Division on its part in the Somme fighting were printed. The General Officer Commanding the N.Z.E.F. was quoted and there were extracts from telegrams sent by the Commanders of II Army, IV Army, III Corps and XV Corps.⁹¹ Later, in an issue on 17 January 1917, there were messages of congratulation from Haig for 'the exceptionally good work of the New Zealanders at the Somme' and Russell, who said that the chief factors in their success were 'the individual qualities of the men and the leadership of the subordinate officers from company commanders downwards'.⁹²

The verse, while in every issue, rarely included explicit references to the Somme but there were some general references to trench warfare and the front. Some referred to the horror. There was one particularly pithy limerick:

A trench,
A stench,
Some scraps of French,
Some horrible German vapours.
A shell,
A yell,
No more to tell,
Bar a paragraph in the papers.⁹³

⁹⁰ [Untitled], *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 5 (1916): 105.

⁹¹ 'Complimentary', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 5 (1916): 100.

⁹² [Untitled], *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 10 (1917): 234.

⁹³ [Untitled], *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 3 (1916): 63.

D. H. L. wrote in graphic terms of:

Walking as though in nightmare sleep
Upon the narrow, never-ending track,
Which writhes and twists in torture as it runs,
Close set on either side with slimy, foetid walls
Wherein the last year's dead decay –
Where nameless horrors lie -
All weary unto death and leaden limbed ...⁹⁴

An untitled poem 'written from the trenches,' but signed off as 'From the Somme Valley', was reprinted in the *Chronicles*, having previously appeared in the *The Times*. The view that the tide of the war was turning (as a result of the introduction of tanks amongst other things) in favour of the Allies was endorsed from the front:

We who have clung for long, long months
To battered lines of knee-deep mud
We are bursting in, we are breaking through.⁹⁵

D. H. L described the physical effects on the troops, including a bomb exploding in someone's face and the condition known as trench foot, in graphic detail in another poem:

There was fever, thirst an' dysent'ry, that made 'em pretty crook...
There was septic sores all over 'em, an' feet was rottin' off
From mud an' wet an' frost-bite, an' p'r'aps a hackin' cough ...⁹⁶

⁹⁴ D. H. L., 'Stand-To!', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 2 (1916): 33.

⁹⁵ [Untitled], *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no 3 (1916): 52.

⁹⁶ D. H. L., 'Gold Stripe', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 8 (1916): 173.

The cartoons and caricatures in these issues did not specifically refer to the Somme but rather service life in general, including trench life. The *Chronicles* were important for the casualty reports published in them. It was reported that ‘The “Chronicles” are read with much interest here. The lists of patients in other hospitals are scanned eagerly, and this section of the publication will prove valuable if kept up to date’.⁹⁷ There was a lot of pressure from the home to produce casualty reports in a more timely manner.⁹⁸

Extensive lists were published at the back of each issue under the various hospitals. There were a number of hospitals in the United Kingdom for New Zealanders including Walton which was the largest, Brockenhurst, taken over by the New Zealand authorities from the War Office, Hornchurch, designated the New Zealand Convalescent Hospital, and Codford.⁹⁹ Reports from some of the hospitals were included in every issue and others from time to time. In the first few issues there were notes written about each patient in terms of how they were rather than why they had been admitted. Comments ranged from a few words such as, ‘In bed. Getting on’, ‘Not so well, wound foot, thigh and hand’, ‘Believed to have left hospital’, to fuller observations such as, ‘Improving satisfactorily. Now out in wheeled chair to be in fresh air as much as possible. Has not use of legs yet’.¹⁰⁰ A few patients were just named, without any accompanying notes, and other lists included the dead, others previously reported missing, later known to be dead, and those believed to have been taken prisoners of war.

⁹⁷ M, ‘Brockenhurst Letter’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 4 (1916): 82.

⁹⁸ Letters of Col. Hon. Sir James Allen, Minister of Defence and General Sir Alexander Godley, Commander 1/NZEF, 1st World War 1916, File 252/3, 1/NZEF, War Archives, Archives New Zealand.

⁹⁹ Myers, pp. 117-25.

¹⁰⁰ New Zealand War Contingent Association, ‘Weekly Report’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 1 (1916): 17-24.

By 30 October the length of casualty lists more than doubled and in many cases they were just lists of names and regimental numbers, sometimes under the heading 'Wounded' or 'Died of Wounds' without even a hospital location. By 29 November lists were again shorter and men were grouped under general headings such as 'Getting Along Very Well'.¹⁰¹

At the end of September 1916 the reasons for being in hospital were beginning to be noted as opposed to earlier issues that were confined to comments about how patients were progressing. Reasons varied enormously from the expected shrapnel, gunshot wounds, gassed, bullet wound, to other medical conditions such as appendicitis, bronchitis, dysentery, jaundice, pleurisy, pneumonia, rheumatism, sciatica, tonsillitis and trench foot. Not only physical injuries were reported. Sometimes trauma conditions such as, 'Fear trouble',¹⁰² 'Shell shock. Lost power of speech but has regained it and doing well',¹⁰³ 'Suffering from shell-shock. In bed, but getting over it he said',¹⁰⁴ were noted, particularly from the 4th London General Hospital. These comments were all recorded next to the names and regimental numbers of patients. Rolls of those departing for home were also included in some issues from 15 November 1916 on. In some cases it was possible to track progress as patients were reported on more than once. Kippenberger, for instance, appeared as 'wounded'¹⁰⁵ and later in a list of 'Departures ... from Hornchurch'.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ New Zealand War Contingent Association, 'Hospital Report', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 7 (1916): 165.

¹⁰² New Zealand War Contingent Association, 'Hospital Reports', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 2 (1916): 41.

¹⁰³ New Zealand War Contingent Association, 'Hospital Reports', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 4 (1916): 96.

¹⁰⁴ New Zealand War Contingent Association, 'Hospital Reports', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 5 (1916): 117.

¹⁰⁵ New Zealand War Contingent Association, 'Hospital Reports', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 8 (1916): 192.

¹⁰⁶ New Zealand War Contingent Association, 'Hospital Reports', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 11 (1916): 259.

Overall this block of issues did not focus, in particular on the Somme, and in fact, references to that battle were somewhat scarce. Other topics covered included editorials and notes on what might happen after the war, the Prime Minister's visit, Trafalgar Day, failure of conscription in Australia, and conscription in New Zealand. Other news included the wrecking of the New Steam Ship Company's ship the *Tongariro* off the East Coast of New Zealand, meat and wool contracts, the Prime Minister's itinerary and visits, and views about peace.

In considering the usefulness of the *Chronicles* for historical research on the First Battle of the Somme, it is probably fair to say that they confirm what is already known, in terms of the facts about the battle and in this regard they do not add anything significantly new. The reports written by the war correspondents were also printed in contemporary newspapers, sometimes with exactly the same wording. So their reports in the *Chronicles* were not unique. The war correspondents were really producing embellished copy of first and second hand accounts, albeit censored and without any commentary. Any sort of in-depth analysis of the battle would probably have been difficult to achieve, even without the limitations of censorship, given the proximity to events in relation to time and geography.

But the introduction of tanks, written about by Ross and Gibbs, was noted on several other occasions including in the editorial notes of the issue dated 29 September ¹⁰⁷ and by the correspondent at Hornchurch Convalescent Hospital who claimed that: 'They just chew their way through a mountain ... Rivers ... why they just go through them like smoke and, and what's more, they absorb enough water so if the German artillery locate them they can submerge themselves.'¹⁰⁸ Similarly the use of aircraft

¹⁰⁷ 'Editorial Notes', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 3 (1916): 56.

¹⁰⁸ Man on the Spot, 'Hornchurch Letter', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 3 (1916): 59.

was noted a couple of times but again not in any detail. There was an unsigned account of two plane rides over part of the line to check gun positions and bomb a German battery.¹⁰⁹

The *Chronicles* are probably more useful for cultural history studies. Keegan insisted that it was necessary to study the emotions of the participants in order to gain what he saw as ‘a truthful writing of military history’.¹¹⁰ Diaries, letters and memoirs are obvious candidates for such study but the *Chronicles* also contained material written by individuals from a personal point of view. The editorials in each issue show a degree of progression from initial patriotic ravings to a certain empathy with the troops and the truth about what they had endured.

One such study might be an appraisal of the way in which men coped with the appalling conditions through studying the text in the *Chronicles*. Black humour was clearly one way of dealing with events. G. B. L., in reply to the request for ‘yarns of any description’, wrote:

I sees [sic] the funny side of everything, I do. One of the first things that hit me at the battle of the Somme was a man’s leg. ... I gathered up that leg, careful-like and passed it on to my mate, who is terrible slow on his pins. I said, sympathetic-like : “Now, matey, you fix this on to some part of your cumbrous frame, and see if it don’t make you get more of a wriggle on in this bit of a slap up, where we are all going to distinguish ourselves so mightily.¹¹¹

In the 17 January 1917 issue, when Christmas celebrations at the various hospitals and clubs were reported, there was hardly a mention of the war.

¹⁰⁹ ‘A New Zealander’s First Flight in France’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 5 (1916): 120.

¹¹⁰ Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, p. 32.

¹¹¹ G. B. L., ‘Things I Thinks’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 9 (1916): 200.

Two correspondents expressed the hope that by the following Christmas it might be over and the men would be home. There was one brief but telling aside when overindulgence at Christmas was compared with other 'suffering and pangs of anguish'.¹¹²

This was the point. Some of the worst experiences were suppressed by individuals as a means of coping and could not be written about. Alexander Aitken made this very observation when he wrote, 'Cries, groans, prayers, imprecations, reached me. I leave it to the sensitive imagination: I once wrote it all down, only to discover that horror, truthfully described, weakens to the merely clinical'.¹¹³ Audoin-Rouzeau, in his study of trench newspapers, reached a similar conclusion when he wrote that: 'These men lived in a perpetual distress which found an outlet in fascinated complacency regarding death and suffering...'¹¹⁴ Modris Eksteins noted this in his examination of personal diaries and he endeavoured to explain it. He said that one of the fears that soldiers had was that they might crack under the stress of battle and so they wrote little about themselves, spiritually, or expressed any of their emotions such as courage, fear, hope or anger. Rather, they tended to talk and write about material needs, conditions and the welfare of comrades.¹¹⁵ Fussell, in writing about the use of irony, stated that, by not writing about the worst of it, the impact was even greater because, 'In writing about horror and violence, understatement delivers the point more effectively than either literalism or heavy emphasis.'¹¹⁶ These observations are true of the *Chronicles* where there is very little up front writing about the terrible

¹¹² Waltonite, [Walton Letter], *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 10 (1916): 229.

¹¹³ Alexander Aitken, *Gallipoli to the Somme: Recollections of a New Zealand Infantryman*, London: Oxford, 1963, p. 171.

¹¹⁴ Audoin-Rouzeau, p. 186.

¹¹⁵ Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age*, London: Bantam Press, 1989, p. 180.

¹¹⁶ Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, 25th anniversary ed., New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 339.

experiences which men had experienced and were more than likely still suffering. There was only the occasional passing reference to the horror of it all, while much was made of the immediate and everyday events.

Another aspect worth development is the way in which New Zealanders coped with the accolades that they received. In a letter to the *Chronicles* one correspondent wrote: 'Our boys are getting tired of being praised up and advertised in the papers every time they do something. There is no mistake, the Colonials have been made too much fuss of ...'¹¹⁷ Another letter writer drew attention to the fact that: 'It is a pity that our boys are boosted so much, but it is inevitable, and they really have done wonderful work.'¹¹⁸ Kippenberger declared himself to be 'disgusted' to be included in a guard of honour when Massey and Ward visited a military hospital and he noted that a eulogy delivered by General Plumer 'made us blush very uncomfortably'.¹¹⁹

The notes about the condition of patients in the hospital reports provide a source of information for study on the reasons for which troops were admitted. Injuries sustained in battle were not the only medical conditions treated. There were a number of other illnesses and operations identified, such as appendicitis and rheumatism, which reflected the demographics of the New Zealand Division. The nature of these reports, whether in detail for individuals or in groups with abbreviated notes, is a reflection of what was happening on the battlefield. When casualties were heavy it was impossible to include extensive notes with the lists.

In conclusion, the two war correspondents, whose work appeared in the block of *Chronicles* examined for the purposes of this chapter, wrote in a similar fashion, within the boundaries imposed by the censor and self-

¹¹⁷ 'Extracts From Letters', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 1 (1916): 9.

¹¹⁸ 'Notes', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 4 (1916): 77.

¹¹⁹ Glyn Harper, *Kippenberger*, pp. 37-8.

editorial censorship. The war correspondents' reports have been criticised for being superficial. Macdonald wrote: 'Stories published at the time were sensational when they should have been serious, at the very least sincere.'¹²⁰ Even though they may not convey any new insights they are interesting for the way in which they were written and reflect the beliefs of that time that war was an honourable pursuit and duty in the form of patriotic service to country and empire was expected. In some cases, the war correspondents almost seemed like propagandists for the cause.

Amongst the other contributions in the *Chronicles*, which included a good deal of material to amuse, there were some significant pieces, often just mentioned in passing in letters, notes, and verse, which give a brief window into conditions, morale, organisation and so on. These isolated observations amongst the pedestrian accounts of day-to-day events, gossip, entertainment and recreational activities were the most revealing, giving occasional glimpses into how the men felt and the horror they had experienced which was often beyond words. Likewise some of the verse was brutally honest. Pieced together they provide some quality source material for historical research.

The extensive casualty lists and hospital reports are a source of raw data. They provide early evidence of recognition about what is now termed post-traumatic stress disorder or syndrome in relation to mental conditions resulting from battlefield stress.

Overall this block of issues of the *Chronicles* furnish a colourful and at times poignant and brutal narrative and in this way they add to or confirm what is already known, through the letters and diaries written at the time by the New Zealanders who took part in the First Battle of the Somme.

¹²⁰ Macdonald, *On My Way to the Somme*, p. 275.

CHAPTER 6

Third Battle of Ypres (1917)

This chapter examines how New Zealand's participation in the Third Battle of Ypres (1917), also known as the Battle of Passchendaele, was portrayed in the *Chronicles* and the usefulness of those portrayals as a source for historical research, in the same way that the First Battle of the Somme was examined in the previous chapter. Once again it is noted that the value of the *Chronicles* as an historical source is one of the key questions raised in this thesis. For the purposes of this research, references to Passchendaele only include the two battles in which the New Zealanders took part and issues of the *Chronicles* from number 27, 19 September 1917, just before the New Zealanders entered battle, to number 37, 13 February 1918, covering the post battle period, are studied.

The New Zealand Division fought at Broodseinde on 4 October and eight days later at the First Battle of Passchendaele on 12 October. The former has been described as a 'stunning success although costly in terms of casualties'.¹ But the latter was a disaster and resulted in 'more New Zealanders killed or maimed in a few short hours than has occurred on any other day since the beginning of European settlement' in New Zealand.² There were over 2700 casualties and of these 45 officers and 800 men were dead or mortally wounded and lying between the lines.³ In one

¹ Glyn Harper, *Dark Journey: Three Key New Zealand Battles of the Western Front*, Auckland: HarperCollins, 2007, p. 16.

² *Ibid.*, p. 16.

³ New Zealand. Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 'The Passchendaele Offensive'.

Retrieved March 25, 2009 from:

<http://www.nzhistorynet.nz/war/new-zealanders-in-belgium/passchendaele>.

morning 6% of New Zealand's total casualties in the whole war occurred.⁴ Another 138 died of their wounds during the following week.⁵

After the New Zealand Division withdrew from the Somme, it rejoined II ANZAC Corps. From near Armentières, in the winter of 1916-1917 operations were mostly trench raids but in March 1917 the New Zealanders were deployed to Messines, south of Ypres. Haig's plan was to secure enemy occupied ports on the English Channel and the Belgian coastline, capture the ridges which overlooked Ypres and ultimately advance as far as the German industrial area of the Ruhr.⁶ However, in the summer of 1917 many weeks were lost and by the time the offensive on the Ypres Salient began, on 31 July, the rain had started.

At Broodseinde the New Zealanders were tasked with the capture of the Gravenstafel Spur, the first of the two spurs from the main ridge at Passchendaele, which they did successfully, with heavy losses to the Germans. More than 1000 Germans were captured and much equipment was taken. Although this battle was a success and went according to plan, with the New Zealanders receiving effective artillery and machine gun protection, there were 1853 casualties. This represented around one quarter of all those who had taken part.⁷

By now it seemed highly improbable that Haig's plan to sweep around to the coast would be successful but the gains of late September and early October persuaded him to continue and try to secure the Passchendaele ridge as his line for the winter. The plan was for the two British divisions of II ANZAC Corps to take Bellevue Spur, the second of the two spurs from Passchendaele, on 9 October and the Australians and New Zealanders to

⁴ Harper, *Dark Journey*, p. 134.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

take Passchendaele on 12 October. However, this time the measures which had ensured the success at Broodseinde such as the 'bite and hold' tactics, careful planning, preparation and effective artillery support were not in place because there was only a short time to prepare and heavy rain had turned the area into a bog. The attack on 9 October failed but Haig and his commanders decided the Australians and New Zealanders should proceed with their goal to capture Bellevue Spur and then Passchendaele village.

On 12 October, as the New Zealanders waited overnight, before the attack began, they were shelled by the Germans and again by their own guns when the barrage opened at 0525 hours. The artillery barrage was thin because the mud prevented many guns getting into position and those that did were unstable, which impacted on their accuracy. A combination of barrage support that was less than effective, mud made worse by heavy rain that set in at 0600 hours, and heavy German fire ensured that the New Zealanders suffered terribly. Those who did actually reach the enemy's wire found that it was largely uncut. The few gaps through were death traps and the troops were forced to shelter in shell craters or dig in where they were pinned down under heavy fire from the German pillboxes that were out of their range. On both flanks the Australians had gained about 300 metres and the New Zealanders were initially ordered to attack again at 1500 hours but this was eventually cancelled. The men of the two Divisions were withdrawn in the evening to positions not far forward of where they had started their attack. It had been a catastrophe and the first failure of such magnitude for the New Zealand Division. To add to the disaster the suffering of the wounded in the appalling weather conditions was terrible.⁸

⁸ Ibid., pp. 15-107; McGibbon, (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Military History*, pp.602-607; McLintock, (ed.), *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, vol. 3, pp. 562-4.

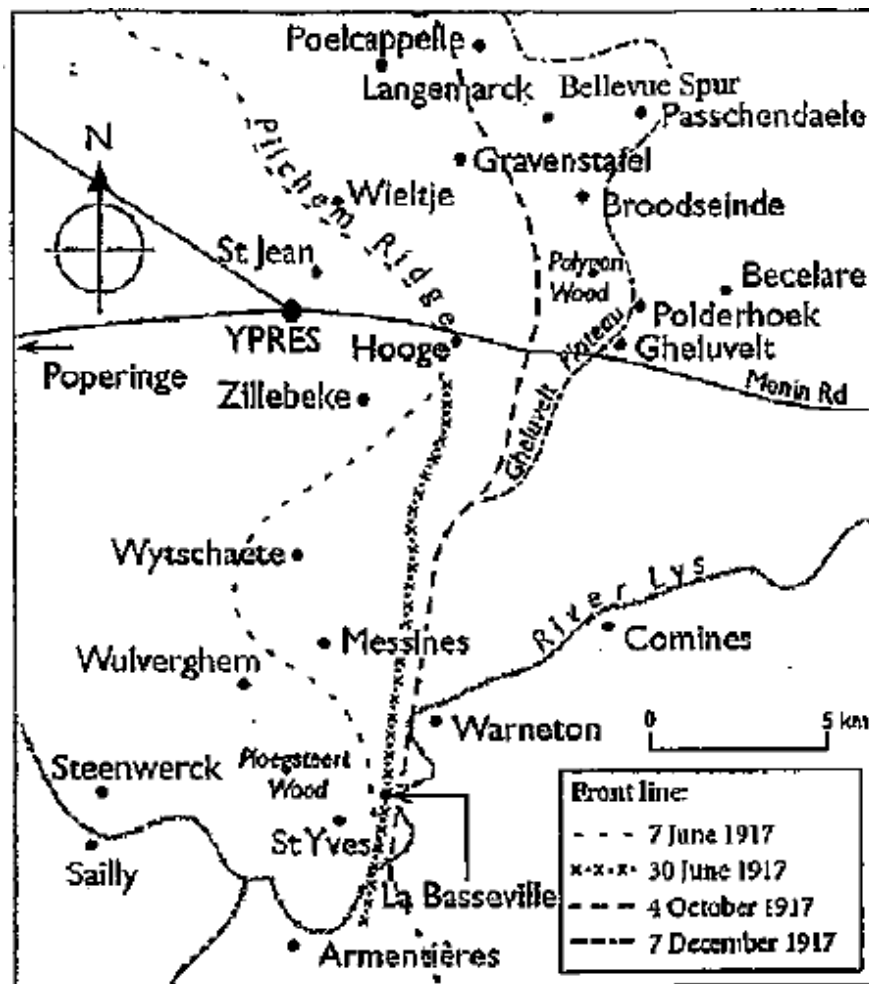


Figure 11: Flanders June - December 1917: Area of Operations and Movement of the Front Line.
The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Military History, p. 603.

Malcolm Ross, had several reports published in the *Chronicles*, in this block of issues. His first dispatch was headlined 'New Zealanders in Flanders Battle' and was received for publication, as was the usual practice, through the H.C.N.Z.⁹ In diary format, he covered the events of 3-5 October 1917. The battle was described in some detail when they 'attacked at dawn [and]

⁹ Ross, 'New Zealanders in Flanders Battle', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 29 (1917): 102-3.

at 6 a.m. the 18-pounders, 60-pounders, and 4.5 howitzers opened with a tremendous barrage upon the German positions'.¹⁰ The New Zealanders were praised for their efforts in taking their objectives in this opening encounter and enemy casualties were emphasised, as was the apparent lack of resistance by the Germans in some cases. Ross wrote:

The troops fought as gallantly as usual, and gained their objectives without a check ... undoubtedly heavy loss was inflicted on the enemy, and a large number of prisoners was taken by the New Zealanders ...The Brigade, which attacked on the right, fought with a dash and gallantry that has more than justified its formation. The Brigadier ... was delighted with his men's success, while the men themselves were in the highest spirits ...¹¹

Ross escaped the censor's pen and named landmarks and places on the battlefield. He described the weather as 'stormy' and later 'the field was swept by a shower of driving rain.' The difficulties experienced in moving the heavy artillery was alluded to but played down with the remark that 'gradually the work is becoming easier.'¹² This was a first hand account but with accompanying limitations, which Ross acknowledged when he wrote, 'I have not yet had time to glean details of the work of the other brigade'.¹³

Immediately following Ross's report Philip Gibbs had an account published. Headed 'New Zealanders at Gravenstafel: Heavy Going', it had been sourced from the *Daily Chronicle*.¹⁴ Gibbs identified various locations by name and described the fighting, including contact with the Germans in the pillboxes and blockhouses that the enemy used. He discussed the

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 102.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 102.

¹² Ibid., pp. 102-3.

¹³ Ibid., p. 102.

¹⁴ Gibbs, 'New Zealanders at Gravenstafel: Heavy Going', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 29 (1917): 103-4.

dangers and the necessity to 'keep close to the barrage, risking the shorts', the eventual success of the leap-frog tactics and the large number of prisoners, sent back unaccompanied at times. He warmly praised the New Zealanders' efforts and wrote: 'Only the great gallantry of high-spirited young men could have done that, and it is an episode which proved the quality of New Zealand troops on that morning of the battle, so keen to do well, so reckless of the cost'.¹⁵ The reports of both Ross and Gibbs were similar with attacks at named locations discussed, but Gibbs added more detail about the actual engagement.

In the next issue of the *Chronicles*, two weeks later and dated 31 October, Ross contributed another report about the operations of 3-17 October.¹⁶ Here, the description of the events of 3-5 October was mostly a repeat of the earlier dispatch. He described the weather, the attack of the 4 October, the demoralised enemy, the large numbers of German prisoners and the comment that the New Zealanders were 'elated at their success'.¹⁷ As the result of proper preparation and effective tactics they would have felt well pleased at having achieved their objective, which was the capture of Gravenstafel Spur.

Ross continued with a narrative of the events of 12 October. There was a full description of the weather that was 'simply appalling' and its effect on the attack that 'started under difficulties in rain and deep sticky mud ... the battlefield is such a sea of mud ... [making] continued success an utter impossibility'.¹⁸ He wrote of the uncut wire, the only shelter from the enemy's 'dominating concrete machine-gun positions' being 'waterlogged shell-holes' and that 'great difficulty had been experienced in getting guns up to forward positions, and when they commenced shooting, some, but

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

¹⁶ Ross, 'The Recent Battles: New Zealanders Attack in the Mud', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 30 (1917): 125-7.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

especially the heavier pieces, shifted upon their foundations, interfering with the usual effectiveness of the barrage.’ His conclusion was that ‘under the conditions that existed no troops could have stormed such positions, and it was wisely decided to break off the attack.’ He praised the bravery of the troops and officers and wrote that ‘after the men had fought almost to a standstill, officers, leaving what shelter they had in shell-holes, went forward to reconnoitre the position’. He was full of admiration for the stretcher-bearers who on 12 October ‘never worked more heroically than they did today, their difficulties being increased owing to mud and the long carries’.¹⁹

Ross wrote frankly about the attacks, the difficulties encountered, and the reasons for the failure of the 12 October, in an informed way. He wrote empathetically about the awful conditions, not understating the situation, and with admiration for the courage of the troops. The praise was probably justified considering the magnitude of the events. The full extent of the casualties was only hinted at but at the time of writing the total human cost was probably not even known.

In the following issue there was another dispatch from Ross under the heading ‘Further Details of Gravenstafel’, with an explanation from the editor that several accounts of that battle had been received in the office. In this dispatch Ross wrote more fully about transport difficulties and the work of the Labour Battalion, Maori Pioneer Battalion and Engineers in the construction and repair of tracks. The work of the Signal Company was also described.²⁰ These details added to the content of his previous reports.

In ‘The Terrible Conditions in the Last Battle’, Ross wrote again about Passchendaele where he made some critical comments about the artillery

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 126-7.

²⁰ Ross, ‘Further Details of Gravenstafel’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 31 (1917): 152-3.

and its role in supporting the infantry. He observed that the conditions prior to the attack were far from ideal including:

greasy mud, waterlogged shell-holes, concrete redoubts fronted with wire and crammed full with machine-guns. The great impediment to success was the inefficiency of the artillery. It had been impossible to bring many guns up, and accurate shooting was considerably hindered by the constant slipping of the gun trails. The sum total of this was that the infantry had not the splendid barrage essential for the thorough cutting of the wire and the shocking [sic] of the pill-boxes. Following the thin barrage, the advancing waves of infantry found themselves raked with machine-gun fire, sniped with rifles, and even shot at by machine-gunners perched on little platforms in the almost branchless trees.²¹

Ross was vigorously rebuked for these remarks in an angry letter written by someone who signed himself Gunner, as reported in the *New Zealand Observer*. Claiming to be an artillery officer, Gunner strongly questioned Ross's views, and referred to his 'impertinence' in calling the gunners inefficient. Gunner went on to state that 'we out here have many a hearty laugh over Malcolm Ross's "tripe", as we call it.'²²

While criticism of war correspondents' reporting was at times warranted, it would seem that in this case, Ross's observations were right, in the context of Bellevue Spur. Perhaps he could have phrased his remarks a little more diplomatically and emphasised that it was poor planning and seriously adverse weather conditions that made an effective artillery barrage virtually impossible. Gunner took the remarks more personally but Ross was not casting blame on the artillery; rather he had underlined a situation over which they had no control.

²¹ Ross, 'The Terrible Conditions in the Last Battle', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 31 (1917): 153.

²² *New Zealand Observer*, Gunner, [Letter], February 16, 1918: 5.

Other contemporary accounts and military historians since have agreed with Ross's assessment. Lieutenant John Byrne when he wrote about the 12 October in his history of the New Zealand Artillery, stated:

From the moment that the attack opened, the artillery barrage was weak and patchy as a direct result of the conditions under which the guns had to shoot; but this deficiency, though serious in itself, was not the chief factor in the tragic failure. The primary causes ... were the deep and continuous belts of uncut wire which faced the attacking infantry ... The results of the day indicated nothing more clearly, than that ... provision must be made both for getting the guns forward and for the construction of platforms.²³

Of the same event, Ormond Burton wrote that 'mud, uncut wire, an ineffective barrage, and an attack that gambled on a German loss of nerve' were the causes of the disaster.²⁴ He concluded that 'where they failed no troops could succeed.'²⁵ Professor Glyn Harper also concluded that one of the reasons the attack of 12 October failed was 'the weakness of the artillery support'.²⁶

In the same report on Passchendaele Ross recorded cases of heroism although individuals were not named. There was a full account of a signaling sergeant in Canterbury Battalion who, in his efforts to find his commanding officer, 'passed over considerable distances of the fire-swept

²³ John Richard Byrne, *New Zealand Artillery in the Field, 1914-18*, Auckland: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1922, pp. 194-5.

²⁴ Ormond E. Burton, *Autobiography: A Rich Old Man*, ca1890s-ca.1960s, II, no. 14: [unpaged], Unpublished Typescript, MS-Papers-0438-059, Alexander Turnbull Library.

²⁵ Ormond E. Burton, *Our Little Bit: A Brief History of the New Zealand Division*, Norwich: Empire Press, 1918, p. 40.

²⁶ Harper, *Dark Journey*, p. 103.

desolation, and went to headquarters twice before he finally ran his man to earth.’²⁷ In another instance a whole Otago Platoon was reduced to one officer and his batman (later killed) who had taken refuge in a German pillbox.²⁸

On Passchendaele and its aftermath, Ross wrote at some length but in more sober terms than he had done previously. The flowery prose was replaced by plain descriptions and, while still admiring the bravery of the New Zealanders, his writing was muted and reflected the shock of the experience. Ross wrote:

The whole line was being held up by masses of barbed wire and a withering machine-gun fire, against which further advance, without increased artillery preparation, was impossible. In spite of this, wave after wave went forward. Numbers were shot down, but still they persevered ... In the afternoon [of 12 October] the attack was broken off. The walking wounded were struggling back. Mud-stained and blood-stained, some smiling and cheerful, others thoughtful and with wan faces ... The infantry fought till they were exhausted, and the stretcher-bearers toiled until they were in the last stages of fatigue ... The weariness of the work was beyond description.²⁹

In the following issue of the *Chronicles*, Ross wrote bluntly about Passchendaele. He stated, ‘we attacked and failed ... Others had failed with us.’ Ross went up to the front line on the day after the battle and described the desolation of the landscape, the condition of the battlefield, the stoicism of the wounded and work of the medical teams. He described movement to and from the front including a burying party, mule teams,

²⁷ Ross, ‘The Terrible Conditions in the Last Battle’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 31 (1917): 153-4.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

men in primitive shelters and ‘night wanderers’. One soldier, who was probably shell shocked and lost, was singing and asking the way to Calgarry [sic] Grange, which was a medical relay aid post. He found that: ‘The battlefield was a scene of depression. Everywhere was torn earth, mud, slush, and brown clayey water. Some of the shell-holes had still a crimson stain. And all about was the litter of war.’³⁰ But final victory was never doubted and Ross concluded on a positive note with the statement that:

Since our attack, further advances have taken us towards our goal. Limited objectives and heavy preliminary bombardments have resulted in successful gains, and soon, in the winter months to come, we shall look down on the enemy in such wet ground as has been our wintering quarters for the past three years.³¹

After the war, in his contribution to *The Empire at War*, Ross wrote about the New Zealanders at Passchendaele. Some of the phrases were the same as those in his account in the *Chronicles*, but, free from the constraints of the censor and the pressures of reporting from the immediacy of the battle zone, he was able to include more detail of places, the engagement and names of personnel. The geography of the Flanders region and the actual heights and topography of the Passchendaele and Grafenstafel ridges and Abraham Heights were recorded. He wrote of the ‘leap-frog’ tactics used by the battalions to move up and take their objectives and how the ‘standing and creeping barrages’ were effected.³² Ross elaborated on the causes for the disaster on 12 October. Although the troops had gone forward ‘behind an altogether inadequate barrage’, he was by now full of admiration for the

³⁰ Ross, ‘The Day After the Battle’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 32 (1917): 177.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

³² Ross, ‘On the Western Front’, in *The Empire at War*, pp. 344-5.

artillery, perhaps having regard for Gunner's criticism. He wrote that the artillery 'had made almost superhuman efforts, but the guns sank in the mud', and then despite deadly enemy fire 'individuals and small bands pushed on only to be caught in the barbed wire entanglements ... It was a forlorn and hopeless task.'³³ He was also able to name 2nd Lieutenant A. R. Cockerell as the officer who had captured a German pillbox and ended up as the sole survivor of his Otago platoon.³⁴ In the *Chronicles* this man could not be identified.³⁵

A comparison of Ross with Bean, in their writing about this period of the war and in particular the Battle of Broodseinde (Grafenstafel), indicates that both concentrated on the effort of their own country while acknowledging the Anzac connection. Bean seemed to relegate the British troops to support roles and described a:

single solid phalanx of Australian and New Zealand troops ... Not the least important cause of the outstanding dash of these troops on this occasion was the real enthusiasm at being employed beside fellow soldiers from the Pacific dominions. The Australasian force which was launched yesterday was animated by a fierce national pride, which cannot be too fully realised.³⁶

By 10 October Bean's report went under the heading 'Exhausted Australians: Too Tired to Hold Some Gains' but he put a brave face on it.³⁷ In his dispatch on 17 October, Bean wrote:

³³ Ibid., pp. 347-8.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 349.

³⁵ Ross, 'The Terrible Conditions in the Last Battle', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 31 (1917): 154.

³⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, C. E. W. Bean, 'Australasians: Centre of the Attack', October 8, 1917: 7.

³⁷ *Argus*, C. E. W. Bean, 'Exhausted Australians: Too Tired to Hold Some Gains', October 12, 1917: 5.

The significance of the five great battles which have just been fought before Ypres, in which the Australians and New Zealanders have taken a really great part, may be lost sight of by attaching too much weight to the fact that the last two [battles] were incompletely successful... one all important fact, which is that we know the method which, given sufficient preparation in decent weather to enable us to beat the Germans every time we decide to attack him... we can win through.³⁸

So Ross and Bean both expressed a public optimism and an explanation for the defeat that placed the blame on factors other than the troops. The calibre of the New Zealanders and Australians in terms of bravery and stoicism was beyond question.

Ross's dispatches were published in newspapers back in New Zealand. His report in the *New Zealand Herald* on 9 October 1917³⁹ was in the *Press* on the same day.⁴⁰ It was reprinted over two issues of the *Chronicles* but not until 17 and 31 October. The reports were almost identical except those in the *Chronicles* had some of the detail edited out. Most omissions were not significant but there were two interesting exceptions. There was a note that 'the French and Canadian troops were met with the choking agony of the first wave of poison gas' and 'The New Zealanders, their work accomplished, sat out in the open smoking the Germans' cigars and drinking German soda water'.⁴¹ Perhaps this indicates that the censor or the editor had been at work and sanitised the report for the *Chronicles*.

The accounts from Ross, in the *Chronicles* on 31 October, which covered the fighting on 12, 14 and 17 October, appeared in New Zealand

³⁸ *Advertiser*, [Adelaide], C. E. W. Bean, 'Breaking the Foe: A Significant Feature', October 20, 1917: 9.

³⁹ *New Zealand Herald*, Ross, 'How the New Zealanders Stormed the Ridge', October 9, 1917: 5.

⁴⁰ *Press*, Ross, 'The Ypres Battle: New Zealanders' Glorious Achievement', October 9, 1917: 7.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

newspapers on 16, 17 and 22 October. While the text was identical, apart from a few minor changes, the headlines in the newspapers were more sensational. The *Chronicles* headed its article with ‘The Recent Battles: New Zealanders Attack in the Mud’.⁴² The *Dominion* went with ‘Thrilling Story of New Zealand Heroism: Men Crown Themselves with Glory’.⁴³ The *New Zealand Herald* used the headline ‘Heroism of New Zealanders in a Trying Time: Advance Stayed by Appalling State at the Front: ... Individual Acts of Daring at Gravenstafel’,⁴⁴ and ‘Superb Heroism of the New Zealand Troops: Officers Fearlessly Reconnoitre Enemy Positions’.⁴⁵ This latter report appeared to be the last by Ross about Passchendaele to be published in any of those newspapers, although there were reports attributed to war correspondents from other countries and the Press Association.

There was nothing published in these newspapers which compared with the frankness of Ross’s descriptions of the battle published in November 1917 in the *Chronicles* under the headings: ‘The Terrible Conditions in the Last Battle’,⁴⁶ and ‘The Day After the Battle’.⁴⁷ This was probably necessary to meet the requirements of newspaper censorship. It confirms John Williams’s assertion that: ‘The war described in the press of those

⁴² Ross, ‘The Recent Battles: The New Zealanders Attack in the Mud’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 30 (1917): 125-7.

⁴³ *Dominion*, Ross, ‘Thrilling Story of New Zealand Heroism: Men Crown Themselves with Glory’, October 17, 1917: 5.

⁴⁴ *New Zealand Herald*, Ross, ‘Heroism of New Zealanders in a Trying Time: Advance Stayed by Appalling State at the Front: ... Individual Acts of Daring at Gravenstafel’, October 17, 1917: 7.

⁴⁵ *New Zealand Herald*, Ross, ‘Superb Heroism of the New Zealand Troops: Officers Fearlessly Reconnoitre Enemy Positions’, October 22, 1917: 5.

⁴⁶ Ross, ‘The Terrible Conditions in the Last Battle’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 31 (1917): 153-4.

⁴⁷ Ross, ‘The Day After the Battle’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 32 (1917): 177-8.

days bore but a surreal and disjointed relationship to the war as it was experienced at almost any level.’⁴⁸

By then all journalists were under scrutiny and the object of jokes and criticism whether it was justified or not. One contributor to the *Chronicles* poked fun at correspondents in a sketch written about returning after ten days at the front:

As a result of the cold and wet, the battalion had moved out into billets, only to find them draughty and damp. No wonder the men “went crook” and inquired plaintively (?) as to the whereabouts of the “warm and cosy huts” so beloved of newspaper correspondents.⁴⁹

An article reprinted from *Klink* and published in the *Chronicles* pointed out that the events at Ypres had been misrepresented in the press. The author wrote:

When our men were putting up a magnificent fight and holding on with a miserably thin line of soldiers and camp-followers against four, five or six times their number of adversaries, holding on and nothing more, our papers were full of a “great advance in Flanders,” and “notable British victories.”⁵⁰

But there was a mood among correspondents that they were tired of the censorship restrictions in the press of the day. Williams referred to this

⁴⁸ John Frank Williams, *ANZACS, the Media and the Great War*, Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 1999, p. 9.

⁴⁹ Moe, ‘Sticking Together’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 34 (1917): 241.

⁵⁰ Lance Captain, ‘The Poilu’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 33 (1917): 215.

when he stated: ‘Correspondents who’d ‘played the game’ throughout the war were beginning to lose patience, and on 11 October 1917 Haig met the accredited British correspondents (as well as Bean and ‘the Canadian, [sic] Ross’) to hose down a ‘pretty acute crisis lately in the censorship’.⁵¹ In the *Chronicles* it seemed that Ross was able to have his outspoken and uncut opinions published more often, and was to some extent free of the limitations imposed by mainstream journalism, while noting that he was less inclined to name places and combatants.

Clutha Mackenzie, the editor of the *Chronicles*, returned from a visit home to New Zealand, in the second issue of this block. He too had some views on the way the war was being reported. In the editorial on 3 October he wrote with some foresight that ‘scant cables give little clue to the intensity of the struggle, the communiqués become monotonous with their perpetually “successful raids” at this unknown locality, ... “so many machines brought down” ’.⁵² This was written before the disastrous Passchendaele battle.

Following reports of Passchendaele, the editor wrote about it several times in a sober and grave way with a deep sense of sadness:

Wet, miserably cold, and with little prospect of success, they did all that mortals could do to gain the German positions. Indescribable mud, weather-hindered artillery and uncut wires assisted the defenders, and at length the attack was abandoned. ... We, here, far away from the Front, are quiet, and stand with bowed heads in deep respect to all the brave fellows who falter under such severe

⁵¹ Williams, p. 203.

⁵² Mackenzie, ‘From the Editorial Bivvie’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 28 (1917): 75.

conditions. And day after day, as the long-typed casualty lists come in ...⁵³

A month later, on 14 November Clutha Mackenzie was still haunted by the memory of Passchendaele. While he focussed his editorial on the New Zealanders' activities in Palestine, he again mentioned their fate in France and the 'hopeless attacks through indescribable mud against vilest elements'.⁵⁴ In early 1918 the editor reviewed the previous year and in measured prose wearily concluded that the year had:

not been a particularly cheerful one for the world ... We have taken part in several big attacks: sometimes we gained every objective, at times we failed; but never through causes which courage, physique or endurance could overcome. We have lost many fine fellows.⁵⁵

He summarised the operations in which the Division had been engaged and described their successes in rather subdued terms. There was admiration and respect for the troops without the earlier exaggerated adulation, but the disaster of 12 October was not downplayed.

In December 1917 Clutha Mackenzie was delighted to have the opportunity to visit the Western Front where he spent four days in the Ypres sector. This gave him first hand experience of the battlefield. On his return to London he wrote:

⁵³ Mackenzie, 'Brave Fellows', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 30 (1917): 123.

⁵⁴ Mackenzie, 'Notes From the Bivvie' *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 31 (1917): 149.

⁵⁵ Mackenzie, '1917', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 34 (1917): 231.

I come back with a fuller realisation than ever of all that the war means and is, and the courage and endurance with which our fellows, no longer assisted by the first romance and joyous enthusiasm of early days, stick the shells, the mud, the rain and all the horrible mechanical devices which science has brought into war.⁵⁶

Clutha Mackenzie wrote frankly about the ‘months of privation and danger in inhospitable Flanders’,⁵⁷ seemingly without the censor cutting his copy. Even before he visited the front himself his editorials had become somewhat sombre in tone and written in a more controlled way without the earlier inflated references to noble sacrifice and glory. In his reports he described the conditions and outcome in forthright prose and made no attempt to tone down the failure at Passchendaele on 12 October, while still deeply admiring the courage of the troops in such terrible conditions.

As well as the reports from the war correspondents and the editorials, the *Chronicles* were always keen to publish first hand accounts by soldiers. In the 31 October issue the editor again appealed for ‘more material from the Front itself ... about conditions of life, football and other sports, experiences’.⁵⁸ Some of these accounts give an insight into the conditions on the battlefield, in the trenches and in billets back from the front line, seemingly with the censorship rules relaxed somewhat.

One contributor, who signed himself B, wrote a free ranging piece which included details of places and the position of other allied troops including the British, French and Canadians both before and after 4 October. He

⁵⁶ Mackenzie, ‘The Front Revisited’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 35 (1918): 21.

⁵⁷ Mackenzie, ‘Notes from the Editorial Bivvie’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 35 (1918): 14.

⁵⁸ Mackenzie, ‘To the Fellows’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 30 (1917): 124.

concluded with a description of the New Zealand troops going up to the front on the night of the 3-4 October as ‘a sight to stir the blood. String after string of them in single file, brown and fit and strong.’ A concluding paragraph yet again referred despondently to ‘the cold rain [which] is driving down in torrents ... Somewhere in the distance a band is playing ... for the tall lads left behind who’ll “never go a marching any more, any more” ... Who wants to anyhow?’⁵⁹

Even in September 1917 the mud was referred to. Writing from France John A. Lee made light of it:

If you are up to your knees in it, and carrying half a hundredweight of military material, it is a ----- few cuss words. But if ... a fritz shell goes “Whizz-bang!” you nearly push yourself out of sight in the earthy soup ... Then a head comes up slowly and cautiously out of a hole, and, to the accompaniment of a sucking sound, everyone else extricates himself from the mud.⁶⁰

In another piece Lee candidly described conditions in a billet away from the trenches, including comments on the weather, dirty drinking water, the reappearance of the rum ration, albeit only every second day, lack of news, and parcels from the Wellington Women’s Christmas Gift Association. About the conditions he wrote:

Today, with qualifications we have enjoyed a spell. Said qualifications are wet, miserable weather, abundant mud, and nowhere to go. ... Yet billets are at any time preferable to the more

⁵⁹ B, ‘The Battlefield of Gravenstafel’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 30 (1917): 128.

⁶⁰ John A. Lee, [Untitled], *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 27 (1917): 55.

arduous toil and deeper mud of trench life ... The absence of noise is a great boon...⁶¹

In a subsequent issue Lee wrote descriptively about the state of the battlefield:

This conspicuous feature of a forest here is an absence of trees ... you will see strange sights ... close along the duckboard, you might see the see the shell-disinterred body of a man ... The trench here, at best, is only a series of disconnected craters ... a land of desolation ... hot food is extremely rare, and shaving and washing may, with luck, be weekly occurrences.⁶²

A contributor, using the pseudonym Goreite, wrote about Christmas in the trenches and while not an actual description of the action at Passchendaele it was a first hand account, of a spell in the trenches at Christmas time. He wrote vividly, with a wry turn of phrase, about the strain of coming under fire, sleeping arrangements, the conditions, eating and the all-important rum ration.

A cutting wind was blowing the snow in our faces, defying all the Balaclavas that adorned us ; the duck-walks and our feet were covered with about three inches of mud and snow, and Fritz, intent on giving Christmas its peace and goodwill character, was making benevolent efforts to distract our attention from the dismal surroundings ... None but those who have experienced it can fully understand what a strain on the nerves, what agony it is to crouch in a comparatively shallow trench under heavy shell-fire wondering how long it will be before *the* shell lands ... Under the benign

⁶¹ John A. Lee, 'Billets', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 32 (1917): 179.

⁶² John A. Lee, 'Life Among the Shell Craters', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 34 (1918): 235-6.

influence of the rum we felt like new men again ... We were sleeping (or trying to) in ... a two-man dug-out. That is a hole in the side of the trench just large enough to accommodate two men and about thirty rats.⁶³

There was an admission by now that men could be afraid. D. H. Soutar wrote:

The men had received marching orders with cheers and they set about their preparations for the great adventure with the calm indifference of seasoned veterans. A few cheeks had blanched. Indifference to danger is one thing, ignorance of it is another. They knew what possibilities lay in the next twenty-four hours.⁶⁴

While there was no close analysis of military tactics in this section of the *Chronicles*, the use of military aircraft was referred to in a number of dispatches from Ross and other contributors. Ross wrote that: 'Notwithstanding the stormy weather, our 'planes did magnificent work, though visibility was so poor that they flew unusually low.'⁶⁵ He noted that they 'directed artillery upon the transport'⁶⁶ and where there were 'clear glimpses between rain-storms and fogs, the enemy shelled and bombed from aeroplanes'.⁶⁷ Ross merely recorded their presence and occasionally their part in an operation but he did not attempt any commentary on their effectiveness. However these notes are interesting as early reports of aerial operations.

⁶³ Goreite, 'The Joys of Christmas in the Trenches', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 33 (1917): 202-3.

⁶⁴ D. H. Soutar, 'Quinn: A Tale of the Trenches', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 37 (1918): 12.

⁶⁵ Ross, 'New Zealanders in Flanders Battle', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 29 (1917): 102-3.

⁶⁶ Ross, 'Further Details of Gravenstafel', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 31 (1917): 152.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

These were accounts written at the time. They were vivid word pictures of the state of the battlefield, and frank unembellished descriptions of the real conditions and the sense of failure and weariness, all of which managed to pass the censor. While there may not have been in-depth analysis of tactics and strategy they were candid and immediate descriptions of the operation, its aftermath and the effect to some extent on morale. This was what Captain Dawson described as the ‘vivid, stabbing little thrust of triumphant scene-painting likely to provide an answer to the constantly reiterated question as to “what it’s like” ’ when questioned about battle.⁶⁸

In addition to the content in articles, there were occasional glimpses of conditions in snippets from letters and notes, club, camp and hospital news. B. E. was a regular correspondent from the 4th Field Engineers in France. He wrote that:

Three weeks we spent in that shell-battered and ruined region, [Flanders] an experience that will live for ever with us. ... One cannot adequately describe the scene. ... It is almost impossible to realise the time the men have when it rains! ... “Duck-walks” are a banned subject, for we had dealings with them every day in the construction of a track right up.⁶⁹

B. E.’s report in the next issue included some detail about time away from the front. He described having ‘a very pleasant spell in a quiet corner of France far from the noise of battle. Rugby football, of course, was the main pastime, and many an enjoyable game was played.’ The tendency of the

⁶⁸ A. J. Dawson, *Somme Battle Stories*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1916, p. 8.

⁶⁹ B. E., ‘4th Field Company, N.Z.E.’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 31 (1917): 155.

locals to inflate prices for goods, 'principally Mr Booze and Coy.', was noted, and the weather was once again a problem for the sappers who had arrived before dawn and decided that: 'Ploughing through the mud in the dark looking for "posies" was not conducive to good temper. That night was spent in tents, but next day we moved into comfortable, recently constructed huts.'⁷⁰ A month later on 12 December B. E. wrote:

We have burrowed into the bank of a lake, and rats and mice are our enemies. ... Last week the mud was in disgrace with the mule packers but this week the slippery ice-caked plank roads have been the cause of so much trouble that it's a wonder the language hasn't thawed the source of annoyance.⁷¹

E. A. from N.Z. Stationery Hospital in France was more optimistic. Under the heading 'When Soldiering is Not So Bad', he wrote of their billet: 'After the strenuous time we had at Ypres, we landed a rest among the hens, chickens, the cows, and the pigs of this country.'⁷²

The comments in letters and notes, club, camps and hospital news revealed a sense of war weariness following Passchendaele. On 12 November a correspondent from No. 1 N.Z. General Hospital, Balmer Lawn Section wrote of Christmas and New Year good wishes that: 'If only the spirit implied in these words could sweep right away from the earth the causes and the effects of the present world war!'⁷³ B. L. reported from the 3rd Ambulance that '... cheery as our [Christmas] feast was we all

⁷⁰ B. E., '4th Field Engineers', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 32 (1917): 180.

⁷¹ B. E., '4th Field Engineers', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 34 (1918): 236.

⁷² E. A., 'When Soldiering is Not So Bad', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 32 (1917): 180.

⁷³ Pakeha, 'No. 1, N.Z. General Hospital Balmer Lawn Section', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 33 (1917): 217.

agreed with the O.C. when he hoped that next Christmas we would be back in our own homes.’⁷⁴ The Christmas pantomime in France was written about as ‘a welcome contrast to the depressing desolation of this country’. But the author ended on a somewhat desperate note: ‘Here’s glorious news in the paper : we’re two duckboards and rum jar ahead today.’⁷⁵ These notes all provide details that contribute to a greater understanding of the conditions for the troops, from their point of view.

It was also possible to track news of individuals and that information was noted in short items. One example was information that ‘Dave Gallaher, who captained the famous All Blacks during their successful tour of Great Britain, was severely wounded in the last attack.’⁷⁶ In the next issue his death from wounds was announced.⁷⁷ Those who had won awards might also have details recorded. For example ‘Second-Lieutenant C. R. Mackenzie was awarded the Military Cross for gallantry during the Passchendaele operations, in which he was wounded.’⁷⁸

In the *Chronicles* issue of 2 January 1918 there were two New Year messages from commanders. Both were serious and acknowledged the past year’s failures while they encouraged the troops to keep going. Godley fronted ‘the question uppermost in many minds [which was] “When will the war be over?” ’ with the frank admission that: ‘No one can tell [but that] it shall only finish in one way. ... We may have to make even greater sacrifices in the coming year than we have in the past.’⁷⁹ Russell’s message was brief and positive. He wrote, “With the coming of the New Year we

⁷⁴ B. L., ‘The Dinner of the 3rd Field Ambulance’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 35 (1918): 17.

⁷⁵ ‘The Divisional Christmas Panto’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 35 (1918): 16.

⁷⁶ ‘Mostly About the Boys’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 30 (1917): 131.

⁷⁷ ‘Mostly About the Boys’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 31 (1917): 157.

⁷⁸ Ross, ‘The Attack on the Chateau’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 nos. 34 - 35 (1918): 7.

⁷⁹ ‘New Year Messages’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 34 (1918): 233.

leave behind us the troubles, the disappointments, the hardships of the past months. ... and with the certainty of success awaiting us at the close of our journey.’⁸⁰

There was verse or poetry in every issue in this period except the shorter number 35. Some poems were frivolous or ended on a lighter note but generally the verse was serious and described the war and trench life including the death of comrades. ‘A Simple Sapper’ is a fun poem about a harmless flirtation with a French girl, with no undertones except a note in the last line about returning ‘to battle and the midnight flare’.⁸¹ In ‘The Reverie of a “Baksheesh” ’⁸² a new soldier from Sling Camp wondered if, in spite of his training he would measure up:

I often sit and ponder deeply, should I ever reach the line.
And the Hun came up to see us, could I get on guard in time ?
Could I get a Mill’s bomb pin out ? For I’d be in such a stew.
You’d see the Hun buck up some when he saw what I can’t do.⁸³

‘The Raid that Didn’t’ portrayed a raid with artillery barrage and then going over the parapet to attack and being caught in the wire, in graphic and poetic terms. But it ended on a lighter note, having been just a dream:

While above, below, and all around,
A shrieking hell – a murderous sound,
Turned trenches into tombs ...

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 233.

⁸¹ ‘A Simple Sapper’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 33 (1917): 206.

⁸² ‘Baksheesh’ is defined as a slang term, meaning, ‘a superficial wound meriting a return home’, Orsman, p. 96.

⁸³ N. McA., ‘The Reverie of a “Baksheesh” ’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 34 (1918): 239.

Fast rained their bombs around me now,
Their bullets ripped my gear,
I was caught in their wire ...
Take warning by my awful dream,
The result of lobster and custard cream,
And a wine or two for tea.⁸⁴

In 'Ypres Memories', one of only two poems in this group that specifically named the battle area, the terrible conditions were written about in a deeply ironic way. There was little glory by then:

How sweet to tread Track No. 6.
In the teeth of the Easterly wind,
How fondly the Flanders mud sticks –
Like a leech and a lawyer combined.

How nice to slip over the edge
And gently subside in the slime ;
And when you grab hold of the ledge
Your mate on your fingers marks time.⁸⁵

'The Road from Gravenstafel', the other poem which was set in a specific place, began with a sentimental word picture of a picturesque and idealised country scene but ended with the devastation of the 'waste of mud and waterhole', 'the blackened ruins' and death. It concluded very grandly: 'Fight on ! the roads are many, but they shall be free again !'⁸⁶

⁸⁴ H. C. Grant, 'The Raid That Didn't', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 29 (1917): 100.

⁸⁵ J. W. D., 'Ypres Memories', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 32 (1917): 176.

⁸⁶ B, 'The Road from Gravenstafel', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 33 (1917): 207.

One particularly grim poem about the song of the 'leaden storm', the 'leaden hail', the 'iron road' and the 'molten waves' ended in a very affecting way with: 'The song of the open graves, And the aching hearts at home.'⁸⁷ There was no attempt to add a positive note or ironic twist in this poem.

Stretcher-bearers were much admired in verse as their work and heroism were similarly acknowledged in other contributions. Private Reginald Lambert (regimental number 3/2981) of No. 3 Field Ambulance in France recognised that the Medical Corps were sometimes patronised 'With a careless word and a laugh', but wrote:

So we heed not the sneer of the new chum,
Or the jokes that some people throw,
For we get what is worth the having –
Respect from the boys who know.

In the same poem he described men's fear in no uncertain terms as 'I have seen the face of the stricken, The flush and the tear in the eye' and the conditions in arresting terms as 'the stinking poisoned mud'.⁸⁸ The ubiquitous mud was often referred to but none more vividly than in a poem of the same name. However there was one consolation because 'the shell that came right at you ... thank God, it lobbed in mud : you're still alive !'⁸⁹

Death was not necessarily glossed over. 'In Memory of a Comrade' was a tribute to 'Pte W. D. Robbins, 26919 – one of many such men' and an expression of guilt about surviving:

⁸⁷ Gisborne, 'Song of the Guns', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 32 (1917): 181.

⁸⁸ R. B. Lambert, 'That Which Counts', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 31 (1917): 154.

⁸⁹ Delver, 'Mud', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 36 (1918): 288.

Poor Robbie's gone ; 'tis hard to think
We stood with him upon the brink :
And he passed o'er, while we were spared !
Oh ! would I could his death have shared ⁹⁰

The general tone of the poetry was sombre, with the awful conditions described, fear acknowledged at times, death written about and fallen comrades remembered. Some poems ended on a humorous note reflecting the men's 'queer gaiety' and the fact that they 'laughed even while they cursed its beastliness'.⁹¹ One correspondent noted about songs: 'Did you ever notice how some sloppy ditties voice dinkum sentiments?'⁹² This insight could be applied to the poetry equally. While the verse may not have been particularly polished, the emotion when expressed and experience was genuine. At times it was serious and grim but defeat was never mentioned.

The cartoons and caricatures in these issues did not specifically refer to Passchendaele but were more general and depicted conditions at the front in France and occasionally in the Middle East. Subjects included bathing in a crater, bombs exploding, taking shelter, the desolation of the landscape, uses for a bayonet and a card school. However, while some hinted at weariness with the war, or dissatisfaction at leave being cancelled and a couple included cynical comments about shirkers and conscientious objectors, others were amusing and self-deprecating. In the

⁹⁰ G. R. Ramsey, 'In Memory of a Comrade', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 29 (1917): 106.

⁹¹ Gibbs, *The Battles of the Somme*, p. 1.

⁹² Special Correspondent, 'On Things in General', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 28 (1917): 79.

only specific reference to Passchendaele, Ypres was drawn as a ruin, with a play on words in its caption.



Figure 12: ‘ “Say, Mate, the Man who Christened this place ‘Ypres’ must have been a Prophet. It’s Nothing but Blooming ‘Eaps! ” ’

Source: *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 4 no. 38 (1917): 35.

News from hospitals, including reports and casualty lists were published in every issue except the shorter number 35. These lists, in the aftermath of the fighting, are a pointer to its intensity and nature. To illustrate the extent of admissions to hospital, Brockenhurst had 1306 admissions in September 1916, after the Battle of the Somme, and 1451 after the October 1917 Passchendaele battles. The average number per month for 1917 was more than double that for 1916. In October 1917 the admission rates at Brockenhurst were the highest in its history and when it ran out of beds the local Y.M.C.A. provided fifty more.⁹³

The opening line from No. 1 N.Z.G. Hospital’s report of 31 October 1917 read, ‘We are very busy here at present, and convoys are arriving at

⁹³ Harper, *Dark Journey*, pp. 114-5.

frequent intervals.’⁹⁴ Another report read, ‘At Brockenhurst, for the last three weeks, patients have been coming in thick and fast’.⁹⁵ By 19 November 1917 the Balmer Lawn Section of Brockenhurst Hospital was ‘fairly busy as regards patients, and short-handed through three members of the staff being on the sick list’.⁹⁶ On 30 January 1918 Balmer Lawn was still ‘busy, as the hospital is full, many of the cases being medical’.⁹⁷ The sheer numbers led to readers in the first issue in 1918 being advised that ‘In the hospital lists in this and in future issues all men whose names appeared in the previous issue, and not in this, are still in the same hospital, and are getting on well.’⁹⁸ Presumably this was an effort to manage the lists as they grew so dramatically.

The hospital lists included comments beside names. These remarks were only one or a few words couched in positive terms, such as ‘Doing slowly’, ‘Fairly well’, ‘Progressing slowly’, or ‘Rather better’. There were lists of men under a single heading such as ‘The following are going on well’ or ‘The following are going along very well’. There were also lists of men who were transferred to other hospitals. In addition to the expected wounds a number of cases of bronchitis, pneumonia, trench fever and influenza were noted.⁹⁹

Two short lists of ‘some admissions from France’ to Balmer Lawn dated 2 and 9 October 1917 were practically all the result of shell gas or gun shot

⁹⁴ Pakeha, ‘No. 1 N.Z.G. Hospital’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 30 (1917): 132.

⁹⁵ ‘About Sisters, Nurses and Others’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 31 (1917): 157.

⁹⁶ Pakeha, ‘Balmer Lawn Section, Brockenhurst Hospital’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 32 (1917): 184.

⁹⁷ Pakeha, ‘Brockenhurst: Balmer Lawn Section’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 36 (1918): 289.

⁹⁸ ‘Mostly About the Boys’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 35 (1918): 22.

⁹⁹ New Zealand War Contingent Association, ‘Hospital Reports’, *Chronicles of the N. Z. E. F.*, 3 no. 27 (1917): 65-66.

wounds to limbs and the body.¹⁰⁰ By 31 October about two-thirds of the reports listed men with gas poisoning, shell gas burns and gun shot wounds. But at the end of November bronchitis, dysentery, influenza, measles, nephritis, pneumonia and trench fever had returned together with shell shock, nerves and debility.

A cryptic remark in the issue for 17 October stated that ‘An unfortunate error occurred in the Hospital Reports of a recent issue. One report, which certainly should not have appeared, escaped the censor’s observation. Both the W.C.A. [War Contingent Association] and the “Chronicles” regret it. – Ed.’¹⁰¹ Seemingly this is a reference to the death of Rifleman Thomas O’Mara (regimental number 23421) as ‘Accidentally Killed’.¹⁰² In the Roll of Honour he is listed as ‘Died of Wounds, France’.¹⁰³ Following this apology, the number of corrections in the casualty lists such as ‘Previously reported missing, now reported missing, believed killed’ or ‘Previously reported wounded, now reported killed’, or ‘Previously reported wounded, now reported not wounded’ appeared to be fewer in number. Perhaps, as a consequence of the events that led to the editor’s apology, more effort was spent on verifying details before they were published, but corrections were still made when more information became available.

To conclude, in this section of the *Chronicles*, there was no particular in-depth analysis of Passchendaele, in the reports from the war correspondents, the editor or other contributors. There were some descriptions about the geography of the Flanders region and the battlefield conditions. The defeat was not understated but rather there was an

¹⁰⁰ New Zealand War Contingent Association, ‘Hospital Reports’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 29 (1917): 156.

¹⁰¹ New Zealand War Contingent Association, ‘Hospital Reports’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 29 (1917): 115.

¹⁰² ‘Casualties’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 28 (1917): 92.

¹⁰³ *The Great War, 1914-1918: New Zealand Expeditionary Force: Roll of Honour*, Wellington: Govt Printer, 1924, p. 223.

attempt to reach some frank conclusions about why it had happened. It was explained in terms of the very bad weather and conditions plus the ineffective artillery support and uncut wire, with no reflection at all on the performance or courage of the fighting troops. Later historians have largely confirmed these observations. The advent of aircraft on the battlefield by both sides was noted, but its impact was not analysed. Material published in the *Chronicles* in this period was generally raw first hand accounts, written close to the events in terms of time and sometimes physical location. Even though they were criticised, the war correspondents were located close to the front and appeared to have a reasonable feel for the conditions. The same applied to the editor, who personally visited the front, albeit briefly.

These reports are significant for the very fact that they were written under such circumstances. In this context, what Gibbs wrote in 1917 is relevant. He described his articles as being:

... written at great speed, and sometimes in utter exhaustion of body and brain, but always with the hot impress of new and tremendous sensations. They may hold some qualities that would be lost if I wrote them with more coldness and criticism of words and phrases. Even the repetition of incidents and impressions have some value, for that is true of modern warfare – a continual repetition of acts and sounds, sights and smells and emotions.¹⁰⁴

Although this set of the *Chronicles* covered the time period around Passchendaele there was no particular focus on the fighting except in the reports from the war correspondents. While some editorials were about operations in France and events at Passchendaele, they also discussed other matters. These included impressions of Stockholm, the extent of

¹⁰⁴ Gibbs, *The Battles of the Somme*, p. 15.

New Zealand's contribution to the war effort, the capture of Beersheba by the Mounteds, the Allied War Council and Christmas preparations together with thoughts of home. Other contributions covered a diversity of subjects including the N.Z.E.F. Masonic Association, the Divisional Entertainers and the Y.M.C.A., a visit to *H.M.S. New Zealand*, a gymkhana at Walton, a function to honour Sergeant Leslie Andrew, V.C., discontinuation of parcels to the troops, a train accident in England when nine New Zealanders died, unwarranted praise of colonial troops at the expense of the British, and the award of chevrons for overseas service.

As was outlined in the previous chapter the real value of these issues of the *Chronicles* for historical research is the insights they provide about the way the troops saw themselves in their letters, verse, articles, short notes, news pieces and illustrations. Some of the writing about the conditions, an acknowledgement of fear, and the magnitude of the tragedy of Passchendaele was quite candid, which is worth noting, considering they were subject to censorship and the role the censor had in maintaining morale. However, while there may have been a mood of depression after Passchendaele, losing the war was never suggested or even alluded to.

Material from the troops is also revealing in the way it was written and what was left out. Some was understated in terms of the terrible conditions, the casualty numbers and the achievements of the Division. Of the allies, including New Zealanders, Gibbs wrote:

They talk in low voices. There is no bragging among them; no wailing; no excited talk. Quietly they tell each other of the things that happened to them and of the things they saw, and it is the naked truth ... So when they say, as I heard them say yesterday, "It

is all right, it was only the mud that checked us.” One knows that this is the truth in the hearts of brave men ...¹⁰⁵

In the verse there was at times raw emotion, where death was baldly described and not in euphemistic terms that could have softened the hard facts or its impact. Or else it was described honestly but with a wry comment or positive note to provide an ironic lift in tone. Some of the cartoons illustrated a social comment on matters of concern to the troops such as unrest about leave and conscientious objectors. Others were typically about army life and amused and entertained.

The Hospital Reports including the casualty lists are another source of information as outlined in the previous chapter. The sheer length of them and their format with its catalogue of wounds and illnesses mapped the seriousness of the conflict.

This section of the *Chronicles*, written around the time of the Passchendaele battle, is an energetic and sometimes grim and frank record of events. These issues were written close to the events, which accounts for some of their limitations. The New Zealand war correspondent appeared to have been given some latitude in these issues with more material published than in contemporary New Zealand newspapers. The hospital and casualty reports were significant in that the censor did not seem particularly active with respect to their content, so they included a lot of detail about casualties. The *Chronicles* provide another source of information, which adds to the material found in other personal memoirs about the New Zealanders' part in the Third Battle of Ypres, in October 1917.

¹⁰⁵ Philip Gibbs, *From Bapaume to Passchendaele*, London: Heinemann, 1918, p. 345.

CHAPTER 7

Comparison between coverage of the First Battle of the Somme (1916) and the Third Battle of Ypres (1917)

This chapter compares and contrasts the way in which the New Zealand's Division's part in the First Battle of the Somme (1916) and the Third Battle of Ypres (1917), or Passchendaele were portrayed in the *Chronicles*, in the two blocks of issues identified and examined in the previous two chapters. As has already been noted, the utility of the *Chronicles* as an historical source is one of the key questions raised in this research. This chapter considers how the two battles were written about in terms of the reports from the official war correspondents, editorials, articles, contributions from designated hospital and unit correspondents, the soldiers' writing in prose, poetry and illustrations, and the casualty and hospital reports and lists in each time period. The similarities and differences in both the Somme and Passchendaele periods, as they are portrayed in the *Chronicles*, are considered.

With regard to the format of the regular columns in the *Chronicles*, it was consistent throughout both periods. There were editorials and opinion pieces together with sections headed 'Notes from the High Commissioner's Office', 'Camp, Club and Hospital News', 'Hospital Reports', 'Casualties' and later 'News From France'. In addition, as has already been noted, there were reports, articles, verse and cartoons.

The war correspondents Ross and Gibbs both wrote about the Somme and Passchendaele in the *Chronicles*. Ross had half as much material published about the Somme as he did about Passchendaele, in five reports; whereas Gibbs had only one report published on each battle. Neither report by Gibbs was written specifically for the *Chronicles* because they were

acknowledged as having been sourced from the *Daily Telegraph* for the former and the *Daily Chronicle* for the latter. In his role as official war correspondent Ross was bound to focus on the New Zealanders and more specifically their part in the battles and on the front. Perhaps Ross had less material published about the Somme because the publication was relatively new and censorship may have been stricter. By way of contrast, Gibbs contributed just one report on each battle, probably because, as one of the accredited British correspondents, he had a broader brief than just the New Zealand angle. When he did write about the New Zealander's part it was in less detail and for this reason possibly considered of less interest to readers of the *Chronicles*.

In writing about the Somme, Ross described the battle in sentimental terms of glory and sacrifice associated with fighting loyally and gallantly for one's country. He glossed over the awful conditions and the casualties. In contrast Ross's dispatches after Passchendaele were written in more sober, toned down language to the point of bluntness when he stated 'we attacked and failed'.¹ The terrible conditions on the battlefield were described and he reported on individual acts of bravery, but generally without naming the participants, for censorship reasons. Ross's descriptions of the battle revealed much of the horror and showed empathy with the troops. This may have been an attempt to counter criticism of previous accounts written by him, which did not present all of the facts about the battlefield conditions. But it is also an indicator of a seemingly more relaxed attitude by the censor, to the *Chronicles*, compared with what was passed for publication in the newspapers of the time. Indeed Ross wrote in much more detail about Passchendaele, in the *Chronicles*, than in the newspapers in New Zealand. Ross himself compared the two battles when he wrote that: "There was surely no more dreary scene in all

¹ Ross, 'The Day After the Battle', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 32 (1917): 177.

the war than was presented by the battlefield next day. It was worse than the Somme.’²

Gibbs, in his two reports, one on each battle, wrote in a cheery vein similar to the earlier ones by Ross. The truth about the defeat at Passchendaele was not even alluded to by Gibbs.

The troops did not generally have a very high opinion of the despatches from the war correspondents. One commentator observed that: ‘The contempt which the soldiers of the First World War felt towards war correspondents was due to their enthusiastic promotion of the war. The war correspondents fed the public a steady diet of heroism and glory, largely ignoring the squalor and futility of the trenches.’³ In the *Chronicles* during the Somme period the writing of both Ross and Gibbs bore out this assessment. By the later Passchendaele period, Ross was writing in much less flowery terms and produced a franker account of the battlefield situation for publication in the *Chronicles*.

By Passchendaele Ross was known to the troops. The writer of the ‘Grantham Notes’ felt compelled to compose a letter, after failing to find anyone else to do the job. He wrote, ‘through waiting so long for a Malcolm Ross to arise in our midst, I’ve been driven to desperation’.⁴ After the battle, soldiers and the editor mentioned the way in which the war was reported. In describing events in January 1918, J. A. L. (who was very likely John A. Lee, although he usually wrote under his full name) wrote cynically that: ‘With so many planes searching for targets, and with many balloons also spotting, it is not to be wondered at if the salient livens up ;

² Ross, ‘On the Western Front’, in *The Empire at War*, p. 350.

³ Darren Moore, *The Soldier: A History of Courage, Sacrifice and Brotherhood*, London: Icon, 2009, p. 383.

⁴ Tenanui, ‘Grantham Notes’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 29 (1917): 110.

and tomorrow's papers will probably report: "There was some artillery activity in the Ypres sector." '5

But it was not just the written accounts that were viewed more cynically as the war progressed. The whole area of information about what was happening was cause for discontent. A contributor noted in late January 1918 that: 'Lots of old rumours are lifting their heads again over here. ... However, when rumours arrive nowadays they don't get the enthusiastic hearing they did two or three years ago.'6

The editorials in the Somme period were written in much the same vein as the dispatches by the war correspondents. In the beginning they were fulsomely optimistic and the war was described in grand heroic terms. But the editorials were tempered with realism when the aftermath of the Somme was known and they were much more muted by the time of Passchendaele when there was a sense of weariness and even hints of dejection. When Clutha Mackenzie visited the front in late 1917 he wrote about Ypres as it was described to him. He depicted it as 'a desolate waste of water-logged shell craters... the shattered trees, the leveled farmhouses ... the plank roads and the wreckage of war ... it was dreary, dismal and depressing.'7 There was less expression in patriotic clichés of noble devotion to duty and sacrifice after Passchendaele.

First hand accounts from the troops in France were difficult to obtain although the editor was very keen to publish such material and had pleaded for articles from the front. In the Somme period there were just three short prose pieces by soldiers that described the conditions, named places and included some amusing comments. In contrast, during the

5 J. A. L., 'January Days: In the Ypres Salient', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 4 no. 37 (1918): 7.

6 'Mostly About the Boys', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 36 (1918): 288.

7 Mackenzie, 'The Front Revisited', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 35 (1918): 15.

Passchendaele period nine articles written by troops about the front were published, including two, probably three, by John A. Lee. Just as Ross had less published during the Somme period, there were fewer articles and in both cases this may reflect the fact that the *Chronicles* were very new, having only started the month before the battle.

After Passchendaele, with more contributions from the troops from France, there were a greater number of specific references to Passchendaele. By then the *Chronicles* had a section 'News from France' where material about the Western Front was published. The writing in these items, which included letters and notes in the 'Camp, Club and Hospital News', was mostly news, opinion and gossip with the occasional explicit reference to fighting conditions at the front, as well as time spent back from the trenches in billets. In the preparations for Christmas, after the Somme, the troops who were still at the front and casualties were barely mentioned. But after Passchendaele, by Christmas 1918, those still at the front and the dead seemed much closer in memory and there were a number of references to mates still in France, a sense of foreboding about the troops who might return as patients in the coming year, and fallen comrades.⁸ The few references to the Somme explicitly or even implicitly, in contrast to the increased number of specific references to Passchendaele, suggests a greater preoccupation with the impact of that battle on the Division and the progress of the war in general.

In the messages printed from commanders in both periods there is a similar change of tone between the Somme and Passchendaele periods. Haig and Russell warmly congratulated the New Zealanders on their successes after the Somme. But following Passchendaele, Godley and Russell, in much more subdued tones, acknowledged the military failure and their New Year messages attempted to boost morale. After the Somme,

⁸ Pakeha, 'No. 1 N.Z. General Hospital, Balmer Lawn Section', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 33 (1917): 217.

Russell wrote of ‘the success of the Division ... Their relatives in New Zealand should be proud to know that these splendid fellows, from first to last, had played their parts like men.’⁹ Godley after Passchendaele wrote bleakly in his New Year message that even greater sacrifices might be required in the year ahead and ‘the darkest hour is that before the dawn’.¹⁰

At least one poem was published in every issue (except number 35) and there were almost twice as many poems published in the Somme period compared with Passchendaele. Only occasionally did verse specifically refer to the Somme or Passchendaele but there were some poems that were written in graphic terms about conditions at the front and in the trenches. There was more humour and lightheartedness in the poems in the earlier period with some not referring to the fighting side of the war at all. However, it should be noted there was still humour in some of the later poems. While death and the trenches were written about after the Somme, the general tone was more sombre following Passchendaele. By then there was a longing for home and much less of the patriotic fervour of the earlier period.

Gibbs, after Passchendaele, wrote that for the first time in the war, ‘the British Army lost its spirit of optimism, and there was a sense of deadly depression among many officers and men with whom I came in touch. They saw no ending of the war, and nothing except continuous slaughter, such as that in Flanders’.¹¹ For the New Zealanders it was no different. Considering how terrible it had been, it is not surprising that Chris Pugsley wrote that the New Zealanders were: ‘Exhausted and dispirited ... morale plummeted after Passchendaele’.¹² The editors of *The Great Adventure*:

⁹ [Untitled], *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 10 (1917): 234.

¹⁰ ‘New Year Messages’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 34 (1918): 233

¹¹ Gibbs, *Realities of War*, p. 396.

¹² Christopher Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell: New Zealanders and Military Discipline in the First World War*, Auckland: Hodder and Stoughton, 1991, p. 250.

New Zealand Soldiers Describe the First World War wrote in their introduction that: ‘Melancholy reaches such depths after the horrific losses of 1917 ... The Battle of Passchendaele of 1917 is a moment of despair, from which the whole New Zealand Division suffers.’¹³ This mood was reflected to some extent in the writing in the *Chronicles* after Passchendaele. There was a sense of tiredness and gloominess although still the occasional wry comment. Lee wrote that ‘it is hard, though, to be consistently cheerful when so much miserable rain falls’.¹⁴ And another comment in early 1918 referred to the New Year as ‘getting dogeared already. I commenced it with scabies, a new pair of trousers, a fed-up feeling and no New Year resolutions, because I had become tired of breaking them.’¹⁵ Although not all of the bad news was reported there were vivid descriptions of awful conditions, written in a flat, matter of fact way, without embellishments.

While the defeat at Passchendaele was keenly felt there was never any expression of the final outcome being anything other than victory. The editor responded in the 17 October 1917 issue to the call from ‘a small section of the New Zealand public ... that New Zealand has contributed her full share, and can afford no more men’. He wrote that ‘fortunately that is not the point of view of most of the Empire or of our Allies ; otherwise we should be abandoning the war on the verge of final and complete victory.’¹⁶ Later he referred to the ‘failing courage of the enemy’.¹⁷ The editor’s views reflected those of the readers and contributors.

¹³ Jock Phillips, Nicholas Boyack and E. P. Malone, (eds.), *The Great Adventure: New Zealand Soldiers Describe the First World War*, Wellington: Allen & Unwin, 1988, p. 9.

¹⁴ John A. Lee, ‘Billets’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 32 (1917): 179.

¹⁵ J. A. L., ‘January Days: In the Ypres Salient’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 4 no. 37 (1918): 6.

¹⁶ Mackenzie, ‘To Each His Due’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 29 (1917): 99.

¹⁷ Mackenzie, ‘Brave Fellows’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 30 (1917): 123.

There were cartoons and caricatures in every issue but about half as many in the Somme period in comparison with Passchendaele. However, they only very occasionally referred specifically to the Somme or Passchendaele. Instead they depicted service life in general, including trench warfare, along with some caricatures of officers and politicians.

After the war the Germans investigated aspects of morale, and according to Lord Wavell they 'attributed much of the British soldier's staying power to his sense of humour'.¹⁸ Humour was an important way of keeping up morale. Moran wrote that:

Only humour helped. Humour that made a mock of life and scoffed at our own frailty. Humour that touched everything with ridicule and had taken the bite out of the last thing, death. It was a working philosophy that carried us through the day, a kind of detachment from the "insubstantial pageant of the world".¹⁹

So while humour in the form of cartoons and caricatures was used in this way throughout the *Chronicles* there were no characteristics particular to either period. The only point of difference was the fact that the Passchendaele period produced more. Professor Harper wrote of 1917 that:

No matter how bleak the year the New Zealand soldier never lost his sense of humour, although it occasionally became very dark. In fact, a sense of humour, like mateship, national pride and self-respect, was one of the vital coping mechanisms that helped sustain

¹⁸ Archibald Percival Wavell, *The Good Soldier*, London: Macmillan, 1948, p. 20.

¹⁹ Charles McMoran Wilson Moran, *The Anatomy of Courage*, London: Constable, 1946, p. 152.

New Zealand soldiers and others through the dreadful conditions that year.²⁰

Wavell and Moran had noted the same use of humour to maintain morale, which must have been stretched after Passchendaele.

The 'Hospital Reports' were identified in the first issue of the *Chronicles* as a section that would take up a good deal of space in the magazine. This was certainly the case in both the Somme and Passchendaele periods with peaks in the size of lists as the wounded arrived in the United Kingdom. It is also worth noting that while extensive lists, complete with reasons for admission including medical and psychological, were included in the *Chronicles*, they were very likely incomplete. Stewart, in his history, *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919*, was not permitted to record exact casualty figures.²¹ Harper observed how 'notoriously difficult' it is for historians to discover accurate casualty numbers when there is much variation amongst sources and they are considerably understated.²²

The *Chronicles* were subject to censorship and the editor referred to tensions with the censor. In a report headed 'Private N.Z.E.F. Chronicles' Clutha Mackenzie wrote that the censor was 'always sniping bits out of him.'²³ This should be taken into account with regard to criticism of the war correspondents' reports, particularly in the Somme period. However, by Passchendaele censorship of the *Chronicles* appeared to be less strict and reports of the actual fighting and the conditions on the battlefield were included and places named. Fuller, writing about trench journalism,

²⁰ Glyn Harper, *Images of War: World War One: A Photographic Record of New Zealanders at War, 1914-1918*, Auckland: HarperCollins, 2008, p. 104.

²¹ Phillips, Boyack and Malone, p. 3.

²² Harper, *Dark Journey*, pp. 467-8.

²³ Mackenzie, 'Private N.Z.E.F. Chronicles', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 4 no. 49 (1918): 3.

concluded that censorship ‘in most cases ... operated with surprising liberality’ and so the trench magazines provided information not always found anywhere else.²⁴ This observation could be applied to the *Chronicles* as well because they included many details about day-to-day activities.

These issues of the *Chronicles* confirm what is already known about the facts of the battles. While there was little analysis of strategy or tactics, the use of tanks in the Somme period and aircraft on the battlefield in both battles was mentioned by the war correspondents, the editor and other contributors. After Passchendaele, Ross considered some reasons for the defeat which reflected the views of others at the time and subsequently.

The *Chronicles* do, however, demonstrate some progression in tone from the earlier issues, which were generally more optimistic, although not always so, to the later ones, in the Passchendaele period, which were considerably muted and even conveyed a sense of gloominess. This is particularly true of the reports from the war correspondents, the editorials and the contributions from the men in the form of letters, articles and poems. The dispatches from the New Zealand war correspondent after Passchendaele were more detailed and graphic in terms of descriptions of the fighting conditions than after the Somme. By then the seemingly freer application of the censorship regulations must have contributed to the publication of fuller accounts. The editor, in the Somme period, described the battle in effusive terms of honour, patriotism and self-sacrifice. In contrast, after Passchendaele his tone was grave and sober. He had a greater knowledge of the extreme difficulties under which the troops had fought and had even visited the front himself in December 1917. The messages from commanders reflected the same trend.

²⁴ Fuller, p. 19.

Contributions from the front were always difficult to obtain but those that were published gave glimpses into the conditions in the trenches and billets for the troops, and army life in general. Both the Somme and Passchendaele periods were marked by the variety of the subject matter within the context of the war in general and army life in particular, at the front, further back behind the trenches, and in Britain. There was no particular subject or theme common throughout or specific to either period. These articles did not always gloss over the truth about the conditions in either period and some used humour to deflect the extent of the misery. By Passchendaele some descriptions were quite candid and included the acknowledgement of feelings of foreboding.

Among the contributors who could be identified, very few wrote in both the Somme and Passchendaele periods. Correspondents from the camps, clubs and hospitals sometimes changed even within the battle time frame and were generally replaced after the Somme.

Illustrations were rarely specific to either battle and did not differ markedly when comparing the two battle periods, although not all of the artists were published in both. There were more illustrations in the Passchendaele period, which may have been an attempt to lift morale, but could merely have been a reflection of what was available for publication.

The casualty lists provided a lot of detail and showed a spike in numbers after each battle, even if they were incomplete. The reasons for admission and on-going progress reports presented a catalogue of injuries and illnesses.

While these blocks of the *Chronicles*, published during the period around the battles of the Somme and Passchendaele, may not add anything significantly new about the conduct of those battles, from the New Zealand perspective, they do corroborate what is already known. However, in the

area of social history, they provide a very interesting commentary from the perspective of the fighting man on how the war developed over an eighteen month time period, largely through the writing of the New Zealand war correspondent, the editor, messages from commanders and the troops themselves. They included some details of everyday living, the conditions and the fighting, together with what was happening further back from the trenches, while on leave or convalescing. But there was also some comment on other related issues such as the accolades written about the New Zealanders' performances and the Anzac relationship, together with observations from New Zealand on how the war was seen by and affected the people at home. This indicates the importance of reading material, particularly if it was relevant to New Zealand and the New Zealanders. All of this material, which was often quite frank, assists in building up a more complete picture of these two periods, particularly in terms of the experience of the troops.

CONCLUSION

The introduction to this thesis raised questions about the background to the publication of the *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.* in terms of why and how they were published, their purpose and whether it was met, the extent of the editor, Clutha Mackenzie's involvement, their content and contributors, the degree of military censorship, and how well they recorded the experience of the battlefield and represented the views of the participants. In addition their utility for historical research as a source of new material has been explored.

The questions addressed covered the circumstances that led to the publication of the *Chronicles* as a magazine and whether its aims were met. The extent to which the personality and character of the editor contributed to their success was another important issue that was examined. There were also questions about the content and what ensured their popularity and continued publication from 1916 until the end of the war. The content, in issues which covered the period of New Zealand's participation in the First Battle of the Somme (1916) and the Third Battle of Ypres (1917) was studied in detail to ascertain whether it concurred with the stated purpose, how censorship influenced what could be published, who the contributors were and what views they represented. All these questions were leading up to the key one for this research, which was an assessment of the usefulness of the *Chronicles* as a source for historians studying these two battles. These questions will be addressed later in this conclusion.

To begin, this thesis outlined the background to the publication of the *Chronicles*, the reasons for starting them, their purpose, staffing, funding, production, distribution, and also the readers for whom they were intended. The readership was diverse and included troops at the front, in

the hospitals, convalescing and on leave in the United Kingdom, and people back in New Zealand. How the *Chronicles* remained relevant to and popular among those different groups was examined.

Clutha Mackenzie was the first and only editor, apart from a period of about six months when he returned to New Zealand and Lance Corporal A. L. Williams was appointed as the acting editor. This thesis suggests that Clutha Mackenzie was pivotal in setting up the *Chronicles* and ensuring their ongoing success, with his influential family connections, his drive and commitment to their continued publication, and the written contributions he made in editorials and opinion pieces. He had strong views on some matters and his editorials were not limited to military or war topics but covered a variety of subjects.

Contributors and correspondents were discussed for the same sample of issues as the content. It was not always possible to identify the writers because many wrote under initials, pseudonyms or anonymously. Ross and Gibbs contributed dispatches in their capacities as the New Zealand and British war correspondents respectively. Illustrations including cartoons, sketches and photographs were published in every issue and they were contributed by a number of artists.

The final part of the thesis, in the last three chapters, examined in detail the way in which the battles of the Somme and Passchendaele were written about in the *Chronicles*, by the editor, the war correspondents and the troops themselves, in prose and verse, and portrayed by illustrators. Then the two periods were compared for similarities and differences in view of the fact that they occurred some twelve months apart.

This research considered the reasons why the *Chronicles* were started and whether their aims were met. As set out in the first issue, they were to be a means of communicating with the New Zealand troops about matters of

interest to them in all theatres of the war and the United Kingdom, as well as to the people at home, furnish an account as to how the money raised in New Zealand was being spent to support the troops, and provide a medium in which the troops could have their literary compositions published.¹

From the outset it was intended that the *Chronicles*, as a priority, would focus on communicating reports from hospitals and convalescent homes on the progress of servicemen who were patients. These reports took the form of annotated lists stating the condition and progress of men who had been admitted to hospital, casualty lists, and regular reports written by designated correspondents from the hospitals and homes on the many activities which were arranged to entertain and occupy the troops, as well as personal notes on individuals. The aim was to provide news to their fellow soldiers as well as to family and friends at home in New Zealand, in a timely manner.

It would appear that the goal of being a means of communicating was achieved, as evidenced in the variety of contributions and positive feedback by way of correspondence from the various groups of readers and from the different locations. With regular news from the battlefields on the Western Front and the Middle East, together with news from the United Kingdom and even from New Zealand, soldiers as well as sailors, New Zealanders with units other than New Zealand ones, prisoners of war, and hospital patients were all kept in contact through the *Chronicles*. With the aim in mind of providing information on how money raised for the troops' welfare was being spent, the reports from the various institutions in the United Kingdom supplied considerable detail about the many ways in which the needs of servicemen were being met. As a medium to convey hospital news this purpose was achieved, and more, because in the

¹ Cecil Wray, 'Foreword', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no.1 (1916): 4.

Chronicles these matters were reported in every issue, sometimes in greater detail than found elsewhere.

By the final issue the editor suggested that the *Chronicles* had achieved more than their original aim and that they had more value than just a magazine of the moment.² He believed that they were important as a record of events and so bound volumes of the *Chronicles* were produced, for sale. The editor also thought that they would be useful as source material when the official histories were written. However neither Drew, Powles nor Stewart appeared to have used them when writing their official histories.³

The *Chronicles* also filled a welfare function, which was not being met by the military. The authorities recognised this fact and supported the publication while using it to convey messages to the troops. The popularity of the *Chronicles* did not wane as the war progressed and there was even discussion they would continue in New Zealand once the war was over. This could be attributed to their fulfilling a need in containing informative as well as entertaining material.

This thesis found that the contribution and personality of the editor, Clutha Mackenzie, was central to the *Chronicles* achieving their purpose. He was deeply involved in every aspect of their production including funding, writing (not just editorials), editing, printing and distribution. His leadership motivated the small editorial team, which he kept together even after their offices were bombed, destroying material which was being

² Mackenzie, 'The Last Number', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 5 no. 61 (1919): 300.

³ Drew, *The War Effort of New Zealand*; C. G. Powles, *The History of the Canterbury Mounted Rifles, 1914-1919*, Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1928; Hugh Stewart, *The New Zealand Division 1916-1919: A Popular History Based on Official Record*, Wellington: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1921.

prepared for publication. His enthusiasm for the *Chronicles* did not wane and he was constantly exhorting readers for more contributions. Criticism and censorship, to which he referred, did not deter him from continuing or prevent him from being quite outspoken on occasions. He was determined, stoic, admired and respected for his courage in battle and the way in which he dealt with his subsequent blindness, and his connections and personality ensured the success of the *Chronicles* to a degree which would have been unlikely without his participation at all levels.

The content for the two periods around the New Zealanders' part in the battles of the Somme and Passchendaele was studied in detail to ascertain how it contributed to meeting the aims of the *Chronicles*. There was a variety of material, in terms of subject matter, which appeared in the editorials, opinion pieces, dispatches, reports, prose, verse, sketches, cartoons and casualty lists. It was intended that the *Chronicles* would be a record of events to inform servicemen, and those at home where they fulfilled a need not always possible to be met by individuals keeping in regular contact. Their content also amused and helped boost morale with chatty pieces about military life, personal news, gossip, and cartoons.

In terms of what could be published about the war at the time, censorship clearly played a part. In a sense all writing about the war, whether it was dispatches or contributions from the editorial staff and troops, was influenced by the constraints of censorship. The *Chronicles* were no exception and indeed the editor referred to tensions with the censor.⁴ However the censor did not seem overly concerned about the publication of material written about the actual fighting and the conditions on the battlefield, especially by the Passchendaele period, when places were named and there were some quite explicit descriptions of the terrible

⁴ Mackenzie, 'Private N.Z.E.F. Chronicles', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 4 no. 49 (1918): 3.

aftermath.⁵ The defeat at Passchendaele was openly acknowledged but victory as the overall outcome was never questioned. Fuller observed that the British censors were remarkably liberal with respect to trench journalism and ‘did not worry about details of everyday soldiers’ daily lives’.⁶ His conclusion that trench newspapers provided information not always found in other sources could be applied to the *Chronicles* also. The overriding concern of censorship was probably the protection of sensitive military information.

It appears that there was some degree of self-censorship by the writers in the *Chronicles*, as well. The reasons for this could have been consideration for family and friends at home but also recognition that some events were just too awful to put into words. An attempt to forget or blank out the worst of the experience was probably a coping mechanism. However, what was not written about was also important, and it is suggested, significant. This is the level of meaning in soldiers’ writing described by Winter as ‘private, sometimes solitary, frequently hidden from view, but no one can doubt it was there.’⁷ This observation would seem to be relevant to the content of the *Chronicles* and needs to be considered when assessing their contribution to the discourse on World War I.

Censorship of reporting was even used as an instrument of propaganda to maintain morale. While not produced by the military the *Chronicles* were still subject to censorship and by extension had the potential to be used for propaganda. But this thesis suggests that in the *Chronicles* the propaganda function should not be exaggerated. Nelson made the point, in relation to soldiers’ newspapers, that: “These were not propaganda leaflets printed on the cheap by the army then “thrown” en masse at uninterested soldiers who ignored such obvious tripe. The soldier newspapers were exceedingly

⁵ ‘Martial Sentiment’, *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 33 (1917): 207.

⁶ Fuller, p. 19.

⁷ Winter, *Sites of Memory*, p. 224.

popular, and were paid for in the millions.’⁸ The point that they were purchased is well made with regard to the *Chronicles* because only hospital patients received them free.

It is suggested that their purpose as an outlet for literary writing by the troops may not have been fully met. There always seemed to be a struggle to obtain suitable contributions, especially in prose, and the editor often begged for material from the troops, particularly from the front. In general terms the content would probably be considered popular rather than literary, in the traditional sense.

The soldier-writers in the *Chronicles* employed a mixture of ‘high diction’⁹ and the pedestrian. This was what Winter summarised as ‘a language half way between lyricism, on the one hand: and realism, bitterness, and anger, on the other.’¹⁰ The direct experience of the troops contrasted at times with what had been the customary way of portraying war with written expressions of ‘patriotic certainties ... incorporating euphemisms about battle, “glory”, and the “hallowed dead”, in sum the sentimentality and lies of wartime propaganda.’¹¹ In studying cultural forms, but with relevance to writing as well, Winter wrote that: ‘Some distinctions between cultural forms persist, to be sure [but] the Great War made a pure distinction between “high” and “low” much more difficult to uphold’.¹² The editor, Clutha Mackenzie, in many ways embodied a relationship between the traditional or élite and the popular or common. His family and background kept him in touch with the former whereas his wartime experience as a trooper (not an officer) at the front and his serious wounds in battle meant he knew about the reality of war from personal experience and wrote about it, at times but not always, free of euphemisms.

⁸ Nelson, p. 174.

⁹ Fussell, 1975, p. 22.

¹⁰ Winter, *Sites of Memory*, p. 204.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 227.

Nevertheless every issue was filled, and the reputation of the *Chronicles* grew as they became established, so it is probably fair to say that they met a need and the expectations of readers. Reading material was important to the troops. Professor Harper, in *Images of War*, made this point in the caption to what appears to be a staged photograph of troops reading *New Zealand at the Front*, which he noted showed 'the importance of fresh reading material. Newspapers from home and publications like *New Zealand at the Front* were eagerly sought after.'¹³ The literacy rate was high amongst the New Zealanders and reading was important as a form of recreation, to entertain and relieve boredom, as well as to inform. It was also a way to share opinions and feelings. The Y.M.C.A. provided reading rooms and libraries for the troops both in the United Kingdom and even on some of the troopships.¹⁴ The fact that the *Chronicles* had to be purchased, except by the men in hospital for whom they were free, and that they were published continuously from August 1916 until the end of the war, is a measure of their popularity and success.

This thesis found that contributors were mostly servicemen or former servicemen, amongst those who could be identified, because apart from the regular columnists and war correspondents only about half of the contributions were signed. Occasionally women had material published.¹⁵ Some contributors such as John A. Lee went on to become published authors after the war and the same applied to cartoonists such as Lieutenants John Gilmour and Patrick Hanna whose careers were interrupted by the war but to which they returned when it ended. It was

¹³ Harper, *Images of War*, p. 275.

¹⁴ McGibbon, (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Military History*, p. 625.

¹⁵ Dorothy Benton, 'Friendship', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 3 (1916): 66; J. Holton, 'The Red Crucifix', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 7 (1916): 162; Jessie Pope, 'What I Think About the New Zealanders (Or What I Don't Think)', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 10 (1916): 223.

discovered that the *Chronicles* were very much an expatriate publication with no original contributions at all sent from New Zealand although there was the occasional piece reprinted from New Zealand (and Australian) newspapers. The contributors, who were mainly Pakeha servicemen, (with probably some Maori), women, and civilians, were representative of the pool of people, from which material was sought and the readership. A significant proportion of the contributions was sourced from personnel based in the United Kingdom which was probably due to the practical difficulties of writing at the front as well as getting material back to the editor in London. It is likely that the high proportion of anonymous writing was not a cover for being outspoken or concern about censorship or authority but rather underlined the modesty of the New Zealander and a sense of insecurity about his literary ability.

In the last three chapters, the way in which the battles of the Somme and Passchendaele were written about is examined in detail to discover how useful the *Chronicles* might be as a source for historians researching those two battles. This is the key question raised in the thesis. Overall it appears that the writing in the *Chronicles* confirms what is already known about the two battles rather than adding any new insights into the way in which they were conducted, in terms of standard narrative military history. There are some accounts of the conditions and specific episodes, generally without places and personnel named, rather than a complete balanced picture. Nor is there any in-depth analysis of tactics, probably only possible in hindsight and at some distance from the events. Rather, the *Chronicles* serve to confirm what is already known.

However, they are significant in that they add colour and represent the soldiers' voices in the way in which the war was remembered. In this context Alistair Thomson explained interaction amongst comrades as:

... the main forum for the articulation of feelings, attitudes and identities. They provided a place to grumble about the food, about officers or about army life in general. Among his mates a man developed particular ways to talk about experiences such as battle. And within this small community, soldiers identified ways in which they were distinctive in comparison with civilians and with soldiers in other units or armies.¹⁶

The *Chronicles* provided just such a forum. Soldier contributors wrote about their own immediate, personal experience. One such writer described the mud in particularly vivid terms:

To form an idea of what one feels like after a few days' wet weather fighting on the Somme, just think of a Taranaki cowyard at its worst after, say, six weeks' rain. Multiply the result eleven times, then roll in it ...take a day's rations and stamp them well into the mixture ...¹⁷

Another wrote anonymously about life in the trenches, in a blunt account:

We sit here for month after month in dreary trenches, wet and cold, pelted continually with explosives of every horrible variety, bombed from the air, blown up from beneath, and poisoned by noxious gases ... And when we do go forward it is not to take possession of some fair city ... but only across a few hundred acres of countryside, shattered beyond recognition, and more like a rubbish-tip than anything else, and here and there desolate mounds of bricks which were villages. ... In those first few months of the war, in the far-off

¹⁶ Alistair Thomson, *Anzac Memories: Living With the Legend*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 43.

¹⁷ L. M. G., '“Somme” Mud!', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 1 no. 7 (1916): 155.

days of 1914, there was still a little romance, and we made merry while it lasted, but it is dead long ago ... Three years have I endured it, loved it, hated it, cursed it and [sic] enjoyed it. And now, as I sit here in a beastly wet, uncomfortable bivvie in Flanders ... Vermin and stench, discomfort and thirst, are but fleeting outward memories, but there is one great thing I will never forget, the stimulus which has kept me going ... human fellowship.¹⁸

As a source the *Chronicles* are useful in making some assessments about attitude and frame of mind. They seemingly captured some of the mood of the present, written for a soldier readership to whom they had to be attuned in order to remain popular. But there was also the readership at home with whom they wanted to remain in communication. A difference in tone and outlook was noted when the two battles were compared. After the Somme much of the writing was about the valour of the New Zealanders and seeming denial of the horror but, in contrast, following Passchendaele the writing was more sober and reflected some realism about the terrible conditions.

Keegan recognised the value of soldiers' voices in 1976 when he equated the true 'face of battle' with the experience of the combatants. He went on to write that: 'Allowing the combatants to speak for themselves is not merely a permissible but, when and where possible, an essential ingredient of battle narrative and battle analysis.'¹⁹ In this context a study of the *Chronicles* has a contribution to make. Fussell took the view that the true reality of war was to be found in the writing of soldiers' experience of it. But even though he was interested in discussing non-literary works in order to present a broadly based cultural history of the war, he still concentrated on literary narratives.²⁰ However, later cultural studies have focused on the importance of 'literary and non-literary "texts" [which]

¹⁸ 'Martial Sentiment', *Chronicles of the N.Z.E.F.*, 3 no. 33 (1917): 207.

¹⁹ Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, p. 32.

²⁰ Fussell, 1975, p. [ix].

circulate inseparably'.²¹ Framed in terms of popular culture, Antony Easthope made the assertion that 'the established distinction between high and popular culture, between literary and non-literary texts has been broken down. The way is open for a combined analysis of literary and non-literary texts as instances of signifying practice.'²² The acceptance of the argument that historians should take a more inclusive approach, and study a wider range of texts to develop cultural studies, ensures the recognition of the *Chronicles* as a significant source.

Stephen Badsey has studied the importance to historical research of participants' writing and views. When analysing the experience of World War I veterans he wrote, 'nor are we quite sure that we ever heard their real voices ... a new and broadly-based international community of scholars is rediscovering their experience, finding new evidence, and new ways of understanding their war ...'²³ He went on to assert that by studying what was written, spoken and believed at the time our understanding of World War I has been added to, even 'transformed' while placed in a 'new context'.²⁴ This thesis suggests that the point Badsey made that: 'Research into how wars have been reported teaches us clearly that it is seldom enough just to study the events of a battle, and that it may be just as important to study how they were reported and understood at the time...'²⁵ is applicable to the way in which the *Chronicles* can be studied to gain new insights. These could include themes such as the development of the Anzac relationship and, as posed

²¹ Aram Veesser, (ed.), *The New Historicism*, New York: Routledge, 1989, p. xi.

²² Antony Easthope, *Literary into Cultural Studies*, London: Routledge, 1991, p. 74

²³ Badsey, p. 244.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

by Fuller, the way in which recreation, and in particular sport, might add to an understanding of the army and its performance.²⁶

As well as information about behaviour and mood there is considerable detail in the *Chronicles* that at first reading might seem inconsequential. But this wealth of innocuous factual information about the organisation of army life, day-to-day matters, entertainments, recreations, hospitals and convalescing is all useful to the historian trying to understand the war from the perspective of the troops. One possible caution might be around how representative the *Chronicles* actually were because they were possibly written by the better educated. But it is suggested that this is less significant in the New Zealand context because of the more egalitarian nature of the New Zealand society in terms of literacy standards. A further consideration is that the writers had no reason to misrepresent or exaggerate this seemingly inconsequential material, which the censor apparently disregarded. The fact that the *Chronicles* were so popular, in many ways validates the portrayal of the content.

A study of the *Chronicles* is important not just in a New Zealand context but in a broader European context also. In this regard Badsey suggested that: 'Already a comparative approach is starting to relate the British experience to those of Australia, New Zealand and Canada, South Africa and India as parts of the empire.'²⁷ So there are possibilities for considering World War I in terms of what Winter called the 'commonality of cultural history' where, from his point of view, a study of the cultural history of the war 'discloses fully the European character of the war. This is a story with fewer national boundaries than is to be found in most histories of the period ...'²⁸ This places research into New Zealand's experience of World War I within an international framework.

²⁶ Fuller, p. 19.

²⁷ Badsey, p. 259.

²⁸ Winter, *Sites of Memory*, p. 227.

To conclude, the *Chronicles* met and usually exceeded their original purposes for being published, in large part driven by the editor. But in terms of their utility for historical research they do not add anything significantly new to the study of the battle narratives about the Somme and Passchendaele. They confirm what is already known but they do not really advance this body of knowledge and it is suggested the same conclusion probably applies to the other battles written about in the *Chronicles*. However, as representative of the voices of New Zealand soldiers, they are colourful accounts and useful as a source for cultural, social, political, and even literary studies about New Zealand's experience in World War I. What they reveal about the New Zealand soldier, his attitudes and views both said and unsaid, and how these developed over time as the war progressed is constructive and valuable. In addition, for cultural studies they are a rich source of prose and verse contributions, cartoons and photographs.

Although historians have not used them, to any great extent to date, the *Chronicles* should be much more widely utilised than has been the case. They are unique among New Zealand troop publications for the uninterrupted length of their publication life that spanned more than two years. Produced, edited and mostly written by New Zealanders, with the support of the authorities, they provide a distinctive and often frank perspective, uninhibited by censorship, of the New Zealand soldiers' experience in World War I, after the Gallipoli Campaign. Their content was not confined to combat matters but included a diversity of subjects in a range of formats reflecting the aims of the editor and the readership for whom they were intended. For these reasons it is argued that the *Chronicles* are indeed a useful source for historical research. They really were 'a most creditable production' and therefore offer much of value to future generations attempting to understand the New Zealand experience in this pivotal event.