THE RISE OF NEW ZEALAND'S MILITARY TRADITION : THE WELLINGTON WEST COAST AND TARANAKI REGIMENT (5 BATTALION RNZIR) 1855-1964

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Keith Charles Hooper
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CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA Journal	Arthur Atkinson's Journal
A.C.	Armed Constabulary
ANZAC	Australian New Zealand Army Corps
AWOL	Absent without leave
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
Bde	Brigade
Bn	Battalion
CO	Commanding Officer
Col	Colonel
C in C	Commander in Chief
DGMS	Director-General of Medical Services
INZEF	First New Zealand Expeditionary Force
G.O.C.	General Officer Commanding
G.H.Q.	General Headquarters
Gov.	Governor
Lt	Lieutenant
Maj. Gen.	Major-General
MP	Member of Parliament
NAAFI	Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes
NCO	Non Commissioned Officer
NZJH	New Zealand Journal History
OCTU	Officer Cadet Training Unit
POWs	Prisoners of War
RAF	Royal Air Force
RAP	Richmond-Atkinson Papers
Rev	Reverend
RNZIR	Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment
ROs	Routine Orders
RQMS	Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant
RSA	Returned Servicemen's Association
SAAF	South African Air Force
2NZEF	Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force
UK	United Kingdom
VC	Victoria Cross
VD	Venereal Disease
WAACs	Women's Army Auxilary Corps
WWC & T	Wellington West Coast and Taranaki

ABSTRACT

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE THESIS

A more detailed general account of this thesis appears in the Introduction, where the themes to be developed are more fully explained. The first three chapters are concerned with developing themes derived from the Maori Land Wars : the colonial soldier's assertiveness, his organisation, and tactics. Thus it should be clear this thesis is more a study of military behaviour than a description of wars and battles. It is further argued that the three themes developed are inter-linked. That is because the early settlers successfully resisted conscription into military organisations, in which they had no say. They learned to impose their own views on the military establishment, and this gave rise to the novel system of electing officers. Further the resulting new military organisations proved fairly successful in the field, and challenged military orthodoxy.

However, these new volunteer formations lacked any overall unity and in peace time were inclined to become rival social clubs with a fetish for bright uniforms, colourful parades, and garrison balls. The long period of peace in the latter half of the nineteenth century also saw the gradual growth of a regular force established on more orthodox lines by career officers, mostly seconded from the British Army. For a while, therefore, two rival military organisations existed in uneasy alliance and the New Zealand defence force was composed of two disparate wings. Eventually, as a result of several 'scares' and the South African War, the colonial government came to

accept the suggestions of the career soldiers, and to reorganise the old volunteer force into a territorial part-time branch of the regular army.

The first World War saw the new system working well but the old colonial assertiveness remained and some allowance for this had to be made. For a time most officers were created via the ranks again. But many of the supporters of the old system were swept away at Gallipoli and the links with the past were lost. However out of this holocaust the new Anzac tradition arose, emphasising a certain military style and fighting reputation.

The nineteen-thirties saw a decline in the territorial system and the country was little prepared for World War II. Nevertheless the overseas battalions were quickly mobilised and once again some of the old colonial attributes became apparent. The Germans for example noted the New Zealanders seemed to favour particular tactics. World War II also saw New Zealanders overseas becoming more insular and conformist, perhaps to present a more definite national image in an international arena of conflict.

Throughout this thesis the Wellington West Coast and Taranaki Regiment has been used as a basis for research, as it fed men into the three major conflicts of New Zealand history. Finally the change in the Regiment's title to 5 Battalion RNZIR, has served to exemplify the trend to centralisation and integration of the whole army at the expense of local affiliations.

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As a long time resident of Wanganui and ex-national serviceman the military history of the district has always aroused my curiousity. However it was not simply an account of the various battles, advances, and retreats which held interest but how the early settlers behaved and thought. It is this social and organisational background to past events which I feel has been chiefly neglected. The local libraries are full of detailed battle descriptions but little has been written of the behaviour and organisation of volunteer soldiers or what traditions developed.

Thus it is hoped that this thesis adds something to the grass roots of military history and provides an insight into the social concerns of the early settlers. Perhaps more importantly my researches have led me to believe and argue that the early settlers, placed in a new and threatening environment, evolved new methods of approach to military affairs which were original and laid the foundation to a New Zealand military tradition. In any case these somewhat motley bands of part-time soldiers represented the various origins of the present 5 Battalion (Wellington West Coast and Taranaki) Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment. This thesis follows the progress of that Regiment as it developed and notes the significance of the various changes which time and events imposed.

It is hoped that in studying the circumstances which brought about a local military tradition and in following the local regiment through two world wars, sufficient evidence may be cited to add something to the present store of national history. Though starting from a separate base

it is argued that much of the subsequent history of the regiment applies typically to other New Zealand infantry regiments. In this way it is hoped the local history can be adapted to throw more light on national developments.

To advance this cause the gathering of primary source material is the first task of the local historian. Fortunately, the late Major C.L. Lovegrove, archivist to the defunct Wanganui Military Historical Association, collected a diverse assortment of letters, documents, reports, diaries, press clippings, etc., relating to the military history of the region. This collection fills fifty-seven boxes at present lodged in the Wanganui Public Library : the archives also contain much other primary uncatalogued material. The district therefore has cause to be grateful to Lovegrove for preserving so much of the past, and this miscellaneous collection of data has provided primary source material for this thesis, especially in the period prior to 1939.

Another major source of national and local primary material was the Army Department files held in the National Archives, Wellington, and these provided a range of information covering the whole period, 1855 to 1964. Lodged also at National Archives are the 'Freyberg Papers,' the 'Kippenberger Papers,' and the 25 Battalion War Diary; all these documents served to emphasise various themes in the chapters concerned with World War II.

The curator of the Queen Elizabeth II Army Memorial Museum, J.R. McLeod, has conducted a questionnaire on fighting in World War II among ex-servicemen, and some of the findings have been used and quoted. In addition

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Major C. Pugsley, formerly of the staff training unit at Waiouru, has contributed some conclusions from seminars held at the centre. Other primary sources used include the Diary of Samuel Austin, recording early events in Wanganui, the Diary of George Jupp, a Taranaki pioneer, and some insights of trench warfare in World War I are gained from the Diary of Basil Handley, a local soldier killed in 1916.

Primary published sources include articles and editorial comment from the early Colonial press, a full list of the newspapers concerned appears in the bibliography. Another major source of information on how the early colonists fought, thought, and behaved is contained in the two volume collection of the Richmond-Atkinson papers. This influential, letter-writing family have contributed much to the early social history of the region and their comments on events are frequently drawn upon. Later on in the 1890s the Fox report is used to shed light on the state of the army, national and local; it also contained important suggestions for the future.

Among the secondary unpublished sources are a brief but factual pamphlet on the organisational history of the New Zealand Army by Major-General W.G.Gentry, and an incomplete five volume miscellany on the Wellington West Coast and Taranaki Regiment, by Major Lovegrove. Several theses have been read to provide additional background to the main themes developed, and a full list appears in the bibliography.

Some useful journal articles have been referred to in the course of the text, including Professor O'Connor's analysis of some of the social problems among the troops in World War I, and Dr L.H. Barber's discussion of the

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unrest among senior officers caused by the defence cuts of the 1930s. Finally the secondary sources contain some twenty-eight published memoirs, from three separate wars. The memoirs are listed separately and those from the two former wars nearly all concern the affairs of the Regiment directly. The remaining secondary publications are chiefly war histories generally in some way connected with the associated overseas battalions of the Regiment.

I would like to acknowledge a debt to Dr M.C. Pugh of the History Department at Massey University, for his thoughtful comments and ability to rescue me from a fascination with the trees, when I should have been looking at the wood. Thanks and acknowledgements are also due to Mr Tony Richardson and Mrs Hilary Wooding of the Wanganui Public Library, Mr Tony Byers of the Wanganui Regional Museum, Lieutenant J.R. McLeod, Curator of the Queen Elizabeth II Army Memorial Museum, Captain S. Gray, Adjutant of 5 (WWC and T) RNZIR, and Mrs Neva Sinclair of Wanganui Newspapers for her helpful comments. Lastly a special thanks to Mrs Mary Beavan for her steadfast typing of a difficult manuscript enabling me to produce in time a final typed draft.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is twofold. Firstly to provide an historical account of one of New Zealand's oldest voluntary organisations, the Territorial Regiment now known as the 5 Battalion (Wellington, West Coast and Taranaki) Royal NZ Infantry Regiment. The Regimant's origins are traced back to the earliest period when this unit was the first British volunteer unit to take the field against the enemy. The early background of the Regiment evolved in the local Wanganui and Taranaki Military districts. Later on the scene moves overseas when the Regiment became a training unit feeding its men into the associated Wellington Regiment battalions. For most of this time provincial links remained clear, solid and identifiable but during World War II the ties weakened. After the war the two units were amalgamated and in 1964 in keeping with the changes in tradition the new title of the Regiment became 5 Battalion (WWC and T) Royal NZ Infantry Regiment.

The second function of this thesis is to use the history of the Regiment as a microcosm reflecting the larger colonial and national military tradition as it developed. However, it is not a descriptive military history which is presented but rather an examination of the social, tactical and organisational aspects of New Zealand's military history.

New Zealand military traditions began in a colonial society operating in an environment which provided a relative abundance of land, loosely occupied by an energetic and threatening indigenous people. Thus the early settler was in an environment which was both a physical challenge and a threat. He had come from a rigid settled society where expectations were very much determined from birth. The New Zealand environment offered no such set of determined expectations, a man could become his own master, and there was a premium on labour. Perhaps above all, plunged into a wilderness of such uncertainty, people needed people. New settlers were welcome additions for they strengthened small communities, psychologically, economically, socially and physically.

At the same time there was no local squire to defer to or a clearly established class hierarchy. Many men had now realised their independence and found a voice in community affairs. Thus in colonial days meetings were well attended, noisy affairs. Gentlemen could still lead but their leadership was no longer automatic or guaranteed a following. Nevertheless, the early colonials thought themselves British to the point of idealisation, yet close proximity to the Imperial army invariably revealed tension and irritation on both sides. The Imperial army should have been welcome, as a protecting shield, but the colonial press gave it a bad time. Nearly every aspect of its behaviour was criticised particularly the arrogance and haughtiness of the officers, which reminded most settlers of their former status. Thus when the racial tension forced the settlers to form their own defence forces they were determined they should not be modelled on the British pattern. However, the Colonial government felt obliged to appoint trained military men to oversee and command each district and ex-Imperial officers were the most appropriate. There then began the long struggle between the permanent staff who thought in British terms, and criticised local improvisations, and the volunteer-settlers who strove to build a popular army (in a democratic sense) with a high degree of individual independence. This battle was largely won by the permanent staff Corps of ex-British officers in the 19th Century, who advised the government, wrote the reports, and kept the records. The main opposition was provided by the provincial press which fostered the local traditions.

Yet the New Zealand army had been born out of a unique environment and a different type of battlefield. The early volunteers thought their small units to be much more successful than the larger and slow moving British formations, and so their own more specialised forms of organisation, tactics and methods were, to them, justified. Thus, it is argued, certain traditions worthy and unworthy became part of the New Zealand military scene. They remain today the characteristics of the New Zealand army and surface more obviously in war time, when the rush of

new volunteers seem to bring along with them the old ideas.

In the early chapters concerning the Maori Land Wars the emphasis is very much on describing military events which bring out the new forms of military organisation, colonial assertiveness, and colonial tactics. To some extent all three themes are linked together. The colonials noisily protested against the compulsory forms of military organisation that were prescribed for them. It became clear that the only way to establish a reliable local defence force was to allow a degree of local autonomy and in particular grant the settlers the right to elect their own officers. There was an element of colonial assertiveness in their methods of fighting. Tactically, the settlers went for more mobile decentralised formations which utilised the bushranging skills, which many of them as small farmers had. They adopted the tactics of the mobile patrol, continually harassing the enemy, destroying his crops, and communications. To do this they were prepared to operate in the bush for long periods day and night. By contrast the Imperial regiments did not like night operations or following the enemy through the bush. Their troops were less specialised, trained for large set piece battles, on open plains. They moved slowly in large regimented columns, where the emphasis was on obedience to a central voice of command. Thus for engagements in the bush they were completely unsuited, and had to hope the enemy would remain in the open. Though many of these points appear obvious they were never really at the time conceded. Both forms of military organisation thought they had won the war.

The first three chapters therefore bring out the formation and early development of the Regiment as a necessity of war. Later in the long period of peace until World War I, the local units tended to either disintegrate or become semi-social clubs, in an era devoted to bright uniforms, town parades, and garrison balls. The governments

of the day were not particularly happy with this state of affairs, nor were the permanent staff who acted as defence advisers. The latter in particular disliked this cheap defence system with its large degree of local autonomy conferred on the various units, lack of an overall command structure, and system of electing officers. Pressure for change built up, through the agency of various invasion scares, culminating in a flurry of military activity connected with the South African War. In 1910, therefore, a new compulsory territorial system was established and the old volunteer corps were merged into a battalion system with a traditional hierarchical command structure.

The new system enabled New Zealand to mobilise quickly in 1914, and perhaps do more than political wisdom dictated. Still the men were eager to go, at first, and displayed a greater enthusiasm for war than their colonial forbears.

Thus, New Zealand soldiers went overseas in great numbers for the first time into a major area of conflict. It is interesting to trace their development from the swaggering almost romantic days at Anzac through to the bitter slog of trench warfare in France. Yet the Anzac tradition became a significant force among the troops who through the bitter days of 1917 and 1918 kept going because of the reputation they had earned. The rallying cry of Empire, King and Country faded for a time, the Anzac soldier was contemptuous of his allies and bitter towards his foe, yet kept on attacking to uphold the newly established New Zealand reputation and prestige. As in the earlier Maori Land Wars his opinion of the commanders and their strategy was dangerously low, but he took some comfort from the slightly different social traditions operating within the New Zealand division. These social factors, a legacy of the past, now took on a different meaning for they emphasised the distinctive New Zealand style of soldiering. Also, the men were still assertive enough, when 50,000 Anzacs rioted in Cairo, 1915, General Godley whilst deprecating the incident to the Defence Minister, could only add that with Antipodeans

unused to restraining themselves he was surprised it had not happened before. Tactically, the fighting experiences of the Regiment can offer very little reminiscent of colonial days, with perhaps the exceptions of, excessive worry about its vulnerable flanks, a desire to keep constant contact with the enemy and some preference for night attacks. Generally, World War I with its fixed lines lacked the mobility for the Regiment's associated battalions to make more of their colonial tradition.

The 1920's saw the problem of officer creation in the New Zealand Army finally settled in favour of something resembling the British rather than the Colonial tradition; perhaps this reflected wider social changes. A period of neglect in the thirties found the system wanting in 1939, and the local territorial regiments suffered accordingly. Some of the early setbacks of World War II can be traced to this period which ended in the sudden mobilisation of hundreds of partially trained officers and men who had to learn their job as they went. In particular the premature withdrawal by the 22 battalion from its key sector in the Crete campaign is noted as an error, by the battalion and brigade commanders, who sited their HQ's too far back to keep in touch with forward companies, a departure from the distinctively colonial tradition of commanders and men all moving up close to the enemy.

The eventual withdrawal of this whole brigade defending the vitalMaleme sector was to have a calamitous effect on the campaign. In part it was due to the inexperience of the officers, but there was also considerable hostility among the battalion commanders which made liaison and control difficult. These matters have in the light of the subsequent heroic retreat tended to be officially glossed over, and earlier army references to this brigade have explained away the difficulties between the battalions as an unfortunate aspect of provincial rivalry. This does not seem to have been the case. This 'odd hostility' stems from inexperienced battle commanders of differing social

backgrounds who could not get on together. In fact shades of the old rivalry between Imperial and Colonial officers. However, by the Italian campaign a significant change had come over the army. It was developing a sensitive insularity. This did not take the form of any strident nationalism rather it was a quiet conservative emphasis on the 'Kiwi' type. Differences within the army were, it is argued, minimised to create an ideal model of the New Zealander to which all personnel could conform and aspire. In this way some of the problems encountered in Crete were solved, and provincialism, the designated scapegoat, suffered accordingly. Nevertheless, the social differences between personnel had been noticed and so the promotion of an ideal Kiwi type common to all provided the best solution. Some of the old colonial assertiveness was still there and reference is made to traditional tactics for which New Zealanders were noted, but it was the concept of the 'One Army' which emerged as the newest and strongest development.

The regiment during World War II had remained in New Zealand training and feeding men into its associated battalions, but some of the old provincial links had perceptibly perished between them. After the war it was the 'One Army' concept which held sway in official thinking. There was to be a greater integration of territorials and regulars, more centralisation, and less local autonomy, and some of this is reflected in the new title adopted by the Regiment; 5 Battalion (WWC and T) Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment.

CHAPTER I

THE MAORI LAND WARS : THE FIRST PHASE

TARANAKI 1860-61

Three features of the first phase of the Maori Land Wars stand out as contributing to the territorial tradition.

Firstly, there were the problems encountered trying to raise a compulsory militia force. The settlers of Taranaki just would not respond in the way the 1855 Defence Act had intended. Compulsory parades were ill-attended and the appointment of officers caused uproar. The Governor, a recent appointee, was somewhat surprised that the systems of old England had been questioned, and hoped with time that the controversy would die away. It did not, for the settlers could vote with their feet and if a reliable local defence force was to be established some compromise had to be made to gain the cooperation of the men. Thus the forerunners of the territorial regiments, the volunteer companies, were created with special privileges including the right to elect their own officers. Generally the system worked well in war-time but in prolonged periods of peace they proved quarrelsome little bands, especially subject to local social and political rivalries. The elected officers were invariably local politicians or prominent citizens much involved in local issues, factors which caused divisions within the ranks.

Secondly, there were issues arising out of the volunteers' first engagement at Omata, the first engagement involving a volunteer force anywhere within the British Empire. The battle divided the Imperial and local forces, and set the latter on an independent course of military development. From this point the settlers ceased to identify with the Imperials and began to assert their own tactical views.

Lastly, and partly because of these opinions a rift opened up between the two allied forces. Colonists found it difficult to get on with the Imperial officers. Perhaps there was an element of inferiority complex here, but there also certainly was a genuine concern about their military competence, as the settlers watched their properties burn and

their stock driven away. The local press became the main voice through which the settlers complained with surprising vigour, and for a time the Imperial commander stopped publication. For such 'backwater' locals to challenge traditional military thinking and conduct was indeed a bold and assertive act, especially in the context of the period. Overall, it is argued, the new settler in a frontier environment, as a small farmer or tradesman, had a degree of economic and social independence not matched by his contemporaries in Britain. These self-made men were conservative, concerned about local politics, and anxious not to lose many of the rights they had acquired, rights which rested on no traditional base. For this reason they were easily aroused in defence of their interests, loud and assertive, they were united by a common interest on the edge of the wilderness.

It was against this background that the WWC & T Regiment had its origin when a local force was required to assist the Imperial troops. Thus after a short while there was rivalry between the forces, their differences in organisation, class structure, conduct, and attitude to warfare were insurmountable. Over the next one hundred years most of these differences were to be eroded as the developing colonial army was led and organised by ex-Imperial officers, who modelled it more consciously to the British system. However, the war itself had roots dating back to 1840 when New Plymouth and Wanganui were both founded on land purchases of dubious title. Wanganui's problems had been largely solved by 1848, after some skirmishing, and the local Maoris remained generally friendly to the new settlement thereafter. But by contrast Taranaki's land problems were not so easily resolved for the tribes of the district had migrated south in 1840 leaving the area only sparsely inhabited. So the New Plymouth settler took possession of the land believing it to have been purchased, though in many cases it had not been sold by the rightful owners. During the next ten years the migrating tribes returned to what they considered their tribal lands.

Thus all sortsof difficulties and disputes arose which strained relationships between the races and between the tribes themselves. The first emergency arose when it was considered that inter-tribal conflict might spread and involve the settlement. So the Governor gazetted Charles Brown, a Captain, and ordered him to call out four hundred men for compulsory militia training. The date was the 12 November 1855 and this could be regarded as official birthday of the WWC & T Regiment.[1]

The Taranaki militia were called out under the terms of the Defence Act of 1855, and it provided for a conscripted force to serve within their local district. Most of the male population was liable for some form of service, and old flint-lock muskets were used, having been originally imported for sale to the Maoris.

Fortunately the immediate danger passed away without incident. Letters between Charles Brown and the Governor reveal that the call up had been widely ignored and no parade was held. Yet the settlement was concerned and alert to the dangers without. Arthur Atkinson's diary refers to drilling under Major Lloyd during November and December by a corps of volunteers.[2] Thus the settlers were concerned and willing to fight but, it seems, not in a Militia Force. The Governor, it appears, drew the wrong conclusions from these events believing it to be a question of local leadership.

However, the volunteer drilling must have been discontinued for in the second emergency to alarm the province in February 1858, the Taranaki Herald noted that a volunteer corps commanded by Major Lloyd had been formed.[3] Later that month as the local situation worsened the Governor again called out the militia. Though he was concerned that there might again be a poor response. He wrote to C.W. Richmond, the elected member for the province; "You are aware also that the inhabitants did not respond when the

1 C.L.Lovegrove, History of Taranaki Regiment, Vol.1, p.32
2 A.A.Atkinsons RAP Vol.I , p.182. 17 November 1855
3 Taranaki Herald, New Plymouth. 6 February 1858

militia was called.... I am well aware the occupations of the settlers are incompatible with the duties of the soldier."[4] Perhaps hoping a change of leadership might achieve better results, the Governor via the Colonial Secretary (F.W. Stafford) offered Major Lloyd the militia command. "I hope and trust that after the harvest they will come out and train,"[5] commented Richmond, also concerned about events in his constituency.

Training was postponed because of the harvest so in the meantime Lloyd selected and appointed the officers. This caused an immediate outcry. Three public meetings were held to protest the selection and organise petitions to the Governor requesting that the men choose their own officers. These meetings were stormy affairs, and the Major, a hitherto respected figure became a particular target. As Jane Atkinson recorded:

> Most or a good part of the old Major's appointments are terribly distasteful to all parties here. The meeting began very stormily, Paddy Newman of Omata leading off in a spluttering rage at the Major. I should suppose the old Major likely to stick to his point, and he has a legal right to name the officers, but should some of the appointments remain unchanged a large part of the militia will be rendered inefficient by continuous angry feeling (6)(my italics).

The Atkinson-Richmond family, the nearest the settlement had equivalent to the British gentry, were shrewd observers of the scene. They saw the issue, not as a question of merely providing strong, competent leadership from the top but of allowing or not, popular intervention and expression. J.C. Richmond wrote:

> At the outset of embodying the Militia we are involved in a most ill-omened quarrel between Major Lloyd and some part of those liable to serve. We, the quiet people are in great anxiety about the result all the men named have replaced their nominations in the Major's hands on the request of a large meeting....The Major says

4 Governor Gore Browne to C.W. Richmond, RAP I p.344 6 February 1858

5 C.W. Richmond to H.A. Atkinson, RAP I, p.351. 14 February 1858

6 Letter from J.M. Atkinson to Maria Richmond, Richmond-Atkinson Papers, Vol.I, p.356. 25 February 1858

> he shall adhere to his nominations and leaves it in the hands of the Government. The Major refuses popular intervention. The people quite rebel at absolute government. Major Lloyd hardly sees the full mischief, I think, we have men assembled with a determination to be indocile. The corps will be a bye word and results even worse may follow (7) (my italics).

At first sight this controversy looked to be a clash between 'absolute government' and 'popular intervention' and an example of colonial 'grass roots' democracy at its best. Certainly the Taranaki Herald gave its readers that impression.

> The colonist above all other is accustomed to an independent course of action and it would have been well if the Major borne this in view and shared with the colonists the difficult and responsible task of choosing leaders. (8)

Yet the published list of the protest committee formed from the meetings in the local Masonic Hall reveal the familiar names of the local politicians. These men were mostly local merchants making their way forward in a new country. The following letter to the Taranaki Herald from I.N.Watt, local politician and prominent citizen, would indicate some degree of responsibility and perhaps manipulation of these meetings.

> I therefore stated it seemd a wiser plan if the settlers were determined to recommend their own officers that a memorial be sent to the Governor requesting a week's delay and in that time it would be possible to obtain something like a real expression of public opinion. This suggestion was adopted and framed into a resolution. (9)

Whatever the truth of the issue the feelings of the settlers had been aroused. There was nothing revolutionary or radical here, most of them were reacting to defend rights they thought they already possessed. Much had been made of the colonists' independence and self sufficiency and to some extent this was true, by general 19th Century standards.

7 Letter from J.C.Richmond to C.W. Richmond, Richmond-Atkinson Papers, Vol.I, p.356. 28 February 1858.

8 Taranaki Herald, 13 March 1858

9 Taranaki Herald, 13 March 1858

Economically and socially they were freer than ever in this frontier kind of society, though political lines were blurred. Within this political scene a colonial middle class was developing its power and influence and it would seem that in Taranaki at this time they did much to arouse local feelings. However, local society needed people as there were many other areas to which the new settlers of Australasia could profitably migrate. Thus to try to do things as if the well ordered societies of Dorset and Devon had been transplanted into this new wilderness was to confuse reality. Perhaps this was understandable in the case of Major Lloyd having spent his life in a rigid class structured military society, or the Governor, a recent arrival surrounded by the settled hierachy of his own establishment. To the settlers in their temporary homes and muddy streets one place was as good as another, there was plenty of land in other parts and the Otago goldfields held an attraction. Thus protest meetings in frontier societies were easily assembled and protest itself could not result in the sort of backlash which produced the Tolpuddle martyrs.

The Richmonds participating in local society were more socially realistic. James Richmond wrote to his brother, C.W. Richmond, a member of the Central Government, doubting the advisability of men interfering in the choice of officers but advised; "The only exit I see is that the Governor should postpone the issuing of commissions and the major should appoint non-commissioned officers and proceed with drill."(10) C.W. Richmond showed the letter to the Governor who accepted the suggestion contained in it and Major Lloyd was advised accordingly. The Governor, Gore-Brown, though an old soldier, conceded that Major Lloyd would do well not to make choices unacceptable to the settlers, though he was reluctant to establish a democratic precedent in military affairs. The Richmonds therefore

10 J.C. Richmond to C.W. Richmond, RAP I, p.358.
28 February 1858

were able to exert an influence over the Governor and so head off a crisis, but neither they nor the Governor were happy about the current situation.

> Even if I were inclined to listen to such democratic propositions, I have no power to do so. We can only follow the English precedent. To recognise the opinions of the men in such cases would to establish a democratic precedent to which I will never consent. On the other hand I agree that Major Lloyd will do well to make such a choice as will not be unacceptable to the people (11)(my italics).

It would appear from the above that the Governor anticipated that in time more settled conditions would prevail, and something more resembling the British pattern would emerge. Certainly Richmond hoped this would be the case. He was aware he was out of step with popular opinion on this issue and wrote: "The people talk big and you might think they were as hard as steel to execute. They would I doubt, prove mere hoop iron were the government to rely on them to strike a blow." (12) It would appear that he believed that in a crisis traditional forms of organisation were the more reliable, and the bold assertive line taken by the settlers was a temporary phenomenon.

Meanwhile a reply was given to the 'protest committee' proposals, and published in the local press, it was signed by the Colonial Secretary, E.W. Stafford.

> His Excellency would be pleased to grant one week's delay in issuing commissions to give time for more mature consideration with a view that those appointed might possess the confidence of the commander and general body of militia. It must however be understood that His Excellency is not prepared to deviate from the practice adopted with reference to the mother country. This would be to introduce an entirely new principle which the government cannot sanction. (13)

11. Gov. Gore-Brown to C.W.Richmond, RAP I, p.362, 12 March 1859
12. C.W.Richmond to H.R.Richmond. RAP I, p.369, 21 March 1859
13. Taranaki Herald, 27 March 1858.

Whatever the basic issues were it would appear the colonists had sufficiently asserted themselves to make the Governor hesitate and adopt a conciliatory approach. It was clearly impossible to raise a reliable local defence force unless their co-operation was gained.

Throughout all this controversy, Major Lloyd had organised the local militia, though he must have modified his training programme to suit the assertive and independent minded settler-soldier. He wrote to the Governor: "In my younger days I was a strict disciplinarian. Colonial experience forbids my being so now with men who are led to believe that with firelock in hand there is still perfect independence."(14) Certainly Major Lloyd was not a bad choice if the issue had been merely a question of local leadership, he was not an unpopular figure.(15) By August 1858 the threat of danger had receded and the militia was disbanded. The local Herald concluded: "Major Lloyd is entitled to our hearty thanks and favourable feeling is entertained towards him."(16)

However in this frontier situation many were not happy for the settlement to be unprepared for emergencies. Arthur Atkinson recorded: "Put my name down for a volunteer company that is being got up as the militia is disbanded. The major is going to get rifles for us from Auckland if he can."(17)

Meanwhile the Governor working to resolve the situation, had appreciated that the colonists were willing to provide for their defence, and he was willing to concede something to gain their wholehearted support. A new Defence Act was envisaged for which the local press, at least, thought the volunteers responsible:

> Another effort to form a volunteer corps with the latest rifles to habituate them to tactics suited to the country

14 AA Journal, RAP II, p.420, 31 August 1858

15 J.C. Richmond to C.W. Richmond, RAP I, p.358: J.C.Richmond had written during the crisis, "amidst all this Major Lloyd personally is much respected."

16 Taranaki Herald, 28 August 1858

17 AA Journal, RAP I, p.420, 31 August 1858

> and warfare they would most likely be engaged in. These corps will serve under special regulations, framed for the purpose, the result in fact of an agreement between the volunteers and the Governor. (18)

The resulting Defence Act attempted to resolve the problem of raising a reliable local defence force by providing for the establishment of volunteer corps and a militia force. Those who enrolled in a volunteer corps undertook a greater military responsibility in an emergency, but their right to choose their own officers and adopt some minor points of procedure was conceded. Ultimately, then the Governor had compromised and retained the compulsory militia force; though in fact the latter's usefulness and reliability was further weakened by the provisions of the new Act, as the best men became volunteers.

The long term implications of this affair over the appointment of officers were to be with the New Zealand army for nearly a century. In the immediate term the Governor's solution had created a democratic precedent which set the local forces apart from their Imperial counterparts, and perhaps explained some of the tension and rivalry that arose. Later on when the Imperial troops had departed and the sense of rivalry gone, identifiable forces with the New Zealand Defence Department worked to erode most aspects of this precedent, and more consciously model the 'embryo' army on traditional European lines.

Thus on 11 September 1858, a public meeting was held in New Plymouth which decided to request the Governor to form a 'Taranaki Rifle Volunteer Corps.' The meeting also decided on a form of organisation and rules, within the framework allowed by the 1858 Act. (19) The Governor's favourable reply was received on November 5; but in the meantime notice of the Taranaki example had appeared in the Auckland newspaper, The New Zealander, and not to be

18 Taranaki Herald, 4 September 1858

19 Taranaki Herald, 18 September 1858

outdone the Aucklanders formed two Volunteer Companies which were gazetted first. (20) The Taranaki Volunteer Rifle Company was not gazetted until 13 January 1859 though the latest type of rifles had been received before Christmas. For this reason many regarded the birthday of the Wellington West Coast and Taranaki Regiment as 13 January, 1859.

Another public meeting was held on 29 January to actually form the company and Major Lloyd administered the oath to just over one hundred men. This was Major Lloyd's last act as commander of the militia, for he then retired to England, presumably glad to leave behind this type of outspoken, independent soldiery.

Further meetings of the volunteers were postponed until after the harvest, then on 12 February 1859, the men met to select their officers. Nine names were put forward and the three eventually selected included I.N. Watt for Captain. Thus it could be argued a colonial military interest group had been competing for power deliberately playing on local notions of independence and democracy.

By mid-March all the geographical divisions of the volunteers were holding weekly district drill sessions. General parades were held once a month, the first being on 24 May, the Queen's birthday. These parades were compulsory and the adjutant's book shows that heavy fines were imposed on absentees. One man had to pay £3 for continued absence. In October part of the town's beach was set aside for firing practice and from then on regular shooting practices were held. A fund was set up to provide a band, to which Governor Gore-Brown donated five guineas, and men were selected for musical tuition. By April 1860, the band was ready and on the 30th Arthur Atkinson's diary recorded: "Marched into town with our band in front of us for the first time." (21) Obviously it was a fiercely proud but cantankerous little unit, one of the first of a new part-time breed.

20 Major C.L. Lovegrove's Papers. Folder 12
21 AA Journal RAP Vol.I, p.573. 29 April 1860

Unfortunately this part-time breed, as in Wanganui, were in peacetime too easily given to internal quarrelling. The very qualities of the settlers, which had forced the Governor to introduce the volunteer arrangement, now threatened the cohesion and efficiency of the new units. People in these kinds of frontier communties were intensely concerned about local politics, quick to assert their rights, and loudly critical of opposing interests. Thus the election of Watt, as Captain of the unit soon proved to be a liability. As a provincial politician his military leadership became inextricably bound up with his politics, and those opposed to him in corps soon found an effective voice in Private Richard Brown, editor of the Taranaki Herald. The local press always played a part in these petty struggles and perhaps with an eye to circulation figures it opted for popular intervention, a stance very different from the British press. This was particularly the case in Wanganui where, as will be evident in the next chapters, popular expression was demonstrably more forceful and obvious.

On balance though the settlers preferred the volunteers to the Militia, and in March 1860, a second company was formed electing Harry Atkinson as Captain. Thus in spite of the lower pay and heavier duties, one hundred and eighty able-bodied males had volunteered for service. At this time four hundred and twenty Taranaki citizens were eligible for militia service so it meant that one third of those liable for military service had volunteered.(22) In practice during an emergency the militia was fortunate to parade one hundred as ready for active service. Thus the volunteers made up two thirds of the local forces and undertook the more adventurous tasks. The settlers had convincingly demonstrated that little could be done if members of the Militia failed to parade, and it remained a weak and unreliable compulsory force.

22 Rev. T. Gilbert, New Zealand Settlers and Soldiers, p.27

Meanwhile the unresolved land question had been growing steadily more urgent up in the Waitara Valley. A Chief (Wiremu Kingi) had instructed his old women to pull out the survey pegs and generally interfere with the survey work. At this the New Plymouth garrison commander, Lt. Colonel Murray, proclaimed on 20 February 1860, martial law, which Kingi regarded as a declaration of war. Perhaps this was too hasty a reaction. Yet at least one settler, the Reverend Thomas Gilbert, living at Omata, understood the Maori point of view. He records that they had watched the formation of the volunteers with some misgivings. They asked why should the settlers wish to bear arms except to exterminate the Maoris, surely the Pakeha was preparing for war? The Maoris knew nothing of the European tradition of promoting peace by re-armanent, indeed their history taught otherwise. Tribes only prepared for war when they meant to go to war. Also there were many among the Taranaki settlers who openly expressed a desire to exterminate the natives. (23) In this atmosphere it appears the creation of the Regiment was in part the cause of its first baptism of fire.

In early March the Governor arrived with another two hundred troops, Colonel Gold, commander of all the forces in New Zealand, and Major Herbert, formerly of the 58th Regiment, to command Militia and Volunteers in Taranaki.

Yet there still remained a sense of unease among the more thoughtful citizens as J.C. Richmond recorded:

> I wish I knew more of our officers here and had good reason for confidence in them. Most of them keep aloof from us and I cannot be elated with confidence nor despondent. Surely we cannot have the Despard blunders again (24)(my italics).

23 Rev.T.Gilbert, New Zealand Settlers and Soldiers p23-25

24 J.C.Richmond to C.W.Richmond, RAP I, p.515, 9 February 1860

Such comments could be construed as indicative only of an inferiority complex among the Colonists engendered by Imperial attitudes. However it is the last sentence with its reference to a former and discredited,Imperial commander, which is the most illuminating, for it places the whole emphasis on a concern for the future; an anxiety perhaps brought about by lack of contact and social indifference, for it basically questions their military ability.

Nevertheless in spite of these minor misgivings the volunteers, and as many militia as paraded, fulfilled their allotted role within the Imperial plan by manning the guard posts round the town whilst most of the regular troops went off to the Waitara. It was an onerous duty as there were few days off and many still had their civilian employment to follow.

Their first action of the war came at Omata, just outside New Plymouth on 28 March 1860. It was learned that some thirty settlers were sheltering in the local vicar's house there, and that three farmers who had tried to reach town with their sons were dead, their mutilated bodies left on the road.

Immediate action to rescue the beleaguered settlers was called for but Colonel Gold postponed a rescue bid to day-break the next day. The Imperial army disliked moving at night over strange and difficult ground,its basic organisation was unsuitable for the sort of deployment these conditions demanded. Naturally this gave the Maori forces a free hand during the night.

The attacking force numbered two hundred and seventy; ninety eight volunteers, fifty two militia, the rest regular troops. They were up against about four hundred Maoris though at the time the number was believed to be about one thousand. Colonel Gold also insisted that the attacking force returned by nightfall, giving little time to march, fight a battle, and effect a rescue. The regular troops were to interpret the orders literally, whilst the colonials took the view that the demands of the situation took preference.

The regulars approached the village directly along the road, whilst the local forces attempted to outflank the position by approaching along the beach and attacking from behind, a difficult manoeuvre over unscouted territory.(25) However, the Maoris were not so easily fooled and directly the colonial forces left the beach to strike inland they came under heavy fire. In fact because of a lack of intelligence (no one was allowed out scouting) the volunteers had wandered in towards the main enemy position and were in danger of being wiped out. Atkinson later wrote:

> The ground was very rough and bad for extending in. However we pushed on as well as we could go gain the flat at Jurys house. The men were too eager and some began to fire before we gained the flat. We found the natives getting all round us in such numbers that we had to retire upon the house. The bullets were coming just like hail on all sides and some of the men were rather anxious to get back...I was almost exhausted from trying to keep them open and from wasting their ammunition (26)(my italics).

Keeping 'them open' refers to a common tendency among untrained or badly disciplined troops to bunch together in battle. Later on the colonial forces were to perfect the technique of open-order skirmishing at night in rough terrain.

In fading light and realising their perilous position, the three volunteer and militia officers present conferred on what to do next. They decided to stay and keep up the pressure, though part of their force was detached to a nearby hill to hold open a line of retreat to the beach. For a time the regular force commander, Colonel Murray, sent a platoon to assist, having heard the intensity of the firing. However this platoon broke off the engagement and returned home with all the other regular forces at nightfall.

25 H.A. Atkinson to C.W. Richmond, RAP I, p.552, 6 April 1860
26 Taranaki Herald, 31 March 1860

This left the local forces in great difficulties and with wounded to carry even a retreat looked impractical. The worried officers conferred again:

> So we both went up to Stapp to have a talk and settle what we could do. The niggers were now close upon us, fifty yards off but quite under cover. Brown (the senior officer) said the hill (protecting their line of retreat) could not be held. I sait it could. I would hold it against a lot of niggers if they liked to come. Stapp said it must be held. So back I went,.....our ammunition was very short, we now fired very little as I was anxious to have a nigger for each shot if they had the foolhardiness to rush us.(27)

In this somewhat grim situation the almost encircled colonial forces lay for some time, believing themselves abandoned by the regular troops and knowing the Maoris would take no prisoners. However at this stage, the navy arrived, landing further down the beach; they assaulted the enemy's main position. The Maoris taken, at last, by surprise abandoned their positions and retreated. The local forces soon realised the siege had been lifted and returned home at once. The Reverend Gilbert wrote:

> The situation of the volunteers and militia was perilous indeed, short of ammunition and abandoned by the military. The natives were thus taught that they had tougher men to deal with, who were as they thought and felt defending their own property and that of neighbours and friends, than the soldiers who, as mere mercenaries, fight only for empty glory, or under the influence of a power which they dare not resist. (28)

The news of the 'shameful abandonment of the local men' was taken up by the press throughout the colony. (29)

27 H.A. Atkinson to C.W.Richmond, RAP I, p.553, 6 April 1860

28 Rev. T. Gilbert, Settlers and Soldiers, p.13

29 Taranaki News, New Plymouth, 30 March 1860

A militiaman, George Jupp, indicated that Colonel Murray on his way back to town was urged to return and help the local forces, and replied: "No, they have got themselves in a mess, let them get out of it, I must be in town by dark."(30) These remarks had wide currency and did much to arouse feelings of mutual resentment. If accurate, they also record the exasperated feelings of Colonel Murray, a regular officer who viewed with disfavour the loosely disciplined colonials attempting a difficult outflanking movement in poor light over rough terrain. The highly trained Imperials would not attempt this sort of movement with their centralised mechanical formations, and it must have seemed a rather brash act for untrained colonials to undertake.

Another Imperial officer noted that newspapers made a great racket about all this, saying the 65th had run away, and that had it not been for the bluejackets the whole countryside would have been murdered and New Plymouth sacked. "We said nothing but felt sad."(31) In fact this kind of accusation was to become a commonplace one in New Zealand military history; there is recorded, as this thesis will show, a continual complaint at being let down by other larger allied units. Nevertheless the incident left a bad impression. Perhaps there was a hint of contempt somewhere here which annoyed the colonists.

This first joint enterprise therefore was a failure in more than one sense. It had brought into the open a rivalry and hostility between the two forces. After this the colonial forces were kept busy on garrison duties, and expeditions became solely the function of the regular troops, Colonel Gold no doubt did not wish to repeat the fuss and furore of another joint mission. The volunteers were unhappy with their continuous guard duties, and the failure at Omata had made the local officers realise the need for some kind of scouting force, to ascertain the strength and position of the enemy.(32)

30 George Jupp, Diary of a Taranaki Pioneer (1851-79) p.59 28 March 1860

31 M.S.Grace, A Sketch of the New Zealand War p.30. London 189?

32 H.C.Richmond to J.C.Richmond, 18 August 1860

The next few months therefore were bad for the general morale of the local forces. Problems of organisation arose with the government, pay for the Militia and Volunteers was late, and no suitable clothing was available for issue. Most of the men paraded for night guard duty in summer clothing which was all they had when they left their farms.

Relationships with the British army remained strained and in particular with overall commander Colonel Gold, who had refused to authorise the £80 required for sentry boxes erected for the militia and volunteers sentries, and had kept the local forces busy entrenching the town, whilst the Maoris were burning outlying properties with impunity. Naturally the local forces felt they should be out protecting their property. The area of New Plymouth within the trenches did not exceed thirty acres; yet it contained the whole population, who, cooped up, watched their properties burn and their cattle driven away.(33) In particular the Militia and Volunteers lost all faith in Gold, especially when his obstinate rigidity caused the regular forces to suffer their biggest defeat of the 1860-61 war at Puketakaurere on 27 June, 1860.

The local press led the criticism. So much so that for a few days in May Colonel Gold suppressed publication of the Taranaki Herald. On resuming publication the paper published

33 Taranaki Herald, 31 March 1860:

> One exasperated settler, signing himself "A Volunteer' wrote the following letter in the paper:
>
> "What are the authorities dreaming of? Here are twelve hundred men huddled together in half a square mile whilst the country districts are abandoned to the enemy. As it is now ordered we are actually feeding the enemy. A party of mounted volunteers could go out and protect herds and flocks. It is a positive disgrace to Englishmen to allow even treble their number of savages to penn them up."
>
> This sort of letter accurately reflected the growing restlessness of the ordinary settler about the conduct of the war and contained an interesting hint as to the growing demand for a new initiative.

the warning letter it had received from the Acting-Brigade Major:

> He (the Colonel) considers your publication exceedingly objectionable and calculated to do much harm to the inhabitants of this town and I am desired to request you will not again render it necessary for the officer commanding the forces to take a step so repugnant to his feelings.(34)

The influential colonists, close to the Governor, were perplexed about these events but gradually came over to the side of the settler. Jane Atkinson wrote:

> The mob thinks matters so bad under Gold and Murray that they can hardly be worse for national honour or New Zealand welfare and that by constant agitation some change will be effected. C.W. Richmond believes press criticisms on the commanders are dangerous; the mob that they do good and restrain Gold's folly (35) (my italics).

It would appear this well to do family, close to the seats of power were not entirely happy about the role of the local press or the mob. Nevertheless agitation and press criticism continued though not always in a negative form. For example, the editor of the Herald offered the following in his leader article:

> A guerilla warfare is the only one which will succeed against the rebels and this must be carried out by a mounted force of riflemen....to harass the rebels in every possible manner, firing their pas, sweeping off their cattle and horses, trampling their crops. Such a force would require no baggage train and if properly led then such would be the rapidity of its movements that the enemy would be worn down by constant watching to resist attacks. Whether what I have written pleases or displeases I care little.(36)

34 Taranaki Herald, 19 May 1860

35 J.M. Atkinson to M. Richmond, RAP I, p.572, 29 April 1860

36 Taranaki Herald, 5 May 1860

Different ideas on warfare were therefore circulating in the province and the concluding sentence of the above extract indicated such innovations were not likely to be well received by the military establishment. But the local press hammered away even questioning the traditional values of a 19th century professional army.

> "Irregular warfare is the only warfare praticable against an irregular enemy. Some mistaken idea of honour requires British soldiers to stand up like a man and to take his chance." (37)

It took some nerve to question the traditional concepts of soldiering, especially when under the umbrella of martial law the paper could be closed down completely. Yet the local press was providing an outlet for the frustrations of the settlers, though by so doing the gulf between settler and soldier was widening. It is argued then these articles serve to illustrate the three main themes of this chapter. Firstly the colonists would not sit back and leave it to the experts. They were independent and assertive enough to back their own opinions and methods. Such expressions by loud-mouthed locals on the exclusive and privileged subject of military conduct and warfare were not common in the 19th century. Secondly, arising out of such bold local comment came the ideas which were to win the war, i.e. the development of a different kind of fighting force and a different strategy. Lastly, clearly indicated in all this was the growing ill-feeling and colonial dissatisfaction with the Imperial army.

Some editorials even read like military directives from some distant branch of supreme headquarters.

> The enemy in future must be kept in a state of anxiety. The lightness and activity of our men must be studied and guides incorporated in the forces. And not least important is some method of attack within the forest. The great stronghold of Kingi is in the forest. There are acres of land fit for the potato culture lying in the bush and if these can be cultivated in security the district will be for a long time a nest of savages. These suggestions are thrown out as they arise and are far from touching on the whole subject. (38)

37 Taranaki Herald, 7 July 1860

38 Taranaki Herald, 14 July 1860

The Richmonds, hitherto supporters of the establishment, were becoming restless and increasingly sharing the views of their fellow colonists: "I say again if the Governor is a man, he should make a way to displace him (Col.Gold.)"..., then referring to a recent setback, J.C. Richmond added:

> Evidently the soldiers exposed themselves needlessly. One fire-eating major told them to stand up like men. I think the volunteers would have got off better because they fire more independently and take care to cover themselves as well as they can.(39)

It would appear two separate views on warfare had emerged, one emphasising discipline and appearance, the other individual intitiative within a decentralised framework. Whatever the merits of the arguments, it created an incompatibility and tension between the two forces.

There then followed several fruitless attempts by Major Herbert and Captain Atkinson to persuade Gold to allow them to form a bush corps to be out constantly scouting or harassing the enemy; local community leaders even approached the Governor to get Gold removed, before a new commander, General Pratt, arrived.(40)

Nevertheless the Governor had been considering the colonists' ideas. A.S. Atkinson recorded in Auckland:

> The Governor had said to C.W. Richmond that he wished to see me about volunteer matters, so I called at Government House and had an interview with His Excellency. He said he thought it right for the volunteers to be let off ordinary duties and that they should roam the country routing out the Maoris.(41)

Therefore the Governor, though without any legal authority, interceded on behalf of the colonists and General Pratt was persuaded to allow them a chance to practise 'guerilla' warfare. It was agreed the militia and volunteers would be released from garrison duties for the rest of August, whilst they went out skirmishing on their own. What then occurred is difficult to establish as contradictory accounts exist.

39 J.C.Richmond to C.W. Richmond, RAP I, p.607, 2 Juley 1860
40 J.M. Atkinson to E. Richmond, RAP I, p.619, 18 August 1860
41 A.S. Atkinson Journal, RAP I, p.628, 21 August, 1860

Lieutenant-Colonel Carey commented:

> Difficulties with the local corps who imagined themselves, though ill-organised and without discipline, fit for every emergency and equal if not superior to the troops.(42) The Volunteer officers told the General they would carry on a guerilla war on their own lands, asserting in a few weeks not a Maori would be seen. The General assented and waited in August for the Volunteers to commence operations. As the Volunteers still remained in town, the officer commanding them was called on to explain, when it appeared that the men were not willing to undertake the duty proposed for them by their officers. The scheme then fell to the ground, and the corps was ordered to resume garrison duties.(43)

However a letter of Harry Atkinson's states they only had four days off guard duty during which so many extra duties were handed out by the Brigade office that they had no time to go out. They were then suddenly brought back to garrison duty and the Governor was informed they had done nothing.

> The bitterest and hardest thing in all this dreadful war is the remorseless treatment of the civil force by the military officers. Your letter makes me wild with rage. So in all their hundreds they could not find men to take the night duty to give you a chance of doing some real service.(44)

Whatever the truth of the matter it is clear the war was almost a three-cornered contest, with the Imperial forces content to take things slowly. There being no rush from their point of view, to conclude matters, particularly as many of the officers believed they were waging a land war against a noble foe on behalf of greedy settlers.(45)

On the other hand the settlers and the local forces thought the war was being mismanaged, whilst martial law and the overbearing manner of the Imperial Officers made life in New Plymouth unbearable.(46)

42 Lt.Col.B. Carey, Narrative of the Late War In New Zealand p.

43 ibid, p.84

44 E.E. Richardson to H.A. Atkinson, RAP p.633, 7 September 186

45 Carey, Late War In N.Z. p.7

46 Gilbert, N.Z. Settlers & Soldiers, p.40 & p.141

Thus the colonial press remained very hostile to the regular forces continually ridiculing their blundering efforts and rigid discipline. Moreover the local forces now saw their correct role as a skirmishing force waging a guerilla war, and felt bitter and frustrated by General Pratt's opposition. In September, Harry Atkinson was to write to his brother in Auckland: "If you come back to the Volunteers in their present condition, treated as they are now in every respect rather worse than common soldiers, you will be doing no good to yourself or anyone else."(47) His brother recorded in his own journal: "O joy for New Zealand when she has enough riflemen of her own to do without the help of soldiers."(48)

However, in September 1860, General Pratt began to include the local forces in his outings and the Taranaki Herald of 8 September 1860 exclaimed: "At last with the troops on expeditions." (49) But the volunteers were not impressed by what they saw. One such expedition, on 10 September, was over a mile long and contained two armchairs for the General and a writing desk. There were a few skirmishes beyond Waitara, but the regular force did not pursue the enemy; the local paper noted: "The rebels avoid coming to a decisive engagement, we must not allow our enemy the protection of the forest."(50) After two nights bivouacing the force of fifteen hundred returned to New Plymouth and the volunteers were actually complimented by the General for their coolness. This praise mystified the local forces as few shots had been fired. One volunteer recorded: "Some called it a shameful retreat, a force of nearly fifteen hundred strong with large guns, retiring, or rather running away from thirty savages."(51) These large useless expeditions only served to increase press criticism and the notion of managing the war with only colonial troops.

47 H. Atkinson to A.S.Atkinson, RAP I, p.644, 17 October 1860
48 A. Atkinson, RAP I, p.631, 2 September 1860
49 Taranaki Herald, 8 September 1860
50 Taranaki Herald, 15 September 1860
51 H. Ronalds to E. Ronalds, RAP I p.639, 25 September 1860

Sometimes circumstance provided a victory as on 6 November 1860, when a joint force captured the pah at Mahoetahi. At first, the combined force got off to a bad start as so many volunteers were late on parade. The soldiers had laughed at Major Atkinson, a somewhat lonely figure and Colonel Carey said in a loud voice: "This is very bad, where are your men?" Never easily put down, Atkinson responded: "Colonel let the column advance. My men will fall in as we go."[52] In fact his full company (140) eventually joined the column, but it must have embarrassed Atkinson and served to emphasise the loose discipline prevailing in the colonial force. Once at the pah the volunteers were selected for attacking the flanks whilst the regulars attacked the centre. The unusual circumstance in this battle was that the Maoris held their ground and met with a decisive defeat. The more customary strategy was to defend strong points only to tempt the attackers forward, then at some crisis point to slip away by a forest retreat guarded for this purpose, a sensible strategy for lightly armed bush warriors.

After this victory for a time there was some mutual back-slapping, but when four hundred regulars were transferred to Auckland, a heavy round of guard duties began. Complaints about the misuse of the local forces surfaced in the press again, and by December some parades were down by fifty percent and had been contemptuously dismissed as insufficient by the regular force commander. This occasional failure to meet guard duty requirements exasperated the Imperial troops, who compared their 1/- a day less stoppages, with the volunteers' 2/6d a day, and a liberty to disobey orders. But when messing together the other ranks got on alright, the regulars finding the volunteers 'rough but cheery.' (53)

By January 1861 the Maoris were still in control of the bush around the town, living according to Richmond, "on beef and fern root." (54) However they had suffered a few reverses, and their morale was diminishing as was their food supply of captured cattle.

52. Grace, A Sketch of N.Z. War, p.85

53 Grace, A Sketch of N.Z. War, p.47

54 J.C.Richmond to M.Richmond, RAP I, p.631, 20 January 1861

Their economy was not sufficient to support a prolonged guerilla compaign. Undefeated, with winter approaching, the Maoris needed a break and so on 19 March 1861, a truce was proclaimed.

However the winter months of peace saw the local forces split by internal bickering. In particular, a fierce quarrel broke out between Major Herbert the commander of the local forces and Captain Brown. As this row was continued in public and involved local politics the effect on discipline was bad. The dispute dragged on until February 1862, when the militia was disbanded, and the volunteers taken off pay. They therefore ended their first tour of duty somewhat fragmented by the strain of a full-time commitment through a period of peace.

For example on 19 June 1861 the following extraordinary publication appeared in the local press:

> Charles Brown and Officers of Militia and Volunteers to the Committee of the Taranaki Ladies who subscribed to the Colours.
>
> A minority of the Officers of the Militia and Volunteers under Major Herbert having determined to give a ball on the occasion of the presentation of the colours by the ladies of Taranaki in which we feel unable to join; we think it due to you to state the reasons for our seeming inhospitality..... (55)

In conclusion, the early phase of the wars offers evidence of the settler's ability to influence the military organisation which would have been imposed upon them. By protest, at meetings and in the press, and by negative actions, they served notice of the need for consultation. This reaction surprised the Governor, Imperial officers and other of the English gentry class who were used to a docile and ordered civilian population. However, this was no social revolution, for it was the established local leaders who were to benefit from the compromises, secured by popular protest. Perhaps they had even manipulated the local voice but a voice it was, and they knew, at least, it had to be heeded. This lack of constraint and assertiveness would always pose discipline problems for the local forces as will be seen in the next

55 Taranaki Herald, 19 June 1861

chapters, but it did help clear away a fog of tradition to perceive the tactical problems created by the war. The more the colonists said and did in war, the more confident they became, and pressure for a self-reliant policy began to build. All this left the Imperial forces somewhat stranded, contemptuous, and bitter.

CHAPTER II

THE MAORI LAND WARS : THE MIDDLE PHASE

Wanganui and Taranaki 1860-65

Throughout the troubles referred to in the previous chapter Wanganui had enjoyed a period of peace. But as in all the provinces attempts were underway to build up a local emergency force of registered militia and volunteers. There was at first in the district a good response to the call for volunteers, and five companies were formed. Unfortunately there were strong local factions in the district, and the various companies enjoying a peacetime role became rival social and political organisations. Matters were made worse by the appointment of a whole string of unsuitable ex-Imperial officers to organise and command the local forces. The various district formations which had earlier responded so well became a shambles. Those that attended parades were reported as strolling around, some without their arms, openly abusing the officers, especially the local commander. When an emergency arrived few paraded and local defence posts remained unmanned. The militia, in particular, were a complete failure. The district was reported to the central government as being apathetic to possible danger.

By contrast the new enlistment regulations in Taranaki saw a good response, the system of electing officers working well, and the unfit being weeded out of office. These experienced volunteer units were now led by men of proven ability, and they went from strength to strength.

The tactics advocated so strenuously in the earlier phase of the war were finally adopted by the Imperial commander and for the remainder of this campaign the two forces worked well together. The role that these volunteers had worked out for themselves and the way they performed stayed in the New Zealand military memory, as will be evident. Their tactics were even commended in the British press.

Thus the successful close of hostilities in Taranaki saw the local white population very confident of its military ability, and beginning to wonder if the Imperial Army was necessary to the colony's survival.

The Wanganui district was to exhibit the same problems which had occurred earlier in Taranaki, that is, a militia which though compulsory, failed to parade, and a volunteer force which paraded, though beset by peacetime bickerings. However, things had begun well enough in Wanganui with the appointment in April 1860 of Major Cooper from Auckland as district commander of the local forces.

Though a retired Imperial officer he was a good organiser and well liked by people in the district. In many ways he was a new settler himself who had undergone the adaptation to a new environment. Indeed as his later affairs disclose, he perhaps adapted too readily to his surroundings. Certainly he was no rigid, pompous martinet. There was already in existence a vigilance committee under the chairmanship of Major Durie, the Resident Magistrate, who had a list of all citizens owning arms; and a petition had been sent to the Governor for his approval to the formation of a Volunteer Rifle Corps. By 28 April 1860, with the Governor's approval, Major Cooper had sworn in just over one hundred men for a Volunteer Rifle Corps and a cavalry unit. The Queen's birthday, 19 May 1860, saw their first parade a very smart affair as this newly formed corp had just received its arms and uniforms, certainly the local Chronicle was impressed and most complimentary. The parade was followed by a dinner and ball at the Rutland Hotel.

All these new social occurrences were good for recruiting and shortly after a second town company was formed, followed by a third company based on Turakina. Adopting the same principle of election, as in Taranaki, the first elected officers of the Volunteers were number one company, Captain S. Deighton; Second company elected Captain D. Porter and the third company elected Captain M. Beamish. By the end of June the commissions of the above officers, together with four Militia officers chosen by Major Cooper, were gazetted.

Reflecting a peacetime attitude in Wanganui both Volunteer Companies elected management committees which met weekly in the Rutland Hotel, and belonging to the volunteers became a socially 'in' thing to do. Two more companies appeared in August, one at Whangaehu electing Captain J. Allison, whilst the other based at Bulls elected Captain G. Worthington.

Major Cooper now commanded a large but enthusiastic Militia district containing four hundred and fifty volunteers and fifty four cavalry. They were all drilled under a regular sergeant, and corporal; shared night picket duties, and undertook joint exercises in skirmishing. Major Cooper, a popular officer, had more idea how to use Volunteers than General Pratt in Taranaki. Firing practices too were regularly held and the standard of marksmanship achieved by the Wanganui Volunteers was among the highest in the country, superior even to their Taranaki comrades. However, the number one company was becoming a somewhat exclusive body, and the usual rules were tightened to make only three blackballs necessary to reject a proposed member, as many were. (1) The two town companies were rapidly becoming off duty, political,and social clubs and mutually hostile, thus dividing the town.

However, the local commander, Major Cooper, was now finding himself in trouble with the colonial government among which he had enemies, especially William Fox. This was a pity as he was a good officer, courteous and tolerant, who had obtained the full co-operation of the settlers; no easy achievement as there was much factiousness among them. He also had maintained good relations with the local Maoris, visiting the Chiefs, painstakingly explaining the reason for the new military organisations and taking care not to offend them by arming outlying settlers. The local chiefs in turn

1 The Diary of Samuel Austin (1860-64),
Queen Elizabeth II Army Memorial Museum, Waiouru.

co-operated with him and advised him of the traffic in arms from the Upper Wanganui to the Waitotara. Cooper therefore established a military post at Pipiriki to intercept this flow. If only a local officer had taken this much trouble in Taranaki things might have been different. As well as his normal duties Cooper had ready, in co-operation with the regular forces, a detailed defence plan for Wanganui should it be attacked.

The first of his misfortunes was when the Government objected to him drawing 10/- a week for using his home as the militia office. The second, his major misfortune, began in December 1860, when he met a couple of Maori girls at the races and asked them back to the Rutland Hotel, where he was staying at the time. It rained hard that evening so they stayed the night. One of the girls, Reuma, was only twelve years of age but was, it seems, fairly mature, for she then moved into the Militia office with the forty two year old Major. One would have thought that such an arrangement in the centre of a small town in Victorian days would have raised an immense public outcry, but it appears the cohabitation lasted five months before the missionary, Churton, complained to the Government. This produced a warning from the Governor. Eventually the affair merited the attention of 10 Downing Street, where the scandal seemed to have more impact than in Wanganui. However, it was the new government of William Fox that re-opened the case. The Attorney General alleged that the Wanganui militia office had become the site of disorderly scenes involving the girl and two officers. The government also charged Cooper with keeping the militia on pay after he had been told to disband them. The latter charges were weak as Auckland had passed his estimates and General Pratt had approved the payments. Nevertheless, realising the vindictiveness of Fox, (Cooper wrote that a man (Fox) who would re-open a case to one governor, dismissed by another would do anything) Cooper resigned, though Grey was later to make him commander of the Militia at Thames.

This incident upset the Volunteer movement in Wanganui, which had started so well and was from this point to be distinguished by a steadily deteriorating morale. The local force had lost a good officer who had adapted to the local environment quicker than most,and it is perhaps an interesting example of the importance of good leadership in colonial volunteer organisation. It will be shown that whenever the colonial soldier had leaders imposed upon him, he became surly and difficult and took some time to accept new authority. He was invariably at his best when his leaders were local, well known, and commonly elected.

The senior captain of the militia, D.S. Durie, now took over the command on a temporary basis from 25 November 1861. Durie was also Resident Magistrate and not a popular man. In February 1862,a new government Act required all the Volunteer organisationsto disband, and then re-enlist under the new regulations. In most centres this operation went through smoothly enough, but not in Wanganui, where without a common foe the rivalry between the two town companies was intense. The number two company now saw a chance, by re-enlisting first, to grab precedence and become the number one company. In retrospect the whole affair seems absurd and petty, yet from the passions aroused it was obviously important to the settlers and the ultimate effect disasterous for the volunteer system. It appears Durie favoured, for political reasons, the old No.2 company and assisted them by notifying Auckland on the 20 March 1862 only of their re-enlistment.

To confuse local politics even further a new Wanganui commander, Major Rookes, was appointed. Rookes, a tactless man, used to commands in Africa, soon fell out with everyone, including Durie, who he accused of neglecting his duties. Feeling in the town soon built up against Rookes and a public meeting was held calling for the re-instatement of Major Cooper. (2) Thus it appears in Victorian Wanganui sexual misdemeanors involving young Maori girls were easily forgiven, whilst matters concerning local politics were much more sensitive areas.

2 Maj. C.L. Lovegrove's Papers, Folder 14

Rookes it seemed ignored social feeling, difficult in a small isolated community, and proceeded to give Captain Porter's company, the former number two company, precedence as that was the order of correspondence on the subject. Later, realising he had made a mistake, Rookes then attempted to name rather than number the two rival companies. This plan went awry when the name 'Grey' was given to the company which was constituted of members politically opposed to Governor Grey. Rookes later tried to compromise by suggesting the company captain choose a name, but by this time matters were getting out of control. Absenteeism from the volunteers was now rife and the officers accused of bad language in public. Rookes also reported these events to the Auckland government and recommended both companies be disbanded. (3)

At the same time Rookes further exacerbated relations with Major Durie his senior militia officer. However, the Resident Magistrate hit back by refusing to allow Rookes to hold firing practices. And so it went on a catalogue of petty quarrels and recriminations which left the companies divided, the officers at loggerheads, and the local commander isolated.

From then on the volunteer movement in the Wanganui district virtually collapsed. In September 1862 a parade was held in which various volunteers appeared without arms, while others threw their's down on parade and one N.C.O. even publicly abused Major Rookes whilst parading.(4) The government had been enquiring into this alarming situation and a fortnight after this disgraceful parade the government disbanded both companies. Once again the Wanganui Chronicle was lamenting the loss of Major Cooper: "the change of commander only shows how much the Corps was under an obligation to the officer who first breathed into it the breath of life."(5)

3 Lovegrove Papers, Folder 16
4 Lovegrove Papers, Folder 16
5 Wanganui Chronicle, 7 October 1862

The dispirited condition of the volunteering movement in the Wanganui military district continued and did not revive until 1869, during the final stages of the Land War. The question which arises now is why was there so much apathy and lack of order in the Wanganui region. Were they anti-military in some way? Obviously not, the Wanganui settlers enjoyed military parades, shooting competitions, and fancy uniforms. Clearly in comparison to their Taranaki counterparts a missing factor was leadership. The Taranaki commanders, Herbert and Stack, far outshone Rookes, and Wanganui produced no local leader to compare with Major H. Atkinson. But then it could be argued that war time conditions helped produce the local leaders of stature, and that the longer period of peace in Wanganui only served to fatally weaken a movement, normally disposed to fragmenting in peace-time.

The militia in particular remained a failure throughout this whole war. In a leader article of the period the Wanganui Herald addressed itself to this question:

> Why is the Militia so unpopular? There can be no objection to arming of the settlers. The man that wields this power is incapable of exercising it aright and has no more regard for the feelings of men, who by their industry are developing the resources of the country than he would have for those of the ordinary soldier. We are surely under some horrible engine or the threat would never have been made of putting down public meetings.
>
> One cause therefore of the failure of this militia call is the opinion entertained of the C.O. Free men will not be bullied; the flunkey species would submit to anything. The next cause is the appointments that have been made among the officers. This is even more fatal to the militia than the first. Two or three commissions have been given to very young men who are respectable in their proper sphere but seem to be regarded with contempt by their men. On Thursday last a company was composed of one man. The militia have for a very long time had a very bad name which the tyranny of the previous C.O. gained for it. The militia movement which is built upon compulsion and force, has become a failure. Would it not be more honourable for the officers to throw up their commissions than retain them. (6)

6 Wanganui Herald , 28 June 1868

The editor's references to the men who are developing the resources of the colony, the right to hold public meetings, the refusal of free men to be bullied, the objection to officer appointments, and the failure of compulsion and force, all emphasise the settlers' sense of dignity and freedom. Obviously this is what the local citizen wanted to hear, perhaps because the growth of military organisations were seen as a threat. Most of these settler-soldiers were not New Zealand born but they had discovered a new identity based on a new environment. The sharp social distinctions of Britain had been left behind, but probably not forgotten. In this loose frontier kind of society men had the vote and were quick to organise public protest meetings. Men were few and labour was scarce and much land awaited the farmer, or as the local Herald put it: "From here to Patea on the one side to Manawatu on the other, the finest land in New Zealand is waiting for capital and labour to make fields of waving corn instead of fern." (7)

How different from the old country where the land was tied up in the hands of the gentry and aristocracy, where labour was cheap, and the workhouse took the overflow. No wonder the Wanganui Herald could also recommend with confidence: "He (the Governor) may promote immigration among the labouring classes with the certain knowledge their condition will be improved and the work of colonisation pushed forward." (8)

Men with their feet on their own land, or with hands which rendered a valued service had independence and dignity. However, the vital point has to be stressed, the new settlers were basically conservative, anxious to retain only the economic and social freedoms which their new environment had provided. It is true, as in Taranaki, the above changes had made the colonist more confident, an assertive fellow,

7 Wanganui Herald, 22 October 1867
8 ibid, 5 November 1867

given to public meetings, and abetted by a very responsive local press but the whole thrust of the clamour was essentially to resist change.

Thus a correspondent signing himself 'Militiaman', wrote as follows to the Wanganui Herald:

> The powers that be are very much mistaken if they imagine we will enroll under such officers as are now over the militia. Are we to knuckle under to boys just home from school or swells whose greatest accomplishment seems to be strutting round our streets. No we won't stand for it and they can't make us. Give us officers of experience and above all gentlemen.

Another correspondent 'GRI' wrote:

> We do not want to be enrolled as militia or volunteers. The first of these names has always been unpopular. Men dressed with a little brief authority for one short hour forget their own position and those under them. The merchant of today sinks into the private of militia tomorrow, and has to salute his next door neighbour.(9)

The whole tenor of press articles and letters was primarily against the compulsory militia and what could result, they were mostly therefore negative, conservative statements, defending the 'status quo'. For Imperial officers such as Rookes appointed direct from a command in Africa, a considerable adjustment was necessary. They found themselves isolated in small self-sufficient communities among inferiors, who could assert themselves either directly via town meetings, or indirectly through the local press, and who generally treated military orders as proposals for discussion. Not all local reaction was negative and much could have been learned from letters such as this one written by 'Observer', who advocated skirmishing and treating men more as equals:

9 Wanganui Herald 22 July 1868
ibid 14 July 1868

> Those in the Militia ought to form volunteer companies and appoint their own officers not to learn gander drill and marching past but to that thorough knowledge of skirmishing and the use of the rifle that gives men confidence. In 1860 I held a command in a volunteer company, a good deal of the secret is the men were treated courteously. The Volunteer movement was upset needless to say by whom or how, and afterwards I attended a number of those men who had been bullied into the militia. I could convey more instructions to them in two hours as volunteers than I could in a month as a coerced militiaman. Another advantage of general volunteering will be the training of useful officers to take the place of the present high disciplined militia officers. (10)

These letters would suggest the settlers did not like the implications of a military hierarchy, which graded men above their neighbours and responded better to a looser open order type of training, rather than strict regimentation and drill. Much the same of course had happened in Taranaki and some allowance too has to be made for the fact that the settlers were uncomfortable parading with Imperial troops and their officers. The rough boisterous behaviour which, W.J.Penn records as breaking out on some of these occasions reflected this.(11) Naturally, the Imperial officers were not impressed by this loud behaviour and simply demanded the Articles of War enjoining respectful conduct and subordination be read out.(12)

In May 1863, war broke out again in Taranaki and the Wanganui Volunteers were paraded to be issued with live ammunition. The authoritarian Major Rookes nearly had a fit, he wrote: "The attention paid by members of the company to this order was disgraceful. The members strolled up, some with arms, some without, and many did not come at all. I fear if this is the boasted spirit of volunteering when

10 Wanganui Herald, 24 July 1868

11 W.J. Penn, The Taranaki Rifle Volunteers, p. 32

12 W.J. Penn, Taranaki Rifle Volunteers, p32

a chance of the necessity of their service is required what will it be when the enemy is at the gate? The whole system of volunteering in New Zealand is a farce." (13)

Fortunately not much happened in the Wanganui Military district in 1863. The local Maoris remained loyal, even renewing their claim to be responsible for the defence of the town. The less friendly up-river Maoris had promised to fight only the pakeha in Taranaki, a pledge they duly honoured. The only black spot for the future was that Doctor Featherston, the Land Purchase Officer and Superintendent of the Province pushed through the purchase of land at Waitotara, when many of the Maori owners were away fighting. The Wanganui Chronicle was critical of this deal and advised leaving it alone until some of the real owners returned. (14)

The alarm was next sounded in May 1864 when it was learned the shrunken heads of a party of the 57th Regiment ambushed near Tataraimaka were on display at the Pipiriki pah. It was expected these Maoris, adherents to the new Pai Marire faith (Hau Hauism) would attack the town, in accordance with their fanatical beliefs. But the morale of the local Volunteers was very low, and letters to the Chronicle over this period reveal a reluctance to serve or even to man guard posts. However the local Maoris, true to their word, would not allow the 'Hau Haus' to attack the town. A pitched battle was arranged on Moutoa Island on 14 May 1864. This was one of the few occasions in New Zealand history when Maori had fought Maori for the sake of the European settlers. Fortunately for the Europeans the loyal Maoris won, and the Volunteers and Militia had nothing to do. It was the great victory in Wanganui's history, and eventually when this fact was realised, the grateful settlers erected a large stone monument in Moutoa Gardens to the loyal Maoris.

13 Lovegrove Papers, Folder 29

14 Wanganui Chronicle, 16 December 1863

However it was not until the end of June 1864 that the Militia was stood down, which produced a storm of protest stirred by articles in the Chronicle . The paper accused Major Rookes of placing himself in antagonism to every Volunteer in the colony, of rendering volunteering its death blow by his unscrupulous conduct, (the conduct was merely a reference to the Major's authoritarian rigidity and dislike of the 'undisciplined' Volunteers) and unreasonably forcing militiamen to go on duty when their families were in danger beyond the lines. (15) Thus 1864 ended badly in Wanganui, with the militia feeling ill-used, the volunteers resentful and lacking respect and faith in their local commander. Also there was much news coming in from the Waitotara of hostile natives, a traffic in arms, and the rebuilding of old pahs.

By contrast in New Plymouth the new 1862 Volunteer regulations had proceeded smoothly and without hitch. On 5 March 1862, Harry Atkinson sent his brother a note: "We had our meeting of Volunteers on Monday; about one hundred and eighty are sworn in. I have one hundred and five of them, Watt the rest.... Poor Hammerton only had ten votes! Hirst joined my company but could get no votes for anything so he and Hammerton are full privates."(16) Hirst and Hammerton had been elected lieutenants in the original company in February 1859, when Atkinson was still in the ranks. Obviously the system of election ensured not only survival of the fittest but that leadership was not the automatic privilege of a gentleman. Certainly the volunteer movement in Taranaki was in good heart as the above enlistment shows, though in part this was due to the fact that in spite of the peace the local Maoris were still restless. The tension created a unity in the movement lacking in Wanganui. The two companies were gazetted under the new regulations on 22 April 1862, as the Taranaki Rifle Volunteers. In December they were inspected by General Cameron who said: "It is very creditable that out of so small a population so many should come forward to serve

15 Wanganui Chronicle 16 June 1864

16 H. Atkinson Papers, RAP I, p.749. 5 May 1862

voluntarily. I wish the other provinces had followed so good an example...."(17)

The interlude of peace in Taranaki ended on 4 May 1863, when it was learned that a party of the 57th Regiment had been attacked by Maoris on Wairau Beach, though earlier warnings from the Maoris of an end to the peace had been ignored. The militia were immediately called out and two hundred volunteers and militia were by 7 p.m. occupying blockhouses and guard posts, as the settlers poured into town.

General Cameron, in desperate need for intelligence of the enemy's movements, decided toallow the volunteers the military role they had so long advocated. It was announced on 1 June by Captain Charles Brown, the local force commanding officer, that men were wanted to go out into the bush. Most men in the two companies volunteered as did all their officers, but when paraded that afternoon the volunteers were told only fifty were required at a time. It was therefore agreed that each company take a month in turn, Atkinson's larger number two company going first, being issued with breech-loading carbines.

From then on Captain Atkinson's scouting force of fifty was constantly engaged in little expeditions on their own account, and it soon became hard to find the enemy anywhere near the town. The Herald declared:

> Not a track of the natives can now be discovered and we are informed so fearful are the rebels of our guerilla parties that in communicating with Mataitawa they have to go round the mountain. There is no doubt that had the present system been adopted during the last war an immense amount of valuable property would have been saved and some of our fellow settlers, who were savagely butchered within a mile of the town, would now be living amongst us.(18)

17 W.J. Penn, The Taranaki Rifle Volunteers, p.54

18 Taranaki Herald, 15 June 1863

Realising the newspaper reports to be correct and that the scouting patrols had driven the rebels away from the town, the Imperial commander agreed (7 July) to release both companies of bushrangers (this is what the volunteers were now calling themselves) from garrison duties. Armed with breech-loading carbines and revolvers they were given a free hand to rove the country. The colonists had at last pushed the Imperial commanders into coming to terms with bush warfare, they had the Governor and local press on their side, and had had a hand in the removal of Colonel Gold. Realising this, A.S. Atkinson could cheerfully write of Colonel Warre: "He is neither wisenor generous, but he is happily thin skinned, most sensitive to public criticism."(19) Nevertheless the volunteers were left to develop their own bush roles. Apart from scouting, their agressive patrolling kept the enemy at a distance, whilst trying to maintain contact, and allowing the rebels no respite. Their constant tracking stopped the enemy from moving and gathering in the bush in large numbers. They uncovered and destroyed rebel supplies and at times acted as a mobile reprisal force. When the army was on the move they acted as scouts, and during attacks worked from the flanks trying to encircle by stealth enemy positions.

The effect of these tactics on the Maoris was devastating; by the end of October 1864 resistance in Taranaki had totally collapsed. The colonists were quick to draw the correct conclusions from this campaign, but first it is necessary to follow the development and execution of these new tactics. Arthur Atkinson who served as a volunteer, and news reporter, left an eye witness record of their activities.

At first, from July to mid-September, there were few encounters with the enemy and the volunteers took to leaving taunting notes on the roadside challenging the Maoris to come out and fight. Perhaps this tactic worked for by October skirmishes were becoming more frequent. One such

19 A.S. Atkinson Journal, RAP II, p.61. 8 September 1863

encounter 'the Allen's Hill Affair' saw the volunteers acting as a mobile relief column, Atkinson described the scene:

> We had seen the soldiers on Allen's Hill and finally F. Mace galloped up and told us if we didn't be quick the soldiers would have to bolt and leave their wounded. We got to the front in another minute passing a poor fellow shot through the chest. Soon after this Captain Short's party was withdrawn leaving us in front. Here we lay for about an hour getting some good whistling volleys before we got the order to retire behind the next rise.(20)

The soldiers were particularly vulnerable to ambush and these mobile patrols were of great assistance to them. W.J. Penn recorded that Colonel Warre (The Imperial Commander) was full of praise for the persevering efforts of Captains Atkinson and Webster, their constant patrolling in all weather at all hours, their endurance of fatigue and their co-operation with the regulars.(21)

The effect of most of their patrols was to keep the enemy on the move, and though they were usually seen by enemy look-outs they generally caused small groups to evacuate their positions. An example of this was noted by Atkinson in February 1864, when he wrote:

> At 2 p.m. we started to explore. We could see a large column of smoke three quarters of a mile off in the bush. We soon found plenty of tracks and a little way in there was the camp just abandoned and the sight of which made us uproarious. There were eight large umus (ovens), some of them not yet opened and full of steaming mutton. Joints of mutton were lying about on the ground and some had been put up on little stages to get cold. I suppose there were two or three heaps of kidneys not cooked. I brought away two to try the quality. It was too late to attempt to follow them, but we went home cheerful because we had spoiled their dinner and routed them out. (22)

20 A. Atkinson Journal, RAP II, p.64-65, 2 October 1863

21 W.J. Penn, The Taranaki Rifle Volunteers, p.54

22 A. Atkinson Journal, RAP II, p.87-88, 6 February 1864

Other patrols were hastily arranged, reprisal affairs in response to a definite crisis. Arthur Atkinson related how a settler named Patterson, in defiance of official warnings, made a habit of visiting his abandoned farm. Word came back to town that he had been fired on and was missing. Number two company left immediately for the scene, going through the bush rather than along the road. On breaking cover they saw some fifty or sixty Maoris about three hundred yards off. Atkinson wrote:

> We beckoned up some of the fellows and then fired but they all bolted into the bush. We thought they would turn and fight as they were double our number but no they were gone....Patterson had been found shot and terribly tomahawked. Then we began to follow their tracks into the bush, but they were very devious. It was rather disgusting not to follow them, but there seemed doubt about finding them. (23)

These extracts give some indication of the employment of the volunteers though sometimes when the enemy could be found they fought battles alongside the regulars, as in the second attack on Kaitoke in March 1864. Colonel Warre directed operations, and his force consisted of two companies of Bushrangers under Captains Atkinson and Good (Webster had resigned in February, 1864, due to pressure of business), fifty volunteers and militia under Lieutenant Hirst, and of course the regular troops. The plan was that after an artillery bombardment the bushrangers were to attack the rear of the Maori position whilst the regulars made a frontal assault. Fortunately at the start of the battle the artillery had provided a smoke-screen for the frontal assault by the lucky chance of setting fire to a whare inside the pah. The operations were entirely successful. Captains Atkinson and Good had found the bush track so overgrown they were a few minutes late, but they did good service by appearing at the top of the clearing, by which line they prevented the Maoris escaping. His men had made a desperate march (to encicle the position) over a succession of ridges and

23 A. Atkinson Journal, RAP I, pp.93-94. 28 February 1864

gullies of seven hours and arrived within ten minutes of the appointed time. "We did not lose a single man."(24)

The local forces had come a long way since their first attempted outflanking movement at Omata in 1860. In those days such manoeuvres through difficult terrain were considered unorthodox, the product of ambitious folly and ignorance. To recall Colonel Murray's remark referring to the plight of the encircled volunteers at Omata: "No they have got themselves in a mess, let them get out of it;" (P.22) or Colonel Carey's opinion when the volunteers requested to go out skirmishing, that the local corps was ill organised and without discipline imagining themselves fit for every emergency and equal if not superior to the troops. (P.27)

The colonists had recognised that the slow moving regulars equipped with artillery were tied to roads. The mobile Maori forces could choose the site of every battle and break off just as the slow frontal assualts were beginning to apply pressure. Bush warfare demanded an element of surprise; the regular forces could never succeed until the line of escape at the rear of every pah was blocked, and the Maoris forced to stay and fight.

Also as was evident at Omata, to outflank the Maori meant a very wide detour through dense bush and then appear at the critical moment in the right place, which was no mean accomplishment. Thus denied free movement in the bush and forced to fight pitched battles, the Maoris of Taranaki were sustaining heavy losses and their economy could not support the rebellion much longer.

The last formal action of the war took place in October 1864, when the rebel pah at Manutahi was captured and its crops destroyed. About a hundred volunteers had taken part,

24 A. Atkinson Journal, RAP II, p.100. 25 March 1864

fifty on each flank of the attacking force of three hundred regulars. The volunteers had been given the specialised job of moving through the bush to surround the pah. But the Maoris had sensed the trap and fled just before the encirclement was complete. Nevertheless, military objectives had been attained. The rebels were routed, sustaining casualties during the break-out, whilst the attackers had suffered no loss. (25)

For the Taranaki Rifle Volunteers their years of active service on their home ground were drawing to a close. There would still be a few minor alarms but the fighting was moving away from Taranaki towards Wanganui. By August 1865, all was quiet in Taranaki, so martial law finally ceased. However, all these incidents in which the bushrangers had been involved provide some idea how the colonists developed the role, for which they had so long argued. It was a role which utilised the advantages of their local background, vocational independence, and decentralised organisation. In just over a year the mobile companies of volunteers, operating at all hours often in dense bush, had been mainly responsible for the defeat of the Maoris.

On the other hand, the regulars had had little success, tied to roads and trained to a standard of mechanical obedience. Only in this way could large bodies of men in close order be manoeuvred, thinking and reacting was centralised in the person of the commander. On a European plain involving large scale battles the ability to manoeuvre masses of men, and sustain heavy losses without running was all important. Attacks also developed slowly as set piece

25 A. Atkinson Journal. RAP II, p.125. 8 October 1864

26 A. Atkinson Journal. RAP II, p.125. 8 October 1864
When they came out of the bush the bushrangers saw a wounded Maori lying on his front with his head turned looking at them, about forty yards distant. One man lifted his gun to shoot him, but I said, don't fire, he's wounded, and he put down his gun. But then others came up. I tried to stop them, but I could not, though I called them cowards to their faces. They fired a volley at him, and though he was not killed outright, he was wounded past hope of recovery.

actions with little scope for encirclement by stealth, and armies were expected to clash until only one remained.

However in any theatre of warfare, a patrol moving at night or in dense bush becomes a most decentralised organisation or should do. The patrol commander has to rely on the good sense, initiative and reactions of his men not vice versa. This kind of guerilla warfare required a particular expertise to move quietly, often at night, through difficult country to infiltrate enemy territory. This last successful campaign in Taranaki had bolstered the confidence of the local defence forces. Harry Atkinson, shortly after his promotion to major, had entered parliament and joined the Government of Weld as Defence Minister. He advocated continuing the war using only colonial forces and that the money saved by not having to pay for the Imperial army would go to building a specialised force to deal with internal emergencies.

To quote a Wanganui Times leader article:

> It is proposed with the sanction of the General Assembly to establish an armed Constabulary force to occupy defence posts supported as occasion may require by volunteers, bushrangers, and cavalry corps. It is submitted that a force of the nature proposed has been proved to more effective in New Zealand than large armies organised with a view to European warfare. Such a force would be in the reach of the colony.(27)

Thus the government came to consider a self-reliant policy more effective for internal defence. Meanwhile in the eyes of the press the Imperial army could do no right. The Wanganui Times again:

> That General Cameron occupied four months in marching with a corps of three thousand men through a country unopposed by the few hundred savages he had to fight, a distance of only sixty miles, is a feat without parallel in military annals.(28)

27 Wanganui Times, 13 October 1865

28 Wanganui Times, 24 November 1865

Of course the Imperial army had adapted as much as it could to the new theatre of war but its training and organisation precluded any radical departure from established practice. The regulars had built roads to increase their mobility, but as their large formations equipped with artillery remained tied to them they could, as above, march back and forth through enemy territory without ever engaging their foe. J.M. Atkinson observed: "Mrs Warre said the military might walk through to Wanganui and not see a native. I felt inclined to say there was no doubt of it." (29)

To conclude perhaps the last word in summary is best left to an editorial article of the English Daily News. It was republished in the colony throughout the provincial press. To quote as it appeared in the Wanganui Times:

> The colonists have adopted new tactics. The plan of attacking the native pahs with overwhelming numbers and of making approaches to a regular system is now abandoned. It was tedious even when most successful the mass of the fighting garrison always managed to escape. Whether it be that the colonists know the country better or that they are reaping the benefit of knowledge possessed by friendly natives or that the officers of the colonial volunteers are more dashing or more earnest we do not pretend to decide but certain it is that since colonial troops have come to the foreground the defeats of the natives are more disastrous and they have been accomplished with smaller numbers. The presence of Imperial troops must be admitted to have been a mere useless expense." (30)

29 J.M.Atkinson to M.Richmond, RAP II, p.124. 4 October 1864

30 Wanganui Times, 24 November 1865

CHAPTER III

THE MAORI LAND WARS : FINAL PHASE

Wanganui 1867-69

The features of the war so far were by now generally recognised, but generally the lessons learned were misapplied. Thus the colonial soldier's assertiveness, the guerilla war tactics, the volunteer bushrangers, and the need to break away from Imperial military traditions and methods, all of which had emerged as significant developments were, as the Colonial government took full responsibility for the war, either ignored or ill used.

The main features of the later campaign were the creation of the Armed Constabulary, a curious blend of the worst traditions of the volunteers and regular troops; the anti-militarism current in Wanganui, a direct result of earlier events; the character of Colonel Whitmore, who could be called the father of the New Zealand army; and the very late emergence of the volunteer cavalry, the essential arm of an anti-guerilla force as it had been in Taranaki. That all these earlier lessons, so clearly recognised by this time, became so misapplied in practice must constitute one of the major paradoxes in New Zealand military history.

The background to these events commenced with the arrival of Colonel Whitmore as part of General Cameron's staff in 1863. He soon left the Imperial service and settled on the East coast to become a provincial politician. In 1863, he was appointed commandant of the New Zealand Militia Forces, and began to make suggestions to the Minister of Defence about the constitution of a regular Colonial defence force. It will be recalled that members of the government were considering a self-reliant policy, though at the time the colony was near bankrupt. Whitmore suggested that the Minister hire men at the cheapest possible rate, i.e., 1/7d as against 3/1d then paid to the militia. He also advocated taking as many men and officers from the Imperial forces as could be obtained. This would be done by a bonus offer

of land after a certain period of service and a special discharge arrangement with the home government.(1) However these proposals ran counter to the possibility of developing a force based on the volunteer bushrangers corps then established. Many in the government, including the Atkinsons, knew of the value of this type of force. A.S. Atkinson wrote: "The council's opinion of bushranging is very high, not higher than it should be, it is the wholesomest thing that has been done in Taranaki."(2) Atkinson further observed: "We ought to have bushrangers of some kind. The choice lies between our own men and the Military Settlers."(3) Nevertheless his brother, the Minister of Defence, requested the Governor to apply to the home Government: "For permission to enlist from the regiments here fifteen hundred men."(4) In effect Whitmore's suggestions had been accepted and the blueprints for an Armed Constabulary force had been laid. But it would appear even the premier was at times confused for he wrote to his Minister of Defence: "The services of the Wairarapa Mounted Volunteers have been refused, do you know why?"(5) At least the Prime Minister and his Defence Minister were united about a self-reliant policy even if the composition of the new colonial force remained blurred. Weld wrote: "People are all coming round to say the removal of the troops is the right thing."(6) Yet a Major Coote, popular in Taranaki circles, served a warning on the premier:

> Do not enlist men from the British Army, their training is such that they have no self-reliance and the men drafted would be such as the colonels would want to get rid of. The new force should consist of efficient men, well paid.(7)

1 G.S. Whitmore to Minister of Defence, RAP II, p.39, May 1863
2 A.S.Atkinson Journal, RAP II, p.129, 2 November 1864
3 A.S. Atkinson to H.A.Atkinson, RAP II, p.132, 13 December186
4 H.A.Atkinson to A.S.Atkinson, RAP II, p.143, 7 January 1865
5 F.A. Weld to H.A.Atkinson, RAP II, p.148, 31 January 1865
6 F.A.Weld to H.A. Atkinson, RAP II, p.150, 4 February 1865
7 Major H.J. Coote to F.A.Weld, RAP II, p.159, 13 April 1865

However, Whitmore's ideas appealed to a hard-up government, also he was a politician and had influence. He had many enemies though and some of them were alarmed that a new permanent military appointment was in the making: "Little Whitmore is going about abusing your government and you in particular, no epithet is too foul for him. He is a contemptible little brute. For God's sake if you are going to give him anything don't let it be here and the further off the better."(8) Yet the government was encouraged to go ahead and the A.C. force was duly constituted and in 1867 Colonel Whitmore was appointed its commandant.

Meanwhile, the confiscation and acquirement of land for the new Military settlers in the Patea district had gone ahead. The local tribes were obviously resentful, and an A.C. force under Major McDonnell was sent into the district in 1866. A series of minor skirmishes took place, though the tribes were not in open rebellion. Perhaps the most significant of these skirmishes was McDonnell's sudden dawn attack on the village of Pokaikai with two hundred men. The constables charged into the sleeping village: "Scattering its inmates some of whom though women were bayoneted."(9)

Many voices were raised in complaint, including M.P.s J.C. Richmond and A.P. Atkinson and an official enquiry was instituted. In London, the Colonial Secretary, Earl Caenarvon, regarded the suppression of natives by McDonnell as an unwarranted attack on defenceless people, causing the local press to comment: "Let us see the last Imperial soldier depart from our shores as speedily as possible; they allow colonial secretaries to hold us up as 'wholesale murderers of poor defenceless natives.'"(10) And so they

8 J.A.Ormond to H.A. Atkinson, RAP II, p.188, 6 October 1865
9 J. Cowan, The New Zealand Wars, Vol.II, p.145
10 Wanganui Herald, 18 July 1867

went all except for one regiment retained by the Governor for dire emergencies only.

The year 1867 seemed quiet enough in the district, the natives were still resentful but few incidents took place. The local press was optimistic, though the following extract raised all the old grievances including the strong Wanganui desire to dispense with militarism.

> When opinion was first broached that 1500 men were sufficient for the defence of this island it was ridiculed as absurd. The fact was on record that 10,000 Imperial troops could not maintain peace or take a pah, so what could a little force of 1500 colonists do. But the 1500 men have brought the war to a close and annihilated nearly all the fighting power left in the Maoris....The Armed Constabulary will be able to suppress future risings so the sooner the Militia and Volunteers are abolished the better. Nothing is more injurious to a young country trying to raise more blades of grass than a system of playing at soldiers with paid drill sergeants. (11)

Wanganui was unique in not maintaining a few volunteer corps, especially as it was so close to a possible source of hostilities, but the reasons for this have already been given. The local editor wrote: "Wanganui has not yet caught the volunteer fever and is not likely to after the experience some of our townsmen learned to their cost in earlier organisations."(12) But in 1868 the troubles increased in the Patea district, with robberies and then murders taking place. The Patea field force was increased, being composed of mainly Armed Constabulary, Military Settlers, and some volunteers from Wellington and Taranaki, total strength was about two hundred and fifty.

In spite of these alarms no volunteers were forthcoming from Wanganui and the city remained defiantly hostile to the military.

11 Wanganui Herald, 18 November 1867
12 Wanganui Herald, 5 December 1867

> Is it necessary to retain the sinecure office of a commander in the Wanganui Militia district. The settlers and tradesmen have steadily set their faces against playing at soldiers and thanks to the commandants the very name of the militia is the most hateful sound that can grate upon our ears. Abolish the office of paid commander. As for the volunteers surely it does not require a paid officer to review fifteen men at Turakina. (13)

It was becoming increasingly obvious as the year wore on that the Patea field force was in trouble, and the one centre from which support was most needed remained obstinate. The district commander, Colonel Gorton, an ex-Imperial officer, was expected to reinforce, supply, and generally keep in touch with field force. A recent arrival in Wanganui, and being of a pompous nature, he was not able to supply the sort of leadership that was needed. The city turned its back on him and the militia and volunteer organisations he theoretically commanded. As in Taranaki earlier, a field force without the supplement of local volunteer bushranger-type corps was unsuited for guerilla warfare. The townspeople even laughed and jeered at the Armed Constabulary recruits as they paraded through the town on their way to the front. The local paper wrote of Gorton:

> Lt. Col. Gorton's energy is applied to carrying out the same red tape system which rendered the exertions of the Imperial Troops comparatively useless. As to his ability to handle colonial troops, I think it would be difficult to find another officer or man who served under him to say that he had a remote idea of his duty in this respect.(14)

This sort of article, and there were many more, must have been embarrasing for Colonel Gorton, and did much to undermine his authority within a small community. Basically the underlying tension had arisen because most of the important

13 Wanganui Herald, 16 May 1868

14 Wanganui Herald, 19 May 1868

permanent commands within the defence forces were held by high ranking ex-Imperial officers. These men had been well trained, but would not adapt and tried to model the new force on the Imperial pattern. The colonists on the other hand expected and had seen something different in their own volunteer companies. This basic rift, it is argued, accounted for the poor response in Wanganui, the failure of the Armed Constabulary field force, and the very late emergence of the volunteer bushranging corps which were to undermine the Maori resistance. It is therefore a not so curious paradox of the war, that when the citizens of Wanganui, finally alarmed by developments, provided the essential volunteer forces, the Colonels Gorton and Whitmore did their best to stifle their creation and use.(15)

Thus the poor response to the alarming situation at the front continued through most of 1868, the militia force, as in Taranaki, remained a failure. The settlers were not enthusiastic to put themselves under officers they had not appointed. In August, under the heading 'Report from the Assembly' the local paper reported: "Mr Hall instanced what has taken place in Wanganui when out of the two hundred men called out only sixteen responded."(16) Even during the crisis period the paper could report: "Grand militia muster, seven first and second class men appeared on parade this afternoon."(17)

Meanwhile the failure of the new permanent defence force, during that year illustrates many of the main themes argued throughout this thesis. First of all it must be noted that their enemy was at all times weak and in a precarious position. Contemporary estimates of the rebel strength varied and were often wildly exaggerated but between two to three hundred was the most common assessment. These warriors also had their families with them which encumbered their progress

15 Wanganui Herald 25 November 1868
16 Wanganui Herald 4 August 1868
17 Wanganui Herald 12 November 1869

and raised severe logistical problems. This tribal rebellion had no economic base to rely on for supplies or reinforcements, and the more successful their offensive, the greater were their difficulties. That they succeeded for a time in holding a huge area of the North Island from Egmont to Wanganui was a remarkable feat, and said very little for the colonial field force operating against them. The colonial force was throughout, superior to the Maoris in supplies, weapons and numbers.

What then was wrong with this force composed primarily of armed constabulary and military settlers? First of all, in spite of warnings, Whitmore had had his way. With promises of land and slightly better pay, numbers of men had been recruited from the Imperial regiments. Also like the British army, the armed constabulary was recruited from the lowest social class within the colony, unskilled men from streets of Auckland and Wellington, with little experience of the bush. This was a far different force from the local companies of volunteer settlers, but it was the one that Whitmore had envisaged, and most suited his background. From the government's point of view it was the cheapest way to raise a large force, though it would have been perhaps better and cheaper to have adopted Major Cootes' recommendations of a highly selected bushranger type force.

However, whilst the senior officers of the force thought in terms of the British regiments, the colonists expected an army less disciplined but more efficient, something akin to the successful bushrangers. Certainly it would seem this was the message the recruits and junior officers received, for example on their way to reinforce the front in 1868 they passed through the hands of Colonel Gorton in Wanganui, who observed:

> On parading the men I warned the men that those who did not obey my command I should disband on the spot, and they would lose their land. Four men never moved at my word of command and I took their arms from them. Encouraged by loafers in the street, more men refused

> to march, surrounding me and raising their rifles to strike me, using the most insulting language. The affair resulting in my disbanding forty two for mutiny, who lost their land. (18)

Another lot were, after some difficulty, hustled on board the 'Woodpecker' bound for Patea, only to mutiny and take over the ship after first broaching the cargo of rum.(19)

At the front things were hardly much better; the local paper's special correspondent wrote: "There is a want of discipline at the front which is the cause of the repulse. It is a well known fact that there are men now in this town, (Patea) wounded that were shot by their comrades. A man named Dwyer who died a few days ago at the front was shot in the back by one of his own men."(20)

Two days later the Herald commented: "Patea we are informed has become a bacchanalianplace, rum ad libium have marred the effects of discipline and reflected upon the authorities."(21)

In September the field force, now three hundred and sixty strong, walked into a series of ambushes whilst trying to attack the pah at Te Ngutu-O-te-manu. Apparently the 'new levies' were unsteady under fire, confused and lost among the trees, and kept bunching together. The disorganised government forces thought themselves outnumbered, when in fact they had a superiority five to one, so one third of the force bolted. Some of the deserters were found later back at camp drunk, others had cleared off altogether.(22) This serious defeat, demoralised the force who thereafter went on the defensive.

18 Lt.Col.E. Gorton, Some Home Truths re the Maori War 1863-69 p.64

19 Gorton, Home Truths re Maori War, p.66

20 Wanganui Herald 10 September 1868

21 Wanganui Herald 12 September 1868

22 Lt.Col.T. McDonnell, An explanation of the principle causes which led to the present war on the West Coast of New Zealand. Wanganui, 1869 p.28

Thus the new colonial army had managed to combine the assertiveness and loose discipline of the volunteers with the incompetence of the Imperials. That is they had taken the worst rather than the best features of the two military organisations. Unfortunately, a scapegoat had to be found and Colonel McDonnell, the only colonial-bred senior officer in the force, filled the role. He was variously accused of cowardice and incompetence, from all quarters. The local paper's correspondent commented: "I have reports from the mouths of many who I believe had never been wilfully sober from the day they arrived in Patea to the present one. These men attribute cowardice to Colonel McDonnell and are claiming to leave the campaign."(23) A week later the paper's leading article concluded: "There has been nothing at Patea but general incompetence. The commanding officer (McDonnell) has lost his prestige and he might be safely removed. What is wanted at the front is unity, energy, and sobriety."(24)

Within a month these qualities arrived in the person of the constabulary commandant, Colonel Whitmore. His character and career lend much to the arguments presented in this thesis: a politician-soldier who became New Zealand's first army general. In many ways the colonial-bred McDonnell was Whitmore's victim. The untrained force he commanded had been created by Whitmore, and the government profiting by the sale of grog licenses would not empower him to close down these unwanted camp followers. By contrast when Whitmore arrived the necessary authorisation was granted. Whitmore had political influence in a way which the straightforward soldier McDonnell could not comprehend. Also, McDonnell's memoirs maintain he was pressured by the government to make premature attacks with raw levies because of Whitmore's failures on the East coast.(25) The government needed a

23 Wanganui Herald 19 September 1868

24 Wanganui Herald 28 September 1868

25 McDonnell, An explanation of the principle causes, etc. p. 25

victory and he was expected to supply it. When in October Whitmore arrived on the West Coast, and volunteered to put himself under McDonnell's command to help and guide him, McDonnell suspected a plot to oust him, and resigned.(26)

Certainly Whitmore was not a helpful person, very energetic and abrasive, he was disliked by all who served under him. He had developed better relationships with former Imperial officers in the command, and Wanganui's unpopular Colonel Gorton was soon promoted to Quartermaster-General of the new defence forces. Both these men at the top of the new army hierarchy particularly disliked the volunteer forces, possibly because they did not fit the mould they were trying to establish. These factors became apparent as the campaign developed.

A few weeks before McDonnell's resignation Whitmore had shrewdly written to the colonial press a letter ostensibly supporting the disgraced commander, and attacking colonial assertiveness:

> It must also not be forgotten that though the recruits sent to Colonel McDonnell were men of a class infinitely more difficult to manage than young country lads at home (U.K.) he had almost no real power to control them. That spirit of individual independence which characterises most colonists naturally revolts from the authority of a commander and the habit of perpetual discussion of public men and political questions which pervades the whole community is opposed to that silent obedience which is the first duty of the soldier. I see that every discontented and nameless subordinate is able to publish his strictures on his commanding officer. (27)

The earlier cry for unity, energy, and sobriety at the front was now indeed served. In the cause of unity Whitmore wrote to the government arguing that all future recruits should be armed constabulary, not temporary volunteers.(28)

26 McDonnell, An explanation....p.28

27 Wanganui Herald 30 September 1868

28 Maj.Gen.Sir G.S.Whitmore, The Last Maori War in New Zealand, p.40

Within a few days the following news item was reported: "The government have determined to enrol no more volunteers for the front. All the men recruited are under the Armed Constabulary Act subject to the severest military rule. We shall hear no more of mutiny for the law permits flogging and the officer commanding has hinted he will inflict that punishment in cases of insubordination."(29)

Whitmore, now the commander in the field, was re-creating a more uniform, disciplined force, based on the British regimental model. It was no longer a case of combining the worst of both worlds but the best and the worst of one type, i.e., the Imperial army. The following newspaper items illustrate this process:

17 October	No.5 A.C. is disbanded for mutinous conduct.
23 October	Whitmore's force down to three hundred men, seventy disbanded with what was construed as mutiny.
28 October	Drinking among officers and men checked to a proper extent, Colonel Whitmore works in an indefatiguable manner to bring things to assume a military appearance.
29 October	Colonel Whitmore has given orders no member of forces will be permitted to correspond with the press. Also Colonel Whitmore has decided to discharge the Wellington Rifles (one of the two volunteer units in the force) who were in a state of insubordination.
12 November	Colonel Whitmore has branded the bulk of the natives (friendly Maoris serving with the force) cowards.
20 November	A contingent of men at Patea under Captain Smith have mutinied...all gave in with one exception and this man was tried, convicted, and sentenced to fifty lashes, was tied up and got twenty four before the doctor interposed.
4 December	Colonel Gorton employed as Quartermaster General, has crushed the bushranging movement.(2

29 Wanganui Herald 10 October 1868 to 4 December 1868

Thus by weeding out the difficult or different, introducing flogging, and closing the grog shops, Whitmore had provided the unity, energy, and sobriety called for. However without the volunteer cavalry and the friendly Maori scouts it was difficult to see what the new force was good for.

The next few months were very desperate for the armed constabulary. That Whitmore survived as a commander must surely be a tribute to his political influence. Whitmore attributed his lack of success to the unsteadiness of his men, and they responded by declaring no faith in his leadership. Colonel Gorton, his friend, recorded that Whitmore used to falsify the casualty returns, abuse officers violently in front of their men, and ignored the plight of the wounded. For example the only decent building left standing in Patea was used as a hospital; Whitmore when he arrived had all the wounded (some of them serious) turned out so he could make the place his permanent living quarters.(30 The colonists were to meet this same kind of selfishness again, in 1915, on the beaches at Gallipoli.

On 7 November, Whitmore attacked Moturoa pah with about two hundred men against one hundred defenders. Whitmore's force had moved fast back down the coast and the rebels had had little time to prepare their defences, especially to the sides or rear. Against the advice of Major Hunter and some junior officers Whitmore decided to commit everything on an immediate frontal assault. Unfortunately this was the only well defended approach to the pah and the result was a disaster; Major Hunter fell leading the charge. Whitmore's force then retreated to the Kai Iwi stream just outside Wanganui. It can be argued in Whitmore's defence that he always moved his forces energetically and the Imperial type frontal attack suited poorly trained and unreliable forces. Encircling movements in the bush required

30 Gorton, Home Truths re Maori Wars, p.106

particular skills and meant the men had to be trusted out of sight.

By early November, alarmed at the situation developing on their doorstep, a series of settler-volunteer corps sprang into being. The following news items tell the story, beginning with the position as it was at the end of September.

> 25 September: The spirit of volunteering in this place has manifested itself on several occasions but on each it has been dampened by red tapeism and extinguished by an unpopular officer. There will never be a response to a call for volunteers and the militia must be an utter failure in this district; we impute this to the utter want of tact and judgement on the part of the commanding officer (Colonel Gorton).

Just over a month later a more concerned and conciliatory tone was sounded.

> 3 November: The formation of volunteer companies will not increase our defenders as there will be a transfer from the militia to the volunteers but they will be twice as effective from a practical point of view.
>
> 5 November: The veteran volunteers company is daily increasing in number and will soon be one hundred strong. It will probably absorb the militia, most of whom would prefer being in a volunteer corps where everything is conducted on popular principles. Colonel Gorton was booed by new A.C. recruits passing through.

A fortnight later with Whitmore's forces retreating to the edge of the city, a more urgent and radical note was sounded.

> 19 November: Now what we propose should be done that the people take the defence of the town upon themselves.
>
> 20 November: A defence committee has been appointed and the people have shown alacrity in volunteering for the defence of the town, we hope there will be no more panics.(31)(32)

31 Wanganui Herald, 25 September 1868, and 3, 5, 19, 20 Novembe

32 Wanganui Herald, 17 October 1868: The citizens of Wanganui had never thought much of either Whitmore or Gorton for all their bluster. The following anecdote on Whitmore had circulated for some time: "Whitmore saw a soldier lying drunk. Riding up to him, he abused him and said, 'You are drunk, sir.' The man said, 'Well I am drunk but I'll get over that; but you are a fool, and you'll never get over that.'"

By now history was repeating itself just as eight years ago the people and press of Taranaki had taken to Colonel Gold and his tactics so Whitmore came in for the same treatment and advice.

> Colonel Whitmore's force might as well be at Wellington for all the good it is doing. It is strongly entrenched a few miles from the town, and within gunshot of the camp the enemy is burning and destroying the settlers' property....keep the enemy in check by harassing him in every possible way. We want to see the force we have active.(33)

A few days later, Ballance, a volunteer and future Prime Minister, wrote in his editorial column:

> What does Colonel Whitmore expect to do with his Grand Army. What is the use of redoubts to us when the enemy walks round them. It has been thought by successive commanders throw up a good redoubt all would be well. Instead of using them as a means of communications for flying columns in their expeditions. The attempt to raise bush-rangers was rendered abortive by one of the peculiarities of red tape. (34)

Ballance was right, and it was clear to many others, without the mounted columns of bushrangers harassing the Maoris constantly, destroying their vulnerable supplies, preventing their free movement in the bush and subjecting them to constant watchfulness, an army stuck in a huge redoubt was ridiculous. The same lessons were being learned all over again. Having achieved nothing Whitmore decided to have another try on the East Coast where he had failed before. However his reputation moved ahead of him and the Hawke's Bay Herald wrote: "To send Colonel Whitmore here at the present time would be most disastrous. He possesses neither the confidence nor goodwill of any part of the community European or native and none would be found to work cordially under his command."(35) Nevertheless on 6 December, Whitmore arrived in Hawkes Bay and the local press recorded: "Arrival

33 & 34 Wanganui Herald 21 and 25 November 1868
35 Hawkes Bay Herald 1 December 1868

of the miserable pretender Whitmore and his second failure .....Why the government inflicted that imbecile upon us is inexplicable. It may be they dare not remove him."(36) Certainly his influence within the government has always remained something of a mystery.

Meanwhile in Wanganui with Whitmore absent there was a flood of abuse published in the local press. These give some idea of the intensity of feeling this man aroused, e.g., a letter from the officers and men at the front written in defiance of Whitmore's orders: "There is a wonderful unanimity of opinion here about Colonel Whitmore; not only the men but the officers agree that he is a perfect donkey without brains to plan or execute and utterly incompetent for an important command."(37)

And so it went, a continuous stream of abuse and items calling for Whitmore's dismissal, which noticeably faded away on his return in mid-January. However the most significant event during Whitmore's absence was the coming into service of two full companies of volunteer cavalry, the Wanganui and Kai Iwi corps. These had been formed by the anxious citizens and settlers in late November, and commenced long distance patrols in December. It will be recalled a very thin force of rebels now controlled a huge territory from Egmont to Wanganui and were thus very vulnerable to these powerful patrols operating deep inside their lines. The success of these patrols soon became obvious and the local paper declared:

> We are seriously of opinion that the militia and volunteers could do infinitely better on their own account without the presence of the constabulary.(37)

A week later the paper reported: "The volunteer cavalry have been out destroying native whares, pahs, crops and cultivations. No Whitmore placards are being carried in town and announce a protest meeting."(37)

36 Hawkes Bay Herald, 6 December 1868

37 Wanganui Herald, 7, 11 and 17 December 1868

A month later at the start of the New Year there was a distinct air of confidence in the town. Whitmore's force was still isolated within its huge redoubt but now the enemy could no longer roam freely. The bulk of the rebel Maori force was now contained within a defensive pah and receiving very little in the way of fresh supplies or reinforcements. This sort of item became commonplace:

> 5 January: The Kai Iwi cavalry took sixty four head of cattle off eighteen hau haus (rebels) who were driving them.(38)

The defensive pah which contained the bulk of the rebel warriors and their families was situated in an area of much open grassland, and its supplies, or attempts to obtain them were easily interdicted. In the defensive redoubt of the 'Grand Army' at Westmere the men were growing restless. Whitmore had been steadily building up the force to a strength of seven hundred and fifty armed constabulary but so far they had done little. A later news item revealed developments:

> One hundred and fifty have deserted from the Westmere camp in the last week. The Kai Iwi Cavalry: Colonel Whitmore should not treat either officers or men disparagingly. We have no doubt any differences existing may be easily adjusted. It is reported that the hau haus are short of provisions. (38)

But differences involving the volunteer officers were not easily adjusted. Though the volunteer corps had been careful to elect only gentlemen-settlers as officers, the Colonels controlling the permanent force did not want them, or their influence. Earlier in the month, the Defence Minister, Colonel Haultain (a friend of Whitmore) had taken the unusual step of cancelling the commission of the Herald's editor, Ballance, a volunteer. Ballance maintained his paper had been moderate in its criticism, and that the rival Wanganui Times or the larger New Zealand Herald were far more anti-Whitmore. This was undoubtedly true but on the local scene the Herald was more important, as the Times with a diminishing circulation was going out of business.

38 Wanganui Herald, 5 and 21 January 1869

A rather bitter editorial appeared:

> The defence minister overrates the value of a colonial commission, in the A.C. it means not to get drunk, not to write to the newspapers, and not to rise before 9 o'clock in the morning. (A very astute dig.) In the New Zealand militia (also controlled by Whitmore) these are given to ihdividuals with a penchant for red waist-coats and fancy swords. Next come the volunteer officers who constitute a class altogether peculiar. They are chosen for fighting purposes by the men which causes violent collisions with the government who require all forces to be quiet.(39)

In a way Ballance was right; the volunteers had provided a skilled fighting force and adapted to the demands of the war. Partly because of this success, their principles and ideas, they were to be denied influence within the military establishment. The three colonels (Whitmore, Haultain and Gorton) who were involved with the formation of permanent New Zealand army had no desire to accept anything other than traditional military doctrine.

The war in the district was nowdrawing to a close. On the 22 January, Whitmore's force of over one thousand left their redoubt and began a slow advance towards the enemy pah. There was some initial skirmishing but to everyone's surprise just as the main force reached the pah the enemy retreated. What had promised to be the decisive battle had come to nothing. Colonel Gorton thought the enemy had left because they were short of water.(40) Colonel Whitmore put it down to fear of him personally, he had shot all prisoners taken on the East coast, so had something of a reputation. The Herald was more cautious; "Colonel Whitmore makes a great mistake when he puts down the retreat of the enemy to fear. Our knowledge of the motives or designs of the enemy is as meagre as it is of his movements. The enemy is in full retreat followed by the cavalry."(41)

39 Wanganui Herald, 4 January 1869

40 Gorton, Home Truths re Maori War, p.104

41 Wanganui Herald, 8 February 1869

Kimble Bent, the pakeha-slave living with the rebels said their sudden evacuation of a strong position was due to religious and superstitious reasons.(42) But perhaps a hint of their real difficulties had occurred a few days earlier during the light skirmishing when the paper reported: "He thinks (Colonel Whitmore) they are short of ammunition and it is certain they are of food."(43)

The strong suggestion is that the war, the mobile volunteers had been carrying on, had caused the enemy to expend their meagre supplies and fresh provisions were not getting through. The warriors burdened by their families and without an adequate economic base could not sustain the fight any longer. The Maori retreat became a rout as they were pursued by an overwhelming force. The rebels scattered into small bands which were ruthlessly hunted down, few prisoners were taken. As the war moved out of the district so the volunteer corps pulled back, leaving the armed constabulary and friendly Maori force to continue the 'game of hide and seek.'(43) Some volunteers stayed with Whitmore's army as scouts, for example:"The scouts came upon some Maoris, Thomas Adamson, late Wanganui Cavalry gave a Maori chase and cut off his head and brought it into camp. Three heads were brought (a practice Whitmore encouraged until complaints grew) in and two women prisoners. Under threats, the women told Whitmore, Tito was short of food, his men were leaving him and where he was."(43)

Colonel Whitmore displayed some energy in following up the retreating rebels and his friendly-Maori volunteers under Major Kemp (a Maori) were easily the best part of his force at pursuing and tracking down the enemy. In fact the war as such had really ended, though Colonel Whitmore

42 Cowan, Adventures of Kimble Bent, p.257

43 Wanganui Herald, 6 and 10 December 1869, 23 March 1869

was to spend many more months unsuccessfully searching for the rebel leaders in the dense hinterlands of Taranaki and the Urewēras. Nevertheless he emerged from the war personally triumphant, acknowledged as the supreme genius of Maori fighting. The premier Stafford called him 'irreplaceable' and his future was secured. As a politician he rose by 1877 to become Colonial Secretary, knighted in 1882, and became New Zealand's first general in 1886.

Thus the final phase of this long war saw the introduction of the self-reliant policy and the establishment of a permanent force structure. There were for a time two possible military systems in competition and a grave overlap occurred when the armed constabulary first took to the field. Eventually through the influence of ex-Imperial officers the colony's permanent force was moulded much closer to traditional military forms. The local volunteer corps had been successful in war, skilled and adaptable, yet it was a settler force of civilians whose main interest lay with farms, businesses, and local politics. They could be loud when their direct interests were threatened, but they had no long term influence. On the other hand, to the senior officers of the new army, who wanted an orthodox and centralised command structure the local volunteers were a challenge that was best ignored. However the volunteers, were a conservative force strong at a local level and could not be easily dispensed with, and so for some time the dual system remained in uneasy partnership.

CHAPTER IV

VOLUNTEERS, REGULARS & TERRITORIALS : NEW ZEALAND 1869-1914

The Maori Land Wars had no definite end, rather they simply faded away, and this period began with the local volunteer corps tense, ready for battle, and looking for a fight. When it was realised all rebel resistance had vanished, these local military organisations, bathed in the after-glow of victory, became very popular. They became known affectionately as 'the old volunteers' and the public was comforted by their existence and reputation. By the mid-eighties however, their numbers had dwindled to half their former strength in spite of the rising population. The inadequacy of this small force to meet possible defence needs became apparent during the Russian invasion scare of the late eighties. A re-organisation followed, and after the Boer War another drastic revision took place. Each change brought closer conformity to British practice, a greater degree of centralisation, and an increase in the permanent staff. With the advent of compulsory service in 1910 a compulsory part-time army was created involving the entire male population. With only a few years of training this new territorial force provided officers and men for the expeditionary force of 1914, and kept up a steady flow of reinforcements.

Thus the New Zealand military experiment had been to raise a volunteer force provincially based, locally organised and controlled with elected officers. Involved in a local guerilla war this system had showed surprising efficiency and adaptability, but such a force had grave weaknesses in peacetime, and could never measure up to orthodox standards. Throughout this long period of peace, a series of harshly critical reports on the volunteers were put before Parliament and slowly the pressure of recommendations for a more

traditional form of army built up. Nevertheless, even though organisation and control became more centralised, the new units created retained a strong provincial basis. Therefore the main theme of this chapter concerns organisation, rather than colonial assertiveness or tactics.

The period began with Maori rebel resistance broken and their leaders chased into dense bush retreats. In the Wanganui district it was thought some rebel bands might be found scattered along the river valleys of the upper Waitotara and Patea rivers. The local district commander, Major Noakes, organised the district corps to make sweeps of these areas destroying villages and crops, and confiscating the movable property. The volunteers seldom saw anyone on these search and destroy missions, the villages being deserted before their arrival. One such expedition in late April involved one hundred and fifty men and the local paper reported:

> After an absence of ten days during which time they penetrated seventy miles of enemy territory, burnt, destroyed and looted all their possessions. A sale of the loot took place on Saturday afternoon at Wereroa, when the sum of £150 was realised which will be equally divided among the forces composing the expedition. (Veteran Volunteers, Kai Iwi Cavalry Wairoa and Patea Rifles.) (1)

Everyone was impressed by the destructive and punitive nature of these operations and there was no shortage of volunteers. There was prize money to be earned, and no one questioned the effect of such destruction on the wider Maori community of non-combatants, or the prevailing mood which inclined the patrols to fire on any Maori who showed himself. Though it must be pointed out no one knew the war had ended, and the volunteers were concerned to ensure that their district could not easily be used again as a base for guerilla activity. Whitmore's failure to capture the rebel leaders led to continual rumours of their return to the

1 Wanganui Times, 13 April 1869

district with a new following. These false reports kept the volunteers on active service and pay for most of 1869, and so after nearly a decade of apathy the volunteer companies found their ranks full to overflowing. Their punitive patrols and other activities were fully reported by the press and were the source of much interest, local pride, and satisfaction.

The large Wanganui military district was now commanded by Major Noakes, a popular and efficient officer who was able to control, build up, and organise the various units in a style and manner quite beyond his unfortunate predecessors. Noakes was a local resident of long standing and when Colonel Gorton vacated his post, the Defence Minister, was served a petition bearing four hundred signatures, calling for Noakes to be appointed the local commander. This was again an unprecedented and unusual way of allocating military appointments but it worked. The petitioners were in fact calling for a local rather than an ex-Imperial appointee and offering their future cooperation as an inducement. In a district fully involved in a guerilla war and noted for what Whitmore (in reference to the failure of the militia to parade) called: "Stiff necked opposition to the government," this did indeed represent an offer.(2) The petition went on to read: "If the appointment of Captain Noakes be permanent it will give general satisfaction to the people. The government should avoid the system of importation when we can get men to the manner bred, whose interests and sympathies are with us and who are quite competent."(3) It could be argued this kind of request represented the worst kind of narrow parochialism, but it should be seen against the background of past difficulties. For whatever reason, from Noakes' appointment, the volunteer movement in the district began to pick up, and expeditions went out as far as Hawera to the north. Slowly the Maoris were

2 Whitmore, Last Maori War, p.60

3 Wanganui Herald, 21 November 1868

being starved out of hiding and what warriors there were, were forced to negotiate their surrender. By late 1869 most of the volunteer units had been struck off pay, only the Wairoa Rifles were kept on mainly to build a coach road through the district. In early 1870, Noakes wrote: "I have not paid the Wairoa Volunteers yet because the work they are on is of importance to complete, vis, to prepare the road. The last time they were paid there was little work done for a few days and one of the men drowned."(4) He went on to add that he would not pay them again until the road was finished, the whole letter indicating the difficult disciplinary problems posed by retaining a volunteer force in peacetime conditions. Eventually in March this unit too was struck off pay. As for the compulsory Militia, Noakes had tactfully decided to treat it as a volunteer force and the last parade was in 1871. Compulsory Militia parades, were like the war, dying out in different places at different times. By mid-1872, this compulsory force had everywhere ceased to function, though the statutory right of the government to raise the force has never been cancelled. Indeed, subsequent Defence Acts have renewed this provision.

Gradually, building on the traditions established in the wars, the volunteer companies settled down to peacetime round of drill parades, firing practices, shooting competitions, camps and balls. They were now the only troops left in the country, the Imperial regiments had gone, the Armed Constabulary was being run down, and the Militia quietly forgotten. This, and the fact that they were the only force to emerge well from the wars added to their prestige. The seventies were great times for the volunteer units and the local press followed all their activities with interest, carefully commenting on each unit's drill, appearance, and attendance. Not unnaturally therefore the uniforms got brighter and the brass bands bigger. In such a climate there was much to be gained from being a member

4 Lovegrove Folder 25c

of a local volunteer corps. In Wanganui a drill hall was erected in 1879 to serve as the district's army headquarters, the various volunteer units raising £700 and another £300 was contributed by the government.

Taranaki had had little involvement in the latter stages of the war and the strength of the volunteer units in the district had waned. By 1876 the Taranaki Rifle volunteers had been re-gazetted, and unit strengths increased until by 1879 the district boasted nearly nine hundred volunteers.

In October 1881, Te Whiti was holding large anti-pakeha meetings at Parihaka and the volunteers were called out for the last time. A force of fifteen hundred was assembled and the Maori village was surrounded. The force included volunteer companies from other districts and the Wanganui men were well represented. It was a show of force calculated to crush any would be thoughts of resistance and in this it was successful. Te Whiti and some chiefs were arrested, whilst the force camped in the settlement for a week searching for arms. They then returned to New Plymouth and were dismissed. The incident did justify the government's peace-time policy of maintaining a mainly part-time force at a miminal cost, and yet still be able in an emergency to concentrate an organised force. Earlier in 1874, Major Gordon had produced a most outspoken report to the Parliamentary defence committee on the state of the volunteer force and had labelled them lax, inefficient, and wasteful. Many of the one hundred and twenty-nine volunteer corps were described as shooting and social clubs supported by the local press. Worse, there existed all over the country a heterogeneous collection of cavalry, artillery, and infantry, springing up and then quite haphazardly disappearing again with government control at a minimum and all weight given to local wishes.

Of course the years without an enemy had seen a decline in military standards, it was the heyday of fancy uniforms, bands, and parades. As Lovegrove recorded, some local units

wore the redcoats of the English, others the bear skin headdress of the Guards, whilst some adopted various styles of Highland dress.(5) Thus town parades revealed a mass of red and blue coats, whitebelts, gleaming brass buttons and buckles, kilts, white helmets and bearskins. Every conceivable style was adopted, and much of the units' allocation was spent in this way. The uniforms kept the volunteers busy as they required constant and devoted attention. Without an obvious foe each unit looked forward to showing off its uniforms and style at the various annual parades and balls. The local press encouraged this trend for it gave prominence to these events, and judged the worth of each unit by its smartness, dress, carriage and numbers. The emphasis was on show and display rather than strict drill parades; it was all more social than military. This was from a defence point of view bad, but it was a force with little public money spent on it, without training manuals, very obsolete equipment and a force which existed only as the result of local effort and enthusiasm, serving for internal security purposes. Gordon advocated more money, more permanent instructors, an overall organisation, and less attention to local feeling. Finally the system of electing officers stood completely condemned.(6) The report was condemned but the subsequent confrontation at Parihaka and other events weakened the argument for the old system. There had been no fighting at Parihaka, Maori threats had been purely verbal, as a potential enemy they were now clearly little threat. Up to this time the volunteers had been viewed as a loyal local defence force available to deal with internal threats; external threats were left to the Imperial government to ponder. So bereft of even an internal enemy the force began to decline, from eight thousand men in one hundred and eighteen corps in 1879, to four thousand men in eighty six corps in 1885. The decline of the early eighties also

5. C.L. Lovegrove, Box 32

6 Report on New Zealand Volunteer Force 1874-78 AD1/Series 37/18 National Archives

coincided with the revelations of the Bryce-Rushden libel case, an event which tarnished local images of 'the old volunteers.' The New Zealand historian Rushden had published an incident of the wars which read: "Bryce distinguished himself, some women and children emerged from a pah to hunt pigs. Lieutenant Bryce and Sergeant Maxwell of the Kai Iwi Cavalry dashed upon them and cut them down with ease."(7) Bryce, a respected local figure and colonial politician, brought a successful libel action but the incident remained a regrettable episode in the history of the local volunteers. The whole colony awaited the result of this trial held in England, not the least because it revealed aspects of behaviour difficult to acknowledge.

Thus for a time and for various reasons the local volunteer forces diminished. The government was saving money, for during 'inactive' service each corps was paid an annual allowance according to its efficient strength. However this state of affairs changed in the eighties with the advent of the Russian gunboat scare. Quite why such an anxiety gripped the minds of so many New Zealanders is difficult to establish. It does not seem possible the Russians could have contemplated a sudden bombardment of a New Zealand port, especially against the might of the Royal Navy in its prime, in any case, what long-term purpose could be served? Whatever the reasoning and whoever were the scaremongers, the idea was sold and strongly implanted.

In 1885, General Whitmore became commandant of the defence forces, filling a vacant post. The scare produced money from the government for new arms, harbour defences, and defence administration. Up to this time the volunteers and a small Armed Constabulary force had managed with the obsolete weapons left behind by the Imperial regiments. Whitmore was energetic, he bought artillery, mines, torpedos, and new rifles. He opened a school to instruct volunteer officers,

7 G.W. Rushden, History of New Zealand, Vol.II p.504

organised the scattered corps into district battalions to co-ordinate activities, and disbanded his brainchild, the Armed Constabulary. To replace the latter he created a permanent militia, specialising in harbour defence, i.e., the operation of mines, artillery, and torpedos. Five new military districts were established in Auckland, Wellington, Nelson, Canterbury, and Otago; and forces equal in size were allotted to each district. The scare, the new equipment, and new organisation saw a dramatic increase in volunteering. Whitmore claimed a peak of 12,000 men.(8)

The West Coast (North Island) Rifle Battalion was formed in 1886, and the Wanganui Rifles provided four of the future commanding officers, the Colonels, Watt, Hughes, Cumingham and Turnbull. All had started their military service in the ranks. The principal new volunteer units to emerge at this time, an unusual occurrence in peacetime, were the Wanganui City Rifles, the Palmerston North Rifles, and the Manchester Rifles at Feilding. The second in command of the new battalion was Major John Ellis, officer in charge of the right wing at Taranaki, and included such units as Taranaki Rifles, Patea Rifles, Inglewood Rifles and Hawera Rifles. The battalion had a strength of five hundred and eighty men and its only camp was held in Wanganui in 1886.

Suddenly, in 1888 Whitmore resigned and the whole organisation crumbled. Whitmore's old adversary, the former volunteer Major Atkinson, had become Prime Minister. He wanted retrenchment and was not impressed by the 'gunboat scare.' (9) The permanent militia was reduced and the whole re-organisation programme shelved. For some time after the aim was coastal defence against a possible external threat, but it lacked urgency, government support and Whitmore's driving energy. The number of volunteers dwindled back

8 Whitmore, Last Maori War P XVIII

9 AD 34/1 New Zealand Militia Force Report. National Archives letter and memoranda contained.

down to four thousand again and the officers' school was closed. What had occurred, was a basic clash of two schools of thought. The traditional career soldier's argument that every state (worthy of the name) should have a standing army, or at least the basic framework ready and trained to meet possible emergencies. On the other hand the community had available veteran volunteers organised only to meet specific emergencies. In the past they had appeared more adaptable when perhaps they were only more specialist. Also the volunteers had scoffed at the refinements of military behaviour because they were not essential to the direct task, and being part-time had no problems of maintaining discipline in peacetime. There was also an economic side to the argument, the career soldier wanted money spent (he believed invested) and the result raised his status. The settler-soldier was basically pragmatic and conservative; a standing army to him was just another burden on the limited resources of the state, resources which he supplied. This whole argument, in all its twists and turns, is one of the central themes of this thesis, and accounts for the somewhat erratic development of the New Zealand armed forces. The argument itself swayed from side to side because the populace was easily persuaded of threats to national security, even though they lived in the most isolated country in the world, protected by the mightiest navy. The nineties therefore became a time of minimal defence expenditure, the allocation falling from £122,000 in 1888, to £59,000 in 1892, and the permanent militia force was reduced to an artillery company of one hundred and forty five persons. Then came the invading expeditionary force 'scare' and the Ballance government, worried at the excessive reliance on a force of four thousand scattered volunteers, requested the Imperial government to send an expert to inspect, report and take over the colony's defences. The new commandant and inspector of the force, Colonel F.J. Fox, was horrified.

In 1893,the colony had fifteen professional officers, four at headquarters, one in charge of each military district, and seven in the permanent militia on coastal defence. He was equally amazed at the other wing of the defence forces, the volunteers, with their obsolete 'Sniders', faulty ammunition, lack of instructors and lack of overall organisation. The post of commandant had been left vacant until the 'scare', when Fox was appointed. His report disclosed thirteen corps in the Taranaki-Wanganui district with a total strength of six hundred and seventy-seven men, mainly in Wanganui and Palmerston. He recommended the Manchester Rifle Volunteers (Feilding) be disbanded as inefficient, but praised the Wanganui and Taranaki Rifle Volunteers as being among the best in the country.

His standards for judging these local units appeared to be their state of uniforms, attendance, established strength, and drilling ability. The officers came in for very hard criticism, chiefly for their failure to drill the men correctly, using out of date terms, and general parade inefficiency.

He proposed officer instruction centres and that regular drill instructors and staff officers be seconded from England to set up and run these centres. He felt that the power of the men to elect officers had been abused and many good men stood aloof because of this system. Though he conceded the regular officer in charge of the military district could veto the men's selection, it was a well known fact such vetos had been overruled and local considerations given priority. Thus his main recommendation was for the establishment of a battalion system, which would centralise the local corps organisation, and sweep away the system of electing officers. The latter, he expected to result from the battalion commanders using their influence to secure changes. This did not develop and the election system remained until the introduction of the territorial force in 1910.

Lastly, he argued the case for an enlarged New Zealand defence force and outlined the various threats to the colony's security, especially the bombardment of ports and the landing of expeditionary forces. By and large these proposals would bring the New Zealand forces closer to the British model with larger formations, better drilled and disciplined.(10)

In spite of the efforts of Colonel Fox and other senior officers brought out to assist him, premier Ballance (a former Wanganui volunteer) hesitated in implementing the reforms suggested. However, Ballance died in office, and ended the line of former volunteer corps officers turned premier. His successor, Seddon, was a man of action and much more attentive to the proposals of Colonel Fox and Colonel Pole-Penton. In 1896, Pole-Penton was appointed commandant and reform began in earnest. The next year the various corps were organised into battalions again, and training began to emphasis field manoeuvres rather than drill, so the annual camps were re-started.

At a local level these changes in the Wellington Military District entailed the creation of five battalions. The 2 battalion at Wanganui consisted the Royal Rangitikei Rifles, Wanganui Rifles, Palmerston Rifles, Manchester Rifles, and Wanganui Guards. As defence allocations and invasion scares increased, the battalion was augmented by the creation of such diverse units as the Wanganui Highland Rifles, Palmerston Guards and Wanganui Irish Rifles.

Throughout the run-down of the nineties only the Taranaki Rifle volunteers had continued to function, in that district, so the planned 4 Wellington Battalion could not become operative. For a time therefore, the single Taranaki corpswas part of the 2 Battalion, but by 1901 a sufficient number of new corps had been created to form a 4 Battalion.

10 Lieutenant Colonel F.J. Fox, Report on New Zealand Defence Forces, AJNR 1893 H9, Wanganui Public Library

In part the jingoism aroused by the South African War helped recruit men into the part-time force. Thus for a period of nine years there had existed only one corps in Taranaki, a province that had once held half the volunteers in the North Island. Certainly the practice of holding the Wellington battalions' annual camps at Feilding, Woodville or Johnsonville each Easter could have appealed little to the northerly Taranaki men, who gave up much to travel so far.

The 2 Wellington Battalion was formed with seven companies, e.g. A Company, Royal Rangitikei Rifles, etc., and as new corps were formed H and I companies were formed. This unsatisfactory extended lettering of companies was designed to preserve the individuality of each volunteer unit, but it could not last and disappeared during the territorial era. The companies were being eventually consolidated, and outlying areas were reduced to platoon establishments. Lovegrove noted:

> Establishing the battalion system in New Zealand was a colossal task. Volunteer corps were always touchy about seniority and many privileges they enjoyed as independent bodies. Also well managed corps objected to joining an organisation that might cramp its style. Apart from the Easter camps which allowed only two days collective training, corps devoted most of their time to drill and non-military activities, becoming in some instances social organisations. (11)

To smooth the path of reorganisation in 1895 the capitation grant was raised to £2.10/- and the next year 2/6d was paid for each parade.

Back at headquarters Colonel Pole-Penton was satisfied with progress so far but wanted more of the Seddon Government. In 1898 his report to the government contained the following items.

11 Lovegrove, History of WWC and T Regiment, Vol.5, 40/1

> A defence committee has been set up to scheme existing means of defence.
>
> Infantry. Battalion organisation now complete except for the Nelson district where corps so scattered that no reality can exist for them as a battalion.
>
> Militia. Militia rolls have been compiled by the police and I have forwarded proposals which could readily be put into force under the conditions of the Act should the unfortunate necessity arise.
>
> Defence Scheme. It has been completed and sent to England for consideration of the Imperial Defence Committee. It lays down where each unit is to be employed on active service under the various contingencies envisaged. Its weak point lies in the absence of any properly trained staff officers and the want of these could hinder it properly being carried out if the unfortunate necessity should arise. (12)

This report is very significant not just because it carried on the scheme of Whitmore and Fox, but because it advanced the cause of a larger permanent force to be the framework of an even larger army. It is also interesting to note how the ex-British officers controlling the force used their connections with the British government, almost to by-pass the colonial government and at times 'to twist the arm' of the Cabinet and Defence Minister. The following letter, written by Pole-Penton in 1900 makes this point clear:

> In my previous reports I have brought strongly to the notice the want of proper military organisation for this colony. Up to the present no change has been made....The Imperial authorities to whom my reports have been submitted concur in the views expressed. In an emergency the confusion entailed by officers having to carry out duties with which they were entirely unacquainted might lead to disaster and would cost the colony more than the payment of a properly organised staff.(12)

As earlier mentioned the background of the South African War with its jingoism and imperialism helped the career

12 Report by Colonel A. Pole-Penton, Commandant H.19.1898 AD 281/1/OV2 National Archives

H.19.1900 AD281/1/OV2 National Archives

officers to push their arguments. Basically they were moving towards the notion of the colony maintaining at least one division in a reasonable state of readiness. A division which would combine enlarged permanent and specialised forces with a bulk of trained part-time but compulsory infantry. The old volunteer officer-politicians had fought against this policy, sceptical of the various 'scares', and believing there would be time in an emergency to raise a force, more specifically appropriate to the nature of the crisis. This had worked well enough during the Maori Land Wars, but the world was getting smaller, and events moving faster. Also it would seem in spite of the comparative security supplied by their isolation New Zealanders felt vulnerable. The colonists wanted, as it were, to pay some kind of insurance to ward off the threats to national security. Thus, through this period, and beyond, the argument of the career militarists grew more convincing, and various governments felt obliged to provide for at least one division in some state of readiness, and this provides the central theme of the Army's development, the argument was never clear cut, or definitely resolved. There were always conflicting pressures.

The next commandant of the defence forces was another ex-British officer, Major-General J.M. Babington and he too took up the policy of his predecessors. He wrote, in 1902: "The organisation of the defence system leaves much to be desired. Lack of organisation in peacetime means inefficiency and expense, and in war produces one result." Such an argument was almost contradictory and far too dogmatic; however, he went on to add: "Staff officers are essential in military affairs as are responsible persons to run a large business. It takes time to train them, and it is too late when a war comes." There then followed a series of communications about the volunteer corps whose combined strength now totalled some twelve thousand men, but their independent organisation did not concur with Babington's

ideas at all. Not the least, the system of electing officers stood again particularly condemned. In the end the government allowed him to re-write the volunteer regulations giving more weight to the district commander's veto, but not to make the major changes he desired: "It was considered inadvisable." (13)

All this time the South African War had been going on and New Zealand supplied ten contingents totalling six thousand five hundred men, though only a few contingents were in Africa at any one time. Out of it came some instances and issues which touched on the three themes developed so far, organisation, tactics and colonial assertiveness. The men who went were volunteers drawn from all over New Zealand but only a fraction were trained members of a volunteer corps in New Zealand.(14) On arrival in South Africa they were split up into even smaller groups, operating in different areas and each with its own experience in the field under different commanders. Thus their colonial identity was largely submerged into larger composite groups controlled by British officers. It is therefore impossible to follow the regimental tradition because of the splitting up which occurred. After the war, and upon reflection, this break-up of the expeditionary force was regarded by the government, press and people as generally unsatisfactory, for a variety of reasons. Suffice it is to say it was not allowed to happen again.

Tactically in the war 'the Times History' makes it plain the New Zealanders were highly regarded, and refers cryptically to: "The tactics used with such effect by the colonial in the field which were the direct outcome of a system of mounted infantry introduced by a few Imperial officers." (15) Unfortunately there is no further detail of exactly what the tactics employed amounted to and the point on the introduction of mounted infantry by a few Imperial officers does not accord with the facts earlier cited in this thesis.

13 Major General J.M.Babington, letters and memoranda. 1900-1902. File AD 281/1/OV3-4 • National Archives

14 D.O.W. Hall, The New Zealanders in South Africa, Wellington, 1949. p. 87

15 L.S.Amery, The Times, History of the War in South Africa. Vol. III. p.35

Tactically the mounted soldier was supreme. The distances, the lack of fixed lines, and the harsh terrain, made this a war unsuitable for foot soldiers. It was noted that the colonial troops in their ability to move rapidly and safely through rough country were superior to British regulars. This of course had been the case in the earlier Maori Land Wars with the volunteer bushrangers, who, more accustomed to rough country were also less burdened by regimentation. The most useful lessons for the future were not tactical but in the more specialised areas of military skills, engineering, artillery, medicine and logistics. Because New Zealanders were split up there was little experience gained in staff work, or in organisation at brigade level or above, but at least many were to gain a realistic appreciation of battle experience. More significantly the men's complaints about lack of medical facilities, clothing, re-mounts, food, recreation and rest were given publicity and duly noted.(16) This was a lesson in sustained warfare, which the Imperial army as a whole came to recognise.

Some particular breaches in discipline were interesting as when, in December 1901, a minor mutiny involving a New Zealand contingent occurred. Acting as a unified group the men released two of their number sentenced to field punishment as the result of an argument with a British officer. The incident was settled quietly in the men's favour but it made the War Office wary of employing colonial troops.(17)

Thus it was the war brought about an increase in the permanent force, which was divided into specialist corps of artillery and engineers. Steadily small increases were made and in 1912 New Zealand had a permanent staff corps of one hundred, and a regular force of over eight hundred. However, the really major changes began in 1907 when due to the tensions in Europe a defence council was formed of high

16 Hall, New Zealanders in South Africa, p.82
17 Hall, New Zealanders in South Africa, p.82

ranking officers. Their brief was to erect machinery for large scale compulsory training, and to make possible the raising of an expeditionary force at short notice. (18) The latter represented yet another subtle change of defence policy, as the invasion scare had now receded. Army headquarters from 1908 to 1910 grew as a large number of officers were seconded from the United Kingdom to prepare for a change to a more tightly integrated force. The aim was twenty thousand territorials in four military districts, senior posts to be occupied by officers seconded from the British army.(19)

The period 1900-1910 saw the peak and eventual demise of the volunteer system after fifty two years, and the substitution of universal military training. The South African War had given the volunteer system a great stimulus and at one time in 1900, seventeen thousand men were enrolled. However, in spite of the establishment of a school for officers, permanent instructors, training courses, etc., visiting inspectors still complained that the volunteer system was so much a feature of local social life that its military role was secondary. The new organisation was intended therefore to promote national rather than local interests.

The 2 and 4 Wellington Battalions went to their last camp in February 1910 at Johnsonville, and then handed their equipment in at various local centres. The older men were discharged for at the end of February the compulsory territorial force came into being, and the volunteers between eighteen and twenty-five were the first to be issued with new kit. The uniform was khaki and included puttees, water bottle, haversack, rifle and bayonet. The new imported rifles were the long barrelled Lee Enfields with a short bayonet and were used in World War I.

18 Defence Ministry Files and Memoranda A/D Vol I Series 30/21 1870-1913 National Archives

19 Memoranda AD/Vol.I Series 30/21. 1900-1913. National Archive

Compulsory service consisted of thirty night drills, six whole day parades, and nine days camping per year. Senior officers of the volunteers were not discharged but otherwise the system was kept up by compulsory measures, cadets from twelve to eighteen years, and territorials from eighteen to twenty-one (later extended to twenty-five) when men were posted to the reserve until they were thirty years. The 7 Wellington West Coast Regiment served the Wanganui area, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel R. Hughes, commanding officer of the old 2 Battalion, and consisted of eight companies to accommodate the old volunteer corps but within the next few years several companies were merged. The 11 Taranaki Regiment was commanded by Colonel W.G. Malone formerly of the old 4 Battalion.

There were in all seventeen district regiments of infantry, of one battalion each, also there were mounted rifles field batteries, etc. in suitable proportion. During the years 1912 1913, 1914 well attended large scale camps were held. By 1913 the territorial force had a strength of 24673 and detailed records were kept of the activities and strengths of each battalion in the force. The annual reports revealed the following of the local regiments:

> 7 Wanganui West Coast Regiment - attendance at camp not good, discipline good, officers good, progress good. 22/3/12.
>
> In camp May 1912, nineteen officers, four hundred and eighty two men.
>
> In camp April 1913, twenty-three officers, six hundred and fifty five men.
>
> 11 Taranaki Regiment - attendance good, very pleased with what I saw, discipline good, officers good, progress good.
>
> In camp May 1912 - sixteen officers, five hundred and eighty two men
>
> In camp April 1913, twenty one officers, seven hundred and seventy nine men (20)

20 New Zealand Military Forces Annual Report 1913 AD34/26 National Archives

It was not until 1913 that the registration of men was completed and the various regiments realised their full strengths. The Easter camp at Takapau, 1914, therefore was the largest ever, involving the whole Wellington-Taranaki-Hawkes Bay district, and each regiment participating had a strength of about one thousand. At these camps it was mainly the territorial officers who trained the troops though the new professional staff made a contribution. Lovegrove also noted, that with the advent of a growing staff corps it became possible to hold courses for territorial officers at more convenient times, consequently attendance and efficiency increased.(21)

It must be emphasised that these reforms developed as a result of the motives and tensions earlier mentioned, and not because anyone was far sighted enough to realise war would break out in 1914. It was therefore purely fortuitous and coincidental that New Zealand had such a large body of trained men available, enabling New Zealanders to participate early in the war. Of course, ever since the South African War career officers had been arguing for a division available for possible overseas expeditions, and the result in 1914 must have been extremely gratifying. By December 1914, New Zealand had twelve thousand trained men overseas, an enormous achievement for a small isolated country that was largely due to the existence of the territorial force. Certainly in common with many other places people were enthusiastic about the war, eager to participate and anxious not to be too late.

Lovegrove observed that on the very night news came through that Britain was at war 'E' company, consisting of a merger of the old Wanganui Guards and Highland Rifles, were marching through the town to the old Drill Hall. A large crowd had gathered outside the Post Office and the territorials received a great ovation as they passed by:

21 C.L. Lovegrove, History of WWC and T Regiment. Vol II, p. 35

"It made a great showing even the sergeant-major was impressed by the reaction of the people, war fever was abroad."(22)

Volunteering for overseas service was brisk, nevertheless in some areas there were shortfalls and conscription was introduced in 1916 as the demand for reinforcements was great. In fact nearly half the eligible male population either volunteered,or was called up.(23) The men who went overseas were nearly all drawn from the territorial force, or its reserve. In all, just over forty thousand men joined INZEF at the rate of eight thousand to ten thousand annually. There were in 1914 about twelve hundred men in the two local regiments and each regiment provided nearly four hundred men annually for overseas. By the end of the war the strength of INZEF was raised to nearly twenty four thousand, some seventeen thousand having perished. The territorial force as such was not mobilised but territorial distinctions were preserved and each military district contributed troops. It was not possible or desirable to enlist a complete territorial regiment as the age limits for overseas service were set at twenty to thirty five years, and in the case of a disaster an immense loss would fall in one particular local district. However territorial distinctions were retained in the expeditionary force. Thus in the Wellington district's regiment of INZEF, 'A' company was Wellington West Coast, 'B' company Hawkes Bay, 'C' company Taranaki, etc. Each company retained the badges and distihctive patches of their respective territorial regiment, and throughout the war company names as much as alphabetic lettering were used. At one stage the Wellington West Coast and Taranaki Regiments ea had four companies overseas serving with four battalions of the Wellington Regiment.

22 C.L. Lovegrove, History of WWC & T Regiment, Vol II p.34

23 J.M. Graham, The Voluntary System and Recruiting 1914-16. Thesis MA, Auckland University 1971

Another link with the home territorial unit was the policy of keeping territorial officers appointed to INZEF on the establishment of the home unit. For example Lieutenant-Colonel Malone commanding the Wellington Regiment was still the Lieutenant-Colonel commanding the 11 Taranaki Regiment. Also officers with INZEF were promoted according to seniority as though they were still serving with their territorial unit. Most of these practices were discontinued in World War II, they were concessions to an earlier decentralised tradition, emphasising strong local ties.

The territorial battalions kept going through the war though with increasing difficulty and in the last years no camps were held. In all the force provided fourteen hundred officers and thirty eight thousand other ranks for INZEF, and maintained an average of twenty seven thousand men in New Zealand for each year of the war. Initially nine officers from Wellington West Coast Regiment and thirteen from the Taranaki Regiment were selected for the INZEF with equivalent rank. This method of selection did not continue and it will be discussed in a later chapter, but it is now appropriate to note in 1914 the expeditionary force required a large number of officers, and nearly all full lieutenants and above had served in the old volunteer corps. A large number of these officers were swept away at Gallipoli, e.g. Colonel Malone, (ex Stratford Rifles), those that survived went on to higher rank, e.g. Brigadier-General R. Young (ex Royal Rangitikei Rifles), Major-General W.H.Cunningham, (ex Wanganui Highland Rifles), etc. These were also the men who, as elected volunteer officers, had been labelled lax, inefficient, and wasteful by inspecting regulars. It is the contention of this thesis that these officers did as well, if not better, than their regular counterparts. In fact it would not be an exaggeration to say the regular career officer did not come out of World War I well. The catalogue of muddles, incompetence and general inefficiency was long and detailed, yet the justification a peacetime staff had used was precisely to avoid these errors, by

virtue of their training. Indeed because so many senior officers in the New Zealand division were only part-time volunteers, and closer to the ranks, the shambles which characterised some allied divisions were perhaps avoided.

To conclude, throughout this long period of peace there had been a struggle between two rival forms of military organisation. Originally this has been traced back to the wars in Taranaki and clashes between the Imperial and local troops. But now the ground had shifted, it was a struggle between opposing military factions within the colony. For a while the defence forces had had two wings, a permanent armed constabulary and a part-time volunteer force. Every threat, real or imaginary, tended to enhance the argument for a permanent and compulsory, centralised force. For a time the Maoris were the enemy and the threat was internal. Then, when it was suddenly evident no internal threat existed there was a brief interlude of security before the 'gunboat' scare. This 'scare' gave way to the possibility of invasion by an external expeditionary force, before, finally the need to be able to muster a division for overseas expeditions became the reasoned objective. An objective which was to remain a New Zealand defence commitment for most of the twentieth century. Given such a policy it was then necessary to make considerable changes, to advance the national interest, and sweep away the decentralised volunteer system. However, as Atkinson, and perhaps Ballance, realised for a small developing country of one million people such plans absorbed too many resources. New Zealand was well organised for World War I and made a great war effort, but as W.P. Morrell wrote: "The country's war effort was out of all proportion even to filial duty. Eventually, the strain of keeping nearly half the eligible male population in arms began to tell." (24)

24 W.P. Morrell, The Provincial System in New Zealand, p.87

The new compulsory system had ensured a large contribution and within seven weeks the first contingent had been ready to sail. This is not to say such a contribution was not politically desirable, but smaller, less speedily mobilised contingents would have served just as well, and been more in keeping with the resources available.

CHAPTER V

OVERSEAS : WORLD WAR I

The territorials of the Wellington district fought overseas for the first time in 1914, so once again the local troops are used as a basis for research on the character, behaviour, and special features of the New Zealand Army. In the last chapter the main theme was the organisation of the army, here the emphasis reverts back to the old themes of assertiveness and tactics, and more importantly, the impact of overseas experience and mass warfare.

The war also called into question some of the beliefs and myths developed in the pre-war period. For example the Generals and staff officers were revealed as less than expert and sometimes incompetent. The British relationship, especially as a model to emulate, was challenged by events, whilst important new links were forged with the Australians. Earlier tolerance to non-conformists (deserters, conscientious objectors, etc.) gave way to the stricter requirements of a military reputation, which was at once demanding, impersonal and idealistic. By contrast the old volunteers had been pragmatic, more concerned with service conditions and local leadership than maintaining notions of reputation and national honour. However overseas contact promoted nationalism, though it must be admitted the pre-war re-organisation had already advanced the cause of national rather than local loyalties. One point to note is that the vital issue of officer creation will be dealt with in the next chapter, concerning events at home, as the crucial decisions and arguments centred round the Defence Ministry in Wellington.

On 16 October 1914, the first contingent left New Zealand in overcrowded but escorted transports. The men had had a great leavetaking marching through the streets of Wellington and Christchurch accompanied by brass bands and cheering citizens.

Though ship life was uncomfortable and boring, the main activity being found in the illegal gambling games. All were eager to be on board as Treadwell of the Regiment wrote; "Thank God I'm booked not one of those unlucky devils who will be left behind"(1) On 4 December 1914 the Transports docked in Alexandria and the troops went by train to their new camp just outside Cairo. Training was recommenced at once, and went on until 25 January 1915, when the battalion took over a front line of four miles along the Suez Canal to meet a Turkish attack. The Turkish attack failed, and after only exchanging a few long distance shots the unit returned to their camp outside Cairo.

Though their fighting qualities had hardly been tested, for most men the sudden uprooting from isolated home communities, through the Indian Ocean, via Australia, Ceylon, Aden and Suez to the teeming cosmopolitan metropolis of Cairo was itself a significant psychological shock. Most were meeting other races, viewing new customs, and hearing other languages for the first time. They were swimming in the Suez canal, shouting across to the big liners as they moved slowly along, and training in front of Indian, Australian, English, French, Gurkha and Arab personnel. Cairo, a mere half hour away, was a source of fascination, an entry into another world. As Burton revealed, the men of New Zealand were excited by what they had seen and their sense of nationality was intensified.(2) Generally the effect of moving in a wider world for the colonial soldier was to make him more satisfied with his own way of life and exhibit a mild contempt for all others. Some incidents of this time will serve to illustrate this growing chauvinistic sense, which aroused feelings of complacency and pride. Important feelings in the development of new national army, aroused by overseas contact for the first time.

1 Major C.A.L.Treadwell, Recollections of an Amateur Soldier, p.23

2 O.E. Burton, The Silent Division, p.15

The first few contingents to arrive in Cairo by train were greeted by hordes of prostitutes and beggars. In 1914, unlike the mother country, there was no street importuning in New Zealand, and this came as a great surprise to the men, as were the diseases they later contracted. For this area of a New Zealander's education had been neglected, and many endeavoured to correct this deficiency, so much so that this problem became extremely worrisome for the Anzac corps commander, General Godley by late 1915. Professor O'Connor's research has revealed some ten thousand Anzac cases in 1915 and nine thousand in 1916. The New Zealand army to quiet reports at home claimed the venereal disease rate stood at an acceptable 1½%, which in the light of the above figures, O'Connor claims, was nonsense. Various methods of computation were used but in 1916 the New Zealand rate was 55.08 per thousand, yielding a combined Anzac rate of 35.4percen whilst that among British troops was 22.03 percent. As General Sir Archibald Murray reported: "The problem was always relatively worse among the New Zealanders." Such reports reaching New Zealand were dismissed by the Army as exaggerated and sent by people without knowledge of the facts. Later on in France the Australians decided to issue preventitives to men going on leave, but the official New Zealand view disclaimed this proposal as being tantamount to encouraging immorality.(3)

It is argued this whole issue was one aspect of colonial aggressiveness, and as important in understanding the attitudes, character and behaviour of the New Zealand army, as the ability to charge up the slopes of Gallipoli is. The impact of the wealthier Anzac troops on the notorious Wasser district of Cairo was to cause a surge in demand which led to a rise in prices. The Anzacs resented this as much as they resented the young ladies who fulfilled their needs and there took place the notorious 'Battle of the Wasser' in Easter 1915. Full of drink and knowing

3 P.S. O'Connor, 'Venus and the Lonely Kiwi,' NZJH Vol.I No.1 1967

a move was near, the New Zealanders began to systematically smash up the district, furniture was flung out of windows and the whole lot set on fire. For many hours the rioting Anzac troops remained in control of the district, even severing the hoses of the local fire brigade, until the destruction was complete. Was this a reaction of puritan hypocrisy or mere chauvinism? Certainly the officers of the Wellington battalion excused the activities of their men, the majority of whom remained anonymous,(4) as an expression of their concern to clean up an area of potential health risk.(5) The New Zealand official historian has even suggested that 'the good work' was the result of a religious revival among the troops.(6)

Nevertheless the G.O.C. Cairo District was not impressed, and likened the rioting colonial troops to untamed savages.(7) Apparently General Godley,unruffled, confessed to the Defence Minister, the only surprising thing was that 50,000 Antipodeans, unused to restraining themselves had not done something long before this.(8) The assertiveness seen in the Maori Wars could have an uglier side overseas. The reaction of the Regiments officers to this new and bizarre environment was similar, but less demonstrative. They marvelled at the open approval granted by the city to its vice trade and the corresponding lack of shame exhibited by its practitioners. Many of the sights both fascinated and disgusted them: "After the Kursaal one evening I with two or three others wandered down into the native quarter and there saw sights of crude depravity, an appalling contrast to the life led in our own native land. It needed a battle greater than the Wasser to eradicate the evils that throve in that city."(9)

4 C.L.Lovegrove, History of... Vol II, p.79

5 Treadwell, Recollections... p.47

6 Major F.Waite, Official History of NewZealand's Effort in the Great War, p.62

7 Treadwell, Recollections....p.48

8 O'Connor, 'Venus'....p.14

9 Treadwell, Recollections.... p.57

Basically their attitude towards the Egyptians was hostile. and this was reciprocated. Two of the battalions officers went for a stroll on one occasion and found themselves jostled by an angry crowd. They escaped with drawn revolvers but were particularly angry that a native policeman present did not respond to their call for assistance: "The whole thing looked like a put up job, nothing riles me so much as a nigger who dares to sneer or snigger at a white man in a hole."(10) Though where ideals were concerned they were not to be swayed. When an Australian court martial found a New Zealand soldier not guilty of an obvious offence, the Wellington's officers were surprised by the verdict. The division, including the battalion, had been moved to the canal zone, leaving behind a soldier who had badly beaten up an Arab girl, permanently disfiguring her. The soldier responsible could offer no defence and his subsequent release, scot-free, was viewed with general disfavour, mainly because the principles of justice had been transgressed.

These incidents are offered to exemplify the collective chauvinism of the Colonial troops. It was an undisciplined form of pride, not easily checked partly because it was shared by the officers, the social gulf was not wide enough for them to look disinterestedly at the prejudices of their men. Unfortunately New Zealand pride was not mellowed by overseas contact, but it was the same fierce pride which was to carry them up the slopes of Gallipoli and across the mud of Flanders.

The West Coast and Taranaki companies were each two hundred and twenty seven strong when they embarked from Egypt. The troops with their Egyptian and territorial background were well trained and eager to test their fighting qualities. In many ways this was to be the supreme test for the coming months were to etch themselves deeply into

10 Treadwell, Recollections...p.67

the colonial military tradition. The Anzacs in Egypt had already considered themselves a superior military caste, and with almost unreal jingoistic spirit they were out to prove it in action. The following letter reveals much of this spirit as well as a sense of regional pride and loyalty. The pre-war re-organisation of the army may have preferred the national interest but strong local ties remained. The writer had been ill or wounded:

> I am improving wonderfully in health and hope in a very short time to be fit enough to do my share on the Penninsular (Gallipoli). Turnbull is doing splendidly and is in good spirits, his operation still gives him trouble. Anyway we are both paying the penalty by being kept out of the fun in Gallipoli. I understand Hardie has been sent to England and of course you will have poor Aldridge back among you all long before this. I don't know whether you have heard it or not but the Wellington battalion is known as 'the men who never retire' and I believe they have thoroughly earned the title.
>
> There is hardly a man of the original company left now and mighty few of the reinforcements. If this business lasts much longer there won't be a New Zealander left to tell the tale. I will wait patiently for my turn, and guarantee that I will do all I can to keep the flag of the dear old 7th Wellington West Coast regiment where it now flies.(11)

On the 25 and 26 April the West Coast and Taranaki companies waded ashore and moved up in single file to Walkers Ridge to support the hard pressed and weary Australians. From the moment of landing and all the way up the ridge they were under constant shrapnel and small arms fire. In these first few days the Turks made a furious effort to drive the Anzacs into the sea. Withdrawal was contemplated, but eventually the troops managed to dig in and some sort of front line was formed. The Anzacs in the initial rush

11 C.L. Lovegrove, Lovegrove Papers Box 17 letter from Captain J.A. Cameron to Colonel and officers 7th WWC Regt. Wanganui 3 September 1915.

had secured a triangular area of four hundred acres, the base of which was one and a half miles of beach and the apex being one thousand yards inland reached by winding goat tracks through prickly scrub.

At first the companies went into action piecemeal to stiffen the Australian line, and on the second day the West Coast and Hawkes Bay Companieswere ordered to mount a futile bayonet charge to advance the line. The order was unhesitatingly obeyed and in broad daylight a good many men fell easy prey to Turkish machine guns. Nevertheless, the charge at high cost had carried the line forward until it was realised that only the old position was permanently tenable, so they all had to retire again. Thus the West Coast territorials were to learn training and drill was no substitute for experience in the art of warfare.

Once a line was formed and trenches dug the fury of the fighting abated; however, the Wellington battalion did not have long at trench warfare before it was withdrawn to Cape Helles to take part in a major attack there.

Once again a frontal assault in broad daylight, across ground which offered no cover, was planned. The attack by the New Zealanders was timed for 10.30 a.m. on 8 May, but due to faulty staff work at all levels the troops were notified so late that at 10.30 a.m. they were still five hundred yards behind their own lines. Thus when the covering artillery bombardment was lifted, the attackers had only just reached their own front line, and had to carry on across no man's land unsupported. Casualties were particularly heavy, and the moving lines were decimated by shrapnel and machine gun fire. Some four hundred yards had been gained before the attack ground to a halt at 1.30 p.m. By this time many of the troops were wondering why, when in Egypt they had considerable training in night operations, were they made to attack in broad daylight. Possibly the

Commanding Generals thought the assembly of troops in the dark too difficult to manage, certainly the officers of the Wellington Battalion were confident there would have been a vastly different result if a night attack had been organised instead.(12) It will be recalled much the same situation had arisen in the Maori Land Wars, when Imperial commanders showed the same reluctance to operate at night to the annoyance of the colonial troops. This was one of the features of the colonial tradition which survived. As it was, Colonel Malone was ordered to make another assault on the Turkish positions at 5.30 p.m. and he at once protested the absurdity of a further advance from their present desperate positions. The Brigadier endorsed his protest and it was passed on. The original order to the Wellington Battalion was cancelled and a general advance of the whole line ordered instead. However there was some difficulty in distributing these new orders to the various front line units and the result was a shambles as some units tried to move forward, whilst others stayed put. By dark everyone had returned to their old positions. This sort of staff organisation was typical at Gallipoli. For a few days the battalion remained in the front line at Helles before returning to Anzac cove. The final sequel to all this confusion was that the Indian troops in the reserve trenches refused to let them leave the front line as they had not been notified of the withdrawal, so they stayed an extra day.

Although the enthusiasm that was so peculiar to the Gallipoli campaign was not dissipated by these incidents they did serve to sow in the minds of the troops certain longterm reservations about the 'brass hats.' These incidents are worth noting in the context of the colonial military tradition as they show how inept the regular

12 W.H.Cunningham, C.A.L.Treadwell and J.S.Hanna, The Wellington Regiment 1914-1919. p.38

staff officers could be, in practice, and how stoically the volunteer soldiers bore the exasperating muddles. Fifty years earlier such incompetence would have been less patiently witnessed, it would seem social attitudes had changed. Though partly responsible would have been the hierachical structure imposed by the pre-war reoganisation. This resulted in a greater degree of centralisation enabling tighter control, better discipline and more conformity. Thus there was less freedom for 'grass roots' expression.

On 29 May the West Coast and Taranaki companies were back in the trenches of the Anzac beachhead along the line of a steep bluff known as Courtney's Post. They lived in deep terraces dug into the cliff, two companies were in the front line, one in the support line, and one in reserve. They all were moved on a forty eight hour rota, the men in the front line were unlikely to get any sleep.

On 10 June the battalion was moved to Quinns Post, the most dangerous, and key sector in the whole line. At some points the Turkish lines were only fifteen yards away, and hand thrown bombs were a constant menace. Colonel Malone distinguished himself by re-organising and strengthening this post until it became a safe and impregnable position. He had been part of that unique colonial tradition which selected its officers from among the ranks. That is he had been elected an officer in the volunteers, before the territorial system. He had started out in life as a pioneer bush farmer who eventually became a barrister. In his fifties, and of strong physique, he was ever present among the men in battle, but he was noted as a stern disciplinarian concerned with the neatness and order. Refusing to take no for an answer he had somehow obtained enough wood and iron to make Quinns Post safe.

In August the great attack of the heights of Sari Bair was planned. If the Anzac troops could occupy this ridge, they could look down and command the narrows, enabling the fleet to bombard Constantinople. On such a plan the whole course of the campaign would depend, thus the battle of Sari Bair was one of the greatest soldier battles ever fought and the climax of the whole operation.(13)

It nearly came off but for the muddle and mismanagement, so characteristic of the whole campaign. The only figures who never failed were the men, tragically sacrificed, not once did they fail to go forward when ordered. On nine out of ten occasions that order meant the most rudimentary form of self destruction.(14)

The headquarters of the New Zealand brigade at the Apex was the nodal point of the whole battle, but the commanding Generals had never visited this point or had any idea of the ground. General Sir Alexander Godley in command of the Australian and New Zealand division, allowed his chain of command to disintegrate and after devising a series of optimistic plans left the scene of action to watch it all from the deck of a destroyer. Not one corps staff officer visited the Apex throughout the battle. One Wellington soldier wrote a diary criticising General Godley and the extract was published in the local Feilding newspaper. Someone notified the official censor who forbade the paper to publish any more material of this type and passed on to General Godley the name of the soldier concerned.(15) This attitude should be compared with the abuse and open criticism of military leaders which flourished during the Maori wars in the colonial press. Godley had been earlier

13 J.North, Gallipoli. The Fading Vision. p.123

14 J. North, Gallipoli.... p.354

15 J.A. Anderson, Military Censorship in World War I, Thesis, M.A. Victoria University, 1952.

released by the British War Office to be command ant of the New Zealand army taking up his office in 1910. He was the last of a long line of Imperial military experts seconded to advise, reform and command the New Zealand defence forces, an end result which brought the force closer to the British battalion system.

The climax of the campaign for the New Zealanders was when the West Coast company reached the summit of Sari Bair on the night of 7 August and dug in on both sides of the crest. For the first time something like the object of the campaign was near realisation; Anzac troops were gazing down on the all important narrows. Colonel Malone deserved this honour; his intelligence and tenacity had converted Quinn's Post from a shambles to a stronghold, and in open fighting he had shown brilliant agressive leadership. But his moment of triumph was brief, more men were needed, and supply was difficult. Also he had recently read a pamphlet written in France recommending troops to be entrenched on the reverse slope of a ridge, for in France it was more important to be protected from artillery than to have a clear field of fire, but this was not the case at Gallipoli.

However, not entirely convinced and uncharacteristically showing some indecision he decided to entrench a thin line of men in front of the crest. By 6.30 a.m. on the 8 August West Coast company in front of the crest was heavily engaged and overwhelmed whilst the Taranaki and Ruahini companies remained on the reverse slope unexpectedly pinned down by heavy artillery fire from both flanks. By 5 p.m. Colonel Malone and many of his men were dead, from shrapnel fire and casualties were very heavy. Had Colonel Malone made the mistake of his life by not investing all his men on the front slopes where they had a fine field of fire?[16] Military historians have argued this point, the weak front line was easily overwhelmed and the Turkish reserves were to mass behind the crest unseen and launch a massive attack,

16 J. North, Gallipoli....p.114

sweeping away the English battalions that had come in relief. By the end of the day the West Coast and Taranaki companies had about fifty men each out of an initial strength of two hundred and twenty seven each. The Commander in Chief was to write in his diary: 'Trenches badly sited they say and Turks able to form close in dead ground.'(17) Whatever the outcome Colonel Malone and his Wellington battalion had acquitted themselves well. They had for a time gazed on the narrows and this has been described as New Zealand's finest hour.(18) For the rest of the campaign they were with the other Anzac troops to cling like limpets to their hillside positions. The Turks above them could not shift them, and paid heavily for the attempt. All this is of course now part of New Zealand folklore Yet there is much in this campaign, especially after the August battles, which is vital to the understanding of the colonial military tradition. From the tales of heroism, attack, and counter attack some distinct psychological impressions emerge. Firstly in spite of the heavy casualties, the dysentry, the strain of close quarters combat, there emerged a sense of profound exhultation. They had been tried and not found wanting. Before Gallipoli they were untried troops, now they had done a deed that would go down in history. They had faced fire and they had not flinched.(19) The same feelings were quick to spread to the home front where all New Zealand thrilled to the exploits of their boys.(20) Even the eventual withdrawal saw no loss of confidence and pride, all New Zealand knew there had been no failure on their part. Major Waite was to record:

> New Zealanders would not be found wanting, they had proved irresistible in attack, steadfast and stubborn in defence. Even as in war we lost our insularity and found our national spirit so at Anzac we found our brothers in arms the gallant sons of Australia. So in future we must stand together and carry the white man's burden in the Southern Seas.(21)

17 J. North, Gallipoli....p.114

18 C. Malthus, Anzac : A Retrospect, p.121

19 Burton, Silent Division p.46

20 S.Johnson, Aspects of Civilian Patriotism in New Zealand during the First World War, Thesis M.A., Massey University 1975

21 Major F. Waite, Official History of New Zealand's Effort in the Great War, p.299

The second impression to emerge touched on above, was an acknowledgement of the same qualities in the Australian troops. For some time after Gallipoli, writers were to refer to our brothers the Australians, as attempts were made to unite the Anzac fellowship into a common identity characterised by the same military virtues. Indeed, the Anzac relationship was to involve much wider social and political implications which still survive. This campaign resulted in a closer military relationship between the two formerly distinct colonies. There were many testimonials to this.

The Australian official historian noted: "The more temperamental Australians tended to brilliance in action, the New Zealanders possessed an orderly steadiness of outstanding value, but it is doubtful if close observers of their behaviour in fighting, throughout the war could have drawn any distinction at all."(22)

Or in a similar vein by a New Zealander: "Strong differences of temperament exist, but they had fought side by side and out of the conflict had been born a new comradeship. They could not fully understand each other but they had learned to trust each other in battle."(23)

Possibly these writers were borrowing sentiment from each other, but these comments, written soon after the war, did reflect the current mood on both sides of the Tasman. Perhaps, disillusioned by the end result, with Imperial myths still somewhat shattered (they were restored within a few years) the peoples of both states needed to salvage some beliefs, and something worthwhile.

Subsequently in France the alliance remained, and was further built upon. It was not just a question of trust in

22 North, Gallipoli....p.188

23 Burton, Silent Division, p.46

war but shared attitudes, which were revealed in the rest camps behind the lines. A few incidents serve to illustrate this point, made possible by the lengthier service in this theatre. The net result was to pass into the folklore of returning soldiers, and to create a new political relationship from a 'grass roots' origin.

Thus when the division arrived in France they learned that their old friends the Australians had been some time in the Somme and they were anxious to be beside them again: "They sent several messages to us to come and fight with them, not politely worded, but the language appealed to us and we understood. We want the Kiwi bastards with us, reminded us of our friendship on old Gallipoli and we could fill in what was behind the message."(24)

Behind the lines in rest camps and on leave there was a strong tendency to fraternise with the Australians. They shared the same strongly independent opinions and attitudes, and dislike for superior type officers. Throughout the war there was always trouble with the Anzac soldier over saluting, smartness, and drill. It is also interesting to note that nearly all the Australian officers had come through the ranks a practice which New Zealand had begun to revise, a result of the pre-war reorganisation discussed earlier. Behind the lines, as in Egypt, the Anzacs would band together especially when they felt rough justice was required. In May 1916, whilst in training camps in England some men had been imprisoned after a brawl involving red caps. Immediately the Australians and New Zealanders had gathered from nearby camps and proceeded to release the men they thought unfairly treated. They wrecked the 'New Zealand clink' and sacked the New Zealand canteen.(25)

24 Major C.B. Brereton, Tales of Three Campaigns, p.171

25 B. Gammage, The Broken Years, p.235

Major Treadwell recalled a later incident in France in October 1917 at Wimmereux, when the Anzacs were in nearby camps, adjoining the Portugese and Chinese camps. The Anzacs never liked the latter and one night two Australians were knifed in the course of an argument with a Portugese. The men of the Wellington Battalion joined the Australians in a retaliation raid, and it was rumoured the Portugese suffered one hundred casualties. Though it was apparent he condoned it, Major Treadwell did not want to know too much about the details. There were numerous incidents involving Anzac troops, but this kind of fraternal assistance was not extended to other allied units, e.g. South Africans, Canadians, Americans, etc.(26)

By contrast relationships with the British army were often strained. It was noticeable that midway through the Gallipoli campaign the New Zealand troops threw away their 'Tommy hats' with which they had landed and replaced them with Australian 'felts.' The caps were never worn again throughout the war. The felt hat dented to a point or creased became a prized symbol, seldom articulately expressed. It was perhaps unfortunate that from their positions of the heights the Anzac troops had watched the muddle of the almost unopposed landing at Suvla Bay.The British troops were raw,badly led, and their initial success was frittered away; thus the New Zealand official historian noted: "If New Zealand could have loosed a full division at Chunuk Bair while the Australians went for Suvla, there would be no talk of a Gallipoli failure, admitting that the New Armies were not of a calibre required for desperate fighting in rough country." (27)

26 Treadwell, Reflections....p.227
27 Waite, Official History....p.269

The latter reference to 'rough country' is interesting, as one of the distinctions claimed for the New Zealand soldier is that his territorial training and background throughout the period covered, especially suited him to fighting in wild and difficult country. This factor had emerged in the Maori Land Wars with the formation of 'bushranger' corps, operating in a way the Imperial troops could never quite emulate. Also later on in World War II various German sources indicate they thought the New Zealanders particularly at home in difficult country.

Out of this campaign emerged very definite feelings of Anzac superiority, which were at the time endorsed by the controversial English news correspondent Ashmead -Bartlett, who wrote much to support the Anzac view of themselves. He was highly critical of the campaign, and its conduct, and his 'Dispatches from the Dardanelles' were much prized by the Anzac news media:

> What can I say about the army? It is no ordinary body of men. It is essentially Imperial in its composition, the majority are volunteers and Colonials. I do not suppose that any country in its palmiest days ever sent forth to the field of battle a finer body of men than these, Australian, New Zealand, and Tasmanian troops. Physically they are the finest lot of men I have ever seen in any part of the world. In fact I had no idea such a race of giants existed in the twentieth century. All we know is that whatever blundering there may have been in the high command, the Anzac corps fought like lions and accomplished a feat in climbing those heights without parallel. It was a combat of giants in a giant country!(28)

Yet even the 'giants' had suffered as the future commander of the Taranaki company recorded on his arrival in Egypt:

> I saw two officers I knew just back from Gallipoli and could realize the effect of the campaign upon them. I never saw anyone in France so pulled down as were the soldiers on Gallipoli; they were simply shadows of themselves. They had been in no better condition in August, and I can never think without

28 St. John-Adcock, Australasia Triumphant, p.63

> a thrill of how, half dead with dysentry, they climbed the steep slopes of Chunuk Bair to fight those terrific battles of the 8th and following days.(29)

After the Gallipoli withdrawal in December the Wellington battalion returned to Egypt where it was to become part of the newly formed New Zealand division. At times in Egypt the New Zealanders came in contact with other allied personnel, and their letters reveal the acquired tone of superiority, self assurance and assertiveness. One wounded soldier was to write as follows:

> We have six English in our tent to eight Colonials and the contrast is very noticeable. The Colonials are well informed or think they are, the English are quiet, steady, ignorant, and hopelessly content with their existence. One of them worked ten hours a day pick and shovel for a pound a week and has no future but that and has no notion of wanting any future but that just to get back. Yet he is a fine dependable unselfish fellow and would not have been so dull in a happier environment. The men are (English) good enough but the economic system is a shame. (30)

Thus, there remained some sympathy for the plight of the ordinary 'Tommy' but hardly any for their officers, many of whom at eighteen appeared very immature to the older New Zealand volunteers. Another letter contained the following observations:

> My first outing was marred by a clash with a British officer of the futile, self important type complete with monacle. He was deep in a doorway as I passed but came bounding after me... you don't stroll past, you salute, etc. Do you call yourself a British soldier? To that I am afraid I answered, no thank God, upon which he muttered, oh you are one of those colonials and modified his attitude a bit. I turned away and left him gobbling like a mongoose. Later I was mollified by a lovely cartoon in 'Punch' of the Australian Colonel preparing his men for inspection by a British General and hastily concluding his instructions, and for God's sake don't call me Bill! (31)

29 Major C.H. Weston, Three Years with the New Zealanders, p25

30 C. Malthus, Anzac : A Retrospect, p.30

31 Malthus, Anzac...p.150

This type of clash with British officers had become very frequent, the Australians in particular being resistant to saluting allied officers. However, the New Zealanders were not too easily outdone in spite of General Godley's Gallipoli manifesto to the effect that there was too much swearing, and that saluting was conspicuous by its absence. It worried the ex-British General that it was held the way the men saluted their officers was a measure of a regiment's discipline and spirit, the Guards regiments being the outstanding examples. This view was never shared by the New Zealand volunteer soldier who was not over generous in saluting his own officers, and tended to consider himself the equal of young English subalterns.(32)

It would seem the self-confidence gained at Gallipoli strengthened traditional assertiveness. In the early colonial wars, the volunteers had acquired a reputation in combat for slovenly dress, rough language, and a general lack of respect to superiors. In some way this characteristic was reinforced by contact with the Australians who behaved in a similar fashion. The organisation of these two armies had learned to tolerate much of this, and as in colonial days, there was always tension when contact was made with the more rigid British traditions. Overseas experience had given birth to some new characteristics, e.g. the complacency and chauvinism developed in Egypt, the desire for a fighting reputation at Gallipoli; but some of the old traditions were still evident. Therefore in spite of the 1910 reforms which swept away the old colonial volunteer companies there remained a legacy from the past sufficient to bring a certain latitude in personal relationships, a factor which made the New Zealand army distinguishable from the British and made New Zealanders at the time proud of their own traditions. This same latitude in relationships continued through World War II, and the significance of this will be discussed further on, when the evidence emerging from that later war will be examined.

32 Burton, The Silent Division, p.194

Later, in France, complaints about the 'Tommies' continued, with the same mixture of irritation and pity. These revelations were very important to the New Zealand army's development, as earlier the pre-1914 territorials had been taught to regard the British army as a military force 'par excellence.' Instead they met with in France, often, ill-trained troops, whoblundered into their trenches. A particular point noted was that English officers were often not with their men and all ranks in the battalion regarded this practice with disfavour.(33)

The most frequent complaint about the 'Tommies' was 'their bad flank' or their failure to support,or keep up with an advance. For example they reported on 25 July 1918 that: "...The advance was being held up by lack of satisfactory support from the battalion of the division on our immediate right. Had they conformed with our advance in the earlier stages of the operation, La Signy Farm could have been had for the asking."(34)

This raises the interesting question as to whether the flank protection afforded by other allied units was really so poor, or were a few particular situations blown up out of all proportion? Certainly it can be argued sensitivity about flank protection was a surviving tradition from colonial days. Bush warfare had been much more 'fluid' and a unit's vulnerability rested in its flanks. Perhaps, therefore, by colonial criteria, the defence provided by other battalions had to beexceptionally strong to satisfy the instinctive expectations of New Zealand commanders.

Cumulatively these different involvements with the British were to undermine some of the earlier assumptions about the British army and the Imperial connection. As one soldier wrote in a letter home: "I am afraid the old name which Britain had in the past will not be so strong after this."(35)

33 Harper, Letters from Gunner 7/516 and Gunner 7/517, p.143

34 Cunningham, Wellington Regiment, p.267

35 Harper, Letters.....p.31

All these revelations had their origins in the Gallipoli campaign, an event which in many ways was to become a psychological landmark in the history of the territorial volunteers, and indeed all New Zealand soldiers. On their departure from the Peninsula the battalion with reinforcements should have tallied over eleven hundred men, instead its effective strength had reduced to less than one hundred.

The arrival of considerable reinforcements in Egypt allowed the formation of a division, and two battalions of the Wellington Regiment. These reinforcements contained a quota of new officers fresh from New Zealand sufficient to meet all new requirements. Both the men and senior officers of the old first battalions protested at the system of commissioning men directly to the force, and General Godley was forced to take note.(36) The result of these protests and subsequent deliberations in Wellington will be analysed in the next chapter, suffice it to say, the system was revised.

By 18 April 1916, the two battalions of the Wellington Regiment were in France with the New Zealand Division and on 13 May moved into the line at Armentieres. They found the trenches in a bad state of repair; they had to immediately be built up, drained, and strengthened. This section of the line had also become a quiet sector. There was an understanding of sorts between opposing troops which the New Zealander could neither accept nor tolerate. Apparently the advice which the 'Tommies' gave was: "Doan't ye fire at im, choom, and 'e woan't fire at ye."(37)

Meanwhile the departing Yorkshire regiment left guides behind who told the New Zealanders that this had been a cushy-spot for six months. Patrols had met in no-mans land

36 Burton, The Silent Division p.138
37 Harper, Letters p.43

and passed without mutual molestation and that for whole weeks hardly a shot had been fired.(38) Thus the snipers for a time reaped a deadly harvest. The Wellingtons took sniping seriously watching all day for tell-tale movements, and Major Treadwell was able to conclude that New Zealand snipers dominated theirs.(39) Equally disturbing for the neighbouring Germans was the New Zealand desire to have uncontested possession of no-mans land at night, and the Wellington's officers were soon able to report that the enemy in general refrained from trespassing on our land.(40)

Again it will be recalled in the Taranaki Wars the Imperial regiments had been content to retire behind fixed lines at night in full view of the enemy, and unless fired upon nothing was done. The settlers had been exasperated by this attitude, taking the view that the enemy should be harassed at all times, and at every opportunity. The local bushrangers eventually adopted this style of warfare and now it seemed some of the same attitude survived.

The next stage in the hotting up campaign was a series of large raids on the enemy line. On 1 July 1916, a 1 Battalion night raid by a party of eighty one men killed many Germans and took several prisoner. However a week later a raid by the battalion was repulsed leaving fifteen killed, and thirty four wounded. These raids and other agressive New Zealand tactics invariably triggered fierce artillery retaliation which eventually involved both sides. This activity cannot be solely explained in terms of a lingering colonial desire to harass the enemy at all times. It does not seem sufficient to explain why the New Zealand battalions

38 A. Aitken. Gallipoli to the Somme p.66
39 C.A.L. Treadwell, Recollections p.127
40 W.H. Cunningham, The Wellington Regiment, p.100

after their heavy casualties at Gallipoli, wished so eagerly to transform a quiet safe sector into a living hell, where to keep up by the end of June the New Zealand batteries were firing three thousand shells a day. All contemporary accounts reveal how the New Zealanders sneered at the live and let live practices of some 'Tommy' regiments, yet their own aggressive policy demanded a high price in blood, for which no easy explanation can be offered. The most obvious answer was that offered by Major Hanna, that is to divert attention away from the great Somme battles.(41) This appears very noble but it does not explain why this practice was continued throughout the war, or why neighbouring allied units did not feel similarly obligated. For example 2 Battalion in May 1918, at Signy Farm, reported its arrival on a quiet front and as ever was not content to let sleeping dogs lie.(42) Was this then naive enthusiasm? Hardly, after the Gallipoli experience, it was more likely an unconscious attempt to keep alive the new image won at Gallipoli. Apparently the Australians behaved in much the same way, also for most of the war.(43)

Keeping alive the Anzac reputation became increasingly the dominant motive behind the agressiveness of the New Zealanders. The New Zealanders were aware that the British press had made much of the Anzac legend, and for this reason they were particular recipients of English hospitality when on leave.(44)

One officer revealed how a group of Wellington battalion men returned from a successful trench raid drunk with excitement and victory. He wrote: "Their language was

41 W.H. Cunningham, Wellington Regiment, p.106
42 Ibid p.259
43 B. Gammage, The Broken Years, p.154
44 Ibid p. 206

monotonously bad and their wild looks and gleaming eyes and black faces gave the appearance of a scene from the infernal regions. Everywhere men stalked around repeating, I'm a --- Anzac and I don't care a --- for you or anyone else."(45) Perhaps,to live up to their press image, a rough colonial hard fighting front was being increasingly presented. New Zealand pride was reinforced in 1916, after the first Battle of the Somme, when after twenty three consecutive days fighting the New Zealand division was reported as a tower of strength and congratulations flowed in from all sides. Though the price was fearful, it gave the men an intense feeling of pride to hear New Zealand's name lifted high.(46)

In this war, reputation, prestige and national pride became matters of prime importance to the New Zealand soldier, and kept him going through the worst days. It has been earlier shown that in the Maori Land Wars, such issues were not dominant. Local leadership and service conditions were much more important to attract and retain volunteers. In this respect social attitudes had undergone a change in the twentieth century. Also the pre-war reorganisation had created a unified national army which to some extent channelled local loyalties on to a national plane, especially in an overseas theatre.

However this aggressive pride had an ugly side when it came to dealing with the enemy. It was widely believed that the Anzacs hated the Hun more than any other allied soldier.(47) There was plenty of talk about atrocities and prisoners disappearing as they made their way down the line but few incidents, except for the plundering, were written up. The writer Robert Graves commented:

45 C.B. Brerton, Tales, p.163
46 Burton, Silent Division, p.179
47 B.Gammage, Broken Years, p.257

"How far this reputation for atrocities was deserved and how far it could be ascribed to the overseas habit of bragging, and leg pulling we could not decide. At all events most overseas men made atrocities against prisoners a boast, not a confession."(48)

Perhaps because of the image built up of the hard living, tough colonial soldier, discipline became a particularly difficult area of man management, and there was little automatic respect for rank. It is argued their belief in their battle reputation was partially responsible for lack of respect and poor discipline out of the line. One Australian sergeant put it: "Its funny when they want something dashing or dangerous accomplished they always pick on the Australians or New Zealanders. Never mind it will be done and done well by these hard living, hard swearing, fighting men, who don't give a damn for anyone, but who are men."(49)

Whether they were particularly selected for dangerous tasks or not, is not at issue, they believed they were, though it should be noted many other 'crack' allied units shared the same notions of themselves. Did they give a damn? Within a small society there was no definite demarcation line of class to receive a generally acknowledged privilege, respect had to be earned. Man management then was a difficult area, as a Wellington Regiment officer explained: "A great many have been independent of control before the war and find it easy to imagine under military conditions that their superiors have a down on them."(50) In this respect the old assertiveness was making itself felt, and comments like the above should be compared with very similar comments on disciplinary problems made fifty years earlier. (e.g. Ch. III p.57)

48 R. Graves, Goodbye to All That, p.154

49 B. Gammage, The Broken Years, p.248

50 C.H. Weston, Three Years with the New Zealanders, p.89

However it appeared that deserters from the front line could elicit no sympathy. One officer noted that: "Soon after our arrival a man was shot for desertion. It was a sort of tonic to feel that if one ran away when things were bad shooting would follow."(51) Attitudes towards men who deserted from the front line never softened. One deserter from the Wellington battalion was sentenced to be shot but eventually the sentence was commuted to ten years' imprisonment by the Commander in Chief, Sir Douglas Haig, because of the soldier's youth. As it was customary to select his own platoon as the firing squad,one might have thought the men would have been relieved to hear of the commutation, but not so, the platoon concerned were recorded to have been most indignant as they felt he had disgraced them.(52)

The most notorious and controversial desertion from the Wellington battalion was that of Schneiderman from Hawkes Bay who at 2 a.m. on 28 June 1916, in heavy rain, crossed to the German lines.(53) The whole division was in an uproar and a review of personnel was called for, resulting in the arrest of a sergeant also of German descent. A few days later a German battery opened up on a hidden support line and many of the Wellington battalion were killed or wounded. Some connected the surprisingly accurate bombardment of this line with the desertion of Private Schneidman.(54). It later transpired that Schneideman had been receiving letters from his parents telling him of the abuse and ostracism to which they had been subjected, and the xenophobia then current. This, in spite of the fact that they had sent their son as a volunteer to fight for New Zealand.(55) However such subtle arguments merited little consideration among the men in the trenches.

51 C.B. Brereton, Tales, p.184
52 C.A.L.Treadwell, Recollections, p.202
53 Diary of Basil Handey, 28 June 1916, p.51
54 Ibid, 2 July 1916, p.51
55 A. Aitken, Gallipoli to the Somme, p.89

The treatment of conscientious objectors was by no means enlightened and though rarely physical maltreated in New Zealand (except at Wanganui) (56), they could expect little sympathy from the fighting men.

> With another reinforcement we received eleven conscientious objectors. As they refused to walk they were roped to wagons and dragged, after a hundred yards on gravel they got up and walked. The general feeling towards them was that of disgust as though they were unclean and hardly human. They were forcibly dressed and handcuffed except at meal times. Eventually two of them hunger struck, and I sent them to France. Nine out of the eleven gave in and did their duty when they got to France.(57)

Again attitudes to deserters, cowards, conscientious objectors had undergone a marked change. They were, it will be recalled, hardly approved of in colonial days, but their existence was at least tolerated.

After the very cold winter of 1916-17 the New Zealand division began the new year still seeking great deeds to give expression to their identity. The high point was the taking of Messine in May, and the capture of La Basse Ville by the 2 Wellington Battalion in August. After that attitudes to the war changed and when the three Wellington battalions paraded before Haig an old soldier recorded: "It was not the same as when Sir Ian Hamilton had rode down the ranks before the Landing, men were resolute still but war was no longer a great adventure but a stern bloody business to be finished gladly."(58) The autumn of 1917 saw a huge loss of life in a series of battles fought over muddy swamps, and the winter of 1917-18 saw a depression fasten on the whole allied army. They knew with Russia gone and Italy routed the Spring would see a big German

56 P.S. O'Connor, 'Awkward Ones' p118 NZJH Vol.7. 1973
57 C.B. Brereton, Tales of Three Campaigns, p.252
58 O.E. Burton, The Silent Division, p.32

offensive. Also the men could see that the losses made a nonsense of the theory of attrition, for it was the best and most reliable battalions which suffered the most. One Wellington battalion officer analysed the shortcomings of the General Staff; he found them lacking in energy, slow to move, and late in action. Good form was everything and the lack of serious application attributed to the leisured classes and their upbringing within the 'public school' system. He had attended a course for field officers in a British Army School at Aldershot and spent there ten delightful weeks but found no serious attempt was made to keep up to date in tactics or research.(59) In 1918, Prime Minister Massey and Sir Joseph Ward came out to visit the troops; not a success, as they were not taken seriously and the men became ribald.(60) Of course this cynicism about Generals and politicians was by 1918 common to all units, and it is difficult to assess if the New Zealanders felt it more strongly. Nevertheless this is one more feature that had been revived from the Maori Wars in Taranaki and Wanganui and it occurred again in World War II.

When the German offensive of 1918 finally came it worked to lift the winter depression; at last there was movement and a change from static trench warfare. The division was marched through deserted countryside to plug the gap the Germans had torn in the allied lines, and eventually the advance was halted. The Germans were now spent and behind the New Zealand lines gigantic reserves were building up. August, September, and October saw the Wellington battalions continuously moving forward. The Germans were surrendering in large numbers and there was much plundering of prisoners for last minute souvenirs. In one of the last actions of

59 C.H. Weston, Three Years with the New Zealanders, p.138
60 O.E. Burton, The Silent Division, p.282

the war, the capture of Le Quesnoy, Major McKinnon, M.C. of 2 Wellington Battalion, was killed. He had been in the Gallipoli landing as a platoon commander in the West Coast Company, and had served continuously right through up to 1918, a remarkable and record survival feat for a brave officer.

To conclude, the territorials had commenced their overseas experience in Cairo, boisterous, and hostile to a new but fascinating environment. Perhaps, in part, their at times riotous behaviour was due to a lack of confidence. They were serving alongside famous regiments, with established reputations, whilst the New Zealand troops had not been battle tested. The Australians too were struggling for a reputation and the New Zealanders found much in common with them.

Yet, it should be clear, enough features of the colonial era had survived to make the New Zealand soldier distinguishable to his allied counterparts. He remained comparatively assertive, difficult to manage, reluctant to salute, etc. In many respects these features were also shared by the Australians, a fact which was immediately recognised and seemed to please all concerned. The resulting Anzac tradition became very important with much wider social and political implications. However, the Australians had abolished the death penalty and kept more to a policy of creating officers from the ranks, whilst the New Zealanders had earlier forsaken some of their colonial traditions to embrace the British model.

In the end pride in the Anzac reputation kept them going, when many others were prostrated. This was the essential sustaining force, rather than patriotism, national or imperial. Anything that spoilt or affected that reputation was unacceptable and not to be tolerated. This would seem to be the chief new feature emerging from the conflict, a

desire to win, and then maintain a military reputation at all cost. It was an impersonal ideal, replacing former personal and pragmatic motivations of a colonial age. It was also a demanding ideal which required sacrifice and conformity, but better suited to a dour conflict of mass national armies with few identifiable or charismatic leaders. In this respect the pre-war reorganisation had suited military requirements, for the centralised command structure emphasised conformity, discipline and national identification, whereas earlier traditions had facilitated independence and local affiliation. Nevertheless, it is apparent in spite of the trend some of the old colonial characteristics remained.

CHAPTER VI

REGULARS & TERRITORIALS : NEW ZEALAND 1915-1964

Within New Zealand the tensions and conflicts which beset the world since the first World War crucially affected the development of the Territorial-Regular structure of the Army. It was an unsettled time when defence interests could never be forgotten for long and the government was constantly trying to reorganise its defence forces to suit economic, social, and political pressures. The new territorial system had just got going when the first World War started, and all the difficulties over officer creation surfaced again. A temporary revision was allowed, but, perhaps reflecting wider social changes, there was influential pressure maintained to keep some system of direct officer appointments. Gradually territorial appointments settled on a local hierarchy whose status was determined by occupational-wealth criteria. Experience during the war was forgotten and the cuts of the thirties brought the territorial system to a volunteer basis for the first time. A rapid and record decline set in, for the territorial force lacked the flexibility and decentralised appeal of the old volunteer companies. Particular organisational and personnel difficulties arose when the government tried to reduce battalions to companies. The second World War saw the new volunteer system badly prepared for an emergency, and many new officers had to be created immediately. Though even these first desperate years saw some attempt to keep territorial commissions the preserve of a certain ascribed status. The territorial battalions had a definite role during the war years, and became part of a conscripted force.

In the cold war tension of the post-war years the territorials once more reverted to a compulsory force, and were reconstituted to be much more integrated with the regular force. It is argued that this particular and important development had its origin in the desire for national conformity witnessed during World War II. The effect was

to increase centralisation and diminish local allegiance. It also created a demand for a greatly increased regular force.

Throughout the course of these developments, the Regiment's particular history is followed as it played its part in the overall pattern.

The compulsory training system kept going through the World War I years, and the two local regiments provided four hundred men annually. These partly trained territorials became the basis for the INZEF reinforcement companies in training at Trentham camp. The vital question throughout the war years was what to do about the territorial officers, especially when they were conscripted. Earlier, in 1910, the problem of officer creation in the territorials had been resolved in favour of the British system of appointing officers after suitability had been proved by examination and in a special training unit. In practice this meant, second-lieutenants were selected from young men who had served in their school or University cadet corps up to the age of transfer to the territorial force. Thus a certain type of young man was coming forward and the examination for most was a formality. The major change had been that officers were to be selected from above rather than elected from below.

When the expeditionary force was formed it was composed of territorial officers commissioned straight into the force, and officers were in short supply. Nevertheless it was not possible for prominent civilians to be commissioned into the force. A prominent Wanganui barrister wrote a most indignant letter to the district army headquarters, asking why he could not as a volunteer be commissioned direct into the expeditionary force. He pointed out that he could get a commissioned rank in the British army, without prior service, and that some of the local officers were his employees, or of equivalent social station. In December 1914, the District Commander replied that, only territorial officers were eligible for commissions into the expeditionary force, no civilians. He suggested to the

lawyer he join the territorials for a requisite period and then try again.(1)

In fact the first few contingents sailed overseas with an officer corps composed mostly of men elected to their rank under the provisions of the old system. It was these men, officers and other ranks, who were to seriously challenge the wisdom and fairness of the new system, a system which had been advocated in so many official reports. As early as April 1915, Lieutenant Westmacott had written a letter home stating: "There is a general feeling in the force that no further officers should be appointed. It simply destroys all chance of promotion for our own boys, who have borne the burden and heat."(2) This letter was forwarded by his father, an influential man, to the government and acknowledged by the Prime Minister in July 1915. But it was directly following the evacuation from Gallipoli that feeling with regard to promotion became very acute.(3)The survivors were joined by the seventh, eighth and ninth reinforcements, which had brought out a quota of officers more than sufficient to meet all requirements. Protest became strong, particularly from senior officers, and General Godley agreed that there was a definite injustice but said he was powerless to act.(4)

Nevertheless he had cabled Sir James Allen, the Minister of Defence and it was agreed the G.O.C. was to have the right to appoint commissions on the field up to 50% of his casualties and that in New Zealand more N.C.O.'s, especially returned soldiers, be nominated for commissions.(5)

1 Letters Army H.Q. Palmerston North, 1914-16 ADI Ser.18/37 National Archives

2 Letter P.M. to Westmacott 2 July 1915 ADI Ser.18/37 National Archives

3 O.E. Burton, The Silent Division, p.137

4 Ibid, p.138

5 Allen letters and memoranda January & March 1916 ADI Ser.18/37 National Archives

Thus the system which Godley had been sent out from England to implement was being partly revised at his request, and there was a swing back towards the older colonial tradition. It will be recalled this tradition had been much maligned by a series of military experts, yet experiences at Gallipoli had at least supported the idea of more mature leadership. The New Zealanders (minimum age 20) had been struck by the youth of some British officers, and had witnessed the leaderless muddle at Suvla Bay. By contrast, though disorganised by the navy, which had landed them on the wrong stretch of beach, the Anzacs had pressed forward rapidly to secure their beachhead and much of this success had been due to the initiative displayed by the common soldier. Certainly the men had made much of this and their views had by 1916 filtered back home. The government, therefore, though reluctant was not obstinate, and began to concede to whatever Godley requested. From March 1916 on, cables from Godley on the question of facilitating promotion in the field were being received and acceded to without demur. First came a request that no more lieutenants or above be gazetted, and then for less second-lieutenants.(6)

At the same time in 1916 defence department figures reveal the examination to become a junior officer in the territorials was being tightened up. The failure rate had risen from below ten percent to thirty percent.(7) In reply to a query from a prominent Wellington barrister whose son had not received a commission the Minister, Sir J. Allen, wrote: "The main source of supply of officers will be through the NCO class."(8) If prominent fathers were upset so were their sons, and the defence department files contain letters from wealthy eighteen year olds, protesting

6 Allen letters and memoranda January & March 1916 ADI Ser.18/37 National Archives

7 Defence Files 1916 ADI Ser.29/27 National Archives

8 ibid 1916 AD 38/109 National Archives

the new regulations. (officers must be twenty three and have at least twelve months service, territorial or active) and threatening to embark for England, where they would be received direct into officer training schools. At least this is what the letters claimed.(9)

A year later in August 1917 the Minister of Defence wrote: "Territorial officers gain only thirteen percent of the total commissioned, more NCO's are being trained in England for commission, thus the supply of officers will in future be furnished mainly from the other end." Significantly he added: "About eight N.C.O.'s are commissioned into the Imperial army per month, more have been requested, but this is the maximum we are willing to provide."(10)

Lastly, in October 1917, a final word on policy was announced in reply to an MP's question in the House asking why young territorial officers were being reduced to the ranks and sent overseas as privates, when called up. The minister replied: "After three years of war he (General Godley) has found it more satisfactory to promote and train in the field the officers required in the Division. The General seems to have come to the conclusion that the NCO who is trained in the ranks makes a more useful officer on promotion than the territorial officer."(11) Thus for an ex-Guards officer who had been sent out to correct local variances, this represented a considerable shift in opinion. It would also indicate that in military affairs there was no substitute for experience.

By mid-1918, it became apparent that many territorial officers were no longer volunteering, or if eligible, somehow avoiding conscription. The Defence Minister received

9 Defence Files 1916 AD 18/37 National Archives
10 Ibid 1916 AD 18/37 National Archives
11 Ibid 1917 AD 18/37 National Archives

a very accusatory letter from the secretary of the Dunedin R.S.A. drawing attention to this fact, and to newspaper articles alleging discrimination. The minister blandly replied: "Territorial officers who remained with the territorial force all had good reason."(12)

The question of officer selection in the new army was it seems a vexatious one. The war had caused battle experience to dominate. The senior officers at the front favoured drawing men through the ranks. One West Coast, Wellington battalion officer made the following observations:

> Social position counts for little in the selection of officers in the field, we have two efficient officers who were formerly a farm hand and a house painter. We do not go in for personal appearance and saluting to the same extent as the 'Tommy' yet a great quality of comradeship abounds.(13)

It would appear from the Defence Ministry files, that at home many men of influence in the community preferred the system of selecting men directly for officer training. The Minister tried to placate many forceful requests for direct commissioning by passing off commissions in the expeditionary force as mere temporary affairs: "It being a transitory organisation and many will have to revert to their former ranks."(14) The whole emphasis was that the real officers and gentlemen were the territorial officers and if you had to serve in the expeditionary force as a private or corporal, well, it was only a passing phenomenon. It was almost like former distinctions between volunteers and militia, where the elected officers fought, whilst the appointed militia officers were kept for decorative purposes. The McLeod research has found that by the thirties commissions in the territorials were largely the prerogative of local wealth and influence.(16) (15)

12 Defence Files June 1918 ADI Ser.18/37 National Archives

13 C.H. Weston, Three Years, p.247

14 Defence Files 1918 AD29/237 National Archives

15 Wanganui Herald, 1869

16 J.R. McLeod, Myth and Reality. M.A.Thesis, Massey 1979

Thus, in 1919, there arose a new problem of what to do with the 'supernumerary officers'.(17) Officers had accumulated in three ways; there were the territorial officers who never went to the front, the returning expeditionary force officers, and an unwanted band of problem officers. This latter group were a secret source of embarrassment, and their existence not acknowledged. But, by mid-1917, concealment was becoming difficult. Okey, the M.P. for Taranaki, had asked the Minister: "Why are so many officers coming back from the front who are not wounded, while there is such a need of men, it is causing a great deal of talk. Can you give me an explanation so I can reply to the New Plymouth cases."(18) The Minister answered evasively referring to sickness and other disabilities, but correspondence on the subject indicated considerable agitation. The problem was what was to be done with them, the men had not been court-martialled and yet it was not thought desirable to employ them in any capacity, whether on district staffs, or in training camps. Worse, most of these men would automatically become territorial officers again; the Minister wrote bitterly complaining to General Godley for not court-martialling and cashiering them.(19) This was one aspect of war that had not been envisaged, and in 1919, a board of senior officers was set up to purge the territorial list of unsuitable officers, and place them on the retired, or reserve list.(20) Therefore, the war had reversed some trends in organisation but the effect was only temporary, and the need for revision had not been welcomed by the authorities at home. However, strong feelings on these issues died away as wartime memories faded and the twenties and thirties saw a general decline in government and public support for the army.

17 Defence Files June 1919 AD 29/237 National Archives
18 ibid 1917 AD 29/237 " "
19 ibid 1917 AD 29/237 " "
20 ibid 1919 AD 29/237 " "

The compulsory military training scheme introduced in 1911 which had sustained the territorial force during the war, remained with modifications until 1930. In 1920, the territorial force was re-organised to produce one division and three mounted rifle brigades. Training was also reduced from seven to four years, with the result many experienced junior officers and NCOs were released. Due to lack of pay, attendance had been poor, but when pay was restored in 1925, 17,335 out of a nominal 20,000 attended camp. This was the peak period for the whole force.

However, in 1930, compulsory training was suspended on economic grounds, though clearly too, anti-military sentiments were beginning to spread, and the full significance of anti-war literature was making itself felt. By 1931 cadet training, except in secondary schools, had been abolished and this fact alone tended to push the senior school leavers forward as ideal candidates for territorial commissions. The territorials were established as a volunteer force with a ceiling of ten thousand, and a real strength of around seven thousand. The infantry strength figures for the thirties, national and local, built up slowly from the advent of volunteering in 1930 to a peak in 1936 when a slow decline set in until late 1939, viz.

	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937
Infantry Strength National	936	2704	3232	3333	3741	3649	3296
Percentage who completed training	25	44	50	48	40	31	40
Strength Taranaki Regiment	67	156	224	317	337	365	290
Percentage who completed training	28	82	72	70	68	38	35
Strength of W.W.C. Regiment	120	163	247	210	307	213	195
Percentage who completed training	nil	42	44	44	29	26	40

(21)

21 Defence Files ADI Series 281/1/10 1937 National Archives

To say territorial stength 'built up' is perhaps an overstatement for if these figures are compared with volunteer numbers, local and national, during the colonial defence force period, (see Chapter IV) the peak in 1936 just reaches the earlier low-points of the 1880s and 1890s, and the population had since doubled. It would appear, especially after noting the percentage who completed training, which meant attending camp, the new centralised hierarchical structure did not have the same local appeal.

It has been the persistent argument in this thesis that the old colonial volunteer system, in spite of constant criticism, internal and external, and many limitations, worked well in peace and war as a cheap defence force. The new territorial system relied on compulsion and had much more finance, and many more defenders. Therefore, the 'old volunteers' have generally gone down in New Zealand history as almost comic 'Gilbert and Sullivan' figures or an eccentric colonial aberration. It is a pity that one of the very few home-grown traditions was cut away to be replaced by an imported idea. In spite of all the experiences of World War I, the subsequent period showed the authorities faithfully stubborn, capable of making only minor changes, and lacking the insight and imagination to rebuild anew. The following pages will bear evidence to these remarks.

In 1937 further defence cuts reduced units to companies, and many junior officers and NCOs were rendered surplus. In the same year it was reported that only about one third of the territorials reported for training, so a special reservist force was authorised.(22) However it was difficult to make these sorts of defence cuts on a centralised battalion system, it had none of the loose flexibility which characterised the old system, where units could

22 W.G.Gentry, N.Z.Army History, Part 3, Para.2. Waiouru.

easily merge, disappear or reappear, as need and finance dictated. Further, the government had now to contend with a permanent force of officers and high ranking territorial officers. Many of these men had built a powerful reputation in war and had wide influence. They certainly did not like to see battalions reduced to companies and all sorts of unit mergers introduced. The government was trying to behave in the fashion of their impecunious forbears, but the new framework could not take this kind of drastic pruning.

Frustration among senior officers boiled over. In May 1938 four senior colonels of the New Zealand Army publicly rebuked their political masters. They published a 'manifesto' in the New Zealand press claiming that the size of the territorial force was insufficient for defence, and that morale was at a low ebb due to public indifference. The colonels were immediately put on the retired list. The problem was that the re-organisation scheme of 1937 looked good on paper, but its effect was to make redundant a number of junior officers and offer only, in addition, frock coats to senior officers. For the men the new scheme demanded, more training, for the same pay. Senior territorial officers were upset and Lieutenant Colonel W.S. McCrome, commanding officer of the 1 Battalion, Taranaki Regiment, wrote on 17 December 1937, to one of the colonels threatening to resign with the words:

> Everything possible to retard and knock back the territorials in provincial districts has been done. We have been cut down and thrown into a nondescript battalion. Farmers will not release, or probably cannot afford to release farmhands. Further no appeal has been made or lead given by the government for recruiting.(23)

Thus by 1938 morale in the army was at an all time low, many good junior officers and NCOs had gone, and a record

23 L.H. Barber 'Colonels Revolt' New Zealand Law Journal p.497 December 1977

low of 3,125 attended camp, i.e., forty one percent of the Army. With reference to the senior regular officers, Major C. Pugsley, who has conducted research on officer training, considered that the run down of the staff corps in the 1930s saw many good experienced men retired leaving only the 'plodders', or those commissioned in World War I because of their deeds not their officer potential, e.g., Colonel Andrews VC, and Major General Duigan who reached his position by outlasting his contemporaries. Pugsley concluded:

> They were not able to keep the territorial officer up to the required 1939 expertise and the relationship with the staff corps was not effective. Without the organisation and the background ability, they gained experience in Greece and Crete with mens' lives and equipment.(24)

It has been said the New Zealand army was kept alive at this time by the self-sacrificing senior territorial officers.(25) These senior officers, as McLeod's research has found, were composed of civilians drawn from the professional classes or well to do sheep farmers, and in general represented the highest socio-income bracket.(26) They could find time and were not pressed for money; no doubt also there was a rewarding social element of common fraternisation; and the regimental balls were always a centre of local interest. The balls, officers club, the mess dinners, the uniforms all carried on a tradition from the volunteer corps of the late nineteenth century. However, the more democratic earlier tradition of electing 'suitable' officers, who had served, and proved themselves through the ranks had faded. Thus by the early years of the war thousands of new junior officers had to be quickly created, their selection based on criteria such as

24 C. Pugsley, Thoughts. Waiouru Military Camp 1978.

25 W.G.Stevens, Problems of 2NZEF p.9

26 J.R. McLeod, Myth and Reality, M.A.Thesis, Massey University 1979

occupational status, other than proven military ability or popular demand. In general, McLeod's research has found these to be men of status in the community, a status derived from wealth and occupation, e.g. sheep farmers, members of the professions, etc.(27)

In 1939, due in part to the Colonels'revolt, the government set a new territorial establishment of sixteen thousand men. The Prime Minister called for volunteers and very quickly territorial strength rose to over ten thousand. The national military reserve was formed as a reserve to the territorial force, comprised of men, who had served at least two years in the territorial force, regulars, or INZEF. Therefore for all the above reasons, the army was less prepared for war in 1939, than it had been in 1914, and all these problems were reflected in the history of the local territorial battalions during the inter-war period to which attention will now turn. Firstly, a brief survey of the Taranaki Regiment from 1919 to 1944, to be followed by a similar survey of events affecting the Wellington West Coast Regiment. In 1919, the command of the Taranaki Regiment passed from Major Bellringer to Lieutenant-Colonel Cox. Particularly pressing in the post-war years was the shortage of officers. When Cox left in 1925 there were only twenty officers available, that is one third below establishment.(28) However the visit by the Prince of Wales in 1920 had reminded the battalion of its peacetime ceremonial role, and in 1921 a band was formed.

Infantry units were organised into four regiments in 1921, but this reform ran roughshod over provincial feelings and was not accepted. It was felt organisation into four regiments reflected only the history and traditions of INZEF and ignored the district regiments which had provided the various companies. Thus all regiments were re-establishe

27 J.R.McLeod. Myth & Reality. MA Thesis, Massey University 1979

28 C.L.Lovegrove, History of WWC & T, Vol.5. p.42

in 1923, and XI Battalion became the Taranaki Regiment again. It would seem provincial feelings were still a force to be reckoned with in army circles at this time, even if the staff corps felt differently.

In 1927, the annual intakes from the cadet battalions had brought the Regiment up to strength, but officer establishment still remained low at half strength. Only six officers at this stage were left from those who had served with INZEF. In 1930, Lieutenant-Colonel Bertrand became commanding officer after serving as a private before the war and receiving his commission with INZEF in 1916. However with the end of compulsory military service the battalion became: "a mere handful of diehards."(29) The first camp under the voluntary system was at Waverley in 1933. The low strength necessitated a combined camp with the Wellington West Coast Regiment and the long association severed in 1901 was again renewed. The scene was far from encouraging but the officers of the two Regiments found common cause, and as a training course for junior officers and NCOs, the camps were successful. By January 1935, a parade before the Duke of Gloucester at Pukekura Park mustered only three officers and one hundred other ranks together with the band. In 1934 and 1935 annual camps were continued in combination with the Wellington West Coast Regiment because of the low unit strengths, however as Major Lovegrove recalled: "It was much like the old days when the volunteer corps was not only a training unit but a social organisation. The social side was not neglected."(30) It would seem almost that the social significance of volunteering flourished in inverse proportion to military establishment.

29 C.L. Lovegrove, History of WWC & T. Regiment Vol.5 p.42
30 ibid p.44

In May 1935, Lieutenant-Colonel Varnham took over. A serving officer in World War I, he proved very keen and energetic, continually visiting all outlying platoons. His efforts to build up the number of recruits paid off. In a ceremonial parade through New Plymouth in March 1936 to mark the presentation of colours, the assembled battalion and band, together with some regular staff mustered a strength of thirty officers and three hundred and fifty one other ranks. Thus though below strength, under Colonel Varnham, the Regiment maintained a strength which was above average and certainly better than that of neighbouring regiments. In fact, it was the largest unit in the central North Island and one of the strongest in the country. In this respect Taranaki seemed to be maintaining an earlier tradition. In 1939, Colonel Varnham left the Taranaki Regiment and was appointed commanding officer of the 19 Battalion, which left for the Middle East with the first echelon in January 1940. Colonel Varnham ended up a Brigadier-General in 1942. When the second echelon departed in May 1940, the regiment was left with only two officers, both ineligible for overseas service.(31)

In February 1940, the battalion went into camp at Waiouru but the first national servicemen did not arrive until October 1940. A basic training camp was temporarily established at Waverley, and an OCTU established at Waiouru. By November 1941, the battalion had moved to the Palmerston North Show Grounds and for the rest of the emergency was part of the central field force camped in the Palmerston area.

A second battalion was mobilised in January 1942. This battalion was a garrison unit like all second battalions

31 Lovegrove Papers, Box 46

in the Wellington province. It had within its patrol boundaries a stretch of coastline as well as the harbour and fixed defences at New Plymouth. The base camp was at the Racecourse. Second battalions generally were expected to repel a raid, or hold up an attack until mobile forces arrived. It was a wartime unit, and, like the old Militia eighty years before raised to meet an emergency then to disappear again when, in 1944, the emergency ended.

Meanwhile the neighbouring Wellington West Coast Regiment had experienced many of the same problems in the twenties and thirties. Lieutenant-Colonel Cunningham returned from France in 1919, to take command of the Wellington West Coast Regiment, at a time when there were few soldiers left in the battalion over twenty one years. War casualties had used up many men and the returning soldiers were too war weary to volunteer for further peacetime commitments. NCOs and junior officers were in especially short supply. With only young men to work with, the adjutant, Captain Wales, selected those to be commissioned in the twenties and a local school for cadet officers was commenced. The adjutant ran this school of instruction, directing classes and correcting papers. There were no failures.(32) By 1930 the shortage of junior officers had been made good, and all officers were members of the Garrison Club, where they met senior and retired officers.

By 1923 the annual camps recommenced, and at the Marton camp in 1927, the Regiment paraded a strength of seven hundred to receive its colours complete with World War I battle honours. However with the end of compulsory training, by 1931, attendance had dropped by half, and there were now too many officers.

When Lieutenant-Colonel Cade, a former volunteer in the Wanganui Guards, retired in 1933, the Regiment was at its

32 Lovegrove, History of WWC & T Regiment, Vol.II p.38

lowest ebb since 1866-1868, when volunteering in the district had collapsed completely. Only one composite company was left in Wanganui and some scattered groups in the country areas. When the Duke of Gloucester visited Wanganui in 1935, there were not enough troops to parade a guard, a fact which did not enhance regimental prestige. During the thirties a remaining composite company participated in some combined annual camps with the Taranaki Regiment at Waverley. In 1937, the Regiment was reduced to a depot status and thus, in 1939, there was no efficient territorial unit in existence to provide companies as in 1914. On the outbreak of war all officers on the unattached list were recalled to undergo a refresher course, and by October 1940, the territorial battalion had been reformed. The reformed first battalion had a year of ordinary part time training before joining the central field force in the Palmerston area. In 1944, when the emergency ended, the battalion was depleted again and returned to Wanganui engaged mainly on guard duties.

A second battalion was formed in 1942 to watch the coast, man fixed defences, and garrison Wanganui. It also received troops from the basic training unit at Waiouru before eventually posting them on to the first battalion or to the Expeditionary Force. Perhaps the climax of the war-time commitment for the Regiment was when the 2 Battalion was posted to Norfolk Island in April 1943 to relieve the associated 36 Battalion. However after only three months six hundred other ranks (all Grade I) returned and most of them went on to Italy. The remaining four hundred and seventy eight returned to Wanganui in December 1943, and the second battalion was disbanded a few months later in March 1944.(33)

33 Defence Files June 1943 to March 1944 WAII Series II No.7 National Archives.

Thus, to sum up, the army was in a much poorer state in 1939 than in 1914. Territorial units were run down, many junior officers were on an unattached list and lacked training. Overall organisation and liaison was poor and many of the remaining senior officers unhappy, in spite of their frock coats.

Many junior officers had to be created quickly and this compares unfavourably with the pre-1914 situation, when the old volunteer system had left a legacy of experienced officers. It has been argued that this same tradition led to a wartime demand in 1916 for promotion through the ranks to which the home authorities acceded temporarily. But there was all the time a particular social pressure for direct officer selection from special training units, and research indicates this method with its strong bias for a criteria of status based on occupation, or wealth, came to dominate the territorial force. It is interesting that when in 1942 some 2NZEF warrant officers, veterans of much fighting, were returned home to help train the territorial battalions, there was for a time a refusal to commission them. The paradoxical position being that, whilst they were eligible for commissions overseas, they could not be made territorial officers. An argument followed: these mature soldiers had been led to expect commissions, so that their valuable experience could be used to direct what were in fact the training battalions for overseas. Instead they found themselves under the direction of young inexperienced territorial officers. The matter was finally settled by a special Army Order 125.1942, which allowed the territorial commissions to warrant officers. (34)

The territorial battalions, therefore, served in a dual capacity throughout the war, the first battalions were organised as a mobile force to meet an invasion threat,

34 Defence Files Series AD 218/2/12 National Archives

whilst the second battalions were occupied as part garrison, part training units. Conscripted men left the second battalions to go overseas or serve with the first battalions in the home defence force.

After the war the associated overseas battalions were disbanded, one of the last was the 22 Battalion which was maintained until August 1947, when the 'J' Force was brought home. With a regular army of two thousand, the territorial battalions again provided the basic military framework of an army.

But the cold war was on, and overseas considerable tension was evident. In early 1948, defence papers reveal the Cabinet approved increasing the Regular Army to over three thousand seven hundred, and bringing in a new compulsory Military Training Act. The territorial battalions were to be reconstituted, with regular staff for training and administration, and this procedure justified an increase in the regular force.

So it was for purposes of better administration and centralisation, in 1948, the VII Wellington West Coast Regiment and the XI Taranaki Regiment were amalgamated. The first commanding officer of the new regiment was Lieutenant-Colonel C.N. Armstrong, MC. ED., and other officers and NCOs were selected from a large group of volunteers, all experienced men. When the compulsory military training commenced in 1949, troops were after initial training, posted to the Regiment for three years' part time service. Thus throughout the fifties and sixties the Regiment flourished under a compulsory system. The first annual camp was held at Linton in 1951, but after that annual camps were held at Waiouru.

The fifties were expansionary years for the Army; the commander, Major General Gentry, kept pressing Cabinet for increases in the total Army establishment and was largely successful. Rather like the situation in the eighteen nineties, the Army staff were outlining the strategic

necessity of having a division readily available for overseas ventures and then in a curiously circular process using the approved policy to justify further increases, e.g.

> The army has been directed to provide for an expeditionary force of an augmented division in an overseas theatre. Our task is clearly defined and much greater than before. It is therefore recommended the proposed establishment be submitted again to cabinet.(35)

A month later the General received the following reply from the Prime Minister's office: "Cabinet are nervous about this but if they got a paper in more detail to justify it and the additional cost involved, they would probably accept it."(36) The General was asking for a regular force of 4550 from 3747 maintaining most of the extra men were required to maintain the vast stores of used equipment for training and possible mobilisation.(37) At first, in 1953, the Cabinet would only go to four thousand two hundred, but this was subsequently raised, and each year a few more were added, until by 1958 the following memorandum was filed: "The cabinet has approved a ceiling establishment for the regular force of 8119."(38) In ten years the regular force had risen from a base of two thousand though the new ceiling was never reached or required. Nevertheless the Cabinet had fallen for the idea of an augmented division for overseas expeditions and kept in being a large compulsory territorial force, (over thirty thousand in 1956).

More significantly arising from some of the trends in the overseas force during World War II, i.e. the decline of provincialism and the growth of a national and more conformist ideal, the Army headquarters now pursued the concept of the 'One Army.' This idea of the 'One Army' had

35 Defence Files Series AD 228/1/1 11 February 1953 Nat.Archs
36 ibid " AD 228/1/2 20 March 1953 " "
37 ibid " AD 228/1/2 8 March 1954 " "
38 ibid " AD 228/1/2 16 September 1958 " "

emerged in World War II as will be evident in the next chapter, suffice it to say, that by this time all regular officers understood something of the term and its implications. For example, in 1951, when regular personnel were moving into the territorial battalions in some numbers the Brigadier commanding the Southern Military District wrote:

> I consider area commanders should not be given disciplinary powers in respect of cadre staff, they should be commanded by the commanding officer of the unit they are members of. If we are to maintain the principle of One Army this aspect is essential to weld cadre staff into their present units.(39)

The concept of 'One Army' implied two things that were new. Firstly, providing a skeleton staff of regulars within the territorial battalions. These were permanent full time administrators and instructors, officers and NCOs. Army headquarters were very clever at presenting Cabinet with coloured charts showing the ratio of regulars to territorials. (40) Basically these dubious statistics showed a much higher ratio of regulars to territorials prior to the fifties in the immediate post-war period. Therefore it was argued that with thirty thousand territorials, and to maintain the ratio, many more regulars were needed, to maintain the growing part-time army. Thus eventually the Cabinet found itself granting a ceiling establishment for the regular army far in excess of its actual requirements.(41)

The second implication of the 'One Army' concept was to sweep away vestiges of provincialism, weaken local attachments, and increase centralisation and dependence on Army headquarters. The units were no longer strictly locally manned, by part-time volunteers, they contained regular soldiers embarking on a career, whose first allegiance was to Army headquarters, not to the local district. Compare the situation with that a hundred years earlier in the days of Atkinson and Ballance. Yet remembrance of

39 Defence Files Series AD 228/1/1 2 August 1951 Nat.Archvs.
40 ibid " AD 228/1/2 8 March 1954 " "
41 ibid " AD 228/1/2 16 September 1958 " "

earlier tradition remained when in February 1960, the Regiment was granted the Charter of freedom of the city of New Plymouth in a ceremonial parade marking one hundred years since the first parade of the militia and volunteers for service on the eve of the Taranaki campaign. Nevertheless the concept of 'One Army' was entrenched and in 1964 the Regiment was given a new name with a lot less regional emphasis, it became 5 Battalion (Wellington West Coast and Taranaki) Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment. In normal parlance the Regiment is simply referred to as 5 RNZIR.

To conclude, this long period of internal development had been an uneven progression of stops and starts, twists and turns. An effort has been made to follow this growth pattern, and explain the factors contributing to it. At the same time within the overall framework, the particular history of the local Regiment has been used to illustrate the ultimate effects of these changes, many of which originated overseas in World War II.

CHAPTER VII

OVERSEAS WORLD WAR II : TRADITIONS CONTINUED

The post-war reorganisation of the Regiment had its origins in World War II, when the 'One Army' concept arose. Such traditions are important as it is the particular accumulation of them which distinguishes national armies of a similar heritage. Thus it is not claimed New Zealand has any sole monopoly in this respect, it is more a question of a traditional stress on specific aspects of military behaviour. For example, throughout the Regiment's involvement in war, three main themes have been advanced under the general labels of military tactics, assertiveness and reputation. These have stood out as especially identifiable in earlier wars, and to some extent this was true in World War II. Therefore, the emphasis switches from organisation, back to these war themes. The object being to trace their survival in the vastly different conditions applicable to World War II.

Of the themes so far examined, the high reputation of the New Zealand soldier may be said to derive from the Anzac traditions of World War I, whilst the 'assertiveness' and the distinct military tactics of the troops can be traced back to the colonial wars in Taranaki and Wanganui. In all there were four battalions in which the Wellington West Coast and Taranaki territorials participated on a basis similar to that in World War I; they were 19,22,25, and 36. The latter battalion was part of the 3 Division in the Pacific, where troops were left in garrisons in a similar situation to the territorials in New Zealand.(1)

1 L. Cleveland, The Iron Hand, p.8 : This division was essentially a garrison force and used only briefly at the end of its tour of duty in a series of minor mopping up operations in the Solomon Islands, at the comparatively small cost of eighty two killed and one hundred and ninety eight wounded. Left throughout the war stranded and with little to do, a few soldiers took to writing poetry; a poetry which one editor described as directed at an inept military system which left thousands idle in island garrisons long after danger had passed.

Therefore this chapter will develop its themes from those overseas with 2 NZEF, the object being to trace the military tradition during World War II as it survived modern warfare, and in particular to use the local history as a basis for analysis. During the Maori Land Wars, the Regiment, in embryo, provided many of the men who helped shape a colonial military tradition. However, then as now, it was the men sent to the front whose behaviour, tactics and reputation provided the chief interest, and in World War II this entails following the fortunes of the associated battalions 19, 22 and 25.

The 19 Battalion was the first of the three battalions (2NZEF), in which the Wellington West Coast and Taranaki Regiments participated, to be formed. It came into being on 3 October 1939 taking mostly men who had served in the various territorial units. The battalion of seven hundred and sixty eight all ranks embarked with the First Echelon on 5 January 1940 bound for Egypt. After a spell in the Western Desert the battalion went to Greece, where on 16 March 1941, it fought a useful delaying action at Servia Pass, but in the subsequent retreat the Wellington West Coast company was left behind to hold the Corinth Canal Bridge. When the battalion arrived in Crete on 28 April 1941 it had lost about twenty five percent of its strength, including just about the whole West Coast Company. After a bitter campaign in Crete the remnants of the battalion arrived back in Egypt on 1 June 1941 having lost a further two hundred and seventy four men, sixty three killed and one hundred and twenty taken prisoner. In early December 1941 the battalion fought its way forward to relieve Tobruk. Then after a rest period in Syria they returned to the Western Desert in June 1942 to take a leading part in the night bayonet attack at Mingar Qaim, which enabled the Division to break out of its encirclement. In July 1942 the battalion met with another disaster whilst attacking and occupying the Ruseisat Ridge without armoured support. Eventually most of the rifle companies were captured, including most of the Wellington West Coast and Taranaki companies. On 5 October 1942 the battalion was renamed 19 NZ Armoured Regiment, and the men re-trained

for a new role. By October 1943, the battalion was ready to fight in Italy, and went on to finish in the final campaign which led to the capture of Trieste in May 1945. Some months later in October 1945 the battalion was disbanded. In the space of two and a half months in 1941, the battalion lost eighty five killed, forty percent of the total for the war, and two hundred and sixty six were taken prisoner, fifty five percent of the war total. Also, the Ruweisat Ridge attack resulted in a further two hundred and twenty being captured as against a total of four for the whole Italian campaign. These sudden losses of men meant that the battalion had at times to be brought up to strength quickly, and often at times when there were no available reinforcements from New Zealand. Thus men were transferred from other units to make up deficiencies. The significance of this point will be discussed later and applied equally well to the 22 and 25 Battalions.

The 22 Battalion was formed on 18 January 1940 and left New Zealand 2 May 1940, arriving in Britain on 2 June. After nine months exercising in Kent, the battalion joined the division in Egypt in time to make the move to Greece in March 1941. After suffering only light losses compared with the 19 Battalion, the battalion was evacuated to Crete where it held the key position covering Maleme airfield. The fight for the airfield and the running battle which followed the withdrawal caused heavy losses. In all there were three hundred and two casualties, some fifty percent of the battalion's strength lost in one month. In July 1942, the 22 battalion in the company of others met disaster on Ruweisat Ridge being overrun by German tanks. Thus in a few days casualties were two hundred and seventy eight, most of them prisoners. With the Wellington company left out of the battle it was the Wellington West Coast and Taranaki companies which sustained almost total losses. The battalion suffered another one hundred and fifty one casualties at Alamein before being pulled out

of the fighting to be turned into a highly mobile unit attached to the New Zealand Armoured Brigade. In October 1943 the battalion sailed to join the Division in Italy, where it fought for twice as long and sustained more losses in killed and wounded than in all the other campaigns put together. However only three men were taken prisoner, throughout the long Italian campaign. A reorganised battalion went with the 'J Force' to Japan on 21 February 1946, where it was disbanded on 7 August 1947 being one of the longest serving battalions in the 2NZEF.

Finally, the 25 Battalion went overseas with the Third Echelon in August 1940 and at Columbo was involved in the take-over by the men, of the troopship Ormonde. The battalion, after an uneventful stay in Egypt, went on to Greece where it fought a successful rearguard action at Molos before being fortunate enough to be evacuated straight back to Egypt missing out Crete. However one hundred and fifty one men were left behind in Greece to become prisoners. One of the early highlights of the battalion's service was the attack in daylight on 'black Sunday', 23 November 1941, when the battalion gained 'Point 175' at enormous cost. Two-thirds of those taking part became casualties. In July 1942 the battalion lost a further two hundred and eleven men in the attacks on Ruweisat Ridge where one hundred and fifty one were captured, when overran by German tanks. The battalion then went on to fight at Alamein, and in the subsequent triumphant North African campaign. In Italy it fought right through as an infantry battalion and suffered a steady drain of killed and wounded, some fifty five percent of the total killed and wounded for the whole war. The battalion was disbanded on 2 December 1945, after a very long period of active service during which it sustained more casualties and had more men captured than either 19 or 22 Battalions. In fact its total

casualties were nearly double those of the 19 Battalion. In the three battalions, then, the Wellington West Coast and Taranaki Regiment was involved in a great deal of action, but out of those experiences some traditions survived, for example, many went off to war buoyed up by belief in the old Anzac legend. In dark days it was a good starting point and provided a ready made reputation of superiority.

Whether or not the New Zealand soldier had the best fighting reputation in the world, or whether such a reputation was justified is beyond the scope of this thesis.(2) It will be recalled it was the Anzac tradition which held a particular meaning for the troops in World War I, and was the chief factor which kept morale high throughout the most difficult days of 1917-18. It is argued that this tradition was also a psychological factor in World War II though possibly not so strong. To a certain extent troops took comfort from the Anzac tradition and there was little sign of the pre-Gallipoli anxiety to prove themselves in battle. Thus in spite of some early reverses there was little sign of self-doubt or despair, for the Anzac legend was built on disaster. Kippenberger said, after Crete: "The infantry had fought so successfully that despite nearly fifty percent losses, morale was if anything higher than before the battle started."(3) Colonel Andrews of the 22 Battalion wrote in the war diary after Crete: "He does not like night work or the bayonet and that on the ground he is no match for our men. Even though we had to withdraw for eleven days we had our tails up in defeat."(4)

2 J.R. McLeod. Myth and Reality. M.A.Thesis 1979. Arguments regarding the factual basis of the New Zealand soldiers fighting reputation are discussed in this thesis.

3 H. Kippenberger Infantry Brigader p.70

4 J. Henderson, 22 Battalion, p.83

Thus nothing in those early days could puncture the New Zealand soldier's belief in his magnificent fighting reputation. Possibly because of this great self confidence, the New Zealand soldier attributed much of the cause for campaign reversals on to other arms at a personal level. It was not bad planning, or weak strategy, or lack of equipment, rather it was lack of nerve on the part of the tanks, or the R.A.F. With this sort of thing in mind Kippenberger, in 1942, when morale dropped because of a lack of faith in other allied arms, gave the following instructions to all ranks of his 5 New Zealand Infantry Brigade:

> Instead of being satisfied with the credit given to them by all other soldiers in Egypt, many of our men are trying to insist on it by blaming or disparaging everyone else. Letters from the men of the Division show that many men are blaming impartially the South Africans, Indians, British, and the Armoured Formations and by implication are boasting that we are the only good troops in Egypt.(5)

The drop in morale continued through the rest period in Syria in 1942. The padres, alarmed that drink and prostitution were tempting many, blamed it on the drop in morale, and concluded the BBC was partially responsible with its pessimistic, though factual, news broadcasts. The chaplains felt less discouraging information was needed.(6)

Thus it was in the pre-1942 period that the Anzac tradition was most significant in upholding morale and keeping alive a keen attacking spirit. With fresh battalions this meant there was some initial keenness, but not as long lasting as in World War I, nor did the initial keenness give way to cynicism, rather a more durable professionalism was noticeable later in World War II. For example, the 25 Battalion had missed the

5 H. Kippenberger, Infantry Brigader, p.197
6 M.L. Underhill, N.Z. Chaplains, p.49

fighting in Greece and Crete, its first major encounter was to be Point 175 in the Western Desert which it took at enormous cost. The men, as Professor W.E. Murphy pointed out, were too keen still, and had seen little fighting. The senior officers did not see, or expect much opposition, and the men attacked prematurely with little idea of what was expected or required of them. The result was a pyrrhic victory and the loss of many brave but inexperienced soldiers.(7)

As Freyberg observed: "The high water mark of battle worthiness was in November 1941....gradually the keen fighting edge was blunted. A gradual reduction in the offensive spirit was offset by the increased efficiency and experience of the divisional machine."(8) This offensive spirit, as Freyberg knew well, was very much the product of the Anzac tradition, and there is some evidence to suggest back in the territorial training depots of Wanganui and New Plymouth, and elsewhere, a lot of this kind of thing was being pumped into the new recruit. An officer of the 22 Battalion in Italy commented: "I know there was a tendency for people to say no fighting spirit, things aren't what they used to be, etc. Looking back I wouldn't think it justified. The young territorial going into his first action went into it with gusto, using his training which he had had for three years before in New Zealand."(9)

Experienced observers noted that from El Alamein on, the infantry was full of self confidence, combined with an increasing professionalism.(10) The tide had then turned, and events after this battle served to promote confidence. This relieved the necessity of drawing on an established but distant tradition to reinforce morale.

7 Professor W.E.Murphy to Lt.J.R.McLeod letter 23/2/79 Myth and Reality M.A.Thesis 1979

8 P. Singleton-Gates, Freyberg. p.288

9 J.Henderson, 22 Battalion, p.234

10 Kippenberger Papers, WA.77.No.38/33 National Archives

In North Africa Rommel had listed the New Zealand Division the toughest in the Eighth Army, and a document captured in Italy from the 278 German Division revealed the following high praise: "New Zealanders are volunteers out of a sense of adventure, specialists in night fighting on a broad front. The New Zealanders have learned to work their way forward under heavy artillery support and in this way take their opponents off guard."(11) The most important point to arise out of these enemy tributes is not whether they reveal any objective facts but to note that the New Zealand soldiers quickly became aware of their content and believed them. This knowledge arising from time to time from captured documents served to reinforce confidence and pride. Though winning battles also helped. Gradually then the significance of the Anzac tradition waned, to be replaced by a confidence and professionalism gained in the field. Nevertheless it still lingered among the old soldiers commanding the territorial training battalions and fired-up new recruits could prove a liability at times as a platoon of the Taranaki Company in Italy found.

> All over the ground we could see them beginning to rise and put their hands up. Then one near us, stood right up and started to walk towards us with his hands up. Just then, unfortunately, a youngster who had not long before joined the company lost his head and fired a burst through the German at short range. The rest turned and ran down the hill while we ran back to the top. The Germans, enraged at their comrade's death, as he was surrendering, rallied swiftly and assaulted the hill fiercely three times.

In this encounter the Germans, who were about to surrender, drove the Taranaki Company off the hill and subjected them to one of the bitterest shellings they had ever experienced. (12)

11 P.Singleton-Gates, Freyberg, p.294

12 J. Henderson, 22 Battalion, p.331

The Italian campaign, with its heavy casualties, did produce a certain amount of battle weariness with its attendant desertions, shell shock cases, self inflicted wounds and tired resignation. For some soldiers a stoic's resignation to fate had come much earlier in the war, a New Plymouth soldier confessed: "Gave up hope, didn't feel bad though, except thought tough on Mum, Margaret and everyone. Talked to B he felt the same, waited and wondered what it feels like to be killed."(13) For the infantry this stoic ability to accept what fate held was the beginning of professionalism. In the same way a Wellington soldier's first kill provided a momentary reflection which marked the development of a professional attitude. "I saw three neat holes, and as he fell and I jumped over him and shoved on, I thought to myself 'Christ, you're a good one,' just like that. And a bit further on I seemed to be outside myself looking at myself, and thinking, 'Hell, is that me?' And then I forgot it all and just shoved on up the hill."(14) After that most men reconciled themselves to killing as a job to be done and seldom out of the line spoke about it. (15)

The long campaign in Italy, the stoic resignation to fate, the detached attitude to killing, were all evidence of a growing professionalism. The Anzac tradition belonged to the 'fired-up' amateur; by 1944 that kind of enthusiasm had faded. The troops were becoming war weary veterans. For example, a survey of the 25 Battalion war diary discloses far more desertions in the field in 1944-45 than in earlier years.(16) Also, as the end of the war approached, there

13 J. Henderson, 22 Battalion, p.331

14 ibid , p.329

15 J.R. McLeod, Questionnaire, Myth and Reality, M.A.Thesis 1979

16 25 Battalion War Diary 1944-45, National Archives

would appear to have been a certain amount of: "If we don't make a noise, he won't."(17) Of course many of these examples and statements would hold true for any army but they do serve to show a growth of professional detachment, and a waning of the old Anzac spirit. Indeed they hold true for any army because what they exemplified were the hallmarks of a professional soldier, whereas the Anzac tradition belonged specifically to the 'wild colonial boys.' Nevertheless, though faded, it was and still is, a deeply embedded feature of the New Zealand tradition, too important to be easily forgotten. It is the sort of memory that will be recalled by commanders whenever they take fresh untried troops overseas.

Assertiveness has been another characteristic and feature of the New Zealand soldier which has survived the vicissitudes of many wars, and has been a theme developed throughout this thesis.

Whether it was the wrecking of the 19 Battalion's cinema or the inability of the New Zealand Headquarters to close the troublesome 'biggest beer bar' in the Middle East, the New Zealand soldier was quick and decisive in airing his feelings. As we have seen, this sort of incident had occurred in the past too, and indicated certain definite attributes. The New Zealand soldier's expectations were high, he felt free to express his feelings, and was intolerant of anything that did not traditionally conform to his standards. Because this attribute of assertiveness was so well developed, he was capable of quick collective action. The authorities were aware of this, and generally tried hard to meet most demands made of them.

17 J. Henderson, 22 Battalion, p.234

A classic example was the mutiny on the Ormonde involving the men of the 25 Battalion. The battalion had left New Zealand in the luxurious Cunard liner, Mauretania, well stocked with New Zealand supplies. At Bombay the British authorities transferred the men to the more ordinary troopship, Ormonde, which had up to then been carrying British troops. Also, the Ormonde served food to the British ration scale which was less than the men were accustomed to, and the senior New Zealand officers alert to difficulties tried at least to have the New Zealand beef transferred from the Mauretania. They were not successful, and the men took over the ship, occupied the bridge and delayed the convoy. Colonel Wilder was eventually able to meet most of their grievances, and had earlier declined an offer of British naval assistance to restore order on board. No further action was taken. The point was the facilities provided had served well enough for British and other troops but were not up to New Zealand expectations, and the men had felt free enough to express their demands.

Saluting was another problem which the senior officers had never definitely resolved. From the days alongside British troops in the Maori Land Wars the New Zealand volunteer had viewed the continuous saluting of every officer as a reinforcement of the class deference system. In the Colonial wars and World War I, it will be recalled, New Zealand troops had been specially paraded to be reminded of the need to salute their own and British officers. However, the message had never really stuck, and the same problems recurred. In the first half of the war troops were continually being picked up by the British military police in Cairo for not saluting. General Stevens declared: "Our custom was to disregard non-saluting, unless the case was a glaring one, for New Zealanders do not consider saluting officers on all occasions is an essential part of

military discipline. It counted as one of the customs of the New Zealand service."(18) This latter statement underlines the difficulties which an independent tradition brought to the realtionship with the British. What had started out as a refusal by the Taranaki settler-volunteers to acknowledge or defer to the superior status of the Imperial officers had now survived to become an embedded custom. Even senior officers like Kippenberger complained of the British and their incessant saluting,whilst Freyberg the ex-guards officer, became sufficiently adjusted to reply to Montgomery's enquiry: "Don't you fellows salute any more?" with, "Oh, they're all right, if you just wave to them they'll wave back."(19) Though it would appear that Montgomery was not unduly swayed by this remark, for battalion routine orders still carried the following reminder from GHQ: "C in C noted that when driving a car his flag is not being saluted."(20) It was not, as the Lovegrove Papers make clear, that this aspect of drill was neglected by the territorial training battalions, rather it simply seemed to lose significance later on.(21) A new recruit to 22 Battalion put it as follows: "One of the first things that struck me when I joined the battalion was the rough and ready ways of the jokers."(22)

Yet there had never been a definite acknowledgment by the Army that New Zealanders need not salute in spite of the evidence supplied by custom. All this must have been very confusing to many in the ranks. The following battalion routine order could not have clarified the situation much: "Saluting: compliments will be paid to officers at least once daily, on leave compliments may be paid to officers, but will be paid to the rank of Colonel and above."(23) At least men in British regiments knew what was required: to salute at every meeting.

18 W.G.Stevens, Problems, p.219
19 P.Singleton-Gates, Freyberg, p.238
20 25 Battalion War Diary. R.O.I. 8 October, 1942
21 Lovegrove Papers, Box 37
22 J. Henderson, 22 Battalion, p.221
23 25 Battalion War Diary, RO 28, 1 July 1944

As in World War I officer-men relationships generally lacked the clarity of established custom which prevailed in other armies. For example the McLeod questionnaire conducted among old soldiers in 1978, revealed that many claimed to have called officers by their first names, some insisting it was standard practice,though it by no means implied any disrespect. This would accord well with old colonial traditions but ex-servicemen were not unaminous in this recollection, and an equal number denied such familiarity.(24) It is argued the uncertainty disclosed was characteristic of this whole area, which lacked a recognised code of practice. The early settlers had been reluctant to grant privileges to their officers, and those who assumed them quickly became unpopular and therefore unacceptable. The settlers had always tried to keep a check on their superiors, and working within isolated communities they had been fairly successful at bringing officers down a peg. However, the 1910 re-organisation of the army on compulsory lines had done much to erode these traditions. In World War I the army had adopted many British customs, but differences remained. Thus after the neglect of the thirties there had been little time to establish definite customs and procedures. The officers certainly sought the privileges they saw extended to rank in other armies, and World War II saw a greater separation between officers and other ranks than had been achieved earlier on. In the desert the officers soon acquired separate showers for example, and even the sea bathing facilities were segregated as this 25 Battalion Order made clear: "The jetty area is for officers only

24 J.R. McLeod, Myth and Reality, M.A.Thesis, 1979

and is out of bounds to other ranks," the latter presumably did their diving from the beach.(25)

Nevertheless even though the officers soon acquired all the privileges accorded to their counterparts in other armies, most New Zealanders still believed their army possessed a greater social equality than most. For example, in answer to the McLeod questionnaire nearly all replies echoed the sentiments of one ex-22 Battalion member that: "We as Kiwis were more friendly to each other. There seemed to be less of a barrier between officers and men than among other allied troops. There was more comradeship between us."(26) Whether this lack of class distinction was a myth as McLeod believes, is open to argument, but the significant point surely is nearly everyone believed it to be the case.

It may have been a common accent that made all feel more comfortable as in colonial days. John Mulgan, a well known New Zealand reporter in World War II, recorded this impression:

> Colonials are sensitive on the subject of officers. In the desert the New Zealanders tried hard to hide the aversion that overcomes them when they meet an English officer but you can always see how they feel. They hate the way British officers talk to their men and the accent of superiority and patronage.(27)

This latter statement was an echo of the feelings of the Taranaki settlers and the troops at Anzac. Perhaps it was because of these memories, that the army cherished the ideals of equality and democracy, and New Zealanders believed themselves more advanced in this respect. Indeed both Freyberg and Montgomery had been warned about: "The outspoken tendencies of the self-reliant New Zealanders."(28) Certainly a belief persisted even if it steadily lost basis in fact.(29) Once again there was a call for the creation of officers from the ranks of the most able battle tested soldiers, and so in deference to these feelings 2NZEF set up its own OCTU, training men who had been

25 25 Battalion War Diary RO44 30 June 1941

26 J.R.McLeod, Questionnaire Myth and Reality, M.A.Thesis 1979

27 J. Mulgan, Report on Experience, p.14

28 P.Singleton-Gates, Freyberg, p.109

29 J.R.McLeod, Myth and Reality, M.A.Thesis, 1979

selected from the ranks. Nevertheless nearly half of all incoming officers were created in New Zealand, and had been selected not on the basis of proven military ability but on other grounds. i.e. on status derived from wealth or occupation. Trained in New Zealand these officers had for a time served with a local territorial battalion, and become part of the home defence and overseas training force. As C.L. Lovegrove noted: "More officers joined the 2NZEF direct from the Regiment (then consisting of two territorial battalions) than 1NZEF."(30) This process did not go unnoticed as General Stevens observed: "The diehards in the force maintained that all commissions should come from the ranks and that no second lieutenants should be sent from New Zealand. All would have to wait until they served for a while in the ranks overseas and proved their fitness."(31) However the 'old fashioned' view did not prevail and the process began in World War I continued to grow in World War II, but because old colonial ideas persisted some fifty percent of the officers created during the war came from out of the ranks.

Drinking has always been a disciplinary problem in the New Zealand Army. General Stevens maintained:

> It is a lamentable fact that few New Zealanders know how to drink....New Zealand conditions of drinking are far from pleasant and consist in the main of consuming as much beer as possible. The British soldier with his experience of the peaceful atmosphere of the local is much better placed to compete with the differences he finds overseas.(32)

Thus it was the 'horrifying drunkenness,' witnessed among the troops garrisoned at Patea and Waihi, and in the Wasser

30 Lovegrove Papers, Box 27

31 W.G. Stevens, Problems of 2NZEF, p.163

32 ibid, p.218

district of Cairo in World War I, had surfaced again. The men of the territorial training and defence battalions stationed in New Zealand garrisons were of course limited to one 'swill' hour per day,but those on leave in Cairo and Italy were enjoying an unusually extended 'swill' time.

Like Patea,in 1868, there was pressure from many quarters to close the beer bars and grog shops of the Berka district in 1942. The anti-British feeling after the Ruweisat Ridge disaster combined with the demon drink to produce what the British Military Police called 'general disorder' with the accompanying violence being reminiscent of the Wasser riots in World War I. (33) Later on in North Africa and Italy, troops often received the opportunity to sample the local wines, a procedure which was entered into with some enthusiasm. The 25 Battalion war diary contained the entry: "In Tripoli the men made first contact with the species of high explosive known coloquially as 'plonk', a vicious type of red wine. Casualties were many but none fatal." A guard was mounted on the wine factory in question.(34)

Pilfering of army stores and the 'souveniring' of prisoners were other disciplinary aspects which had survived from colonial days.

It is not that the New Zealand soldier was worse than anyone else but that he was probably more indulged. There was a light hearted bravado about this kind of thing which was often shared by the officers. When the 25 Battalion was supplying working parties to unload stores at Tripoli it was circulated around the battalion that: "The Kiwis could unload more in three months than the Regulars in twelve, but as they acquired more in three months than they unloaded in twelve the score was about even."(35) It can be seen such stories were more boasts than confessions and seniors officers were sufficiently

33 Freyberg Papers, Series 8 (GOC) 2NZEF/U National Archives
34 25 Battalion War Diary, DA443 27/2, February 1943 " "
35 E. Puttick, 25 Battalion, p.265

aware of something going on to issue the following light reprimand and warning: "Dock Labour: There have been repeated reports that a considerable amount of pilfering is going on. Any ideas that broken stores may be taken away or consumed are quite incorrect."(36) In Italy the new crime of 'black marketing' became an adjunct of pilfering, and again directives to the troops on the subject seemed to assume a basic naive innocence, e.g. "Offences of looting are becoming unduly prevalent, it is apparent troops are not aware looting is an offence."(37) In reality there would seem to have been some sort of double standard being applied. The following notices appeared on battalion routine orders, where sympathetic but official warnings were curiously juxtaposed with a light hearted banter on supposedly serious subjects: "Bartering will cease forthwith; it is apparent all ranks do not realise it is an offence." The same month: "A certain officer asked the RQMS for fifteen pairs of canvas shoes, (for hockey) he was asked what price he was getting." And if the disposal of all the lire the troops were accumulating was a problem, then this notice offered a solution: "Members of the battalion who have more lire than sense are invited to try their hand in the Signals nightly school, where betting takes the sky's limit principle. As a result some are in the capitalist class."(38)

More generally Colonel Boord in response to a questionnaire answered: "After Casino there was a decline in moral standards, much hocking and looting."(39) Another soldier wrote: "Few drew full pay in Italy, which short of goods

36 25 Battalion War Diary February 1943

37 ibid RO3 7 February 1945

38 ibid March 1945

39 Kippenberger Papers 'Marshall Questionnaire' WA77 No.38 National Archives

was a ready market for surplus gear, blankets, clothes, cigarettes, food, etc. Everyone was doing it but not many got caught. The Americans and British were in it too, but their penalties were much heavier, it is difficult to say if New Zealanders were worse, just easier going militarily."(40) General Stevens wrote: "The only reliable guards on depots were German P.O.W.s....a regrettable state of affairs, all we could do was to refuse to handle the money the troops accumulated."(41)

The main point of bringing this darker side of a colonial tradition to light is to observe the role of the Army authorities. These offences were common to all armies but it is the latitude allowed by the senior officers which makes the whole area a curious feature of the New Zealand tradition. It would seem to stem from the old days when front line discipline only was held important. In a volunteer part time army there were no problems of occupying the men in peacetime, so the settler-companies tended to relax out of the line whilst the British were occupied with 'spit and polish' and regimental drills. Such penalties as were devised to keep order were mild, by overseas standards. It would seem much of this still applied in World War II. The officers took a relaxed and lenient view tending to defend their men rather than accuse them. Punishments, in the welfare conscious New Zealand Army, (evidence will be cited in the next chapter) were still mild compared with other armies, and there was a shared light heartedness about the whole subject, making it difficult to really crack down. Though judging by remarks made by the new arrivals overseas, the territorial training battalions operating in a home theatre took a more serious view of this kind of misbehaviour, so the relevant analysis is based on overseas comparisons.(42)

40 L.Hobbs, Kiwi Down the Strada, pp.15-20

41 W.G.Stevens, Problems, p.88

42 J. Henderson, 22 Battalion, p.221

The same latitude applied when it came to carrying on the World War I practice of 'souveniring' prisoners. For example the tone of this directive to officers was hardly severe or even implied the practice must cease: "P.O.W.s, instruct the men there is to be no lolly scrambles for souvenirs."(43) Certainly the Germans had knowledge of New Zealand partialities. At Trieste the garrison agreed at last, to surrender only to the New Zealanders. A German officer said: "If the partisans take us we shall lose our lives: if the New Zealanders, we shall lose our watches."(44) Earlier, in September 1944, a 22 Battalion soldier had observed, on being taken prisoner and successfully concealing a disposition map: "This officer's (German) main anxiety seemed to be for remembrances (souvenirs) which made him seem one of us."(45)

Yet, when questioned, most ex-servicemen agreed front line discipline was good, but in the same questionnaire opinions differed widely about discipline out of the line, possibly due to unit variations, or faulty memories.(46) Certainly this kind of directive revealed practices had developed in Italy that would not have been permitted among the territorials at base in Wanganui or New Plymouth. "Despite the fact that several orders have been issued, a large number of soldiers continue to wear unauthorised hats, recently a large number of French, Italian, German and civilian felt hats have been noticed."(47)

To sum up, a wide range of social problems have been looked at, i.e. demands for better conditions, non-observance of saluting, uncertainty in officer-men relations, a subscribedgeneral belief in social equality, attitudes

43 25 Battalion War Diary, 13 March 1943

44 P. Singleton-Gates, Freyberg, p.304

45 J. Henderson, 22 Battalion, p.361

46 Lt.J.R.McLeod, Myth and Reality. Questionnaire 1978 M.A. Thesis 1979

47 25 Battalion War Diary, 19 April 1943. National Archives

to the less serious crimes of pilfering, drinking, etc., and discipline at the front. All these problems are common to other armies, but due to a particular colonial tradition it is argued that, certain beliefs and attitudes were attached to these problems which made the New Zealand experience of them unique. There was a different psychological climate in the New Zealand Army, than say in the American Army, the men were much more indulged, and this could have been partly the result, and partly the cause of the men's assertiveness. For example, there can surely be few armies where the men can mutiny, take over a ship and delay the whole allied convoy, to obtain redress for a few petty grievances, and then have the whole incident quietly forgotten. Though admittedly this latitude prevailed more overseas than at home, and some of the reasons for this appear in the next chapter.

The earlier colonial wars had seen the development of a preference for particular battle tactics. At the time the adopted tactics had suited both the men who employed them and the needs of the situation. In World War I trench warfare had allowed little scope for traditional New Zealand specialities but World War II offered again more opportunity for tactical choice and preference.

In colonial days the volunteers had always kept their chain of command well forward, i.e. the leaders who had to make the ultimate decisions kept close to the fighting line. On the other hand, Imperial operations were often handicapped by definite orders from a chain of command which stretched right back to base. Later, in World War I, Colonel Malone was to complain bitterly when the Wellington Regiment was forced to attack in the wrong place at the wrong time by a chain of command which had no knowledge of the ground involved. It will be recalled at Cape Helles he successfully protested the futility of one attack. General Godley,

the British General, sent out to command the New Zealand forces was also criticised for planning attacks with his New Zealand staff from the deck of a destroyer and never visiting the scene of operations. On the other hand the old volunteer officers like Colonel Malone had learned the value of siting command posts well forward, to keep a firm hand and provide direction, certainly a necessary feature of bush warfare.

The major tactical failure of World War II for the New Zealanders was the premature withdrawal by the 22 Battalion from its position defending the vital airfield at Maleme, in Crete. A lot had gone wrong in this brigade and (see next chapter) one of the errors involved was the siting of brigade and battalion command posts too far back from the front line. Thus at a critical stage in the fighting the New Zealand commanders lost contact, and were unaware of the true situation. The men of the 22 Battalion were by no means overrun, as was presumed when ordered by their distant commander to withdraw. They therefore left, leaving a vital airfield to the enemy and his reinforcements.

The commander of the 22 Battalion, Colonel Andrews, V.C. had been a corporal in the first World War, subsequently promoted for his deeds, and retained in the inter-war regular force, spending much time seconded for training with British units. A deep and extended chain of command was a feature of World War I, the product of defensive thinking, and large armies. More generally this sort of thinking had not been adopted by the territorials training in New Zealand, for the 22 Battalion was an exception. Most battalions arrived from New Zealand with officers prepared to site their command posts well forward establishing some visual contact with the front line. Thus Colonel Varnham, the pre-war commander of the Taranaki Regiment received injuries on the first day the 19 battalion saw action in Greece.(48) This, of course, was the risk

48 D.W.Sinclair, 19 Battalion p.85

to be run and sometimes the price paid was too high. For example, in its first major encounter the 25 Battalion at Point 175 had its command posts too far forward and some of them were overrun, causing confusion and loss of direction.(49) Gradually, through trial and error, the correct positioning of command posts were established and a suitable balance arrived at. Nevertheless, when in contact with other armies different procedures were observed. General Kippenberger commented that by contrast, the American chain of command was too formal, same attacks, same troops, same places. Subordinate commanders were never consulted and the commanders never went forward or knew the condition of their troops. Such things were done by the British in World War I and Kippenberger found it hard to believe such an ignorance of war was still possible.(50) However, this is not to imply other armies did not also share these tactics from time to time. But two points are worth making. Firstly, having battle commanders well forward to make decisions on the spot; these were features of the early colonial army and probably small armies generally, e.g. the vast Russian army had a chain of command stretching right back to Moscow. Secondly, the pre-war territorial appeared to have developed a training bias for forward positions which was conveyed into action by the battalion commanders with territorial experience. As the 25 Battalion found out, it was a procedure suited to a New Zealand bush background, and not to be too faithfully repeated in the open desert.

The second tactical feature to survive is the agressive patrolling principle, i.e. ensuring your front is in contact with the enemy. The New Zealand volunteers had taught the Imperial army in the Maori Land Wars the value of active

49 W.E.Murphy, Point 175, p.20
50 H. Kippenberger, Infantry Brigadier, p.350

patrolling, and keeping contact with the enemy. Also, in World War I, the New Zealand Division had kept to this tactic and woken up many a quiet front, whereas the British as at Suvla Bay had been content to dig in without making contact. The Americans did a similar thing at Anzio. The New Zealand Division was noted in the Desert and in Italy for its active patrolling.(51) A captured German report on the fighting in Italy, belonging to the 29 Panzer Division, noted: "New Zealanders have a great preference for night patrolling mainly in cold blood....Against New Zealanders the troops must be particularly alert at night, not more than one third of the men in the front line must be asleep at once."(52) Thus, in at least this aspect the New Zealand soldier had acquired a special reputation, and after all the Germans were in a position to judge.

However this sort of tactic threw a great strain on the infantry platoons especially in Italy where casualties were high, and it will be shown later that New Zealand combined a high casualty toll, with a high battle 'exhaustion' rate and in this combined respect exceeded all other allied units in Italy.(53) Commanders complained of the men developing 'casa mentality', i.e. platoons 'holing up' in a ruined house and being reluctant to venture abroad. Moreover the principle of maintaining contact with the enemy became both more urgent and dangerous in Italy. The enemy was constantly withdrawing and the topography provided plenty of cover. Thus there was always the problem of detecting whether the enemy had withdrawn or not. On 31 January 1945 a platoon of the Wellington West Coast Company, 25 Battalion, was sent well forward in daylight to occupy a stopbank from which it appeared the enemy had withdrawn. The platoon successfully rushed across the open ground and dug in some distance away from the rest of the battalion. Meanwhile the Germans observing the advance, stealthily infiltrated across the stopbank and encircled the platoon. Cut off, after a hopeless fight, the platoon surrendered, whilst the battalion watched helplessly.(54)

51 E.Puttick, 25 Battalion, p.187
52 ibid p.559
53 T.M.Stout, New Zealand Medical Service, p.643
54 25 Battalion War Diary, 31 January 1945.

Relief had been impossible across open ground in daylight. The platoon had fought desperately until out of grenades (the vital weapon in this kind of fight), at that point only twelve out of twenty seven remained unwounded. Later two of the platoon escaped from captivity and made it back to tell the full story. Thus the principle of keeping contact with the enemy not only imposed a great strain on the men, it was costly as well.

Lastly there was the New Zealand preference for attacking by encircling the flanks or rear of an enemy. It must be added quickly that this tactic was by no means exclusive to the New Zealanders, but like the two tactical features mentioned earlier, the Germans had thought them sufficiently characteristic as to warrant special mention in a secret report to their divisional commanders. "The enemy (New Zealanders) very seldom attacks positions frontally but always tries to take them from the flank or rear.... they base their defence mainly on houses which are quickly converted to strong points for all round defence."(55) It will be recalled that the early Taranaki Volunteers had employed both these techniques to good advantage. Of course the bush was expressly suited for this kind of warfare and it was to be expected the territorial in training would adopt the techniques relevant to their background.(56) After all in Malaya the Japanese had quickly developed the same skills to surprise the British, whose training based on European type trench warfare had led them to ignore the possibilities contained by the jungle. It was of this kind of small scale penetration by patrols, operating especially at night, that the Germans sought to forewarn their commanders. No doubt the same kind of warning was passed on about other allied units, for it was a characteristic which could be shared, but

55 E. Puttick, 25 Battalion, p.559

56 C.L. Lovegrove, History of WWC and T Vol.V p.42

also one for which New Zealanders were by background suited. Therefore, by the judgement of the Germans, in World War II the New Zealand soldier was most outstanding employed as a specialist night fighter moving quickly through difficult terrain, in small patrol groups, operating on a wide front. An Intelligence Summary captured at Faenza from the 278 German Division revealed the following: "They (New Zealanders) are specialists in night fighting. They fight on a broad front in a way which corresponds to the German method (i.e. trying to infiltrate the flanks of a position) and are capable of fighting through difficult country."(57)

It was, therefore, the loose, decentralised, night patrol action which best reflected the territorial soldier's training and tradition, whereas young men from the brightly lit and sprawling industrial areas of the northern hemisphere were more easily organised en masse to perform in large set piece battles. New Zealand soldiers en masse could be very difficult to handle, as they were often rowdy and easily stirred. For example, in all three wars, even in relatively small numbers a troopship of New Zealanders has proved to be a difficult cargo. Perhaps it was because the troops were unused to being regulated in large numbers, and liked to assert their opinions. When the above were combined with the peculiar New Zealand drinking habits (less applicable now) the resulting mixture could provoke noisy crowd scenes, as military police who served in Cairo in both wars would have cause to remember.

New Zealand has been, and to an extent still is, a land of small towns, nearby bush and abundant space to use small arms. From such a training environment a part time soldier has emerged different from his territorial counterpart in London or New York. The latter have no nearby bush, in which they could pass their boyhood and early cadet training, instead they are used to the urban drill hall and organised rifle range.

57 P. Singleton-Gates, Freyberg, p.294

Whereas in the 1940s most New Zealanders lived in a semi-rural or small town environment which facilitated the development of military skills like, a keen eye, a quick appreciation of cover and hidden folds in the land, a proficiency with firearms, and an ability to move easily at night. Territorial training could build on these environmental influences and even the city dweller could learn from the ever present farmer's son. It was no wonder that in the early encounters with the 19 Battalion in Greece, a German paratroop sergeant said: "The men thought they had run up against picked marksmen, who were clever at hiding themselves and knew how to hold their fire."(58) Thus territorial training, tradition and environment, had combined to produce an amateur soldier used to moving through difficult country, often at night, and employing many of the same skills adopted by his forebears nearly a hundred years earlier.

It would seem safe therefore to conclude that some of the earlier traditions did survive World War II especially those depicted under the theme headings of reputation, assertiveness, and military tactics. Many of these characteristics have been weakened over time; for example, the ideals and enthusiasms bound up in the Anzac legend, or changed by circumstance such as the increasing urbanisation of the New Zealander, but some part of the old traits remained. However, even as some of the old traditions faded, so new, more national, aspirations rose to take their place. Above all the war brought out a desire for unity in the Army and a search for a shared but distinctive New Zealand identity. Tracing the course of this important development, which has already been shown to have affected the post-war organisation of the army, territorial, and regular, is the final task of this thesis.

58 S.P.Lleywllyn, Other Side of the Hill, p.9

CHAPTER VIII

OVERSEAS WORLD WAR II : NATIONALISM AND CONFORMITY

Besides taking overseas some features of their heritage the soldiers of the Regiment also began to find a common unity never before so noticeable. It has been argued that the result of these experiences can be seen in the post-war integration of the Army under the 'One Army' concept. The final product being the merger of the Wellington West Coast Regiment with the Taranaki Regiment in 1948, and an ultimate change of name to 5 Battalion RNZIR in 1964. These conclusions taking place within New Zealand have already been described, it remains however to examine the origins of these important developments which occurred overseas.

In World War I the two battalions of the Wellington Regiment had remained closely identified, often fighting side by side, keenly aware of their own special relationship and their link with the territorial depots in Wanganui and New Plymouth.(1) Billeted together at Fricourt in October 1916 the Majors Treadwell and Hanna observed: "We no longer looked upon ourselves simply as members of one or other of the two battalions but as part of the Wellington Regiment".(2) This sort of thinking was in direct succession to behaviour in the Maori Land Wars when provincial loyalty was everything in military affairs. Thus in spite of reorganisation in 1910, regional loyalties still remained a bonding force in World War I, and even the reorganisation of 1923 referred to earlier, had proved abortive because it disturbed local affiliations. But this was not the case with the Wellington battalions of World War II, they never did discover the same affinity; either between themselves or their nominal territorial depots. The former practice of

1 C.A.L.Treadwell, Recollections, p.141

2 W.H. Cunningham, The Wellington Regiment, p.109

the overseas battalions retaining the various hat badges of the territorial units they represented was discontinued from the outset. Also no officer would write regularly to the territorial depot giving news of the fortunes of the local affiliated company as Captain Cameron did, expressing such sentiments as: "I will do all I can to keep the flag of the dear old 7 Wellington West Coast Regiment where it now flies."(3) Nor did the territorial regiments maintain the same links; territorial officers were no longer assumed to be in two places at once or promoted according to seniority if overseas.

To explain this shift in emphasis from regional to national identification will be the first of two themes developed. That is to establish what factors promoted the national ideal and the parallel 'One Army' concept. It will be argued as the 2NZEF became a distinctively national force,local identities and rivalries had less meaning. It was the concept of the 'One Army' which increasingly dominated military thought to the detriment of earlier traditions. Not unconnected with this trend is the second theme of conformity within 2NZEF, whereby certain consensus opinions and methods were established reflecting a greater confidence and self satisfaction. Mid-1942 was the critical time when these new traditions rose to maturity to be overtly and definitely expressed. After sustaining heavy losses in the desert New Zealanders felt ill-used in a campaign that was going badly. Survivors of the battles wandered around Cairo aimlessly drinking and picking fights with their allies. Serious disorders occurred but much of the detailed evidence still remains classified beyond the reach of researchers.(4) The officers protested to Freyberg the need in future for supporting New Zealand arms under New Zealand control, and

3 Lovegrove Papers, Box 17

4 Freyberg Papers Series 8 National Archives

this gave urgency to what was already army policy. The army, thereafter became more insular, whilst trying to establish a distinctive New Zealand identity, and to achieve the two ends a necessary internal conformity was required. But it was a conformity imposed from below, endorsed and at times directed by the senior commanders, who shared very closely the feelings of the men in the ranks.

It was not just the loss of the regional hat badge; there were many other factors about battalion life in World War II which diminished regional consciousness and the sense of a particular provincial identity. In World War I diaries, letters, routine orders, etc. there was constant reference to the various companies by name and seldom by the alphabetical designation A, B, C, D, etc. From the start the reverse was true of World War II.(5) In any case after the sudden setbacks of 1941 and 1942, it was not meaningful to refer to the companies by their provincial titles. Many of the companies had to be reconstituted from whatever troops were available as reinforcements. For some time after Japan's entry into the war, from December 1941 to January 1943, reinforcements were held back in New Zealand. Thus for a period the Division had to make good its losses by taking men from base at Maadi or utilising those released from hospital.(6) The situation was stabilised somewhat during the Italian campaign when more regular losses were matched against regular reinforcements. However, by that time all sorts of changes had been made in the New Zealand battalions, so that the historian of the 19 Battalion observed: "No longer could the 19 claim to be a North Island unit, the provinces were still represented but so was the rest

5 Lovegrove Papers Folder 12

6 W.G. Stevens, Problems of 2NZEF, p.44

of New Zealand."(7) The Kippenberger Papers reveal that at first the other arms had a priority call on new drafts and the infantry took what was left.(8)

Major-General Stevens acknowledged this need to transfer men at short notice and noted that the average New Zealander can be transferred with ease. He went on to add: "The commonest form of transfer was from one to another of the three infantry groups Northern, Central and Southern. Varying losses, the varying composition of the call up, the formation of the armoured brigade and other moves of units, all made it necessary from time to time to transfer blocks of men."(9) Thus within a short time there was less and less purpose in referring to companies by their provincial names, but it did mean an immediate sense of local identity was lost. When Major-General Stevens referred to the ease with which New Zealanders can be transferred he had in mind a certain uniformity among New Zealanders, a uniformity of manner, speech, outlook, and physical type. He noted that regiments in Great Britain and Europe were drawn from limited areas because of strong differences in dialect and life style. Thus to transfer a block of men from say Cumberland into a Surrey regiment would be to immediately set them apart and disturb the unity of the regiment.

By the same token when deficiencies are revealed and things go wrong it is more comfortable for all concerned to bring out and play up impersonal regional differences as the scapegoat. Provincialism was blamed for the disastrous rivalry between the battalions of 4 Brigade which culminated in the premature withdrawal from the vital Maleme sector in Crete. In part this withdrawal was due to a lack of liaison between the rival battalions, especially between 22 Battalion and 23 Battalion. The Kippenberger Papers reveal there was much personal animosity

7 D.W.Sinclair, 19 Battalion, p.491

8 Kippenberger Papers, Ref.SA77 No.38/33 National Archives.

9 W.G. Stevens, Problems of 2NZEF, p.195

between Colonel D.F. Leckie an ex-territorial officer of good social standing, and Colonel L. Andrews, the former corporal, who had risen through the ranks of the regular army. Kippenberger in a letter to W.C. McClymont wrote: "Hargest ran a lax brigade, the units quarrelled with one another or rather their commanders did, and the units conformed with mutual dislike."(10)

To some extent the numbered battalion provided a conscious focus for identity, as it did in World War I, but the specific geographical identity of a battalion with a province was weaker. Partly this vacuum was filled by new role identities which further weakened old provincial ties. The 19 Battalion became an armoured regiment, whilst for some time the 22 Battalion became a motorised unit acting as an independent and self supporting group. As these specialised functions developed so did new allegiances, symbolised for example by the adoption of the distinctive Tank Corps black beret by the 19 Battalion in December 1942. Thus the World War I concept of battalions fighting side by side differing only by their geographical allegiances and provincial badges had faded, as modern warfare required distinctive and specialised units. Most men enjoyed and identified with their new specialised roles. When at one point a mischievous rumour went round that the 4 Armoured Brigade would lose its tanks and become infantry again, there was some dismay recorded among the men of the 19 Battalion.(11)

Sport too was not conducted on a regional basis, rather it is noted in Italy the 19 Battalion's rugby team: "Had a match each week against various teams from R.A.F. and S.A.A.F. units stationed nearby."(12) Thus apart from matches against other allied units, there were the brigade

10 Kippenberger Papers WA2 Series 11. No.7 National Archives
11 D.W. Sinclair, 19 Battalion p.476
12 ibid, p.489

and divisional teams which of course were non-regional. Even the inter-unit matches invariably involved contests with specialised units like an Ammunition Company, or Field Regiment, etc. Thus it is argued that the Division provided the strongest and most binding source of identity. It was, by 1943, a small and all-embracing national army, and the vaguer regional affiliations gave way to being part of a definite body, the Division. Without the diverse dialects of the British, the New Zealanders shared an experience in common with the American soldier, i.e. identification with the Division. Of course at a personal level of consciousness the platoon was the world, as Captain E.B. Paterson of the 22 Battalion described it:

> The platoon was the fighting unit, the unit you actually lived in. You ate with, slept with, fought with those in the section. You knew those in the other two sections and you relied on them in a fight to support you. You didn't know, however, the chaps in the other sections with anything like the same degree of intimacy. Generally in battle you felt the strength of the platoon rather than the battalion.(13)

Nevertheless there remained a larger more objective group consciousness to be satisfied which in the second World War with its greater mobility, improved communications, radio, and films, found its identity in the division. The sense of mutual belonging which the two battalions of the Wellington Regiment had in World War I, represented by their common regional tradition, did not exist between the 19, 22 and 25 Battalions in World War II.

Apart from differences growing up within the battalions there were considerable external pressures forcing the West Coast and Taranaki soldier to settle his larger group consciousness on the Division.

13 J. Henderson, 22 Battalion, p.7

First there were the directed pressures which worked to build up the image of the New Zealand Division. Also as the New Zealand Division was to all intents and purposes the New Zealand Army, the effect was to consolidate a national ideal and distinctiveness.

From the start there emerged a strong desire to keep the New Zealand Army, a distinct and independent force. This wish to be independent and self-contained was if anything strengthened as time passed. Originally the New Zealand government opposed the splitting up of the Division so that it could keep the army under its control. The disappearance of small units piecemeal into the British Army would not allow this. Such a development would have offended national sensibilities and made impossible the high standard of welfare New Zealand troops demanded. Thus contemporary accounts came to record that on matters of pay, leave, punishments, and welfare, the New Zealand soldier was better off than most of his allied counterparts.(14)

The Division had commenced operations in Egypt adopting British rations, punishment centres, welfare centres, service facilities, hospitals, etc. By 1941 the British rations were supplemented, a punishment centre established, separate but not at first exclusive welfare and recreational facilities opened, including a New Zealand Naafi selling home rather than the more easily obtainable British products.

Perhaps with more concern for welfare than being distinctively national, the Division had soon shunned the British punishment centres in Egypt, and in 1941 a Field Punishment Centre was opened to deal with the majority of offenders. Those with longer term sentences were sent back to New Zealand. Brigadier-General Kippenberger decided soon after arrival in Egypt to inspect the British Punishment Centre, he later wrote: "I did not like the British glasshouse, its commander, or the look of the staff, the food, or the

25 Battalion War Diary, March 1945:
14 A survey of 25 Battalion offences in March 1945 revealed some forty charges mostly for AWOL, drunkeness, and loss of regimental necessaries. Nearly all were punished by forfeiture of pay and this was at a time when offences were on the increase.

scrubbing of latrine buckets, or the men stood facing the wall."(15) His views were shared by many of the senior New Zealand officers who found such a regime left men either broken or resentful.(16) On the other hand perhaps the New Zealand detention facilities were too humanitarian as at least one local soldier found: "One week's detention proved more pleasurable than Company routine. The detention unit was on the shores of the Mediterranean and we had a glorious swim each day."(17) With lighter court martial sentences and an obvious concern for welfare, the Division generally appreciated the paternalistic basis on which it operated. The men looked aghast at British discipline, and the heavy sentences the Americans handed out, for New Zealand had a system of suspended sentences with an immediate forfeiture of pay.(18) Kippenberger gives an illustration of a more flexible approach:

> I merely asked them if they intended to be soldiers and follow the rules or not, they said they did so charges were dismissed. Later some soldiers presumed on this leniency and went inside.(19)

Thus the men were reminded of their distinctive identity and the privileges attached to it.

In June 1941, the NZEF Times was created as a method of disseminating 'New Zealand' news. It was very successful and though primary full of sporting news, including the racing results from home, it nevertheless worked to provide a Divisional consciousness. In this respect the territorials lagged behind, for like their colonial forbears, their newspapers were mainly local, concerned with events which affected a particular region.

15 H. Kippenberger, Infantry Brigadier, p.10

16 W.G.Stevens, Problems, p.221

17 F. Stuckey, Sometimes Free, p.13

18 25 Battalion War Diary, September 1941: the diary shows many AWOL offences were punished simply by suspended sentences and a forfeiture of pay. One case in September 1941 resulted in the loss of five days pay for a private soldier found guilty of being in Cairo without leave, dressed as a sergeant, found in a black brothel area contrary to a special circular and having struck the military policeman who arrested him.

19 Kippenberger, Infantry Brigadier, p.10

The New Zealander was to become very proud of the high standard of his clubs and welfare centres. The New Zealand club in Cairo opened in 1941 boasted one of the 'biggest beer bars' in the world, a record some thought a disgrace. However, it was the increasing insular aspect of these bars and centres which should be noted, a point exemplified by this direction on 25 Battalion routine orders: "Reminder, NZ Forces Club was closed to other troops so other clubs should be left free to troops other than New Zealanders, and as it is desired not to put other forces clubs out of bounds, therefore troops are required NOT to use them."(20) In Italy the same practice was followed and the troops delighted in the race which developed outside the large cities to see which allied unit could commandeer the best hotel. The New Zealanders were first in Venice,after an unauthorised move out of the divisional area, when Freyberg specifically detached the Wellington West Coast company of 22 Battalion to secure the Danieli Hotel.(21) Such exclusive clubs and leave centres gave the New Zealanders great satisfaction and a feeling of distinctiveness. A sense deliberately indulged by Freyberg who held: "You can't treat a man like a butler and expect him to fight like a gladiator." Freyberg, the ex-Guards officer, had made considerable adjustments since taking over the New Zealand Division, as his biographer records, particularly as these centres were established on an all ranks basis.(22) But the essential point about these clubs was not the very high standard of welfare provided, but the fact that they were closed to other nationalities, whilst other allied centres remained open to all.

20 25 Battalion War Diary RO30 14 June 1943

21 J. Henderson 22 Battalion p.43 : the company had to guard its prize and Lieutenant L...., a former meter reader of Hawera, was forced to turn away an enraged brigadier, a colonel, and several staff officers from other divisions.

22 P. Singleton-Gates, Freyberg, p.109

This mood of national insularity began in earnest in mid-1942. The war had been going badly and the New Zealanders in particular had suffered a string of humiliating disasters for which supporting allied units were blamed. The survivors of the depleted battalions went on a rampage in Cairo reminiscent of the riots in World War I. Drinking heavily they picked fights with other allied personnel, particularly allied officers and the British Military Police who complained of obstruction and antagonism from the New Zealand provost, a force specifically established to assist them. Throughout these disorders the officers displayed considerable sympathy for the men, and were accused by the British Police authorities of neglecting their duty.(23) The outcome of this tension was a demand from the senior field officers that most supporting units in future be either New Zealand manned or New Zealand controlled, in fact, dealing less with outsiders. Already to some extent army policy, the complaints gave added weight to a desire to form more New Zealand specialist units. Thus the 19 Battalion was taken out of the desert fighting to reform as an armoured regiment. A few months later in 1943 another row developed with British G.H.Q. over the location of New Zealand hospitals, the British maintaining the hospitals should be located to meet the needs of the whole Eighth Army. The Division, insisting that New Zealanders wished to be treated in their own hospitals and they should therefore be located near the Division. In the end the British had to reluctantly give way, though the hospital did not function to full capacity in its new more exclusively New Zealand orientated location.

By 1944, it was decided to create a New Zealand OCTU even though this was wasteful of manpower. At first it had been thought useful to use the British facilities as cadets could profitably associate with other nationalities.

23 Freyberg Papers, Series 8 (GOC) 2NZEF/U August to September 1942.

However it was reasoned such cadets were to be junior officers to lead New Zealand platoons and would seldom meet other nationalities anyway; also there was some unhappiness over training priorities in the British OCTUs, especially the excessive amount of 'spit and polish'.(24) Furthermore a British proposal suggesting the pooling of officer resources was rejected. As Major General Stevens admitted:

> We had no objection to New Zealanders moving on to higher commands in British formations but we could not bring ourselves to agree on the reverse as we did not think UK officers could handle New Zealanders. We thought in 1940 and continued to think that New Zealanders gave of their best only when commanded by New Zealanders, and that there could be no question of a British formation commander serving in 2NZEF.(25)

A process which began in 1940 with resisting Eighth Army attempts to transfer specialist units away from the Division continued from 1942 with the aim of keeping the Division exclusively a New Zealand force in every aspect. General Stevens added: "In a small army the practice of having separate depots was wasteful but we did not want to share, so we had our own driving schools, signals, maintenance, camouflage reception depots, ordnance, ports, ciphers, records, bakeries, etc."(26) He went on to pose the question:

> Was our tail too large, should these service units been attached to the equivalent British units? Although this tied up roughly half 2NZEF in employment outside the Division it was the price of keeping New Zealanders happy by being with their own kith and kin at every stage between disembarkation and the Division. Unconsciously at first then more consciously as time went on we liked working with our own people and disliked being detached from them.(27)

24 W.G.Stevens, Problems of 2NZEF, p.200

25 ibid, p.178

26 ibid, p.142

27 ibid, p.170

It should be appreciated how little this process could involve the home territorial battalions stuck in their base camps and city garrisons. Nevertheless there was some interchange of personnel and the message got through well enough to facilitiate a smooth integration of regulars and territorials in the post-war era.

Whether 'swanning' around Europe immediately after the war or locked inside POW camps, contemporary accounts continuously refer to this process of searching each other out and forming tight knit exclusive groups. As one Wellington soldier wrote of his POW experiences: "We worshipped New Zealand in adversity the greatest little country on earth, and formed a close knit community which joked and yarned."(28) Another soldier writing of the 'swanning time' in Italy at the close of hostilities: "New Zealanders went everywhere in Europe unofficially. They kept to themselves on leave because they thought a New Zealand identity worth preserving, from what they saw of other people."(29) Becoming increasingly insular and feeling far from home,the authorities recognising the need even, had circulated special 'New Zealand' note paper and in November 1944 the following notice appeared on the 25 Battalion Routine Orders: "Owing to the extraordinary demand for notepaper there will be a shortage in future."(30) Thus the net result, whether directly or indirectly, was to create an awareness of exclusive nationalism and a deliberate isolationism. Certainly wherever international feelings are played down national ones are intensified. Also as many politicians the world over know, when faced with problems of unification, national feelings grow at the expense of regional or provincial ties, and vice versa. New Zealand's army came out of World War II a much more collectively national force. The territorial regiments

28 J. Henderson, Gunner Inglorious, p.167

29 L. Hobbs, Kiwi Down the Strada, p.120

30 25 Battalion War Diary, R051. 16 November 1944 National Archives

were to recover some ground during the conscription years of the 1950s, but the strong sense of local pride and identity of former years had passed for ever. It was inevitable such a development could not remain autonomous to overseas experience, and the 'One Army' concept referred to earlier, was the direct result, which led to a re-organisation and integration of the territorial system in the post-war years.

The second theme of this chapter deals with the strong conformist influence which pervaded the army at this time, and is not unconnected with the process examined above. This type of conformity accorded with the New Zealanders concept of equality, but it had no politically authoritarian overtones. It emerged rather as 'a grass roots' phenomenon, perhaps augmented by the welfare consciousness of the army. The result was to produce not so much political or economic conformity, but rather a social conformity. As has been stated in Chapter I, the early settlers wanted more equality, both economic and political. Yet as became clear throughout the Maori Land Wars they were amazingly tolerant of eccentric and independent minded citizens. However by World War II it appears much of the demand for equality had become a demand for conformity. Moreover it was in particular a social conformity which was required, by the men themselves. The army authorities were needed only to endorse such demands, which in the main they did.

Thus the 'all ranks', 'Anzacs only', 'biggest beer bar' situated in the centre of Cairo was viewed by even the New Zealand authorities as a 'monstrous disgrace,' and by the redcaps as a source of constant trouble; but nothing could be done to close it.(31) The troops wanted it, however, from time to time it was allowed to run out of beer in such a way as the men would understand and appreciate. (32)

31 P. Singleton-Gates, Freyberg, p.186

32 25 Battalion War Diary, RO42, 28 June, 1943: "The supply of beer held by the New Zealand Forces Club has been exhausted. In future beer will be strictly rationed."

Having once again one of the highest VD rates in Egypt and Italy, among allied personnel, was also no source of pleasure to the army establishment. The problem became worse in Italy with a large civilian population and big cities.(33) At times in Italy, the rate per thousand affected was running six times as high as that of the British troops.(34) Such problems indicated a lack of adequate discipline and moral laxity, to the medical authorities, but there was little that could be done.(35) Originally as in World War I, the senior officers wanted offenders punished and treated as criminals. However the view of D.G.M.S. prevailed. His aim was to encourage preventitive measures and be lenient enough to encourage the men to report early when infected. This of course meant the army was conforming to the men's requirements, and liberalised its thinking, but it did ensure a speedier return to health and active service.(36) Therefore, in Italy, battalion routine orders posted regular notices of the following kind: "VD Warning, report sick as soon as first signs appear."(37)

There were many other examples of the troops acting together in an unpremeditated way to achieve ends which brought the authorities to conform to their thinking and adjust to the general consensus. Such as the demand for minimum standards of comfort by the 25 Battalion, and elements of other units, sailing on the S.S. Ormonde : the

33 25 Battalion War Diary. Weekly Health Report, 8 June 1944, disclosed nineteen men were being treated as against a weekly average of less than ten in Africa.

34 T.O.M. Stout, N.Z. Med. Services, p.683

35 ibid, p.683

36 A.J. Barker, Behind Barbed Wire, p.140.: The tactful but liberal issue of condoms produced some amusing incidents as when Captain Brown was captured in Greece. His luggage contained six hundred contraceptives for issue to his company. The army duly forwarded his luggage home to his wife. Some months later in captivity he received a letter in which she expressed surprise stating: "One normally expects a man on active service to have a few romances, but I never dreamed you were so virile."

37 25 Battalion War Diary R.O.s 1944-45

wrecking of the camp cinema as a protest against inferior programmes and breakdowns, by men of the 19 Battalion; and the uncontrolled outburst of firing on New Year's eve 1941, which spread through the whole division and alarmed other allied units. Some of these activities were strongly reminiscent of a tradition of behaviour stretching back to the Maori Land Wars and as such will be referred to later on. By the same token there was little likelihood of the territorial in New Plymouth or Wanganui garrisons indulging in any of these activities.

However to get the New Zealand soldier to conform as a matter of direction from above in the manner of some European and Asian troops was difficult, as the officers of the 25 Battalion found, when they called for cheers for Mr Churchill as he drove along the road occupied by the battalion. The response at first was weak but when he returned along the same route no one called for cheers, and the reception then was warm, friendly, and enthusiastic. Churchill asked the Brigade Commander why this was so and was told, they do not cheer well to orders, but the second time cheered of their own accord.(38) For the same reason a member of the 22 Battalion catching an informal glimpse of King George VI during his visit to Italy, wrote: "To see our dust covered monarch drive slowly by with no ceremonial parade or organised cheering point, convinced me 'old George was a good bloke' and brought to light an unexpected patriotism."(39)

38 J.T. Burrows, Pathway Among Men, p.199

39 J. Henderson, 22 Battalion, p.310

Nevertheless there remained a strong desire for conformity among the troops coming out and spreading up from the other ranks. Thus as long as the authorities based their actions on what conformed to the men's basic beliefs there was no need to tread lightly.

For this reason conscientious objectors were not to be treated leniently. Of the 5117 appeals lodged, forty percent were dismissed outright. Eventually a hard core of eight hundred men became military defaulters, and were sent to detention camps until May 1946. This was an improvement on the treatment this minority group received in World War I, but by no means approached the easy toleration of Maori Land Wars, as it was in the Taranaki and Wanganui military districts, when men were conscripted for the militia. Moreover, a contemporary comparison with the U.K. in 1943 revealed three hundred and fifty men detained there for much shorter terms as against nearly eight hundred permanently held in New Zealand.

Another form of unspeakable non-conformist behaviour was cowardice in the face of the enemy. When a man of the 22 Battalion fell sobbing near the attack start line:

> Two other men were about to go too, if they went most of the platoon would crumble. The platoon officer held him by the neck and tried to shake some guts into him but in vain. So towing him by an arm, they dragged him along the ground along with them into battle.(40)

By 1942 such cases had multiplied enough to be treated medically and labelled with the euphemism 'physical exhaustion': such soldiers were given a base job or returned to New Zealand.(41) At various times the problem had been referred to as functional nervous disease, hysteria, battle neurosis, and nervous disability. Though all this name

40 J. Henderson, 22 Battalion, p.5

41 T.D.M.Stout, New Zealand Medical Services, p.481

changing indicated confusion, it was due more to a desire to hide the facts rather than an inability to diagnose the cause. But as cases multiplied so at last this kind of bold authoritative decision became possible: "As from the publication of this order all casualties due to nervous disability will be classified as sickness-exhaustion not hysteria or anxiety neurosis."(42) There were many instances of men refusing to go into battle in every battalion and they usually received one year's imprisonment. Little sympathy was retained for such men, and there was considerable pressure on individuals to perform well and not lettheirmates down. As one ex-member of 22 Battalion put it: "Fear of failure was most important, no one wanted to be a coward and very few failed."(43) Perhaps pressure from mates and fear of failure explain why New Zealand's combined battle casualty rates and battle neurosis rates were both higher per thousand than that of other allied units fighting in Italy in 1944. Only the Indians had higher rate of battle casualties and the South Africans a higher rate of nervous disorders; but neither could exceed the New Zealanders combined figures.(44)

It will be recalled there was no pressure, or fear of failure surrounding the colonial soldier in the Maori Land Wars, when many of the Armed Constabulary simply took off, whilst the militia often failed even to parade for active service. Also the territorials in New Zealand awaiting possible drafting to 2NZEF, would know little of these problems. 'Exhaustion' meant a posting back in the Divisions ever growing tail. There was no repetition of the World War I error of returning officers home to their territorial depots for no apparent reason, a practice which in small communities caused much speculation and comment.

42 25 Battalion War Diary. R.P.57 5 December 1944 National Archives

43 McLeod Questionnaire, Question 9, Myth and Reality, M.A. Thesis, Massey University, 1979

44 T.D.M.Stout, New Zealand Medical Services, p.643

On other matters it would appear the Army authorities, urged on by particular circumstances, or international comparison, moved a little ahead of the general consensus of opinion, especially in the areas concerning women and P.O.W.s. Apparently the employment of women in 2NZEF was not considered until the army authorities, desparately short of typists, etc. became aware that other allied units of the Eighth Army were employing females in a non-combative military role.

> They arrived in the Middle East in their thousands but New Zealand lagged in following suit, save for the nursing sisters. Presumably elsewhere the moral risk attendant on a few women serving among a lot of men was held to be too great. Surprisingly enough most of the men in the force agreed with this view and did not approve of New Zealand women working in the Middle East. This viewpoint does everyone credit; but surely time had marched on.(45)

It took some time before women were admitted to the 2NZEF and much earnest discussion. The first girls arrived in 1944, increasing slowly in number to about two hundred by the end of the war. Even then H.Q.2NZEF could never bring itself to adopt the mixed messes common in other allied units, perhaps because they were unwanted.

With the traditionally higher than average VD rate it was expected: "The mere presence of New Zealand girls would influence the behaviour of the men for the good, but their influence was negligible."(46) However it soon became apparent the girls were monopolised by officers, and the belief gained ground that the girls were officer conscious, and the men began to sneer and avoid them.(47) Matters were made worse because the over protective Army authorities insisted on the girls being given officer status, and moving around in hotels, clubs, trains, etc. using first class

45 W.G.Stevens, Problems, p.207
46 ibid, p.209
47 ibid, p.209

facilities. However, outside New Zealand circles in Egypt and Cairo, girls in uniform were treated as the female equivalent of the men in the ranks, as were British, American and French girls. This offended New Zealand sensibilities: "We were not prepared to see our girls treated in the same way as were these English WAACs who travelled third class."(48) At one stage the Army considered making them all officers, but in the end sensibly opted for a special printed card stating clearly that the holder had all the privileges of an officer.

Because of all this official fussiness, the men who had never wanted them in the first place, grew increasingly irritated. As a soldier commented: "It seemed girls only went out with officers and this was resented. Indeed girls sought out the highest ranking officer. There were stories circulating of girls cutting privates they knew from the same home town."(49) The celebrated New Zealand war novel, Brave Company, set in Italy, brings out this bitterness towards women, especially the New Zealand women, who patronised the men and made up to the officers.(50)

Generally speaking, apart from basic sexual relief, the New Zealand soldier had little time for women. There were relatively few marriages overseas and in any case, they were officially discouraged, and no marriages to non-Europeans were to be allowed at all.(51) The majority of men went along with this point of view for as a soldier in Italy wrote: "Not too much taking Italian girls out, New Zealanders slow to grasp Italian preferred drink and sport to courtship."(52) Yet there remained the same odd streak of naive puritanism referred to in World War I. It was reflected in this 22 Battalion soldier's observations: "And the women, so many of them still had the charm and

48 W.G. Stevens, Problems, p.209

49 L. Hobbs, Kiwi Down the Strada, p.61

50 G. Wilson, Brave Company, p.97

51 25 Battalion War Diary. R.O.23.20 June 1944: In no circumstances will a member of 2NZEF marry without consent of HQ. Such marriages will not in any way be recognised by 2NZEF and no dependants allowance will be paid

52 L. Hobbs, Kiwi Down the Strada, p.58

looks of their uprbinging, their new job did not show in their appearance. We asked one young girl in a bar one night why she had started on this career."(53) Thus the troops in general and the Army authorities in particular retained definite ideas about marriage partners and the role of women: the ideal was the virtuous and home loving New Zealand housewife. Nevertheless the government were obliged by circumstance to bring out girls who often did not conform to the ideal, nor did the Mediterranean bar girls, or the Arab women going about their menial and degrading chores. These everyday examples of different female behaviour tended to arouse either irritation, interest, or indignation. In Syria, June 1942, the men of the 19 Battalion saw Arab women employed by sappers as labourers. This caused astonishment to the troops, who when passing the toiling parties were always ready to hurl derisive comments at the sapper supervisors for their lack of chivalry in permitting women to perform this solid manual work.(54)

For a time New Zealanders held a tough uncompromising line with reference to POWs. In World War I, only five hundred New Zealanders had been taken captive, and though this tiny proportion of the INZEF was warmly received back, for some, there remained a faint sense of shame and disgrace. In World War II over eight thousand were captured and ninety percent of these were captured in the early years of fighting, 1941-42. Thus many of the men went into captivity feeling somehow guilty and disgraced.(55) These feelings persisted through captivity. Corporal Stuckey of Palmerston North described how he felt on his way home.

> What would it be like? My thoughts were very mixed. Other feelings haunted me deep down. What did you do in the war Daddy? I was a prisoner of war, Sonny. Of course that was never said to me, but that was what haunted me as the engines were cut and slowly but surely a new life was about to begin. A prisoner

53 J.Henderson 22 Battalion, p.305

54 D.W.Sinclair, 19 Battalion, p.249

55 W.Wynne-Mason, Prisoners of War, p.527

of war. A big disappointment to me.(56)

Up to the end of World War II there was perceived in the official attitude to returning POWs, a faint element of disapproval as in this report to HQ 2NZEF from the New Zealand Repatriation unit in the U.K., dated 25 March 1945:

> Any ex-prisoner arriving in our hands should be treated as a normal soldier who has returned to duty after having had a slack time...and his liability to Army orders made clear so that there is no doubt if he makes any breach of orders. He should be punished for breeches as a normal soldier. Special treatment, leave or concessions such as U.K. leave on a big scale should be avoided.(57)

It appeared for a time the public and authorities in New Zealand shared much the same view, and regarded POWs as soldiers who had been enjoying a 'slack time.' However once the stories of hardship and atrocity became public, attitudes everywhere swung sharply to the opposite extreme. Perhaps too much so, for their was some romanticising of the state of captives in enemy countries.(58) Meanwhile, the Director General of Medical Services had acted by strongly recommending that the reception unit in the U.K. be in the nature of a convalescent depot with an absence of discipline, and that it be situated near or in a large city, as POWs were sick of the country. Also he arranged for ex-prisoners to be sent home as soon as they were fit enough to mingle again with their own community. Wynne Mason concluded: "Fortunately for all concerned it was this enlightened view which was that adopted by the Reception Group in the U.K."(59)

56 F. Stuckey, Sometimes Free, p.192

57 W.Wynne-Mason, Prisoners of War, p.494

58 ibid, p.528

59 ibid, p.301 : Of the New Zealanders held in Italy at the time of the armistice, some twelve per cent successfully escaped whereas the percentage of successful escapes at this time for the British Commonwealth captives as a whole was double this figure. This low escape rate is partly explained by the fact that many New Zealanders were held in Northern Italy where the Germans had greater control.

Most armies hold definite opinions about other allied and enemy units. There was, in this respect, the usual degree of conformity and the written opinions of the men of the three Wellington battalions proved no exception. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this range of common attitudes is to note the change and modification they underwent from World War I. The Anzac soldier, it will be remembered, was loud and abrasive in his view of others, and his attitude indicated the immaturity of the zealous amateur soldier. In this longer, more mobile war, especially by the time the Division reached Italy, the attitudes reflected more the detached maturity of the professional soldier. These views are important because they soon filtered back to the territorial soldiers, who had no first hand experience but relied on the veteran NCOs, sent back to update their training, for impressions of others. Impressions, which easily became the folklore of military history. Thus the hated 'Hun' of World War I became 'old Ted' who never gave an inch.(60) There was a grudging admiration of 'old Ted' and his superb siting of delaying weapons.(61) Likewise there was generally a respect and liking for allied units fighting alongside whether they were British, French, Indian, South African, Australian or American. The British infantry in particular receiving much more respect than was customary in World War I. There was some initial hostility reminiscent of the colonial wars, in Cairo 1940, between the 19 Battalion and the neighbouring Scots Guards, which spread to the officers, but once out fighting in the desert, tension eased. The 19 Battalion in the desert struck up a particular friendship with the Essex Regiment, and, all ranks who associated with the Essex Regiment held them in very high regard.(62)

60 J. Henderson, 22 Battalion, p.271
61 D.W. Sinclair, 19 Battalion, p.471
62 ibid, p.226

Even the R.A.F. and the Tank corps managed to redeem themselves for their earlier non-appearance. It is also interesting to note the change in attitude from World War I towards the Egyptian civilian, from being mere 'niggers' and 'natives', the male Egyptian had at least become sufficiently human to be personalised as 'George Wog.' The term 'George Wog' indicated the troops obtained a derisive amusement from the antics of the Egyptian labourer and his 'shifty' 'lazy' ways. A soldier of the 19 Battalion wrote: "George toiled no harder than he had to and was adept at all types of subterfuge, the toe of an army boot was applied on occasion and proved a better incentive to work than kind words."(63) Yet the vital impression of cynical amusement remains and this showed a marked shift in attitude from World War I when 'niggers' were regarded with hostility and contempt.

Nevertheless at convenient times, as in the previous war, the Egyptians would angrily turn on their protectors, as this warning to 25 Battalion soldiers made clear: "Seven cases have been reported of attacks made on New Zealanders by Egyptians, particularly when the soldier is alone."(64) Most often contact with the local people arose simply from their desire to relieve the 'rich' New Zealanders of cash by the speediest means, otherwise, as before, racial fraternisation was minimal.(65) By contrast, feelings were running high against the Japanese when the 22 Battalion arrived there in 1946. An officer of the battalion commented: "I was never able to lose a feeling I was dealing with something just slightly less than human in mental make up, no common ground whatever."(66)

63 D.W. Sinclair, 19 Battalion, p.44

64 25 Battalion War Diary R.O.74 4 August 1941: National Archives.

65 25 Battalion War Diary RO 48 5 July 1943, National Archives: Soldiers have been accepting the offers of native boys to lead them to brothels, then at the doorway paying off their guides, too often they have been left outside the house of respectable citizens, and considerable consternation has been caused.

66 J.Henderson, 22 Battalion, p.455

On concluding this theme of conformity within 2NZEF it would be appropriate to mention the growing conservatism of the Army. Conformity and conservatism were closely related and mutually supportive. It was a brand of conservatism resting on a social basis.

> The social extremes observed by the men in Italy tended to make New Zealand soldiers conservative, convinced of their better way of life and determined to keep things the same. New Zealanders saw the communist system in Trieste, the Russians at Klagenfurt mistreating their own ex-POWs, and the big difference between men and officers in the American army with their heavy court martial penalties. There was much more sympathy with the British soldier regarded as underpaid, and badly looked after.(67)

However, it was a social, rather than political, or economic conservatism which was defended as Colonel Russell, Commander of the 22 Battalion, noted shortly before his death:

> My word what a lot of problems there are going to be squared up after this show. It is very interesting yarning to the boys under these circumstances for you get so much closer to them in the field.... and the one thing they are all emphatic about is that no political differences or class warfare must be allowed to interfere with the comradeship built up under these conditions. That the RSA must never be used for political ends, but the carrying into all shades of life the comeraderie learnt in the field. How many of us will remember this five and ten years after? (68)

Certainly few wanted economic conformity or to keep things as they were in that sense, army tradesmen still protested they should receive comparable civilians rates, and caused quite a stir even though the infantry took all the risks.

67 L. Hobbs, Kiwi Down the Strada, pp 35-36

68 J. Henderson, 22 Battalion, p.197

Even the chaplains wanted to visit the Holy Land as 'training' at the government's expense.(69) Rather it was the sort of social conformity that made for an outward sign of unity. The war comradeship had established a certain insularity which needed a distinctiveness of national type to be preserved. Thus the differences between the regular and part-time soldier and especially the latter's local eccentricities were to be submerged to make way for a more centralised and nationally orientated part-time force.

Of course the men training with the territorial battalions in New Zealand were not to undergo directly the experiences which evoked a desire for conformity and unity within the Army, but there was a constant flow of manpower, especially NCOs and junior officers, between the associated battalions at home and overseas.(70) Thus when the post-war re-organisation referred to in an earlier chapter came about, it was warmly received by all concerned without surprise or protest.

As stated, at the beginning, the object of this chapter has been to trace new developments in the military tradition as they evolved from events overseas; basing the analysis on three representative battalions of the Regiment and the Division in which they served. It only remains now to draw together all these various traditions of the Regiment and the Army, and relate them to the organisational changes which were so often their result.

69 W.G.Stevens, Problems, p.119

70 Army Order 125. 1942. Transfer of Selected Warrant Officers to the Territorial Force AD/218/2/12 National Archives.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis has been to follow colonial military traditions as they were built up and acquired in war and peace. Research has been based upon the activities of one local Regiment, the 5 (WWC and T) RNZIR. This has served the dual purpose of providing a local regimental history and furnishing detail to illuminate the New Zealand military experience. The Regiment is one of a few long standing New Zealand infantry regiments with roots which go back to the early colonial days. Thus it has made major contributions to the country's military tradition, and is an ideal unit for analysis.

The year 1855 saw the first attempts to form the colonial settlers into some sort of local defence force. This proved unexpectedly difficult, and it soon became clear to the Governor and his advisers that a reliable local force could only be raised if the settlers were given considerable freedom to arrange their own military formations. At that time a military career was highly esteemed, and commissions only available to the sons of gentlemen. The military were, throughout the world, thought to possess a certain mystique and established forms were not to be taken lightly. Therefore when the local settlers insisted on electing their own officers they had, by established principles, already rendered themselves inefficient. Yet the Governor needed local forces to back up the thinly spread garrisons of Imperial troops, so in the end he approved their formation. The local volunteer corps had little need of discipline out of the front line, as they had their own occupations to pursue. This looseness of discipline and familiarity with officers, horrified the Imperial commanders, who had therefore extra reason to doubt the reliability of their allies. Thus the volunteers were kept busy on garrison duties and left out of field operations. What joint operations there were did much harm to relationships between the two forces.

The Imperial troops would be formed up waiting whilst the volunteers would join the ranks in one and twos, some catching up later with the column on the march, their behaviour often loud and boisterous, perhaps to hide embarrasment. On the other hand, the settlers felt restrained in long, slow moving columns, which remained mostly tied to the roads. They felt contact should be maintained constantly with the enemy by having mobile patrols continually harassing him in the bush. Their criticism of Imperial tactics only added to the mutual animosity, which kept the local forces out of field expeditions. The local press took up the cause of the settlers and gradually the Governor and his advisers were forced to take note. The Imperial troops had made little progess in the war, and it appeared many more of them would be needed, something the colony could not financially afford. Eventually the local corps were given a free hand to practice the tactics they had advocated and the result was devastating for the rebels. The Maori economy was not sufficient to maintain an offensive force, continually at war, it was vulnerable and easily destroyed. Once their supplies of food deep in the bush had been reduced they had no option but to sue for peace.

From the early events in Taranaki the three main themes of this thesis emerged: the organisation of the local military forces, their assertive behaviour, and the battle tactics they adopted. In effect the settlers had built a specialised force to meet the requirements of bush warfare. They could therefore dispense with many of the disciplinary practices of the regulars, who were a non - specialised force required to meet all needs in peace and war.

When the fighting moved to the Wanganui hinterland the Government felt sufficiently encouraged by the local performance in Taranaki to want to run the campaign, using

only colonial forces. This was expected to save the colony money, yet, though the activities of the specialist bushrangers had given the authorities confidence to take control, they then proceeded to draw all the wrong conclusions. Colonel Whitmore, an ex-Imperial officer, was appointed to command a new regular force known as the Armed Constabulary. In a curious way this force managed to combine the worst of both systems. It lacked the expertise and local knowledge of the Taranaki bushrangers but possessed their loose disciplinary standards. On the other hand it lacked the discipline and cohesion of the Imperial troops, whilst it shared the same economical recruiting system, drawing at low rates of pay the unemployed men off city streets.

Whitmore's brainchild soon met with disaster once let loose in dense bush: one third of them bolted in their first engagement, maintaining they were surrounded, when in fact they outnumbered the rebels five to one. Whitmore began to tighten up on discipline and suppress the assertiveness of the men. Desertions were many and the force increasingly resembled an Imperial regiment. It achieved roughly the same result, always moving slowly after an enemy, never actually catching enough of them to force a decisive battle. The impasse as in Taranaki was broken by the local volunteer companies launching mobile patrols deep into enemy held territory. The rebels could not defend their captured territory adequately or their supplies, and were therefore deprived of both. The rebellion collapsed, Whitmore emerged from his redoubt to chase the few remaining rebels back to their tribal retreats, and was hailed as the great bush fighter.

Whitmore became the colony's first general and was an important figure in the long years of peace which followed the Maori Land Wars. The question of organising the infant

colony's defence forces now became paramount. What, if any were needed, and for what purpose? The long line of military experts and commanders seconded from Britain recommended a larger permanent army, abolition of the 'inefficient' local volunteers, and a much more centralised command structure. A series of 'scares' promoted their views, and the Boer War illustrated a need to participate in wars overseas.

In 1910, the new re-organisation was announced, and a compulsory territorial system introduced. The old decentralised system with its scattered companies of independent volunteers and elected officers was replaced by the battalion system with a centralised hierarchy of appointed officers. Hardly had this process been completed than World War I erupted, and thousands were required to serve overseas at short notice. The system proved to be a reliable servant of the great war machine that was devouring men in Europe, and New Zealand easily fulfilled, if not overfulfilled, her political obligations. The Regiment had only just been created from a grouping of local volunteer corps, though it still remained a home territorial unit, but through the associated Wellington battalions, it saw much fighting. The Regiment's companies overseas carried the local territorial badges and the officers also retained their home commands.

Overseas in World War I the same earlier traditions surfaced: the assertiveness of the Anzac troops, their fresh and keen approach to battle, which laid the foundations of the Anzac reputation, and the organisation which went back for a time to the old system of creating officers through the ranks. But in many ways the Anzac Gallipoli campaign was the climax and watershed of this whole history. A lot of the old volunteer corps officers and men died on those slopes and their local traditions with them. They had been criticised in the past for being inefficient, and too autonomous, but when it came to battle they proved just as reliable and resourceful as their forebears had done in the bush-battles in

Taranaki, so much earlier. Indeed to continue the analogy, the professional 'experts' who had in so many reports denigrated the volunteers for lacking their criteria of military worthiness, as in Taranaki, found themselves in difficulty when it came to earnest combat. The 'old volunteers' that survived the Gallipoli campaigns went on to higher rank in the New Zealand Division, and it was these senior officers who urged General Godley to create more officers through the ranks. However it was the last throw of the old system, for after World War I sufficient social changes had occurred to warrant the re-adoption of the more orthodox British methods of selection and appointment. After the Gallipoli campaign there grew up a kind of legend around that epic struggle. The new Anzac tradition gave to the New Zealand soldier a fighting reputation which was absent before. It provided an ideal to uphold and a source of pride in difficult days.

In the twenties the territorial system was resumed and the Army's organisation followed closely along the paths envisaged by the Imperial experts at the turn of the century: a permanent force of specialists combined with a compulsory part-time force to provide a division for overseas service at fairly short notice. This remained the aim until the economic cutbacks of the thirties, when the territorial regiments operated on a volunteer basis for the first time. The Wellington West Coast Regiment's roll fell dramatically, and annual camps had to be abandoned. By contrast, the Taranaki Regiment under an enterprising commanding officer came through this period of national neglect much more intact. As in colonial days, good leadership was very important in organising a volunteer military force. Lieutenant-Colonel Varnham of the Taranaki Regiment went on to command the associated 19 Battalion in World War II.

Because of the economic cutbacks World War II saw the Army and the territorial regiments less prepared than in World War I. A lot of men had to be trained in a hurry and a whole new breed of officers had to be created. The officers were selected mainly on non-military criteria (wealth and occupation) and the territorial regiments resumed the role of training men for their associated overseas battalions. The central themes of this thesis were followed through at this stage to see how much of the old traditions survived the conditions of modern war. The Anzac tradition remained a source of inspiration, though its memory faded as the Army came to rely on its own more recent successes after 1942. The same assertiveness which had characterised the colonial volunteer was still there, though how much it was a product of the latitude allowed to the New Zealand soldier is difficult to assess. Certainly he did not suffer the harsh penalties or longer sentences applied to the British or American soldier, and this of course had been the case from the beginning. Tactically, there still existed definite New Zealand specialities or preferences and the Germans supplied evidence to support the contention, of a night fighter, best in the very decentralised patrol type activity, operating on a broad front, looking for gaps to infiltrate into. Lastly, this thesis examined the decline in regional significance and autonomy within the Army. In World War II the Regiment's links with its associated overseas battalions weakened and had, in the end, little meaning. On the other hand an overall national relationship was growing especially as the Army overseas was becoming more insular and seeking a distinctive identity. The latter implied an outward conformity and an accompanying sense of unity.

This latest important development gave birth to the 'One Army' concept, and a subsequent post-war reorganisation. The Wellington West Coast Regiment was amalgamated

with the Taranaki Regiment in 1948 and the enlarged regular army was integrated much more closely with the territorial battalions. Regular army personnel took over many of the key posts within the territorial units, a factor which tended to increase centralisation and weaken local affiliation. For these career soldiers were committed to the centralised command structure and would move from battalion to battalion on their way up the promotion ladder. Nevertheless, fundamental policy had not altered, the old Imperial aims remained the same: to provide a division equipped and ready for overseas service at fairly short notice. Eventually the increasing integration of the whole army structure made it sensible to recognise the changes by making all the territorial regiments, battalions of the Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment. Within one hundred years the Army had evolved from a defence force of two seperate wings, the Armed Constabulary and the local volunteers, to a fully unified battalion system based on a centralised command structure. By 1964 the Wellington West Coast and Taranaki Regiment had become 5 Battalion of the Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment.

Some final conclusions remain to be drawn. Firstly, in regard to assertiveness, it will be recalled the early settlers had felt free enough to demand their own kind of defence force. It has been argued that in frontier type societies where economic prospects are good, citizens and settlers are quick to protest compulsory edicts which threaten their freedom, and the status quo. In this case, the authorities wisely compromised and a tradition of forbearance and latitude began. Within the volunteer companies the same latitude applied, there was a job to be done but beyond that the officers had little control. When the first regular force was formed, men joined up with the same expectations with regard to discipline and

punishments, and because of this the Armed Constabulary nearly came to grief. Later disciplinary standards improved but even in World War I a certain latitude was noticeable; for example, the men were amazed by the British system of field punishments. It would seem the 'rough Anzacs' were expected to make a noise and so accordingly obliged. General Godley's comment on the Wasser riots in 1915 was, that he was only surprised it had not happened earlier. Later on in World War II, similar incidents revealed the same latitude and forbearance in official reaction.

Thus the assertiveness referred to throughout seems to be the product of environment, economic circumstances, official indulgence, and general expectations. Likewise New Zealand preferences for certain battle tactics seem to be the product of initial specialisation in bush warfare, and general environmental influences. Much of this has already been commented on.

However, a word should be put in for the 'old Volunteer' companies. History has not been kind to them. The butt of many official reports, too scattered to make their own case, and without the ear of central government, they have been remembered generally as 'Gilbert and Sullivan' type soldiers obsessed with fancy uniforms. Yet they provided a very cheap and useful defence force. Admittedly lacking an overall organisation it would have taken much longer in 1914 to have raised a division for overseas service, but then that in itself, might not have been such a bad thing. The 'old volunteers' were a New Zealand military experiment in decentralised organisation, which was curtailed to make way for more orthodox overseas procedures. The pressing need was to have a division available for overseas service. The latter has always

been a doubtful political obligation and one which the country has never been really able to afford. On the other hand a more decentralised structure, carefully arranged, could in future emergencies have real possibilities, and would lack the vulnerability to nuclear attack which at present makes centralisation of command so suspect. Nevertheless, from World War II on, the trend has been for greater unity, increased conformity and centralisation. From 1942 this trend gathered momentum, when 2NZEF increasingly resented sharing facilities with other larger allied armies into which it could have dissolved. Moreover the withdrawal of the Australians from the Middle East left New Zealand with one of the smallest national armies participating in the European theatre, and it was an army very far from home. Determined to remain a mini-army rather than be absorbed piecemeal the New Zealand Division was eventually smaller than its overseas base facilities. But the economics did not matter as long as national unity was preserved. However it was not presence of New Zealand facilities everywhere which created the feelings of oneness, but the other way round: the desire to be distinctively one established the need for more New Zealand support branches. Insularity was also promoted by the economic and social standards the soldiers witnessed among Europeans at that time. It was felt, as a consequence, a distinctive identity was worth preserving, and in this context, regional diversity had little meaning.

Thus one of the long term trends has been this decline in regional affiliation and autonomy, and the growth of a central but nationally organised command structure.

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