

Maoris. But on that date, Wednesday, the 3rd July, I heard that Moore and Beggs had been murdered in the cemetery reserve at Waioeka. The man who brought in the news was Rakuraku, a sort of go-between between us and the Natives who used to bring me information. I heard from him that these men had been really murdered. On the day of the attack on their hut Lawson, an ensign stationed at Opotiki, went with a party to get the remains. I may explain here that this place called the cemetery was a reserve set apart for that purpose for Opotiki. It was a cemetery reserve six or seven miles from the actual camp, what is now the Township of Opotiki, and just at the entrance to the Waioeka Gorge. Prior to this date a post had been established there by an officer called Gray, with about five and twenty men. That explains what follows in my diary: "Gray heard voices from the redoubt, and marching out, had a skirmish with Lawson in the bush. The skirmish was between Ensign Lawson, who went out with his party from Opotiki, and the officer in charge of the redoubt. He heard voices in the bush about half a mile from his redoubt, and, thinking they were Maoris, marched out and fired on them, and they returned the fire. Fortunately there were no casualties. We all turned out pretty sharply, and rode out to the scene of action." Those are my notes for that day.

398. Can you say whether the bodies of Moore and Beggs were found that day?—Yes, I remember that distinctly.

399. Where were they found?—Directly this firing was heard Major St. John went out with a number of men, having at once come to the conclusion that this redoubt had been attacked, and I followed him as soon as I got my horse.

400. You know the details of the affair?—He probably took fifty or sixty men with him.

401. Mounted or on foot?—The bugle would sound the alarm, and every man that could snatch up his arms would be mustered, mounted and foot.

402. Did you overtake them?—When I got there Major St. John told me what had occurred—that Ensign Lawson and Mr. Gray had a skirmish in the bush, but fortunately no one was hit. Then myself and Major St. John went to Gray's quarters to inquire into the matter. In the meantime a number of men were sent into this bush gully to look for the bodies of the two men, and they found them and brought them to Opotiki, where they were buried two days afterwards.

403. Before you leave the subject of the expedition, did you see McDonald there?—No.

404. You do not know whether he or Mr. Wrigg was there or not?—No; I cannot say.

405. You told us you were second in command in the Opotiki district at this time: who was next in command?—Captain Skene.

406. Would he have precedence over Captain Bower?—He was senior captain. Captain Bower was district adjutant, but I do not know whether he was the junior of the four captains settled at Opotiki, but I know Captain Skene and Captain Broun were both senior to Captain Bower. There were four senior to Captain Bower—Major St. John, myself, Captains Skene and Broun, and then I do not know whether it would be Bower or Walker.

407. Was Captain Walker fifth in order of seniority?—Yes, I think so.

408. Did you remain any time at Opotiki then?—I was there in July and August.

409. Recurring to the incident when you met Trooper McDonald, did he go on or back?—I imagine he went on to Tauranga. I know he had letters from Major St. John to Colonel Harington, and would naturally go on to Tauranga.

410. It may be assumed he went to Tauranga and returned to Opotiki. You being at Opotiki at the time, and civil officer in charge at Opotiki, did you hear any particular act of heroism in connection with the carrying of despatches on that particular occasion?—No.

411. Did you ever hear any suggestion of an act of heroism?—No. I travelled that road oftener than any man in the Bay of Plenty, because my duties took me to Tauranga to confer with Mr. Civil Commissioner Clark.

412. Did you hear any special performance on the road to Tauranga in connection with the carrying of the despatches?—No; it was simply one of those things that come in a day's work. Any man might have been called upon to carry despatches.

413. When did you first hear of Mr. Wrigg's name in connection with the carrying of despatches to Tauranga?—I saw it in an Auckland newspaper in April or May last.

414. Is that the first time you had ever seen it?—That is the first time I ever heard Mr. Wrigg's name connected with the carrying of despatches.

415. You have been in the colony all the time since?—Yes.

416. Connected with the public service?—Yes.

417. Colonel St. John, we hear, died about ten years after the events we have been considering?—About eight or ten years afterwards.

418. Has any application ever been made to you as next in seniority in connection with the carrying of despatches by Mr. Wrigg?—No.

419. If any such application had been made should you have recommended it?—Certainly not.

420. It took you, then, entirely by surprise to hear that there had been any distinguished act of bravery or heroism in connection with the carrying of despatches in June, 1867?—Yes.

421. You were on intimate terms with Major St. John at that time?—Yes.

422. Did you ever hear him mention the name of Wrigg in connection with any heroism?—No.

423. Was Colonel St. John, to your knowledge, a man who would recognise any special performance?—Well, he recommended the man who, I think, succeeded Captain Gwynneth in command of this corps, Captain Angus Smith. He recommended him afterwards for the New Zealand Cross, and he got it. He was not a man to pass over anything of that kind.

424. As to the procedure of a military camp as was at Opotiki in June, 1867, what would be the course in reference to issuing orders?—They would be issued by the district adjutant and entered in the order-book, and promulgated by the sergeant-major.

425. That would be district orders?—Yes.