

554. It has not been suggested by Mr. Wrigg, you understand, that he had any despatches to carry to you. Are you prepared to say that on the same day that McDonald delivered despatches to you Wrigg was not on his way to Tauranga with despatches?—He may have been. I cannot connect him in any way with despatches.

555. You have told us also that when Trooper McDonald delivered despatches to you he went on in the direction of Tauranga?—I said, naturally he was going on. He told us he had despatches for Colonel Harington.

556. Did he show them to you?—No.

557. I suppose the despatches would be put up in a packet and sealed?—They would be in official envelopes.

558. Did he show you the envelope?—No.

559. When he said he had despatches to deliver he intended to convey he was in the parade that was delivering the despatches?—He gave me the packet addressed to myself, and then was going on with a packet addressed to Colonel Harington.

560. Was there another gentleman of your name in the district?—Yes, a brother of mine was at Tauranga in the service.

561. Is he living now?—Yes.

562. Where is he?—At the Thames.

563. Would you be prepared to assert that Mr. Wrigg, who swore that after he had delivered the despatches to Captain Goldsmith Captain Mair travelled with him for two miles on the way from Tauranga?—I cannot swear, of course, as to my brother's movements, but I showed him a letter in Wairarapa about three weeks ago. I showed him a letter signed "Harry Wrigg," in which there is a statement to this effect: "The late Colonel St. John (then Major) was still in command when I left the district, and for some time afterwards, I believe. Major Mair was never stationed there whilst I was in the Opotiki district. The only gentleman of that name was a Captain Mair, who was, I believe, stationed at Tauranga (presumably Captain Gilbert Mair, N.Z.C.), and, if my recollection serves me, after I had delivered the despatches, rode a couple of miles back with us on our return journey. Poor Trooper McDonald would have supported me in this had he lived, but he met a soldier's death whilst upon a similar duty on the Galatea Plains. I did make an effort to get Major Mair's support (not certificate) to my application; as a gentleman who had seen and done much good service for his country, his support would have been valuable, but the time was limited, and the major was away upon official duties." I showed that to Captain Mair the other day, and he said he had no recollection of anything of the kind.

564. Therefore you are not in any position to contradict Mr. Wrigg?—No.

565. You told Mr. Hutchison that Colonel St. John recommended a man named Angus Smith for the Cross?—Yes.

566. Do you know whether Angus Smith applied for the recommendation?—He may have; but it would have been a very improper thing to do.

567. You remember saying that you went out with the troops to get these bodies?—Yes, I followed afterwards.

568. You are quite certain that you were there when these bodies were recovered?—I heard that Moore and Begg had been murdered, and followed the troops which went out.

569. How were the bodies wrapped up?—I only saw the bodies that evening lying on sacks or stretchers.

570. How were these bodies covered?—When I saw them lying in the church they were lying either on stretchers or on sacks, and half the flesh had disappeared from the bones.

571. You did not see them at the camp?—No.

572. You could not describe them when they were found?—No.

573. Have you kept yourself in touch with your other brother officers since you left active service?—Yes.

574. Was Captain Gwynneth a friend of yours?—Yes.

575. Would you not recognise him as a captain in the same way as Major St. John?—We were very good friends. I used to dine at his house occasionally, and so on.

576. Was Captain Gwynneth simply captain of this mounted troop?—Yes; for a short time he commanded this company of Volunteers.

577. You said that the carrying of despatches from Opotiki to Tauranga would be all in a day's work?—Men were constantly being sent up and down with despatches.

578. Supposing you put these circumstances with their combined results of skirmishes—it was common knowledge that men had been murdered on the road, and that the cavalry corps had been called out, and the captain of that corps had asked for a volunteer to carry despatches, and only one man volunteered: would not that be a praiseworthy action?—I should say that there was not a man in the troop that would not have volunteered to go under the circumstances.

579. Probably if volunteers were called for it would stick in the memory of any one who was present, it being unusual?—Yes.

580. Mr. George Leaning tells us Mr. Wrigg stepped forward and offered to go?—I know McDonald often carried despatches, and was fitted for it. He was carrying despatches afterwards in the Taupo district, and was killed while doing it.

581. There is a danger in carrying despatches?—That was right through the heart of the enemy's country, sixty or seventy miles away from Opotiki.

582. I suppose you would consider that an act of bravery?—Yes. He really incurred danger, because he was killed.

583. You consider that Trooper McDonald, in carrying despatches through the enemy's country, was really a brave man and deserved the Cross?—Yes.

584. I suppose about this time, Major, a great many daring things were done by the men when it was required?—Occasionally daring acts were done by members of the forces.