

corps for a short time, and was not regarded as a man conspicuous for bravery. There were troops stationed along the East Coast, and the only place that could be considered as being unsafe was a distance of three or four miles between Waiotahi and Ohawa, and even over that part there was very little danger, as the custom was for a detachment of the corps to ride through and see that the route was clear. I recollect the occasion on which Mr. Wrigg claims to have displayed such valiant conduct as to merit the distinction of the New Zealand Cross; but the matter was regarded in a very different light at the time by his comrades, who saw nothing above the common in what he did, nor more than most of us were in the habit of doing when required. The man who carried the despatches on the occasion referred to was Trooper Donald McDonald, and Mr. Wrigg merely accompanied him, and nothing of moment was reported at the time as having occurred during the ride from Opotiki to Tauranga. I am sure that had there been any special danger attached to the journey, the fact would have become known to those of us who were in the corps at the time and performing active service. If Mr. Wrigg had performed any act or service above the common, our commanding officer, Colonel St. John, would no doubt have recorded the fact at the time, and reported the matter to the proper authorities. Colonel St. John lived for several years after the period referred to. And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of 'The Justices of the Peace Act, 1882.' Declared at Coromandel, this 23rd day of September, 1898, before me, T. W. Rhodes, a Justice of the Peace in and for the Colony of New Zealand.—A. S. Ford"—That is absolutely correct.

157. Mr. Wilford read part of the indorsement on the Camp Orders; I want to read another part. This is supposed to be an indorsement by Captain Gwynneth made some two years after the murder of Bennett White: "On the evening immediately after their return from this duty, which was performed with credit to themselves, and whilst yet in the saddle, they accompanied and assisted me in a search for the bodies of Messrs. Moore and Beggs, who had been dragged from their dwellings into the bush and murdered by the Natives, in which search we were successful in finding the bodies and bringing them into camp." Can you say whether the expedition that went out brought back the bodies in the evening or not?—We started in the morning.

158. Would Captain Gwynneth be correct in saying he was one of those who went all the way and found the bodies?—No, it is not correct.

159. *Mr. Wilford.*] May I ask whether those are your words or Mr. Hutchison's when you say, "As a matter of fact, Mr. Wrigg was only in the corps for a short time, and was not regarded as a man conspicuous for bravery." You told us you knew him. Are those your words?—Yes.

160. You swear you put those words in the letter that you wrote to Mr. Hutchison?—I am pretty well certain it is word for word.

161. Why should you make use of that statement?—Because we know if a man is credited with any acts of bravery it becomes known.

162. You do not mean it is a reflection on Mr. Wrigg that he was a coward: you mean to say he was not regarded as a man conspicuous as having done any particular brave act?—I know when I have gone out I have never seen Mr. Wrigg. He was generally in the office.

163. Were not those his regular duties? He had been with Captain Gwynneth?—That surveying business?

164. Yes?—Yes; that would account for his not being in the troop when wanted.

165. Do you suggest Mr. Wrigg would not go out when he was called?—I could not say that.

166. Are you able to say Mr. Wrigg ever shirked his duty and refused to do it?—The only time I remember seeing him on an expedition was some three weeks or a month after Moore and Beggs were killed. It was then we got word from the friendly Maoris where the bodies were. He did go with us on that occasion, and Captain Gwynneth did not go.

167. "Then he (Captain Gwynneth) handed over his revolver to Mr. Wrigg and said, 'I am puffed'": Would that hand over the command to Mr. Wrigg?—Oh, no, it would be giving two revolvers to one man. We expected an ambuscade ahead of us. A dog was ahead of us, and it gave the alarm.

169. You are not able to say Mr. Wrigg ever shirked his duty or refused to go when called on?—Because I do not know when he was ever called on.

170. *Mr. Holland.*] Do you recollect Captain Bower?—I just remember him, in Tauranga.

171. You do not remember whether he was there at the time this took place?—Major St. John, Captain Walker, and Captain Lawson were in charge at times.

172. *Mr. Field.*] You said, Mr. Ford, that you were one of the first men to join the Bay of Plenty Cavalry corps?—One of the first.

173. And you remained a member of that corps about how long?—Until the Thames Goldfields broke out.

174. How long would that be?—That would be the latter end of 1867 or 1868 that I went to the Thames diggings.

175. Was Mr. Wrigg a member of the corps at the time you joined?—That I could not tell you.

176. You said you were the second man to join: was he a member before you were a member—at the time you joined yourself?—I think it is most likely he was a member. There were so many surveyors that joined the troop that they tried to get their survey offices arranged in connection with their commission offices.

177. That being so, you could hardly have been the second member?—Officers are elected after the corps is formed. They do not form a corps and then look for privates.

178. You joined as a private, so did Mr. Wrigg?—I take it for granted Mr. Wrigg joined as a private.

179. I want to know whether or not Mr. Wrigg joined before you: do you recollect?—I think the remark of the man that was coming out as I went in was, "Ford, you are next; I am No. 1."

180. Was Mr. Wrigg a member of the corps at the time you left it: had he left the corps before you?—No, John Kelly was our cornet then.