



# The New Zealand Gazette.

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Colonial Secretary's Office,  
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**H**IS Excellency the Governor directs the publication of the accompanying despatches, with enclosures, from Lieutenant-General Cameron, C. B.

ALFRED DOMETT.

Head Quarters, Queen's Redoubt,  
4th Sept., 1863.

**SIR**,—I have the honor to forward, for your Excellency's information, the copy of a report from Ensign Dawson, 2nd Battalion Royal Irish, of an attack made upon the Patrol under his command, near the village of Pokeno, on the morning of the 2nd inst; with one from Captain the Honorable F. Le Poer Trench, 40th Regiment, whom, on hearing the firing, I ordered to proceed in support with the Inlying Picquet from the Queen's Redoubt.

The gallantry of Ensign Dawson and his Patrol in charging the enemy without hesitation, when fired upon suddenly from the bush, their steadiness when they found themselves nearly surrounded by superior numbers, and the manner in which Captain Trench brought up his support and assisted in putting the enemy to flight, reflect great credit upon those two officers and the detachment under their command, which consisted of parties of the 2nd Battalion 18th, 40th, and 65th Regiments.

I have, &c.,  
D. A. CAMERON,  
Lt.-General.

His Excellency  
Sir George Grey, K.C.B.,  
&c., &c., &c.

Queen's Redoubt,  
Sept. 4th, 1863.

**SIR**,—I have the honor to report, for the information of the Lieut.-General Commanding, that on the morning of the 2nd September, I was subaltern in charge of the Pokeno picquet, consisting of two sergeants and sixty rank and file, leaving Queen's Redoubt at about 7 o'clock a.m. When within about half-a-mile of the village I was attacked in my rear by a body of Maoris. I ordered my men to face about and charge them. We drove them down a gully towards the swamp into the bush on the right of Pokeno village, I followed them for about half-a-mile along the track towards Papanoa. Hearing yells in the direction of the village, I returned along the track to the open ground where I was first fired on.

On arriving there I was received with a volley from the enemy, who were extended across the whole of the clearing then between me and the village, and also from the bush on the right. I cannot too highly praise the steady conduct of the men at this moment, the enemy appearing in great force. I ordered the men to remain in skirmishing order, and to keep up a steady fire, taking advantage of any cover the ground afforded. From the commotion I occasionally perceived, I conclude that our fire was effectual, and that the Maoris were removing their wounded. I remained in the position I had taken up until reinforced by Captain the Honorable F. Le P. Trench, 40th Regiment, who then assumed the command, and by his order I advanced with the skirmishers.

I have, &c.,  
CHARLTON DAWSON, Ens.  
2nd Batt., 18th Royal Irish.

The Asst. Military Secretary,  
&c., &c., &c.  
Head Quarters,

Queen's Redoubt,  
4th September 1863.

SIR,—I have the honor to report for the information of the Lieutenant General Commanding, that at about  $\frac{1}{2}$  past seven o'clock, on the morning of the 2nd, I was ordered to march the Inlying Picquet to the support of the Patrol at Pokeno village; when within about  $\frac{1}{2}$  a mile from the village I found the Patrol under the command of Ensign Dawson, 2nd batt. 18th Regiment, engaged with a body of Maories who, at that time, occupied the bush on the right of the village and the clearing on the side of it, which is covered with fallen timber. I immediately reinforced the skirmishers who advanced, driving the Maories from the clearing and out of the village into the bush. After scouring the bush on the right of the village, the enemy having made their retreat in that direction, and deeming that further pursuit was useless, I returned to the Queen's Redoubt; in the meantime the Force under my command had been augmented by the arrival of the escort under the command of Captain Noblett, 2nd batt. 18th. I am happy to be able to state that there were no casualties on our side, and that both officers and men behaved with the greatest steadiness. I am unable to compute the loss on the part of the Maories. Two Flint guns and some ammunition fell into our hands.

I beg to bring to the notice of the Lieut. General Commanding, the services of Ensign Spiller, 65th Regiment, Ensign Gomez, 40th Regiment, Lieutenant Croft, 2nd batt. 18th Regiment, who accompanied the Inlying Picquet, and more especially the conduct of Ensign Dawson, 2nd batt. 18th, who had to contend against a force of Maories far superior in numbers to the Patrol under his command.

I have &c.,  
F. L. P. TRENCH, Captain  
40th Regiment.

The Asst. Military Secretary,  
&c., &c., &c.  
Head Quarters.

*Lieut.-General Cameron to the Governor.*

Head Quarters,  
Queen's Redoubt,  
11th September, 1863.

SIR,—With reference to my letter of the 9th instant, relative to the engagement which took place in the bush near Cameron, between a party of the 65th Regiment under the command of Captain Swift, and a body of rebel natives, on the 7th instant, I have now the honor to forward the Report of Color Sergeant McKenna, which has been transmitted to me by Colonel Wyatt, commanding 65th Regiment, a copy of whose letter I enclose.

This interesting Report fully bears out the opinion I expressed in the letter alluded to above, of the conduct of the officers and men of this detachment.

It is difficult to conceive a more trying position than that in which this detachment was placed, when, deprived of both its officers, it found its way in the midst of a dense bush, surrounded on all sides by a savage enemy, and

so distant from the nearest post to entertain any hope of support.

The courage, intelligence, and self-reliance for which the soldiers of the 65th Regiment are so distinguished, were never more conspicuously displayed than on this critical occasion. Fortunately, in Color Sergeant McKenna, the detachment found a commander whose coolness, intrepidity, and judgment, justified the confidence placed in him by the soldiers brought so suddenly under his command.

I need scarcely assure your Excellency that it will give me great pleasure to report the meritorious conduct of this detachment to His Royal Highness the Field Marshall commanding in Chief, and to the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for War, and to recommend to special notice the names of Lieutenant Butler, Color Sergeant McKenna, and the other non-commissioned officers and soldiers so honorably mentioned by Colonel Wyatt.

I have, &c.,  
D. A. CAMERON,  
Lieut.-General.

Camp, Queen's Redoubt,  
11th September, 1863.

SIR,—In accordance with the wishes of the Lieut.-General, I have called upon Color-Sergeant E. McKenna to furnish me with a report of the action, at "Cameron" on the 7th instant.

From the corroborative statements made to me by Lieut. Warren, who had ample opportunities of acquiring full information of the various events and places, while in command of the detachment 65th regt., that proceeded from the "Alexandra Redoubt" in search of the missing, on the 8th (under Colonel Murray) and subsequently on the 9th, I am perfectly satisfied with the truthfulness of the appended letter.

As acts of daring and gallantry are sure to be appreciated, I trust the Lieut.-General will be pleased to bring this instance to the notice of his Royal Highness the Field Marshall Commanding in Chief, for some special mark of approval on the part of Her Majesty, for his gallant conduct, after both his Officers had been shot, in charging through the position of an enemy heavily outnumbering him, and drawing off his small force through a broken and rugged country, with the loss of but one man killed and another missing.

As soon as I can obtain the necessary documents from the Officer Commanding at Tuakau, I will not fail to bring to the notice of the Lieut.-General the gallant conduct of Lance Corporal Ryan and Privates William Bulford and John Talbot, who removed the body of their Captain from the field of action, and remained with it all night in a bush surrounded by the enemy, and also that of Privates Benjamin Thomas and John Cole, who after remaining all night in the fern with Lieut. Butler, who was badly wounded, in the morning carried him several miles towards

the 65th Camp, until met by the reinforcement under Colonel Murray proceeding to their assistance.

I would also beg to bring to the notice of the Lieut.-General the conduct of Drummer Henry Welsh, who, when Private Grace was killed, picked up his rifle and emptied his pouch of any ammunition and copper caps, under a galling fire, and thus prevented the enemy from obtaining that trophy, and I trust that the cool and determined bravery of the small parties under the command of Color Sergeant McKenna and Sergeant Meara will be favorably considered and honorably mentioned.

Only one rifle was captured by the enemy, that of Private Bellringer, who was killed when with the advance Guard, which was then fearfully outnumbered and hardly pressed by the enemy, and slowly retiring in skirmishing order.

I sincerely trust and hope the Lieut.-General will make a favorable mention to His Royal Highness of Lieut. Butler, who in the late, and already in the present war, has proved himself a most promising Officer, and unsurpassed for coolness and conduct under trying circumstances.

From my knowledge of the late Captain Swift, I may safely say that I considered him one of the best Officers I ever had the honor of commanding, and one who held a high position in the estimation of every individual in the 65th regiment.

I have, &c.,

ALFRED F. W. WYATT,

Col. and Lt.-Colonel Commanding,  
65th Regiment.

Alexandra Redoubt,  
Tuakau, 8th Sep. 1863.

SIR,—I beg to state for the information of the Lieut. General Commanding, that at 1 o'clock p.m., on the 7th September, 1863, I proceeded under command of Captain Swift, with the force as per margin,\* to attack a party of natives who had set fire to the friendly native pah, erected on the Township of Cameron for the purpose of trying to rescue Mr. Armitage and a party of friendly natives who were known to have been down there, also a quantity of Commissariat supplies, brought up from Waiuku.

Proceeding in skirmishing order, we arrived at about 2½ o'clock p.m., at the skirt of the bush leading to the ranges on which the pah was situated, and after an half hour's struggle through the bush, we came to a clearing, halting, the Captain ordered our half-ration of rum to be distributed, sending on the advance guard immediately after. When, on having proceeded a few hundred yards, it became apparent that the advance guard had lost, or struck off the track, but that we had gained it. I then proposed to

\* 1 Lieutenant, 3 Sergeants, 1 Drummer, 50 Rank and File.

Captain Swift to advance and act as scout to the party, to which he immediately assented, cautioning me not to proceed more than 30 yards in front of the main body. After advancing in this order for about ¼ of a mile, I observed tracks of natives, and in large numbers; this I pointed out to the Cptain, and a little farther on, I heard the natives in loud debate, on which (expecting that they were returning on the track that we were pursuing,) I again informed Captain Swift, who ordered the men to lie down in the bush, at the same time ordering them not to fire until he gave the word of command; however, on finding that the natives were not advancing, I crept up to within 12 yards of them, when, from their conversation, I judged they were under the influence of liquor. Captain Swift immediately called to advance, ordering the men to "fix bayonets and charge," we advanced to within 6 yards of them when they opened a most terrific fire; Captain Swift and Lieut. Butler were at this time leading on the men, and after receiving the enemy's fire, the men gave a cheer and returned it in grand style, Lieutenant Butler shooting down a native on his right, turned his revolver to the left—as quick as thought, I saw him come on his knee, at the same time discharging the remainder of the barrels of his revolver, bringing another native down at the same time that he fell himself. Seeing that he was wounded, I ordered Corporal Ryan and one of the men to take him to the rear, when he ordered me to lead the men to the front; on turning to my left I found Captain Swift mortally wounded: and after speaking a few words to him, he desired me to take his revolver and lead on the men, as at that time I was loading. With one loud huzza, we charged, burning to avenge our officers. I now found myself in an open clearing of a few yards, the rebels flying to cover on our front and left, where they opened fire on my small party, who at this time numbered 2 sergeants, 1 bugler, and 35 men. Seeing that we were greatly outnumbered, I determined to hold on our position, if possible, until dark, trusting that the men in charge of Capt. Swift and Lieut. Butler had retired well to the rear, and been joined by our lost advance guard; if so, I knew they would be able to make well towards the Redoubt before darkness set in, when probably I should be able to join them; but I found at about a quarter to 6 o'clock that the enemy had got round to our rear, thereby cutting off our retreat by the way we came. I immediately ordered a charge, but was met by a volley that killed one and wounded 3 men. On trying again, I found it hopeless to attempt it; I therefore determined to retreat down the hill which was covered with fern, and sending on our wounded, I threw out a line of skirmishers, ordering the front rank to "fire and retire." In this order we retired down the hill in a steady and orderly manner, the natives coming out of the bush and raining down

a complete shower of bullets on us, when, although we were not above 100 or 150 yards from them, not a man was hit. At this time it was near dark, but we managed to scramble through the bush until at last we lost the track, when I ordered the men around me, and told them I should stay there until morning, ordering not a word to be spoken or a pipe to be lighted. I now found that 4 of the men were missing, and knowing that it would be completely useless to attempt, at that time, to find them, I determined to wait until morning, hoping in the meantime to hear them about in the bush. At 4½ o'clock a. m., on the morning of the 8th, we commenced to try and gain a track out of the bush, and at about 8 o'clock a. m. we succeeded, and were met about half way from the Redoubt by Colonel Murray and his party, and then learned that our esteemed Captain was dead. After detailing a man to return as guide to Colonel Murray, I continued my march to the camp, which we reached at about 11 o'clock a. m., completely exhausted. I am sorry to report our casualties (as per margin\*) were very great, but taking into consideration the number to which we were opposed, being near 7 to 1, we have every reason to be thankful that it was not greater.

I hope it may not appear presumptuous on my part to bear testimony to the cool and gallant manner displayed by the late Captain Swift, and Lieutenant Butler in this desperate affair; the Captain issuing his command as if on parade, and even when wounded, refusing to take one man from the force to take him to the rear, until he was told that I would not be able to keep my position much longer; and Lieut. Butler, even when brought on his knee, in the coolest manner possible, deliberately fired the shots from his revolver into a crowd of Maories.

I need scarcely add, that the men behaved most gallantly; in fact it would be impossible to recapitulate the many acts of individual courage, when each man emulated the other in acts of heroic bravery.

I however beg to bring to your favourable consideration the valuable assistance I received from Sergeant Bracegurdle, who supported me throughout in a most intrepid manner; as also Lance Corporal Ryan, Privates William Bulford, John Talbott, John Cole, and Benjamin Thomas, for the devotion they manifested to their officers, by staying with them until 7.30 p.m. on the night of the 7th instant. Captain Swift died at that time, after which they hid his body in the bush and waited until morning, and then carrying Lieutenant Butler in their arms, they returned meeting Colonel Murray and force, Corporal Ryan returned with Colonel

\*Killed—Capt. Swift; private Bellringer, Richard; private Grace, Stephen.

Wounded—Lieut. Butler, private Powell, private McLane, private Whittle.

Missing—Private Bryan.

Murray and pointed out the spot in which Captain Swift's body was hid.

I also beg to enclose the report of Sergeant Meara, in charge of our advance guard, also a plan of the scene of action.

I should estimate the loss of the enemy to be between 20 and 30 in killed and wounded, 7 of whom I, myself, distinctly saw shot dead and dragged into the bush by the rebels.

I have, &c.,

E. MCKENNA,

Color Sergeant, 65 Regt.

W. Hutchins,

Lieut.-Colonel Asst. Military Sect.

*Lieut.-General Cameron to the Governor.*

Head Quarters,

Queen's Redoubt,

12th September, 1863.

SIR,—I have the honor to forward for your Excellency's information, the copy of a report from Captain Greaves, Acting Deputy Assistant Quarter-Master General, who acted as guide to the party under the command of Major Blyth, 40th regiment, which proceeded from the Queen's Redoubt to Tuakau on the 9th instant, and who subsequently accompanied the party under Lieut. Warren, 65th regiment, from that post to Cameron town, in search of men dead and missing, after the engagement on the 7th instant.

Captain Greaves' sketch, which I also enclose, shows the track taken by Captain Swift's party from Tuakau to Cameron, and the scene of the skirmish of the 7th Sept., 1863.

I have, &c.,

D. A. CAMERON,

Lieutenant-General.

His Excellency, Sir George Grey, K.C.B.,

&c.,

&c.,

&c.

Queen's Redoubt,

10th September, 1863.

SIR,—I have the honor to report for the information of the Lieutenant-General Commanding, that I guided a party of the 40th Regiment, under Major Blyth, through the bush to Tuakau yesterday. We reached the Redoubt at about 12 p.m., and I immediately accompanied a party of 100 of the 65th Regiment, under Lieutenant Warren, to Cameron, on the Waikato—the scene of the late Maori attack upon the friendly natives' pa—to search for three soldiers of the 65th Regiment (one of them known to be dead), who had been left in the bush in that vicinity, on the occasion of the fight between Captain Swift's party and the Maoris, on Monday last.

We proceeded through the bush, on the track likely to be taken by the missing men, to Cameron, where we arrived at 3.30 p.m. On the spot where the fight took place we found the body of Private Grace, 65th Regiment. He had a gun-shot wound in the face, and cut from a tomahawk in the chin. The body had been covered over with fern by the party when they left it, and so we found it.

We went down to the pa, which is a miser-

able affair, and totally incapable of being defended, being completely commanded by a hill close to it, and constructed simply of stakes driven into the ground, about two or three inches apart, and tied with supple-jack at the top. The house and whares inside the pa had been completely gutted, and all kinds of property were scattered over the place.

I went with a few men down to the bank of the River, about 100 yards below the pa. The ground was strewn with bran and corn, the former partially burnt. We found a canoe at the landing place, which I ordered the men not to destroy—fortunately, as it turned out afterwards, for it proved the means of saving one of the wounded men, who was close to us in the bush while we were there, and who came up to Tuakau at night in the canoe.

We returned to the scene of the fight, of which I enclose a sketch; fires were still smouldering and a quantity of potatoes were on the ground, showing that the enemy had been there very lately.

We then proceeded to examine the country in the direction in which the missing men were last seen to go, but found no traces of them. The bush and fern were so dense, that we gave up the search as hopeless, and determined to return. We left the ground at six o'clock, just as it was getting dark, and, carrying the body with us, we returned to Tuakau, reaching the Redoubt at midnight, the distance being between eight and nine miles.

On arrival we found that one of the missing men had come up the river in a canoe.

From the number of fires, sleeping places, and the extent of ground covered by the Maoris, I am satisfied that there cannot have been less

than 200 when they were attacked by poor Capt. Swift's party, and it is wonderful, considering the nature of the ground, how in the face of such a superior force this party, only 28 in number, at the end, succeeded in keeping the enemy in check until their two wounded Officers had been safely conveyed to the rear, and how they, within 10 yards of the enemy, who were firing at them from the bush, covered up with fern the body of one of their number who was killed, and then retreated in good order, carrying some wounded men with them. Too much cannot be said in praise of the Non-Commissioned Officer in charge and of the men themselves for their gallant conduct on this trying occasion.

Captain Swift, when he left his post, must have been convinced that the enemy were in force or they would not have dared to attack what was considered a fortified post, still notwithstanding the difficulties of the road, and the small number of his party, he pushed on to the assistance of the friendly natives, and lost his life while leading his men in a most gallant manner against a force vastly superior in number to his own, and posted in a strong position.

I beg to bring to the notice of the Lieut. General Commanding the very excellent manner in which the expedition in search of the missing men was conducted by Lieut. Warren and the Officers and men under his command.

I have, &c.,

G. R. GREAVES, Captain,  
Acting Deputy, Assistant Quarter  
Master General.

The Deputy Quarter Master General,  
&c., &c., &c.  
Queen's Redoubt.

