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Colonial Defence Office,
Auckland, 17th Dec., 1863.

HIS Excellency the Governor directs the publication of the following Despatch, with its enclosures, from Lieutenant-General Cameron, C.B.

THOMAS RUSSELL.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL CAMERON, C.B., TO THE GOVERNOR.

Auckland, Dec. 16th, 1863.

SIR,—I have the honor to forward to your Excellency the accompanying letter of Lieut. Colonel Nixon, Commanding Papakura District, transmitting a report from Captain Jackson of the Forest Rangers, of his having surprised a party of Natives in the bush about five miles North of Paparata.

Captain Jackson, Ensign Westrup, and the men of the Forest Rangers deserve great credit for the persevering manner in which they followed up the tracks of the natives, who appear to have been taken so completely by surprise as to have been able to offer very little resistance.

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

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

Camp, Papakura,
14th December, 1863.

SIR,—I have the honor to enclose, for the information of the Lieutenant-General Commanding, a Report from Captain Jackson, of the Forest Rangers of an affair he had yesterday morning with a party of Maories, about five miles north of Paparata.

In consequence of my absence on duty from Papakura until late this afternoon, I have been unable to forward the Report at an earlier hour.

I have, &c.,
M. G. NIXON,
Lieut.-Col., A.M.,
Commanding Papakura District.

The Deputy Quarter-master General,
Auckland.

Papakura, December 14, 1863.

SIR,—I have the honor to report for the information of the Lieut.-General Commanding, that, in accordance with your instructions, I started on Friday, the 11th instant, at 1:15 p.m., with a force of my Company of Forest Rangers (as per margin*) on an expedition towards the Wairoa river. At 6:30 p.m. on that day I camped on the Hunua river, and started from thence at 4:30 next morning; at 6:30 a.m. we struck Native tracks, which appeared to be quite fresh; at 10:30 a.m. we found a camping ground, which was capable of accommodating thirty or forty Natives—one of the fires here was still hot; at 4:30 p.m. we got to another camping ground, the five fires of which were quite hot; we had evidently gained a day's march on the enemy. I continued our march till 6:15 p.m., when finding we had overrun the track I camped for the night. On Sunday, December 14th, I broke camp at 5:30 a.m., and turned back to re-examine the path, and found tracks diverging to the left. I then posted some men to look out for smoke, which was soon discovered rising out of the ranges; we went very quietly towards it, and, by using great caution, suc-

* 1 Sergeant, 1 Subaltern, 2 Corporals, 23 Privates.

ceeded in surprising the enemy about 8:40 a.m. We had got between their sentry and their camp.

When about twelve or fifteen yards from the enemy, I halted my men on an eminence, to give them breath, and gave orders that they should first attack the enemy with their carbines, and then rush them with their revolvers. The Maoris were then cleaning their guns. The surprise was complete. After our carbines were discharged, the enemy, apparently expecting we had only empty pieces, turned upon us with their guns, tomahawks, &c., but the revolver soon sent them to the right about. Several of the enemy who were wounded by the discharge of the carbines, were assisted away by the women, who were very busy removing arms, dead, and wounded. I saw two or three natives hit who were immediately helped away by women. I had directed my men not to fire at the women, and I am happy to say they did not; though it is very possible that some of the women and children may have got hurt in the affray; but I only know of one instance, a woman, I believe, was wounded in the leg by a stray shot. The affair lasted only four or five minutes. I saw three dead men taken off, and four of their dead were left in our hands. Two of the natives, when surrounded, endeavoured to stab my men, one using a bowie knife, and the other a large carving knife, but the revolver made short work of them. One native, at great risk, returned and attempted to carry away a small tin box, but a bullet made him drop it and run off. Many of those who escaped were wounded. Had my party been larger, I think I could easily have surrounded the enemy and taken them all prisoners. None of my men were hurt, as only those of the enemy who were on the outskirts of their camp could find time to load and fire on us, and they were just as likely to hit their own men as mine. I estimate the number of the enemy to have been over forty men. One of the natives, before he died, told me there were twenty-eight, and on being again asked he said there were twenty-eight, double—holding up two of his fingers; he also said his tribe was the Ngatipaoa. He would not tell his own name; but said the man next him was a chief named Matariki. The scene of the engagement was in the ranges, about 5 miles due north of Paparata. The natives retreated in an easterly direction,

one of the sentries I had posted informed me some time after we had left the place, that a broad track led easterly from near where he was posted, and that he saw a man on horseback go up it. The enemy appeared to have plenty of provisions; we found a good deal of tea and sugar and some flour; there was abundance of fern root; three or four *kapura Maori* had meat in them, and a good quantity of pork was hanging up. In the box which the native tried to secure—mentioned above—were three flags, one a large red flag, on which was embroidered a white cross and star and the word *Aotearoa* in white letters. It is made of silk and is neat and handsome. Another flag is a large red pendant with a white cross; the remaining flag is a handkerchief of the union jack pattern. The other spoils are a double-barreled gun, a large horse-pistol, and a smaller pistol, three or four cartridge boxes, a great deal of property which had belonged to settlers, such as scarlet hangings, fancy window blinds, small work boxes, &c., some papers belonging to Mr. Richardson of Wairoa, and a coat belonging to Mr. Johnson, of the same place, several articles which were stolen by the Natives from Mr. McDonald at the time Trust's children were murdered near Howick. I therefore conclude these Natives were of the party who committed those murders. One of my men has two small packets of hair, I think European, they are evidently relics, he will give them up to any one who may claim them. We could not bring away much of the "loot," as we were heavily loaded with our arms, blankets, &c.; but I think I brought away sufficient to prove the character of the party we fell in with. We destroyed several packages and tins of gunpowder, and threw a great number of bullets into the creek.

I have great pleasure in reporting that my men behaved with great coolness and courage; there was no firing at random. I am anxious to bring to your special notice the brave and cool conduct of Ensign Westrup, who was foremost in the attack, and made every shot of his revolver tell; also of private John Smith, who had a severe hand-to-hand struggle with a powerful Native.

I have, &c.,

WM. JACKSON,

Captain Commanding Forest Rangers.
Lieut.-Colonel Nixon,
Commanding Moveable Column.