

the 8th, we commenced to try and gain a track out of the bush, and at about eight 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 eleven o'clock A.M., completely exhausted. I am very sorry to report our casualties (as per margin)* were very great; but taking into consideration the number to which we were opposed, being near seven to one, 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 commands 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 Lieutenant Butler, even when brought on his knees, 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 Serjeant Bracegurdle, who supported me throughout in a most intrepid manner, as also Lance-Corporal Ryan, Privates William Bulford, John Talbot, John Cole, and Benjamin Thomas, for the devotion they manifested to their officers, by staying with them until half-past seven 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 the Lieutenant in their arms they returned, meeting Colonel Murray and force. Corporal Ryan returned with Colonel Murray, and pointed out the spot in which Captain Swift's body was.

I beg to enclose the report of Serjeant 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 twenty and thirty in killed and wounded, seven of whom I myself distinctly saw shot dead and dragged into the bush by the rebels.

I remain, &c.,
(Signed) E. McKENNA, Colour-Serjeant,
65th Regiment.

Queen's Redoubt,
September 10, 1863.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour 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' pah, to search for the 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 Maories, 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 half-past three 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 a 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 pah, which is a miserable 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 wharves inside the pah had been completely gutted, and all kinds of property was scattered over the place.

I went with a few men down to the bank of the river, about a 100 yards below the pah; 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 at 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, shewing 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 Maories, I am satisfied that there cannot have been less than 200 when they were attacked by poor Captain 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; 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 numbers to his own, and posted in a strong position.

I beg to bring to the notice of the Lieutenant-General Commanding the very excellent manner in which the expedition in search of the missing

* KILLED—Captain Swift, Private Richard Belringer, Private Stephen Grace.

WOUNDED—Lieutenant Butler, Private Whittle, Private Powell, Private McLean.

MISSING—Private Bryan.