

Troops at New Plymouth, enclosing a Report from Captain Atkinson, Taranaki Volunteers.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) D. A. CAMERON,
Lieutenant-General.

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

New Plymouth, New Zealand,
September 30, 1863.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to transmit, for the information of the Lieutenant-General Commanding, the accompanying Report from Captain Atkinson, the Senior Officer in command of the Volunteers organized to patrol the settlement with a view to prevent the incursions of rebel Maories. It is with much pleasure I draw the Lieutenant-General's attention to the satisfactory result of this encounter between the Civilian Forces of this province and the rebel Maories, and to the persevering efforts of Captains Atkinson and Webster and the officers and men under their command, to carry out the important duties entrusted to them. In all weather, and at all hours, have these companies sought the enemy; and it is to their constant patrolling not only the immediate vicinity of the town but the outskirts of the settlement, that I attribute the little annoyance we have experienced from the presence of, it is now stated, some 500 of the rebels, who occupy strong positions on the edge of the bush between the Bell Block Stockade and Mataitawa.

Captain Atkinson possesses all the energy and perseverance requisite to make him a first-rate "guerilla" leader, and he is most ably seconded by the officers he has trained, as well as by the non-commissioned officers and men who form his force. They have co-operated with the regular troops on several occasions, and I am much indebted to their exertions, their endurance of fatigue, and their willing cheerfulness in the performance of their arduous duties.

I am happy to state that no casualties occurred, although the escapes of several of the men engaged appear to have been marvellous.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) H. J. WARRE, Colonel,
Commanding Troops in Taranaki.
The Assistant Military Secretary,
&c., &c.,
Head-Quarters.

Taranaki,
September 29, 1863.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Colonel Commanding, that this morning, at twenty minutes past three A.M., I left town with my own and Captain Webster's company of bushrangers, for the purpose of laying an ambuscade in the vicinity of the Bell Block. We planted, and remained in ambush till half past eight A.M., but without success. We then moved inland by the boundary line of the Bell Block, and upon reaching Street's Clearing, which is covered with high fern, we surprised a party of about thirty Maories. They returned our fire well for a few minutes, but very soon took to the bush, and then right away. We continued our march to Greenway's, where we surprised another party of about the same number; they also, after a short skirmish, made off as fast as possible. This party was apparently in waiting for a small escort from the Bell Block Stockade fetching firewood.

Knowing the strength of the natives in the immediate neighbourhood, I did not consider it prudent to follow up either of the parties, or to attempt to surround them, which could have been done in both cases had I felt certain of their numbers.

I believe we killed two, if not more, and wounded several.

We took six mats, two stained with blood, several haversacks and kits with food in, and one bag containing twenty-two leaden bullets.

There were no casualties I am thankful to say on our side, except one man (Rushton) just touched in the ear.

We reached town on our return at two P.M.

To Captains Webster and Messenger, to Lieutenant Jonas and Ensign Brown, and to Assistant-Surgeon Webber, my best thanks are due. The conduct also of the non-commissioned officers and men, upon whom so much depends on such occasions, was most satisfactory. I have, &c.,

(Signed) H. A. ATKINSON,
Captain T. R. V.

The Garrison Adjutant, Taranaki.

Head-Quarters, Queen's Redoubt,
October 28, 1863.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to acquaint your Excellency that, on the afternoon of the 23d instant, I received information from Lieutenant-Colonel Chapman, Commanding at Drury, that Lieutenant Lusk, Commanding the outpost at Mauku, had reported to him that a large body of the enemy had approached within a mile of Mauku Church, and that he had left the Stockade with part of his detachment, to endeavour to ascertain their strength. Lieutenant-Colonel Chapman stated, that he had sent a reinforcement of 80 rank and file under Captain S. John, Waikato Militia, to Lieutenant Lusk's support.

At about eleven o'clock that night, I received further intelligence, that Lieutenant Lusk had incautiously engaged the enemy with his small force previous to the arrival of Captain S. John's reinforcement, and being greatly outnumbered, and attacked on both flanks, had been compelled to retire with loss.

I immediately ordered Lieutenant-Colonel Chapman to dispatch a reinforcement of 200 men (18th and 70th Regiments), under Major Ryan, to Mauku, with orders to attack the natives and drive them from the bush, and requested him to call upon Lieutenant-Colonel Nixon, to co-operate with part of the Colonial Defence Force from Papukura. I instructed Captain Rutherford, 70th Regiment, commanding a portion of Lieutenant-Colonel Nixon's column, which was encamped at Selby's, to move as rapidly as possible by Tuakau and Cameron to Pura Pura, with the view of intercepting the enemy, who were likely to attempt to recross the river at that point.

Lieutenant-Colonel Nixon and Major Ryan arrived at Mauku early on the morning of the 24th, and found that the natives had decamped from the neighbourhood. Captain Rutherford pushed on to Pura Pura as expeditiously as the marching through the bush at night would allow, but was too late to cut off the enemy's retreat.

I herewith enclose Lieutenant Lusk's report of the engagement. The force which this officer had at his disposal was too small to attack so large a body of natives, advantageously posted in the bush, with any prospect of success; but the gallantry which this officer and the detachment under his