

## Garrison Towns in the Nineteenth-century Empire

An overview of the symposium held at Victoria University of Wellington Te Whare Wānanga o te Ūpoko o Te Ika a Māui, 4 - 5 December, 2017

### *Monday 4 December*

We began with Dr Mike Ross's (Ngāti Hauā, Te Kawa a Māui, VUW) mihi whakatau: welcoming greetings offering connections, acknowledgements and the good anchoring spirits of Te Herenga Waka (the VUW marae) to preside over our meeting.<sup>1</sup> I set the historical discussions running with observations on the place we were in: the Duke of Wellington who dominates 19<sup>th</sup> century military culture and his presence in this place – of the university, of the city (its harbour, hills and people past and present) as well as across other places of empire. Professor Doug Peers came to the symposium from Ontario's University of Waterloo. These spaces contain the central theme for our deliberations: the creation, nature and operation of cultures of coercion in garrison



towns.

*Professor Sekhar Bandyopadhyay.*

Professor Sekhar Bandyopadhyay (History, VUW, and Director New Zealand India Research Institute) chaired the first session focusing on military culture in 19<sup>th</sup> century India noting the influence Doug Peers's argument of the fiscal-military state in early 19<sup>th</sup> century India has had on the field of Indian history, and Dr Erica Wald's recent important work examining relations *between* strata of the British military in India in her *Vice in the Barracks* (2014).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.aut.ac.nz/community/maori/mihi-whakatau>  
<https://www.victoria.ac.nz/maori-at-victoria/whanau-on-campus/te-herenga-waka-marae>



*Professor Doug Peers, Sekhar Bandyopadhyay.*

Doug presented to us his first lines of thinking on a rich set of archives detailing courts martial in India 1820-60. Speed, efficiency (i.e. low cost), and the public staging of discipline were prominent features identified. The interplay between order and honour and how these were calibrated by race, status, and gender, in the cases he is studying is a central theme in his study. Discussions of such factors were constantly being negotiated, and, in the case of general courts martial, made visible by the requirement that the commander-in-chief had to explicitly approve or confirm both the verdict and the sentence. What mattered was not so much the punishment meted out to the offender but how discipline was performed to the wider group. Doug likened the moment permission was given to use cameras in the India Office archives as akin to his marriage and birth of his children (to general mirth); we all recognized the pressure on time and funds in getting to our archive! London (England) is an expensive distance in money and time from our globally disparate locations.

Professor John Cookson, wryly identifying himself as ‘a veteran’ (of studies of late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century soldiers and their pension, pay and disciplinary regimes<sup>2</sup> rather than of the campaigns themselves!) noted the self-contained nature of regimental communities of this time and the existence of ‘officer paternalism’. Associate Professor Kate Hunter (commenting after Doug and Erica’s papers) probed whether discipline was less of a problem and there were fewer court martials in regiments where theatricals

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<sup>2</sup> J. E. Cookson, “The Edinburgh and Glasgow Duke of Wellington Statues: Early Nineteenth Century Unionist Nationalism as a Tory Project,” *Scottish Historical Review* 83, no. 215 (2004). J. E. Cookson, “The Napoleonic Wars, Military Scotland and Tory Highlandism in the Early Nineteenth Century,” *Scottish Historical Review* 78, no. 1 (2010): 60–75. John E. Cookson, “Regimental Worlds: Interpreting the Experience of British Soldiers during the Napoleonic Wars,” in *Soldiers, Citizens and Civilians*, ed. A Forrest (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). John E. Cookson, *Lord Liverpool’s Administration: the crucial years 1815-1822*, Edinburgh and London, 1975; *The Friends of Peace: Anti-war liberalism in England, 1793-1815*, CUP, 1982; *The British Armed Nation, 1793-1815*, Clarendon, 1997

allowed some carnivalesque release of tension (satire or questioning of authority of officers on stage releasing actual tension in soldiers' day-to-day existence).



*Dr Erica Wald.*

In Erica's presentation on 'Skittles, cricket and theatricals' in the garrison towns and cantonments of 19<sup>th</sup> century India we turned to leisure: what did soldiers and officers do when they weren't 'doing anything' but 'being present' (which actually turned out to be a lot of the time). Given the plentiful labour available for washing, cleaning, cooking, sewing, etc from the local population, it was not even in these kinds of tasks that men (or women 'of the regiment') could find occupation beyond their military duties. Erica suggested that the army did little to cultivate active leisure beyond some rudimentary provision for sports (and even that came rather later than what might be expected). Reading was generally not encouraged, or had to be done under supervision of the regimental librarian (usually the chaplain), so the notion of the ruffian soldier, a man driven by animalistic appetites, was upheld rather any idea of the soldier as a person with intellectual, cultural or improving aspirations. Coffee (properly brewed) was Piddington's other contribution to the 19<sup>th</sup> century military, besides meteorology, and his specifications for the drink that could supplant alcohol in soldiers' tastes, were such as would make a 2017 Wellington (New Zealand) barista raise a well turned eyebrow. We returned to the spaces and occupations (or lack thereof) of Erica's wastrel soldiers in subsequent discussions.





Erica Wald, Sekhar Bandyopadhyay.

Returning from our first break for tea (at the gentlemanly hour of 11), I talked (for too long probably) on how Rebecca and I had started on the 'Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Settler' project – neither of us being military historians, but rather, variously historians of migration, mobility, gender, culture in the 19<sup>th</sup> century world. My earliest publication was on VD and New Zealand's CD Act (1869) but the military context was not the trigger point for the historian or in fact the history in this instance.<sup>3</sup>

Our starting hypothesis - now transforming into an argument - rests on the characterization of New Zealand operating as a garrison colony (c.1840s-1870, possibly longer), and *becoming* a settler colony by means of it being a garrison colony. What is the garrison culture that is created, conveyed to and shaped in such a place and through such a process? How do we think about and see the particular shape of 'settler colonialism' working in conjunction with the coercive military power of direct force. And how does such an examination change our view of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – not only in the colony of New Zealand - but across the 'settler empire'?

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<sup>3</sup> That work appeared as a chapter in London Feminist History Group, *The Sexual Dynamics of History*, Pluto Press, 1983 in which Myna Trustram's early work from her PhD also featured. Charlotte Macdonald, 'Ellen Silk and her sisters: female emigration to the new world', London Feminist History Group, *The sexual dynamics of history: men's power, women's resistance*, Pluto Press, London, 1983, 66-86. 'The "Social Evil": Prostitution, Prostitutes and the Passage of the Contagious Diseases Act (1869) in New Zealand', *Women's Studies Association Conference Papers 1983*, Auckland: WSA (NZ), 1984, 42-61. See also 'The "Social Evil": prostitution and the passage of the Contagious Diseases Act (1869)', in Barbara Brookes, Charlotte Macdonald and Margaret Tennant, eds, *Women in History*, Allen & Unwin, Wellington, 1986, 13-33; *A Woman of Good Character: single women as immigrant settlers in nineteenth-century New Zealand*, Wellington: Allen & Unwin, 1990; Myna Trustram, 'Distasteful and derogatory? Examining Victorian soldiers for venereal disease', London Feminist History Group, *The sexual dynamics of history: men's power, women's resistance*, Pluto Press, London, 1983, 154-164. Trustram's work would later be published in full as the landmark *Women of the Regiment: Marriage and the Victorian Army* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984).





*Professor Charlotte Macdonald.*

The porousness of a settler colony as against the segregating cantonment regime of India is one area of interest, given the experience, linkage and presence of troops in both places - the 70<sup>th</sup>, 43<sup>rd</sup>, 68<sup>th</sup> and 57<sup>th</sup> regiments all arrived in New Zealand from India and Rangoon in the 1860s. J. A. Hobson's views on the military logic of imperialism (as well as its economic imperative) and John Darwin's idea of the military as a 'bridgehead' in his conceptualization of the rationale for 19<sup>th</sup> century expansion were canvassed as approaches to the military/imperial nexus. Space and place, music, theatre, bodies, postal networks all pose places of a garrison culture. A wide array of ground was galloped over rather speedily. I finished by presenting the 'Pratt pendant' (in Te Papa's collection) as a complicated product of garrison culture. How does a token or trophy of colonial war become an intimate gift of husband to a wife for a wedding anniversary?

Kate Hunter asked if part of our conundrum was that we were looking to find a smooth surface to an empire-wide pattern of military culture whereas everywhere we looked we actually found lumps – wrinkles – in the tablecloth of empire. What we are seeing is a local insistence – of difference, of specificity of place and time insistently poking through – even though the red cloth of the soldier's tunic, the hard steel of the Enfield barrel, the bugle call of dawn are everywhere exactly uniform.



*Charlotte Macdonald with student Leah Bell (formerly Otorohanga College) in slide behind.*

Lunch. Talk of other kinds.

Dr Arini Loader, Mike Ross and Kelly Keane-Tuala opened the afternoon session with linked presentations on their stunning work on the waiata (songs) written into MS by prisoners from the battle of Rangiriri (November 1863) while held on the hulk *Marion* in Auckland harbour from late 1863 through much of 1864. The MS now lives in the Sir George Grey Special Collection, Auckland Libraries. Arini, Mike and Kelly are following several tracks in their research: identifying the waiata, looking for clues as to their composers, analyzing the te reo lyrics and prose, and bringing the waiata and the stories they carry into new life. Some waiata are well known and are songs associated with particular iwi. Mike talked of the Ngati Haua waiata – *E whiti e te rā* – a symbol of hope, roughly conveying the idea in the picture ‘beyond the trouble the sun shines’.



Mike Ross.

Some waiata have been separated from the events that surrounded their composition. Kelly, with expertise in language study, gave us a stunning and illuminating discourse on the ‘luminescent beauty’ of the waiata *Pinepine Te Kura*. The full and enriching meanings of ‘kura’ emerged wonderfully for us all. Kelly’s whanau melted our hearts and expanded our understandings through time by singing *Pinepine*.

Arini quoted Maya Angelou: ‘History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again’ to frame her discussion of the Rangiriri prisoners’ waiata: works of great beauty, strength and treasure created in circumstances of terrible violence, capture and pain. As well as looking at the overall context of the waiata, Arini is particularly interested in following the women in the 19<sup>th</sup> century war story. She identified a woman present at Rangiriri who took the bullet for her husband; the woman who, as a child, had been a witness to fighting, and whose recollections of the war in 1931 (as an old woman) were still prefaced to readers with the warning ‘this does not reflect well on the British’. The waiata that talk of the person who is not there – of separation – is not just a waiata but speaks of something larger: a whakapapa of separation.





*Arini Loader.*

The author of the fine *The Great War for New Zealand. Waikato 1800-2000* (BWB, 2016), Dr Vincent O'Malley spoke about the garrison towns of the Waikato, and specifically about Kihikihi. What links might we see between the Kihikihi of the 1860s and the Kihikihi of 2017? The census profile shows us the long term consequences for a community marked by dispossession and violent suppression. Yet, in the 'before' story (before the 1860s wars) of these towns and surrounding districts there is a history of extraordinary productivity, people that are thriving by any measure – economic, cultural, social, political. Vincent drew attention to just how dependent Auckland was on Māori production from the Waikato through the 1840s-1850s. What became of these small frontier towns (some of them marked by roads carrying names of military officers and men, and districts bisected by 'Frontier Road' – the boundary marking the confiscation line between 'the King Country' and now occupied territory)?



*Vincent O'Malley.*

How memory works as another form of cultural coercion was evidenced in the historical marking of events of the war at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A monument to Rewi Maniapoto was erected in 1894 just months before his death. Maniapoto, by this time, had become a figure of reverence, respect and prominent profile. Ironically (but also logically in the working of colonial relations) the monument was provided and paid for by Sir George Grey (is the lesson here: watch out who your friends are – when your opponent builds a monument to you a cultural conquest completes the conquest by bullets?) To say that History is written by the winners is not new, but needs to keep being said.



*Back row: Garth Houltham, Mark Brewer (obscured), Raenyn Dalziel, Katie Cooper. Middle: Caitlin Lynch, Ben Schrader, Trish Downes, Penny Russell, Kate Hunter*



Dr Janice Adamson explained the archaeologist's (and especially the historical archaeologist's) challenge: 'how to extract meaning from copious remains'. And she set down her preference for small scale studies building stories from single artefacts or sites (inspired crucially by the 'Little Lon' study of inner Melbourne).<sup>4</sup> We saw the power of Janice's approach in what she showed us: from the dig she was part of as an Honours student at the University of Auckland on a tiny portion of what had been the 21 or so acres enclosed in the Albert Barracks walls and in her subsequent PhD work on two house sites in Taranaki.<sup>5</sup>

Buckles, numbers, buttons and glass objects (the last profuse in New Zealand archaeological sites) all abound. Amongst the bottles found in the corner of the barrack ground were ones with cut off necks. Janice surmised these were officers slicing off the tops with their bayonets in shows of bravado (and with disregard for the recyclable value of the glass). Ceramics, the focus of Janice's study on the site, tell us a story of domestic life – a child's toy, cups with and without handles, the everyday Willow pattern (a 'Briscoes' level of householding as against the fancier patterns and shapes)<sup>6</sup> – but as ceramics still speaking of a rising or aspiration or attention to domesticity not evident in the metal basin or mug used by a bachelor soldier in barrackroom or camp.<sup>7</sup>



*Janice Adamson extracting meaning from materials below ground.*

From her PhD study on two Taranaki house sites where the structures were destroyed or dismembered in the 1860-61 fighting, Janice showed another set of relationships between settler domesticity, household and 'improving aspiration' and warfare. Mrs Jury's three teapots speak of an elaborate, layered and differentiating sociability against Mrs Autridge's one-pot approach to social relations (or lack of choice in having only one teapot in which to brew tea for visitors as well as household members). Throughout Janice's presentation we were viewing a washbasin from the Albert Barracks carrying the

<sup>4</sup> Alan Mayne, Tim Murray and Susan Lawrence, 'Melbourne's 'little Lon'', *Australian Historical Studies*, 31: 114 (2008), 131-151.

<sup>5</sup> Janice Fraser [Adamson], "The Domestic Front: An Archaeological Investigation of the Albert Barracks Ceramics Assemblage" BA (Hons) dissertation (University of Auckland, 2002); Janice Adamson, "Improving Our Condition: An Archaeology of Improvement in Taranaki, New Zealand, 1841-1860", PhD Thesis (University of Auckland, 2013), <http://hdl.handle.net/2292/21233>

<sup>6</sup> Not The Warehouse 'where everyone gets a bargain', but Briscoes 'where you'll never buy better'.



transfer print in floral pale blue named ‘Alma’ – a name carrying the Crimea from battlefield to washstand, from Europe to colonial Auckland.

An archaeologist by qualification and by professional practice, Janice Adamson attended the symposium with Dr Hans Bader, director of Archaeology Solutions.<sup>8</sup>



*Doug Peers, Vincent O'Malley, Dr Craig Wilcox.*

Professor Penny Russell's visit to Wellington was sponsored by the Australian High Commission. As well as speaking at the symposium Penny delivered a public lecture at the National Library of New Zealand: 'Extended Families: Politics and Practice in Family History'. Noting the huge popularity of family history in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century and the various prompts driving that interest - including the promotions of companies such as Ancestry.com - Penny noted her own fascination with the politics of the intimate, the 'extraordinariness of the ordinary' that family history admits.

But it is a fascination, and a practice, that can be complicated - and troubling – when ancestors do, say and believe things that jar against a 21<sup>st</sup> century sensibility. In a careful, intriguing address Penny asked if family history was about what people did in the past or what we want them to do or be for us in the present. Why is the popular TV series 'Who do you think you are' rather than 'Who do you think they were?' She used a branch of her own family, a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century set of merchants and congregationalists, who migrated to New South Wales in the 1830s with 10 of their 12 children as a base from which to explore the intricacies of family, emigration, colonial opportunity, and 'the frontier'. The room was full, Zoe Roland (Manager of Public Programmes, National Library) gradually bringing more chairs into the back rows.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.archaeologysolutions.co.nz/about-2/>

## Tuesday 5 December

We reconvened on Tuesday morning, beginning with Dr Huw Davies (King's College, London) recalling his visit to Canberra in February 2016 for a military history conference in which Jeffrey Grey challenged historians present to look beyond the immediate confines of their specialism. Since then, Huw told the symposium, he had been attending conferences at which he felt 'deeply uncomfortable'. Historians of empire, culture and 19<sup>th</sup> century society asked different questions, used different language, started in different places – yet provided stimulating intoxicants to his fields of research.



*Huw Davies expounding the 'military cloud'.*

Huw introduced the idea of the 'military cloud', an adaptation or extension of the concept of 'the imperial cloud' recently discussed at a Paris conference and drawing on a 2016 article.<sup>9</sup> Adopting the language of current day computing the concept draws attention to the idea of a collective 'reservoir of knowledge' available across European imperial powers rather than just within any one single one, and points to the multiple ways in which such a body of knowledge might be accessed and 'downloaded' according to use, need, circumstance and context. It is, in this sense, a development on from the 'colonial or settler archive'. Huw then tested the idea with reference to specific events in the garrison towns of Lahore, New York and Sydney – where knowledge – or rather, the use of knowledge, was variously successful (or not) in advancing or receding imperial ambition. Huw's sharp analysis, laced with a disarming wit, brought the catastrophic

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<sup>9</sup> Christoph Kamissek and Jonas Kreienbaum, "The Imperial Cloud," *Journal of Modern European History* 14, no. 2 (2016): 164–82.

1839 invasion of Afghanistan and contemporary Brexit into the arena of an assessment of the durability of ‘the military cloud’.

Josh King, a BA (Hons) in History/LLB student at VUW asked Huw an important question about the changing nature of the informality of the ‘cloud’ he had sketched across the 18<sup>th</sup> and into the 19<sup>th</sup> century – did it lose its effectiveness in the face of a greater formalisation of imperial administration and army bureaucracy?

Dr Rebecca Lenihan’s detailed discussion of preliminary findings relating to the composition of the strand of imperial soldiers who end up in New Zealand in 19<sup>th</sup> century (around 18,000 in total in 1840s-1870) noted at the outset the separation of the story of ‘settler’ migration and ‘19<sup>th</sup> century colonial wars’. This was a point John McLellan returned to later in the day. Early analysis of soldiers present in New Zealand shows a predominance of Irish, and a very low proportion of Scots (at considerable contrast to the civilian settler stream). For all that attention sometimes falls on those soldiers who discharge and become ‘soldier settlers’, 80 per cent of soldiers who serve in New Zealand leave the place. So what we are seeing here is the significance of New Zealand as a place of outward as well as inward movement of people at mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, and in some cases a chance for future settlers to sample the colony before making the decision to migrate permanently. Rebecca’s work is situated in the borderlands, between the rich fields of migration and mobility studies, both areas of considerable new work in recent years.



*Rebecca Lenihan.*

Desertion, discharge and death – the three ‘Ds’ through which men disappear or slip off/out of our database of imperial soldiers – show different patterns across the group of men. 59% of those who took their discharge in New Zealand were Irish, compared to just 39% English and 3% Scottish; among the deserters however the figures were quite different, at 33% Irish, 53% English, and 9% Scottish.

Despite the transience of many soldiers, is it reasonable to conclude that soldiers made little impact beyond the military in the colony in which they spent several years? Rebecca raised this as one of her questions, along with the potential implications of a significant number of current-day New Zealanders tracing descent from soldiers who became settlers. How might putting the military settlers into the migration story alter senses of identity and Pakeha relationships with this history?

Rebecca also noted the degree of interest in identifying imperial soldiers present in New Zealand amongst some sectors of the public – a point we surmised at beginning of



project but can now say has been tested with 2002 unique visitors to the database page within the project website ([www.soldersofempire.nz](http://www.soldersofempire.nz)) in the first 2 weeks after release (late October 2017). Interest, filtering back via email and paper mail, since the release of the data has been high. Rebecca signaled that some interest in this area comes from people who want their Pakeha ancestors to have a voice in commemorations and in this history. She reprised Vincent O'Malley, quoting the Waitangi Tribunal's words: 'While only one side remembers the suffering of the past, dialogue will always be difficult. One side commences the dialogue with anger, and the other side has no idea why.'<sup>10</sup>

Dawn Chambers<sup>11</sup> asked if the database shows (or has capacity to) show where men settle in New Zealand after discharge?

Associate Professor James Beattie asked about links between India and New Zealand.

Kate Hunter drew parallels between proportion of Irish amongst soldiery in New Zealand and Ann McGrath's work in Australia.

Kathryn Patterson (who has done much work on Irish regiments in New Zealand) noted only two soldiers who married Māori women (in formal marriages).

Garth Houltham (Research Officer, New Zealand Fencible Society) noted the G series at Archives New Zealand as containing valuable information.

Hans Bader asked how many discharged soldiers went into the Militia.

Morning coffee break.

Sue Dinsdale (NZSG) convened the following session in which Dr Angela Wanhalla spoke about the elusive Mr & Mrs Flowers – presented to attendees through a striking photograph taken in the Whanganui studio of William James Harding in the early 1870s. The couple are clearly wearing their best clothes for the occasion. But what was that? This is but the first of a forest of questions which surround these people – people who Angela described as the 'ordinary extraordinary', historical subjects who occupy something even slighter than a shadow in the archives. What is less than a shadow?

Nathaniel and Margaret married on St Helena, where Nathaniel Flowers was a soldier. But Mrs Flowers – Mary Ann March, spinster, was who, and from where? They are in New Zealand (and Whanganui) from 1857 where Nathaniel signs up with the 65<sup>th</sup> Regiment. But their lives beyond these few threads remain in the realm of the enigmatic.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://newzealandhistory.podbean.com/e/the-great-war-for-new-zealand/>

<sup>11</sup> See Dawn's website of genealogical and historical research data here: <http://www.nzpictures.co.nz/>



*Angela Wanhalla introduces Mr & Mrs Flowers.*

Trish Downes (ANU, Canberra) took us on an excursion to Bathurst – a garrison town, planned and planted by Governor Darling as ‘capital of the inland’ – the territory beyond the Blue Mountains. Transporting people, goods, and stock in and out of what had become ‘the interior’ was not easy. As was the case in Ireland, the regiments were distributed in small detachments.



*Trish Downes en route to Bathurst early 19th century.*

Dr Craig Wilcox's question: in the 1824 campaign when numbers increased dramatically, where did all the military get accommodated?

Dr Ben Schrader: was river transport and access significant for Bathurst and other inland garrison towns/outposts – given the barrier posed by the Mountains?

Trish's paper brought to the fore the nature of garrison towns that are not on coast, not ports, and thus not so directly meshed to the seagoing empire, and with it the Royal Navy, the shipping networks and routes. We might ask questions or look for parallels with Graham Dominy's work on Fort Napier in Pietermaritzburg.<sup>12</sup>



*Penny Russell, Janice Adamson, Hans Bader.*

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<sup>12</sup> Graham Dominy, *Last Outpost on the Zulu Frontiers. Fort Napier and the British Imperial Garrison* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2016).



The lunch break was also the occasion for some of the symposium participants to see 'Apparitions: the photograph and its image' exhibition at Adam Art Gallery, with curator Professor Geoffrey Batchen (Art History, VUW).<sup>13</sup> The exhibition features images made from the first and only photograph made of the Duke of Wellington (1769-1852) in the studio of Antoine Claudet in London on 1 May 1844: the Duke's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday. Geoffrey emphasized the play between capitalism, invention, technology, colonialism and ego in the development of what came to be known as 'photography'.



*Huw Davies, Charlotte Macdonald, Geoffrey Batchen, Erica Wald, Doug Peers before the 'Wellington' wall in 'Apparitions' exhibition, Adam Art Gallery. Robert Cross, VUW Image Services.*

Resuming for the afternoon, Penny took us to a brawl between civilians and soldiers outside Sydney's George Street barracks on 17 August 1828. One of the few things that seems clear about this well documented (but interpretively opaque event) was that the fight was not instigated by any personal animus but was a conflict between soldiers as soldiers and civilians as civilians. Had a code of conduct or a question of honour been disputed between the protagonists? Was the reputation or honour of soldiers impugned by supposed words thrown at or by them, or was it that the soldiers had thrown their uniformed weight around over a civilian population they derided as tainted by convictism?

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.victoria.ac.nz/sacr/about/staff/geoffrey-batchen>



*Penny Russell sorting out a brawl in Sydney, 1828.*

What begins in the coroner's court over the dead body of the unfortunate soldier Terence Rooney, shifts in scale and magnitude once criminal charges are laid. The centrality of barracks and of redcoats as prominent figures in the town – for better or ill, admired or resented, lies at heart of this episode of friction. Also fuelling the conflict, and subsequent episodes between soldiers and civilians, are the pro and anti pastoralist interests, pro and anti the perceived despotism of Governor Gipps. There is no neutral ground in 1830-40s Sydney.



*Tell us more!*



Ben Schrader, as an urban historian, asked how or when a resolution of tensions evident in the city occurs.

Trish Downes noted that what Penny Russell has said aligns with idea that garrison was ‘a necessary evil’ – the view of contemporaries.

Kate Hunter asked if and when dueling was outlawed in Australasia – an answer came from Doug Peers.



*John McLellan, Mark Brewer (Military History Society), Amalaratna (ATL), and Linda McGregor (ATL)*

Declaiming herself as neither military historian or historian, but a specialist in art history, Te Papa’s curator of New Zealand historical art, Dr Rebecca Rice, delivered an excursion across various visual representations of the 19<sup>th</sup> century wars.<sup>14</sup> Gustavus Von Tempsky, the Prussian adventurer and artist, produced a series of scenes in romantic style in 1865-67. Some were bought by Premier William Fox, and subsequently donated to what was the relatively new Colonial Museum (formed 1865). They constitute the first acquisitions for what would become the national public art collection. Soldier-artist, politician-philanthropist, art patron and benefactor are all of a piece.<sup>15</sup> H. G. Robley’s work was considered next, in the framework of documentary. Robley was astute in supplying the *Illustrated London News* with sketches of battle sites in New Zealand, thereby capturing the narrative presented to the Anglo-wide reading public. William Strutt, painter, and trained artist, whose 1861 painting, ‘View of Mt Egmont, Taranaki, New Zealand, taken from New Plymouth, with Maoris driving off settlers’ cattle’ is a grand and magnificent piece painted and exhibited in Melbourne in 1861, bought for and brought to New Zealand for

<sup>14</sup> See Rebecca Rice’s 2015 Gordon Brown Lecture published as Rebecca Rice, *Unsettling: Art and the New Zealand Wars* (Wellington: VUW, 2016).

<sup>15</sup> <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1f15/fox-william>



the first time in 2015 (2015-0042-1). It currently forms the centerpiece for the Te Rā Maumahara Day of Remembrance snapshot exhibition at Te Papa Tongarewa.<sup>16</sup> Finally, Rebecca presented the work of W. F. Gordon, in photographic portraits collected in albums, and in flags used in the battles. Rebecca drew attention to the well-known (and often reproduced) photograph of Heni Pore purporting to be shot with the flag she had made and flown at Gate Pa. In fact the photograph is constructed by Gordon with the flag drawn in, an instance of what Rebecca suggested as ‘Victorian photoshop’.



*Rebecca Rice wrangling Von Tempsky, Robley, Strutt, and Gordon.*

Derek Leask questioned the location of Strutt’s painting – scene – was it Waireka? Could it be? (Derek has looked closely at the maps made by the army and navy through the 19<sup>th</sup> century)

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<sup>16</sup> Rebecca Rice, *Unsettling: Art and the New Zealand Wars*, Gordon Brown lecture, Wellington, 2017. Rebecca Rice, “Painting by Numbers: Creating a Colonial Masterpiece,” January 11, 2016, <http://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2016/01/11/painting-by-numbers-creating-a-colonial-masterpiece/>.

Hans Bader noted the constant, dense and prolific making of maps by the Royal Engineers. He has had ample opportunity – necessity and reason - to consult them in the course of conducting archaeological excavations.



*Daniel Thompson*



*Daniel Thompson appraises the Enfield across the empire*

Daniel Thompson's examination of the cultural history of the Enfield rifle across the British empire revolved around the proposition of the co-production of knowledge, gender, race, civilisation 'and all that sort of thing' (no small task Daniel!). He set out the reasons surrounding the rapid innovation in arms technology in Britain after a long

period in which the Brown Bess musket was the default weapon. Above him in a dramatic opening slide was a c.1872 Mr Cobb sitting, rifle clutched firmly and proudly to his chest (and cocked), photographed in the same Harding studio in Whanganui as Angela Wanhalla's Mr & Mrs Flowers.

The Enfield rifle was not just an improvement in efficiency but was also thought to require (and inspire) a different kind of man, its efficiency improved the moral nature of its user. The Enfield was associated with a rational masculinity, its users and owners were 'men' rather than 'soldiers', the rifle stood for modernity of weaponry, of person, of warfare and of the imperial power that had produced it with all its high precision engineering and financial capital. The Enfield was famously/infamously used in India, but was also central to the middle class Volunteer Movement. In New Zealand there was great confidence it would vanquish Māori easily. Events proved otherwise. Weapons that spoke to the antithesis of military might and civilizational (and racial) strength: the tomahawk and Enfield rifle, did not represent the conquered and conqueror. The coding of weapons to character and motivation carried through from 19<sup>th</sup> century history into later 20<sup>th</sup> century imagining of that history. The important and ever-intriguing feature film *Utu* (1983) makes weapons speak loudly (not in their fire but in their culture) – CM's point in discussion.

Erica Wald noted that sepoys in India did take up the Enfield against British and did so effectively, so the 1857 moment of supposed rejection, was only a small if sensational moment in the larger story. John Cookson pointed to the Dog Tax War in the north of New Zealand in the 1890s when Premier R J Seddon ordered cannons be used indicating how little faith he had in military success. Such ridicule deserves a stage play. John thought that was a job for a younger person – but there was a feeling in the room that perhaps it was his to pick up!

With that thought in mind, there was a final short break for afternoon tea.

The final session began with John McLellan's fascinating discussion of soldiers and colonists – a searching depiction of men who discharged from the army in New Zealand (the numbers amounting to approximately one-fifth of the total 18,000 in the colony between 1840-1870). Various paths were taken by such former redcoats. For officers there was often a rise to civic prominence and modest or even significant wealth (William Russell Russell's case was instructive if chilling). For soldiers only a few made a go of land holdings they received as part of their 'reward' for service. Some made good with domestic labour at hand (wives and children making up a productive domestic economy); others ended up in 19<sup>th</sup> century 'security' – as gaolers, recruits to the armed constabulary, warders in lunatic asylums, etc. Some appear later in their lives in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century press described as worthy recipients of charity – public and private – old men to whom gratitude should be shown for defending the colony in its early years.

Inevitably, the capacity to track individuals in any detail is limited by the uneven record (especially as men leave the pages of the War Office archive) and by the sheer weight of numbers and thus research time involved in pursuing individuals. John's work, it might be noted (as was the case with Daniel also) was undertaken in the scope of a one-year, 40,000 word MA thesis.



The challenge of identifying and tracking the paths of individuals within the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century military is one that the ‘Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Settler’ project has wrestled with throughout. What Matt Plummer usefully noted on one occasion as the ‘micro-macro dilemma’. Yes.



*Lachy Paterson introducing John McLellan.*

John Cookson, with great experience of labour intensive work in the archives counting and tracking individual soldiers in pension records, talked about the possibility of drawing a sample of perhaps 1,000 men. What about NCOs? Might this middling group of men become the ones who ‘had a head start’ through better education, better pay and a capacity to bring social capital to more fulsome use?



*Front row: Rebecca Rice, Matiu Baker, John Cookson, Caitlin Lynch, Fiona Gray*

John McLellan's closing points drew attention to 'the interconnected mess' of settlement and wars, returning to and amplifying points raised by Rebecca Lenihan earlier in the day. John posed questions about the implications of New Zealanders recognizing the lines of descent – ancestry – from such men. In relation to this question John noted that he looked forward 'with both excitement and apprehension' to future commemorations of the Rā Maumahara: Day of Remembrance (28 October).

James Beattie (Science in Society, VUW) asked about climate – how important to soldier settlers and prospective soldier settlers, as a factor alongside land?



*James Beattie asking John McLellan about climate.*

Garth Houltham noted the destruction of vellum volumes from Auckland's Ranfurly Home for veterans – which were taken to the dump some years ago. An example of the wanton destruction of records that has gone on.



Historical geographer, economic historian and expert on 1840s Wellington (and avowed *non*-military historian) Dr Brad Patterson set out the scale and impact of the commissariat in 1840s Wellington. At the time a tiny faltering settlement in its early years, described by (a clearly deluded) Nelson visitor in 1845 as 'rotten to the core', the arrival of the military brought people, spending, work, and cash. The precise value of economic stimulus is not yet calculated but proportionately was probably more substantial than the military brought to Sydney in the same decade.

Brad traced the kind of modest trades, but trades nonetheless, brought to New Zealand by soldiers who might earn on the side while in uniform, as well as earning as tradesmen once discharged: shoe and bootmakers, tanners, coopers, carpenters, blacksmiths and the like. And others in the colonial community who benefited: service providers – hoteliers, coach builders, watermen, small cultivators.

*Dr Brad Patterson*



A question from Lachy Paterson: were Maori labourers employed by the military and what do we know of interactions with Maori?



*Ben Schrader asking a question from the urban history perspective – when the military leaves what happens?*

Ben Schrader: what happens when the military leave taking capital and consuming power with them?

Trish Downes – convict labour was deliberately introduced and welcomed in Western Australia because it provided a cheap labour source, thereby recognizing the value of labour in establishing a colony.

James Beattie – what about fresh water?

A military historian and an Australian (a statement with different resonance when made at Port Jackson (Sydney) than Port Nicholson (Wellington), in Parramatta (33.48.54 S/151.00.4 E) than in Paremata (41.07 S/174.52 E) – both of which were military as well as scholarly places<sup>17</sup>) historian of military culture and provocateur Dr Craig Wilcox gave a closing address of wit, panache and wide insight.

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<sup>17</sup> Alice Te Punga Somerville, 'Living on New Zealand Street: Maori Presence in Parramatta', *Ethnohistory*, 61: 4 (2014) 665-669, DOI: 10.1215/00141801-2717813. Arini Loader, lectures to HIST 112: Islands and Peoples: New Zealand and the World, VUW, 2016 and 2017.





*Craig Wilcox, military historian and an Australian.*

In his paper Craig set about answering the criticism Jeffrey Grey had leveled at his *Redcoat Dreaming* (2009) and along the way depicted some of the features of a garrison town. Sydney was one in the 19<sup>th</sup> century whereas now it is not – despite the continuing and continuous presence of a barrack in the city. There is no longer a corporate presence of the military. Shining a light onto the positive (contemporary 19<sup>th</sup> century) view of the military, of British regiments, was his goal – a light or glare that has been resisted, one that has not ‘taken’ in the Australian historical landscape.

What a society imagines, dreams about, Craig suggested to us, was as important as what it ‘did’ in an empirical or practical sense (and we might ask – I am asking (CM) – can those two ever be fully uncoupled)? Commanding officer through most of the 1840s

(‘His Excellency’) Maurice O’Connell was someone who sought to find a future in the colony rather than take himself or the garrison somewhere in a wider strategic or imperial sense. O’Connell was someone who knew his men and gave them what they wanted; for himself he sought patronage, and operated nepotism ensuring a future for his family in New South Wales.



*Listening, attending, thinking.*

Craig remarked that Australian historians didn’t look outward enough and New Zealand historians didn’t look toward Australia enough – the price being the loss of a sense of the dynamism of the military sinews linking colonies, people, interests across the Tasman and Bass seas. (We agree!) And it is exactly this sense of connectedness we are wanting to explore in our project (and that the symposium was designed to advance).

The Flight of the Conchords managed to be part of Craig’s story in a stylish nod to creole nationalism. But we landed in a modest cottage in Erskineville with Mary Ann Bourne, the ‘so different’ daughter of Sergeant Noakes of the 58<sup>th</sup> Regiment. We love this ‘difference’, this home-ness, this crossing of the threshold of the redcoat/colonial world. Thank you Craig.

Questions explored O’Connell’s explicit cf latent intent in ‘settling’ (John McLellan); the view from NSW of Hone Heke as a freedom fighter, an ancient Briton defending his honour (Penny Russell); O’Connell’s relationship with other officers (Derek Leask) – Craig’s reply included the note that O’Connell’s son, Captain O’Connell was regarded as ‘the consummate puppy’; do we know who precisely conveyed the news of the northern war to O’Connell (Emeritus Professor Raewyn Dalziel); how do we think about parallels of 1840s if looking from Victoria – where this is a time of war – Port Fairy, Mounted Police etc (Kate Hunter); the likening of the military to the church as a profession and how these work as communities, as status markers in colonial settings (Charlotte). We



ended up considering the relationship between the British Army, Catholicism and advancement with Doug Peers making important observations on connections here.



*Raewyn Dalziel, Ben Schrader, Trish Downes, Penny Russell, Kate Hunter*

In a bookend to the opening, Lachy Paterson, as chair of the last session, offered a *poroporoaki*<sup>18</sup> – the closing bracket to the opening of Mike’s welcome. With thanks and some farewells we closed at AM LT105 and most of us adjourned to Milk and Honey for drinks and buffet supper. Looking out from the high windows at the evening dropping over Whanganui-a-Tara – Wellington and its surrounding hills – the range of Hataitai and beyond the Orongorongo. Dan Harvey serenaded us with airs on the violin between 6 – 7pm. Talk and good cheer continued at the end of two very full days.

Thank you all for the riches of expertise, hard work, and good company you brought to us.

Charlotte Macdonald & Rebecca Lenihan

15 December 2017

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<sup>18</sup> <http://maoridictionary.co.nz/word/5879>;  
<http://www.radionz.co.nz/collections/whaikorero/introduction>





*Vincent O'Malley, Hans Bader, Janice Adamson.*



*Erica Wald asking Daniel Thompson an Enfield question (Bettina Bradbury to right).*