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VICTORIA'S VICTORY

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The honour of being the first Australian force to serve officially overseas has normally been bestowed upon the New South Wales force which served in the Suakin Expedition. Australians did serve in the Waikato War (New Zealand 1863-4), but these men were individual volunteers who served in New Zealand regiments. However, a case can be made for an earlier group of Australians who served in the Second Maori War between 1860 and 1861. The group in question were the landing party (or parties) from Her Majesty's Steam Sloop *Victoria*. The *Victoria* was part, indeed at the time the only part, of the Colonial Navy of Victoria. As such, her crew were an official serving unit. Their service in New Zealand was both officially requested and sanctioned. The men in the landing party, like those in the later Suakin campaign, served beside regular British forces and qualified for the campaign medal. It is the aim of this paper to outline the history of the *Victoria*, particularly her service in New Zealand waters, and to claim the honour of being the first Australian force to serve overseas for these men.

THE HISTORY OF H M C S S VICTORIA

LEGISLATION

In the Legislative Council Minutes of November 1853, Lieut-Governor La Trobe had written; "The frequent communication with the Heads which will be rendered necessary by the establishment there of a sanitary station, and the conveyance of public officers and of stores to the outposts should be provided for, and it is proposed to appropriate sums sufficient to purchase and keep in commission a Government steam vessel, which, if the Council thinks fit, can be procured from England without delay".

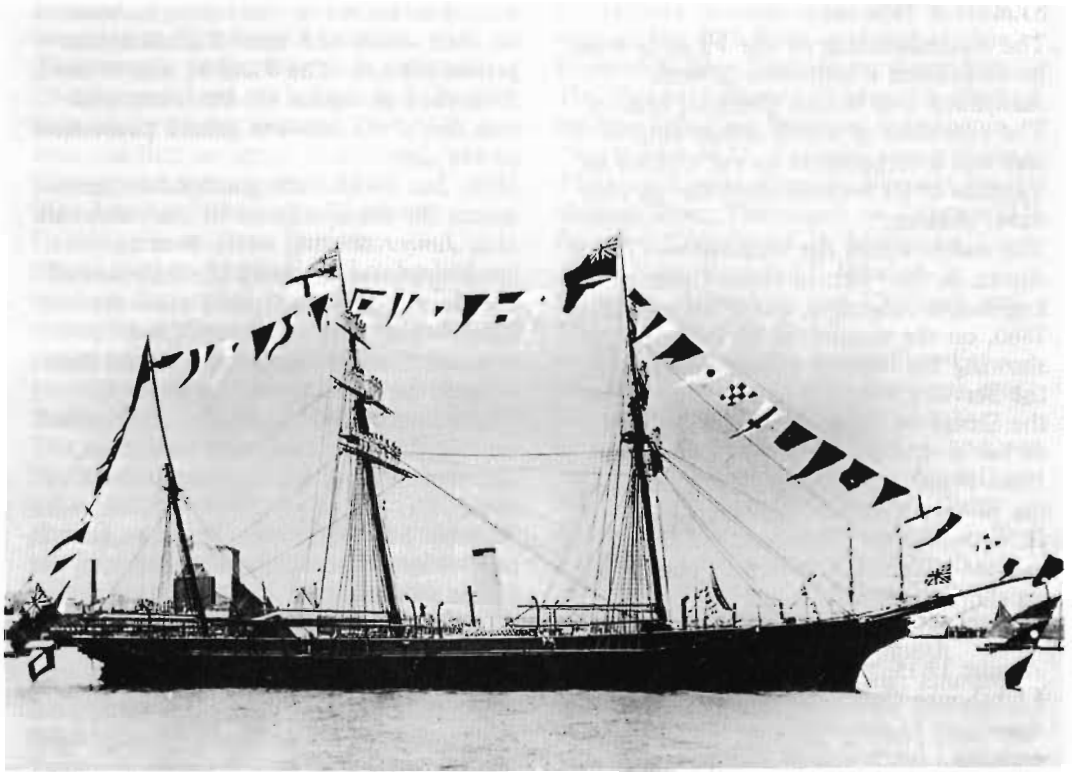
Commander W Lockyer RN (retired) chief harbourmaster at Melbourne was commissioned to procure the required steamer and to oversee and supervise its construction before LaTrobe's successor, Sir Charles Hotham, left England to assume office as Governor of Victoria. Sir Charles was advised by Commander Lockyer of the project which had been placed in his hands by the Victorian Government. Sir Charles then requested that Lockyer remain in Melbourne until he arrived.

Within one month of his arrival Governor Hotham wrote to Commander Lockyer (July 19th 1854) informing him that the amount placed at his disposal had been increased to 27,000 pounds and that he might spend up to 30,000 pounds if absolutely necessary. He was "no longer to consider a light draught of water as a necessity" but "to obtain a good sea-going vessel fitted for general service".

It is generally accepted that Governor Hotham altered what was originally designed to be a light despatch vessel for purely civil use, to a steam sloop of war equipped for offence and defence. The consternation caused by the news that the Russians were believed to have an 80 gun battleship in the Pacific, four 60 gun frigates at Valparaiso, and possibly 14 frigates at Vladivostoc, possibly played an important part in the decision to construct a warship.

CONSTRUCTION

On the 17th April 1855, the following paper was tabled in the Legislative Council; "Screw Steamer and Dredging Vessel", further correspondence with copy of drawings, specifications etc. Signed, W.N. Lockyer. Commander RN. 5 Cannon Row, Westminster, 3rd January 1855.



“Specifications for building a Screw Steamer Vessel to be named the “*Victoria*” of the following dimensions; “Length between the perpendicular 166 feet, keel for tonnage 149 feet 9½ inches, breadth extreme 27 feet 2 inches, breadth for tonnage 27 feet depth in hold from lower side of deck to upper side of skin 16 feet, burden in tons no. 580, . . .”.

“The steamer is to be built under a shed according to the drawings and dimensions furnished by Oliver Lang Esq, Master Shipwright of Her Majesty’s Dockyard at Pembroke”.

She was built by Young, Son, Magnay & Co, Limehouse, London. Engines of 150 horsepower, manufactured by George Rennie & Sons, London. Armament: One 56 cwt-32 pounder (9 foot 6 inches) gun. Six 25 cwt-32 pounder guns. Speed — 12 knots. The final cost was reported to be 38,000 pounds.

SHIP COMPLEMENT

The original ship’s complement was 50, comprising; Commanding Officer (Norman), 2 Executive Officers, 2 Engineer Officers, 3 Warrant Officers, 6 Petty Officers, 21 Able Seamen, 8 Firemen and 7 Boys. At the time of building the *Victoria* was considered to be “the first vessel of war built to the order of a British Colony”.

H.M.C.S.S. *Victoria* was commissioned, and arrived in Hobson’s Bay on the 31st May 1856, under the command of Captain W.H. Norman (1812-1869). The selection of an Officer of the Mercantile Marine to command the first Colonial owned warship was somewhat unusual. Norman was the Captain of the steam auxiliary vessel “*Queen of the Sea*”, in which the new Governor of Victoria, Sir Charles Hotham, had taken passage from England. It is quite probable that Norman’s Captaincy of the *Victoria* resulted from this earlier meeting.

SERVICE 1856-1861

The commissioning of the *Victoria* must be considered a milestone in both Australian and British Colonial history. The provision of a well armed ship of war was a recognition by the Colony of Victoria of its responsibility for its own naval defence.

The use to which the *Victoria* was put is shown in the "Return to an Order of the Legislative Assembly, dated 25th January 1860, on the motion of Mr Vernon, showing the Nature, Amount & Value of the Services rendered to the Colony by the Steam Sloop *Victoria* from the date of her arrival to the end of December 1860. Printed December 1862", and lists the following type of service;

1856. June 7-11. "Proceeded to the assistance of the ship *Arthur the Great*, on shore, succeeded in getting her afloat".

August 13-15. "Proceeded with Lighthouse Commissioners and Marine Surveyors to determine on the sites for erecting Lighthouse at Wilson's Promontory, Cape Schank, and other places on the coast".

Oct 22. "Manned and armed boats and sent them to quell disturbance on board the Penal Hulk *Lysander*".

1857. Feb. 12-Feb 13. "Proceeded to the assistance of the schooner *Freebridge* on shore in the west channel".

March 23-Mar 25. "Penal outbreak. Sent boats manned and armed on shore to assist in quelling it. Conveyed the body of the late Inspector-General of Penal Establishments to Melbourne, and moored ship alongside the Hulk "*President*" to be ready for any emergency." (John Price, Inspector-General of Prisons in Victoria, was hated by the convicts for his strict and rigid discipline, and finally murdered by them at Williamstown.) The prisoners were housed on a number of prison hulks moored a few hundred yards off shore. Two of the hulks, "*President*" and "*Success*" accommodated the most dangerous of the men, and for several days after the murder of Price pandemonium reigned, the prisoners,

who were locked in their cells, hammered on their doors and hurled abuse at the prison officers. The *Victoria* was ordered to anchor alongside the *President* and sink her if the convicts gained possession of the ship.

1858. Jan 19-25. "Commenced a rigorous search for the mutineers of the American ship *Junior* sending boats away at every opportunity along the seaboard of the Colony adjacent Island until the 22nd, when, finding traces of the mutineers, and picking up the boat they escaped in, also their arms, gave information to land police at Port Albert on the route the mutineers had taken, and which led to the capture of most of them".

1859-60. Most of *Victoria's* duties were in marine survey and lighthouse work, water police services, going to the aid of ships in distress or wrecked, and carrying stores and provisions.

1860. "From 18th April 1860 to 11th April 1861, services rendered to H.M. Government and the Government of New Zealand @ 2,500 pounds per month, 11 months and 22 days £29,333.6.8."

1861. "From August 4th 1861 to 4th April 1862, of the mission of humanity to the relief of missing explorers, eight months @ £2,500 per month, £20,000"

Signed. W.H. Norman.

There can be no doubt that although the Victorian Naval Brigade was not part of the Royal Navy, it would be under the guidance of the Royal Navy, and no ship could carry the title "Her Majesty's Colonial" etc without Royal permission.

SECOND MAORI WAR.

In march of 1860 the Maoris under Chief Wirrimu Kingi rose in revolt, partly due to the fact that they were being forced to part with land at prices very favourable to the New Zealand Government. The natives south of Auckland, who had remained neutral during the first Maori War of 1845-47, rose with the natives of Waikato. The Government of New

Zealand appealed for aid, and troops were despatched from Australia (Volunteers), India, Burma & England. The troops of the 40th Foot and the 12th Foot under Major General Pratt C.B., were the first to arrive despatched from Hobart and Sydney, Australia. "On 5th April 1860, the Governor General, Sir William Denison, telegraphed to Melbourne that he had received despatches from New Zealand conveying a demand for troops, and he expressed his willingness to spare a portion of those stationed in New South Wales, should General Pratt require them. The same patriotic course was adopted by the Governor's of Victoria and the other Australian Colonies, their only anxiety apparently being that reinforcements should be sent without delay. The Colony of Victoria also placed at the disposal of the Major General for the transport of troops, and other service that might be requisite, their fine war steam sloop *Victoria*" (Carey.Lt Col.C.B. "Narrative of the late War in New Zealand". London 1863)

On the 19th April 1860, H.M.C.S.S. *Victoria*, under the command of Captain Norman with a complement of 90, sailed

for Hobart to embark the Officers and men of the 40th Foot, arriving at New Plymouth, New Zealand on April 30th. The Taranaki *Herald* of May 5th 1860, has the following Shipping Intelligence. "April 30th H.M. Colonial steam sloop *Victoria*, 3 guns, Captain Norman from Hobart Town. Passengers — Captain G.O. Bowdler, Captain J.E.D. McCarthy, Lieut J.V.H. Rees, Ensign J.T. Whelan, 8 Sergeants, 2 Buglers, and 120 Rank and File of H.M. 40th Foot".

It is of interest that Captain Bowdler (then Lieut George Owen Bowdler), was the same officer who served with the 40th Foot in Melbourne in 1854, and was sent with the regiment to put down the "Rebellion" of the miners under Peter Lalor at Ballarat. The miners had built and barricaded a stockade at Eureka Street, East Ballarat and burned their gold licences when the cost of the licence had been raised to £1 per month considered a totally unrealistic amount. The stockade was stormed on Sunday, December 2nd 1854, by soldiers from the 12th and 40th Foot. Peter Lalor who lost an arm at the "Eureka Stockade" later became a member of the Legislative Assembly, and on several occasions refused a knighthood.

Correspondence relevant to the *Victoria's* service in New Zealand. (from Victoria Legislative Assembly paper 26 June 1860)

Government House Auckland. 26th May 1860

"Sir, I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's despatch of the 17th April, informing me of the steps you have been good enough to take consequent on the receipt of my report of the native disturbances in this Colony. In reply, I beg your Excellency to accompany my own thanks and those of the Government of New Zealand for the promptitude with which you have attended to my request, and I beg your Excellency also to be good enough to convey to the members of your Government our special thanks for the forethought and liberality which has induced them to place the valuable services of H.M.C.S. *Victoria* temporarily at our disposal!"

SIGNED. J. Gore Browne.

His Excellency. Sir Henry Barkly. K.C.B.
Governor in Chief. Victoria etc.

Commodore Loring to his Excellency the Governor of New Zealand.
Iris at Auckland, 26th May 1860.

“Sir, I have the honour to forward a copy of a letter I have received from his Excellency Sir Henry Barkly relative to the armed steamer *Victoria*. For immediate convenience I have ordered her to be supplied by the Commissariat, in the same manner as one of Her Majesty’s ships, but her lengthened detention will infer a considerable expense which is not anticipated or provided for by the Imperial Government, and which I shall not be justified in incurring except at the urgent requisition of your Excellency. Under these circumstances I have to request that you will inform me whether you consider that she should be detained and that this expense should be incurred.”

I have the honour to be,
Sir
Your most obedient servant,
Signed. William Loring.
Commodore & Senior Officer.

His Excellency Colonel Gore Browne. C.B.
Governor of New Zealand.
A no 42.

His Excellency the Governor of New Zealand to Commodore Loring.
Government House, Auckland, 31st May, 1860

“Sir, I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 26th instant forwarding a copy of the letter received by you from his Excellency the Governor of Victoria, relative to the armed steamer *Victoria*. In reply to your enquiry, I have to state that, in the present state of the affairs of New Zealand, the services of the steam-sloop *Victoria* are of great importance, and that is very desirable that she should be retained on these coasts.

I have etc etc
Signed. J. Gore Browne.
Governor

Commodore Loring. C.B.
H.M.S. *Iris*.

Iris, at Auckland, 1st June 1860.

“Sir, In reply to your letter of April 18th 1860, permitting the steam vessel *Victoria* to remain under my orders on the coast of New Zealand. I have the honour to forward a copy of a letter which I have addressed to his Excellency The Governor, and his reply, and to inform you that, in accordance with his wish, I shall detain the *Victoria* during such time as her services are required.”

I have etc
Signed. William Loring.
Commodore and Senior Naval Officer.

His Excellency Sir Henry Barkly. K.C.B.
etc etc Governor of Victoria.

VICTORIA'S LOG BOOKS

The Log Books of H.M.C. Steam Sloop *Victoria* (which were finally located thanks to Peter Burness of the Australian War Memorial), are at the Australian Archives, Sydney, under SP 551/1- Bundle 610, 611 etc. They proved a disappointment. Far from being the mine of information anticipated, they contained very little relevant information. Saturday May 19th 1860, "First Lieutenant, Chief Engineer, and Surgeon, went over to Auckland to volunteer men". Tuesday, July 24th 1860, "Embarked, 1 Lieutenant, 3 Sergeants, 1 Corporal, 1 Bugler, 40 rank and file of H.M. 40th Regiment". Monday, December 17th 1860, "Mustered at quarters and read General Order from Major General Pratt to Ships Co for volunteers to reinforce the Naval Brigade".

Tuesday, December 18th 1860. "Lieut G.A. Woods, with 14 men disembarked to join the Naval Brigade".

Monday, January 28th 1861, "Lieut G.A. Woods returned to the ship from Naval Brigade.

Monday, January 28th 1861, "Embarked our Naval Brigade and Mr Horn, Midshipman".

The Taranaki *Herald* of 28th December 1860 refers to the Naval Brigade from the *Victoria* under Lieut Woods and Midshipman Horn and 24 men, on the way to Matarikoriko. (The battle of Matarikoriko Pa was on the 29th and 30th December, 1860, so Lieut Woods must have been joined by Midshipman Horn and 10 men somewhere between December 18th and December 28th 1860, although this does not show in the Log Book.)

REFERENCES TO AUSTRALIAN FORCE 1860-61

The book *Northlander* by Herbert Baillie, Kaitaia, April 26 — May 31st 1931, has the following chapter; "A Naval Brigade under Captain (Later Commodore) F. Beauchamp Seymour, afterwards Lord Alcester, was stationed at

Waitara, where Captain Seymour was wounded, June 1860, at the attack of the Puketakauere Pa. The Brigade was composed of men and officers from H.M. Ships "*Niger*"; "*Pelorus*"; "*Cordelia*"; "*Iris*"; "*Elk*"; and the Victorian steam sloop *Victoria*."

Another interesting account appears in the book "The New Zealand Wars" by James Cowan, 1922, and he goes on to say; "The warships landed some parties of sailors and marines, and there was now a Naval Brigade of about 300 men on shore under command of Commodore Seymour (afterwards Lord Alcester), of the "*Pelorus*". The First Australian warship the "*Victoria*", a beautiful auxiliary-screw barque, lent by the Government of Victoria, arrived soon afterwards and landed 60 men, who helped to garrison Fort Niger, the sailor's redoubt, on a hill which is now (1922) a recreation reserve, on the eastern side of the town".

An article "When Australians Guarded New Plymouth" by Mr A.H. Messenger appeared in the Taranaki *Herald* of 1952/3 and quoted a member of the Armed Constabulary named George Bishop; "He had joined the schooner *Pride of the Isles* at Wellington for a voyage to the Manakau and was off Cape Egmont on April 20th 1860, ahead of us we sighted a large vessel under sail and steam, it was the *Victoria* cruising off New Plymouth in order to intercept any craft trying to run guns or ammunition to the enemy". Bishop left the schooner and made his way back to New Plymouth to enlist in the Taranaki Force, he got to know the *Victoria's* men well in the following months and described them as a cheerful and lively lot of lads, mostly young Australians recruited in Melbourne. They seemed to regard the war as a jolly sort of spree until they got mixed up in one or two skirmishes in the vicinity of the town. There was plenty of lead flying around their ears, and one of the young sailors needed all the slang he could conjure up to describe what he thought of them as he was carted back to town with two bullet holes through one of his

legs. "It was a good job for him" said Bishop "that he hadn't faced a tomahawk charge like we had on one occasion just beyond Marsland Hill?"

THE LANDING PARTY

For the main part, the *Victoria's* men appear to have engaged in ferrying men and guns ashore through the surf, and in keeping long watches while the ship patrolled the seas along the coast. Sixty of her crew helped to augment the garrison at Fort Niger, and 50 more of them were stationed at Mount Eliot overlooking the landing place."

According to the "Estimates of Expenditure for 1861 — "*Victoria*", the crew in 1860 numbered 90 in total, but it is generally believed that this was supplemented during the period that they were assisting the Royal Navy in the Maori War, 150 is the number that the ship's complement was reported to have been raised to during this period. This would then explain how they could have 60 men at Fort Niger and another 50 at Mount Eliot, both of which are extremely high and doubtful numbers for such a small ships company.

Taranaki *Herald*, "Extra", July 10, 1860. "We hope that our Government have not neglected to acknowledge, in the handsomest manner, the deep debt of gratitude which New Zealand owes to Victoria for the liberal and kindly way in which she has placed the splendid steamer at the disposal of this Colony. A more beautiful ship never entered the Waitemata, more perfect in her details, or more ably and skilfully officered. And, as if her invaluable services, as a troop ship were not enough, we have further to add that out of a ship's company of 77 hands, she has left behind Lieut G.A. Woods, W. Horn, Midshipman, and 30 picked men, admirably armed and equipped, who in the most plucky way have volunteered to take their share with their brother blue jackets of the Queens service in this untoward war. This is conduct which requires no eulogy at our hands, and we trust that the generosity of the Victorian Government and the

gallantry of her men of war, will be recorded in glowing character in the future history of New Zealand."

There is no doubt that Lieutenant Woods, Midshipman Horn and a party of ship's company, most likely 24, fought at Matarikoriko on December 29th & 30th 1860, under the command of Major General Pratt C.B.

"WINKING-EYES"

The force under Major General Pratt comprised the following; Staff, Lt Col Carey D.A.G., Capt Paul, 65th Reg't., Brigade Major, Lieut Forster, A.D.C., Lieut King A.D.C., Medical Staff, Dr Monat C.B., Ass't Surgeon Niven., Ass't Surgeon Grace., Commissariat D.C.G. Jones., A.C.G. Bartlett. Royal Artillery, Capt Stover, R.A., and 20 rank and file, and 2-24 pounder howitzers. Royal Engineers, Colonel Mould, R.E., Capt Mould, R.E., Lieut Warburton, R.E., 2 sergeants, and 27 rank and file. 12th Regiment, Capt Miller., Lieut's Lowery & Mair, Ensign Hurst, and 86 men. 65th Reg't, Colonel Wyatt, Capt's Bulkeley and Strange, Lieut's Urquhart, Whitbread, Toker, Wrixen, Pennyfather, White., Lieut and Adjutant Lewis., Ensign Butler and 322 men. Naval Brigade, Lieut Woods, Midshipman Horn, and 24 men. Lieut Talbot and 30 men (65th), to join the force. The 40th foot was already at Waitara, and they joined this force together with Commodore Seymour's Naval Brigade. The total force of approximately 900 was at the camp at Waitara on the 28th December 1860, and they were to leave the camp at 3 am the next day to commence the attack on the Mata-Rikoriko Pa ("Winking Eyes"), which was a short distance inland from Puke-Ta-Kauer near the Waitara river.

The Taranaki *Herald* of Jan 5th 1861 reported; "Sunday, December 30 A heavy fire of small arms was maintained by both sides from 6 am yesterday morning till 2 am, this morning, the enemy keeping close in a gully lined with rifle pits in high fern. The troops expended 70,000 rounds of rifle ammunition. Our

casualties are; 3 killed and 21 wounded". (Naval Brigade-1; Royal Artillery-2; Royal Engineers-1; 12th Regiment-1; 40th Regiment-12; 65th Regiment-4.).

Taranaki *Herald*, Jan 19th 1861.

"Monday, Jan. 14th, between 4 and 6 am the General (Pratt) accompanied by Colonel Carey D.A.G. Staff, and a considerable force (1000 men consisting of the 40th, 14th, and Naval Brigade with their 12 pounder howitzer arrived at Kairau where some companies of the 65th and 12th joined the force". "The Naval Brigade under the command of Commodore Seymour, were engaged during the day either as flanking guards, working the 12 pounder and 8 inch guns, or on the works".

MENTIONS IN DESPACHES

Captain Norman and Lieutenant Woods were both mentioned in the despatches (Woods twice), from Major General Pratt to the War Office, London. Midshipman Horn was also supposedly mentioned in despatches, but there is no evidence of this at this juncture. *London Gazette*. April 9th 1861. p 1490. A despatch and its enclosures of which the following are copies have been received at the War Office from Major General Pratt C.B. Headquarters, Camp Waitara, New Zealand, 31st December 1860. Sir, etc, "I have also to bring to His Royal Highness's notice the conduct of the officers, and to name for his approbation those in command, and at the head of departments., Commodore Seymour, assisted by Lieutenant Battiscombe H.M's *S. Pelorus*, and Lieutenant Woods, Chief Officer H.M's *S Colonial S. Victoria*, performed their duties in the usual gallant manner" etc.

London Gazette. Friday, July 26th 1861. p 3037/8. A despatch of which the following is an extract, has been received, with its enclosures, from Major General Pratt. C B. Sir, etc "Commander Norman, Her Majesty's colonial steam-sloop *Victoria*, has with his ship, provided of incalculable value during this

service, and his chief officer Mr Woods, late R.N. did good service while attached to the Naval Brigade on shore". etc.

THE MEDAL ROLL

Only those who had served in one of the various shore parties from Victoria became entitled to receive the "Maori War Medal" dated on the reverse 1860-1861, and the following list of names is lodged at the Public Records Office in London under PRO.ADM. 171/16 ff. 72-73, and is headed "List of Officers Seamen & Marines entitled to the New Zealand Medal for services in H.M. Colonial Steamer "*Victoria*".

Although 40 were obviously entitled, only 10 received the medal. One can only assume that they had to actually apply to receive the medal, hence the late issue in 1905. Of the 10 issued medals, one is known with the dated reverse 1860-61 to Harry Ford AB, and is in a private collection in Sydney. The medal issued to George Marey is known to exist, it came from an auction in London circa 1930, and apparently went to a collector in the U.S.A., present whereabouts unknown. One is known to William Jones AB and has the undated reverse, as have all late issues of the Maori War Medal, this is now in the Australian War Memorial at Canberra, where it forms the nucleus of a "Colonial" collection being put together at the War Memorial. The medal sent to Samuel Smith c/o Department of Defence, Melbourne in 1905, is apparently lost.

With the knowledge of the known medals, it is safe to assume that of the 10 issued, 7 were issued with the dated reverse 1860-61, and three were issued with the undated reverse.

The name W.H. Norman (Ship's Captain), appears on the medal roll and it is regrettable that he died in the year that the medal was sanctioned (1st March 1869). It is odd that his name should appear, as the requirement for the Navy was to have participated in a coastal

barrage from the ship, or served ashore with the Naval Brigade at one of the actions. It is difficult to understand why all the shore party entitled did not send

for or receive the medal, distance from Melbourne has no bearing as two of the medals were sent to the recipients in New Zealand in 1888.

Name		Ratings	No. on Ship's book	When delivered or sent. Remarks etc.	
Page 72	ASHWELL.	Edw'r.	Trimmer.	2426.	
	BRETT.	Geo.	A.B.	2427.	
	BONFIELD	Patrick.	A.B.	2428.	
	COLLINGWOOD.	Jo's	A.B.	2429.	
	CROMARTY.	Jas.	A.B.	2430.	
	DUNN.	A.	A.B.	2431.	
	DUDLEY.	Tho's.	A.B.	2432.	
	DAVIS.	Mark.	Trimmer.	2433.	
	EDMONDS.	R.	A.B.	2434.	
	FORD.	Harry.	A.B.	2435.	Sent 18th July 1872.
	GRAHAM.	Cuthbert.	Drummer.	2436.	Sent to party 14/11/72.
	HORN.	Wm.	Mate.	2424.	Sent 13 Jan'y 71.
	HORSELEY.	Wm.	Boy 1st Class.	2438.	
	HOAD.	Peter.	A.B.	2439.	
	HAWKINS.	Ja's.	A.B.	2440.	
	HAY.	John.	A.B.	2441.	Agent General for New Zealand 29.3.88. Ic 621/1888.
	JONES.	Wm.	A.B.	2442.	Agent General for New Zealand 12.6.88. Ic 234/1888.
	JONES.	Wm.	Cooks Mate.	2443.	
	KENSINGTON.	Ambrose.	Capt. Fore Top.	2444.	
	LUTHER.	Masco.	Gunns Mate.	2445.	
	LONG.	Saml.	2n Master.	2446.	Sent 18th July 1872.
	LINTON.	Robt.	2n Master.	2447.	
	LOCKE.	E.J.	A.B.	2448.	
	LAWSON.	Alexr.	A.B.	2449.	
	MAREY.	Geo.	Stoker.	2450.	Sent 26th Aug'st 1872.
	McINTYRE.	Tho's.	Trimmer.	2451.	
	McMYRM.	John.	Trimmer.	2452.	
	NORMAN.	W.H.	—	2453.	
	OVENDEN.	Jas.	Capt. Fore Top.	2454.	Sent 5th Dec'r 1872.
	PARKES.	Rob't.	Trimmer.	2455.	
	REES.	Benj.	Stoker.	2456.	
	SCHRADER.	John.	A.B.	2457.	
	SMITH.	David.	A.B.	2458.	
	STEWARD.	Jas.	A.B.	2459.	
	SIBBOND.	Wm.	A.B.	2460.	
	STROUD.	A.	A.B.	2461.	
	SMITH.	Saml.	Boy 2d.	-	Secretary, Dept of Defence, Melbourne. 13.4.1905. Sent 22 July 71.
Page 73.	WOODS.	G.	Lieut.	-	
	WHITE.	John.	A.B.	2463.	
	TAYLOR.	John.	Ld Seamn.	2464.	

Camp Waitara. New Zealand. 2nd April 1861.

Sir, "The return of H.M.C.S. *Victoria* to Melbourne affords an opportunity of acknowledging, as I desire to do in the strongest terms, the deep obligation under which the New Zealand Government feels itself to the Government of Victoria for the valuable services rendered to this Colony for nearly a year by the steam sloop *Victoria*. She has been at all times ready to undertake every duty for which she has been required, and has never failed to perform that duty in the most satisfactory manner. The New Zealand Government also desire to express their great sense for the meritorious services of Captain Norman, and the Officers and Crew of the *Victoria*, who, during a period of nearly a year, have performed duties of an arduous and harassing nature with a zeal and activity worthy of the highest commendation.

etc

I Have etc.

Signed. Gore Brown.

His Excellency. Sir Henry Barkly. K.C.B.
etc etc.
Melbourne.

BURKE AND WILLS SEARCH PARTY

Not long after their return to Melbourne, the *Victoria* was delegated another very important and historical task, that of assisting in the search for the missing explorers Robert O'Hara Burke and William John Wills and party, who had set out on August 20th 1860 from Melbourne to cross the Continent. Thirteen months later one survivor returned emaciated and broken by hardship, having left three of his companions dead in the desert. Several land parties set out to search for Burke & Wills, and they were eventually found by Alfred W. Howitt and his party, who buried Burke and Wills and brought back King alive. They arrived in Melbourne on the 28th November 1861. Alfred Howitt and his party were sent back to return the bodies of Burke and Wills to Melbourne which they eventually did, arriving on December 28th 1862.

The relief party under William Landsborough left Brisbane in the transport "*Firefly*" to sail for the Albert River where Captain Norman of the *Victoria* had fixed his depot. Norman was sent to the Gulf of Carpentaria as a support depot for the explorations of Landsborough, McKinley, and Walker, and was Commander in Chief of

Northern Expeditionary Parties, he had left Melbourne on August 21st 1861. The "*Firefly*" carrying the Landsborough party was wrecked in Torres Straits, but Captain Norman managed to tow her round to the Albert River.

The officers of the *Victoria* were; G.A. Woods, 1st Lieutenant., C.C. Gascoyne, 2nd Lieutenant., R. Griffiths, Chief Engineer., G. Elliot, Paymaster., S. Paterson, Surgeon. Gunner Frost was killed in a gun shot accident in the Gulf of Carpentaria. Lieut Woods, Gascoyne and members of the crew of *Victoria*, searched and surveyed the surrounding coastal areas. They left on February 16th and reached Melbourne on February 31st 1862. Two reports from Captain Norman were presented to both Houses of Parliament. 1. "Exploration Expedition, Letter from Commander Norman reporting the return of the *Victoria* from the Gulf of Carpentaria, together with correspondence", Hobson's Bay, 31st March 1862. (51 pages). 2. "Exploration Expedition, Report of Commander Norman, of H.M.C.S. *Victoria*, together with copy of his journal on the late expedition to the Gulf of Carpentaria", dated, Hobson's Bay 1st April 1862. (31 pages.) Both of these reports are too detailed and lengthy to repeat here.

The descendants of Captain Norman have a beautifully hand illuminated Address * from the "Exploration Committee of the Royal Society of Victoria", "To Commander Norman, Officers and Men. Melbourne. June 18th 1862". The certificate has vignettes of Burke, Wills & Norman, along the bottom border, and other vignettes around the edges, in all a most beautiful certificate.

VICTORIA'S CAREERS END

In March 1864, the Treasurer of Victoria, Mr (afterwards Sir) George Vernon, stated that the *Victoria* was unfit for defence purposes being superseded by ships of more recent design. For some years after this the *Victoria* was engaged in Admiralty survey work, under Staff Commander H.J. Stanley. She was paid off from this service in January 1878. She was chartered in the Christmas period of 1882/83 for bay excursions by Captain S. Patrick, and in 1888 was sold by the Government to Captain James Deane, of Williamstown, for a sum stated to be only £350. Deane cleaned and scraped her, revealing the beautiful timber, and ran her for a season as an excursion steamer to Schnapper Point, but failing health put paid to any plans he may have had. She was finally sold in August 1894 to William Marr, Shipwright, of Williamstown, and broken up in 1895.

CONCLUSION

Much has been written about the Contingent that left New South Wales to serve in the Soudan in 1885, and it is claimed that they were the first body of Australians to serve as an Australian unit overseas, and also the first Australian unit to fight beside regular British Troops, such is not the case. The shore party from H.M.C.S.S. *Victoria*, unquestionably had that honour. They were from an Australian ship, and they fought beside regular British Troops from the 12th, 14th, 40th & 65th Regiments, not to mention the Naval Brigade of the Royal Navy, some 25 years before the New South Wales Contingent left for the Soudan!



* (Two other examples of this Illuminated Address, to Mangan and Gaskett are in the La Trobe Library, Melbourne, also an Address to Captain Norman. Manuscript section "Illuminated Addresses, Queensland Relief Expedition. Box 2087/1h and Map Case 5, drawer 7.) (D. Mangesi, Carpenter's Mate, and G. Gaskett, Captain of the Fore Top, both received printed examples in black and white of the illuminated address given to Commander Norman, so it is safe to assume that the entire crew received printed examples of the address.)