



The view from above of some of the soldiers of the 5th Battalion WWCT standing to attention for a medal and plaque unveiling ceremony on Puke Ariki Landing in New Plymouth yesterday.

Photo: MIKE SCOTT

Soldiers mark 150 years of special service

By **MATT RILKOFF**
matt.rilkoff@tnl.co.nz

SOLDIERS, soldiers everywhere and a lot of marching feet.

New Plymouth hosted the largest part of the Taranaki celebrations to mark 150 years of service for the 5th Wellington West Coast Taranaki Battalion Group on Saturday.

At Puke Ariki Landing, New Plymouth District Council chief

executive Barbara McKerrow gave the regiment, lined up with guns held low in front of her, the freedom to march through the city, swords drawn and bayonets fixed, whenever they wanted to.

This was followed by the Chief of Defence Forces representative Brigadier Dave Gawn mentioning several outstanding members of the regiment, including the famous strict Stratford accountant, Colonel William Malone.

"There are many who think he may have been done out of a VC for his role in Chunuk Bair in Gallipoli. His soldiering is something we look to as a model even now."

He told the 100 or so spectators and at least 30 honoured guests that the regiment had faced many challenges through its history, from the New Zealand wars in the 19th century, to the battles of both world wars and Korea, Vietnam and now Afghanistan.

"Our world isn't going to get any easier, especially in our patch here in the Pacific. If anything, the demands will be greater than ever before."

The regiment then marched through the city.

Commander of the Taranaki Company of the 5WWTC Major Brent Manning said a church service at St Mary's Pro-cathedral in New Plymouth yesterday provided an emotional conclusion to the weekend's festivities.