



The colours of the Taranaki Mounted Rifles, on the north wall of the nave, surmount the hatchment to the Friendly Maoris. Beneath are brasses, all made by W.R. Bock of Wellington, commemorating three soldiers: Charles Stapp, Robert Parris, Thomas Good. Colonel Stapp's, with red and black lettering, was placed near the seat he used to occupy. It was said of him that more than any other local man during the 1860s, he was the means of preventing the destruction of the entire European settlement. He left a legacy of £10 with which the vestry bought a safe for storing the registers and other archives.

The window at the left was given in 1926 by W.G. Weston in memory of his father. Made by Clayton & Bell, its subject is Jesus, the light of the world. The window at the right is one of the oldest in the church. It is in memory of Holden Hammerton who arrived with his family in 1854. On account of age or sickness, he went with the women and children of the settlement to Nelson at the outbreak of hostilities, and died there on 27 February 1861. He is buried in the cemetery at Fairfield Park, Nelson.

The stonework is part of the only remaining wall of the original church.

New Plymouth City Council, Public Relations Office Collection (Photo: K. Pfeiffer)

THE HATCHMENTS

The idea of the hatchments which, strictly speaking, recorded the achievements of some deceased person and were fixed to the front of his dwelling-place, grew out of a desire on the part of Captain F.C. Rowan of the 43rd Regiment to erect a memorial to the men of his regiment who had died in the wars of the 1860s in Taranaki. Rowan was in command of the Armed Constabulary station at Whitecliffs, which was visited by its chaplain, the Revd Philip Walsh, vicar of Waitara, and the two men discussed the idea. As there was no money for a stone monument, Rowan envisaged a painted tablet over the graves near the entrance

of Te Henui cemetery. In the days before museums, Walsh urged him to place the monument in the church, where it would be secure from desecration, and if the memorial took the form of a painting, he promised to do the work himself if Rowan provided the panel. As a result, the hatchment to the 43rd Regiment was placed in St Mary's in 1878.¹

There are 17 hatchments in all, prepared by Walsh over more than 30 years, and the last dedicated five years before his death. W.H. Skinner collected the necessary data from the regimental headquarters in England,² and Walsh himself designed the hatchment to the Friendly Maoris. Painted in oils, the first two (43rd and 65th) were on kauri, the next four (18th, 70th, Royal Marine Light Infantry, Taranaki Militia and Volunteers) were on Californian redwood surrounded by kauri ogee mouldings, and the remainder were on composition board. Most, if not all of the panels were made by John Leech of Shortland Street, Auckland, and the oils were those of Gebr. Heyl & Co., Germany.³

There appears to have been no unveiling ceremony for the first hatchment. The others were dedicated on the following dates:

13 March 1898	65th
27 August 1899	18th, 70th, Royal Marine Light Infantry, Taranaki Militia and Volunteers
3 November 1901	58th, 14th, 40th, 57th
28 April 1904	Niger, 50th, 68th, Friendly Maoris
28 March 1909	12th, Royal Engineers, Royal Artillery

The hatchment to the 65th was prepared in commemoration of the jubilee of Archdeacon Govett's ministry in March 1898, in view of his connection with the regiment in Taranaki. It was dedicated by Bishop Cowie of Auckland, with Archdeacon Walsh standing beside him at the chancel steps. At some stage it has been altered. Originally the honours read, INDIA, ARABIA, TARANAKI, WAIKATO, but in place of the last two, there is now NEW ZEALAND. The alteration probably took place after 1933 when the Army Council did not allow WAIREKA on the new regimental flag, and it was replaced with NEW ZEALAND.⁴

The hatchments have attracted numbers of visitors to St Mary's, amongst whom was the distinguished soldier Sir Hector Macdonald. During a brief call at New Plymouth on 5 November 1901 he inspected the hatchments, accompanied by Archdeacon Walsh and W.H. Skinner, who presented him with photographs of them taken by W.A. Collis.⁵

At the unveiling of four hatchments in April 1904 that included one to H.M.S. *Niger*, the Governor-General, Lord Ranfurly was present, accompanied by Captain R.F. Scott and R. Skelton, engineer, on their way home from their first expedition to the Antarctic. Walsh maintained that of all the hatchments, it was the one to the *Niger* that had given him the greatest pleasure to prepare as it commemorated the doings of the sailors who had arrived 'in the nick of time' to save the local volunteers at Waireka.⁶

In the changing climate of the 1980s, with its desire to explore anew the concept of Maori and pakeha as 'one people' in the life of the church, the continuing presence within the church itself of the flags and hatchments and their message was questioned and an alternative location suggested, but as a result of submissions received from parishioners and others, the vestry decided that they should remain.⁷ *Photos: Giles Alington*