

Report on Hutt Stockades

Archives NZ Reference AD (Army Department) Series 1 1868/4648

This file contains four letters – summary details are from the correspondence register:

Beginning of sequence

1868/4415 Nov 28 Has arranged to enrol and arm Hutt Militia during ensuing week – reports relative to stockades &c &c (Captain Ludlam, Hutt) – forward to 1868/4506

1868/4506 Dec 02 Promotion of Captain A. Ludlam to be Major and his appointment to command of 2nd Hutt Battalion Wellington Militia and Volunteers at Taita and Lower Hutt (Hon. Defence Minister, Wellington) – forward to 1868/4647

1868/4647 Dec 07 Reports enrolment of Militia – as to drills appointment of Captain Johnston Drill Instructor &c (Major Ludlam, Officer commanding, Hutt) - forward to 1868/4648

1868/4648 Dec 07 Further report on work required to Stockades – has communicated to settlers Taita views of Government respecting Blockhouse (Major Ludlam, Officer commanding, Hutt)

End of sequence

Letter 1868/4648 Hutt 7 December 1868 Letter to the Hon. Defence Minister, Wellington
Sir, I have the honor to report to you that according to instructions, I communicated to the Militia Mess at the Taita the contents of your letter of the 2nd inst. relative to the erection of a Blockhouse by the Government in that district and required them to inform me on their first Drill day if they were willing to throw up an earthwork round it in case of necessity. I would suggest to you that instead of a Blockhouse being erected the Government should have the School house lined and made Bullet proof as a place of refuge. I examined the building and think it suitable, it would hold a large number of women and children. I also inspected the Block house and Stockade at the Upper Hutt and found it in good condition but requiring a certain amount of work to be done, for instance the Gravel in the walls of the stockade has shrunk down so much as to render it unsafe, it not being Bullet proof to a greater height than five feet six inches from the ground, which would make it unsafe for men to defend, it will require 18 inches more gravel put in. I have shown Captain Cruickshank what I think necessary and asked him to procure an estimate of its cost. I enclose you the particulars of the work required to be done. I have the honor to be Sir, Your most obedient servant, A. Ludlam, Major commanding Hutt District.

Work required to be done at the Upper Hutt Stockade

Ten dead trees outside of the Stockade to be cut down. Portions of fallen trees inside the Stockade to be removed. Ditch round the Stockade to be cleared and earth put round the foot of the Stockade Walls. A piece of ... blown off the Roof of the Blockhouse to be replaced. An Iron bolt to be put on top and bottom of Stockade Gate with new pile for lower bolt. Iron bar for inside of Stockade Gate. The Gravel in the Stockade walls to be filled 18 inches higher. A. Ludlam.

Major Ludlam authorised to purchase a sufficient number of one inch boards to line the upper story of the Taita school house and the lower story to a height of six feet. These boards to be piled near the building in case it should be thought necessary to make it bullet proof. The block house at the Upper Hutt is to be repaired as suggested.

Letter 1868/4647 Hutt 07 December 1868 Letter to the Hon. Defence Minister, Wellington
Sir, I have the honor to report to you that I have enrolled all the Militiamen of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Classes who attended at the places named in the Notice calling them out for Service, I am glad to be able to say that the men responded cheerfully to the call made on them and with the exception of a small number the whole have turned out. I have enrolled 141 at the Lower Hutt, 98 at the Upper Hutt and 50 at the Taita, those that did not attend will be served with Notices for the first Drill day. I have been in communication with Captain Johnson relative to the appointment of a Drill Instructor for the Militia and Volunteers in this district, he is willing to accept the position and assures me that he is capable of performing the necessary duties. I would therefore recommend that he should be appointed. In reply to that portion of your letter of the 2nd inst. requesting me, after having visited the different portions of the district, to state what further arrangements I may think desirable, I would recommend as regards the Drill of the Militia and Volunteers that for the present the Militia should be drilled once a week, I do so because a large number of those enrolled consist of 3rd Class men who have never been drilled before, so soon as they have learnt a certain portion of their work, the Drills might be reduced to once a fortnight. The Rifle Volunteers should be drilled once a fortnight instead of once a month as at present, as a good many new men have just joined the two Companies, the Volunteer Cavalry Corps is just raised, I propose they should be drilled once a week at present the same as the Militia. There is one point in connexion with the drilling of the Militia and Volunteers that I am anxious to direct your attention to, viz that of allowing them when sufficiently advanced in their Drill some Ball and Blank Ammunition for practice, the former at the Target, the latter for Skirmishing. I believe this would do more to get the men on and give them an interest in their work than anything I could suggest. While I do not think it advisable to put a Guard at the Upper Hutt Stockade or any other that may be erected until such time as the district may be in danger I would recommend that I should be empowered to do so when the occasion calls for such a step, the same with regards to Patrols for the safety of the district. I am not in a position at present to say how many more Officers will be required for the different Militia Companies but will inform you as early as possible, I expect there will be 150 men in the Lower Hutt and that it will be necessary to form them into two Companies. I have the honor to be Sir, Your most obedient servant, A. Ludlam, Major commanding Hutt District.

Captain Johnson to be employed to drill the militia and will receive pay at 6s a day. Proposed arrangements for drill approved but Volunteers should be left to carry out their own drills the Officer commanding limiting his orders for Parades to once a month. Ball and blank ammunition for practice will be supplied. Major Ludlam authorised to mount a Guard or to employ Patrols should any sudden emergency arise. [Signed] T. M. Haultain 7 Dec 1868. These letters should be... to Colonel Reader and I have informed Major Ludlam that in future all correspondence must be transmitted through him, as Officer commanding the whole district.

Reply

Colonial Defence Office 08 December 1868. Letter to Major Ludlan, Commanding Hutt District
Sir, I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated December 7 inst. reporting the enrolment of the Hutt Battalion of Militia submitting certain proposed arrangements as to drill and requesting that Captain Johnson be placed upon pay as Drill Instructor. In reply I am instructed by the Defence Minister to inform you that the arrangements proposed for drilling the Militia are approved but Volunteer Companies should be left to carry out their own drill; the Officer commanding the District limiting his orders for Parade to once a month. Ball and blank ammunition will be supplied through the usual channel. I am further instructed to authorise you to mount guards at the Stockades and to employ patrols should any sudden emergency arise which would in your opinion render such steps necessary for the safety of the District. Your requisition as for copy... has been approved by the Defence Minister. I have the honor to be Sir,.... C. L.C. Haughton.

Letter 1868/4506 Colonial Defence Office 02 December 1868

His Excellency the Governor is respectfully advised to make the undermentioned appointment.

In the 2nd (Hutt) Battalion Wellington Militia

Captain Alfred Ludlam to be Major. Date of Commission 2 Dec 1868 and to appoint Major Ludlam to command the 2nd (Hutt) Battalion Wellington Militia, and the Volunteer Corps at Taita and Lower Hutt [signed] T. M. Haultain.

Letter 1868/4415 Hutt 28 November 1868 Letter to Captain Ludlam

Sir, I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 24 inst. requesting me to undertake the arrangements for enrolling and arming the Militia in this district and to report upon the state of the Stockades. In reply I have the honor to inform you that arrangements have been made for enrolling and arming the Militia during the ensuing week. With reference to the Stockades I think it better to report to you what is likely to be required in case of any disturbance in this district before taking steps as authorised by your letter. The Lower Hutt Stockade was sold to the School Committee and removed by them to a site a little more distant from the Hutt Bridge than where it stood, the Gravel in the walls was taken out thus rendering it not Bullet proof. I would recommend that it should be replaced at once so as to make it available as a Blockhouse it will be necessary that the windows, eight in number, should be protected by Iron shutters, there is no palisading to speak of round it, nor do I think looking to the large number of women and children requiring protection in case of danger palisading would be of much service. I would suggest that arrangements should be made so that in the event of a threatened attack the large buildings including Churches may be protected by earth works which could be thrown up in a short space of time. The Taita portion of the district is without any place of safety for the women and children in the event of an attack and without such they would be exposed to great danger nor are there any large buildings close together as is the case near the Bridge, the Government are in the best position to judge whether there is any present danger requiring a place of safety to be provided at once, at all events arrangements should be made for providing one when required. At the Upper Hutt there is a Blockhouse with palisaded yard capable of holding I should say the women and children of that part of the district, Captain Cruickshank informs me that so far as he knows it is in good repair. I shall be at the Upper Hutt on the 5th December when I will visit it and report as to its condition. At the Wainuiomata I believe the small Stockade erected there has tumbled down, it will be necessary that something should be done to afford a place of safety in case of danger, the number in the place is not large. In reply to that portion of your letter regarding the Upper Hutt and any other stockades being guarded by men from the Militia or Volunteers I would say that at present I do not see any necessity for such a step, at the Upper Hutt the Constable lives in the Stockade. I would however recommend that full powers should be given to the Officer in command of the district that in the event of its being desirable to do so he could call out men to guard them. I have the honor to be Sir, Your most obedient servant, A. Ludlam, Captain commanding Hutt Battalion Wellington Militia.

Captain Ludlam to be appointed Major and to command 2nd or Hutt Battalion of Wellington Militia. He is to be authorised to put in complete repair and make bullet proof the "School" Blockhouse and to erect a Blockhouse 16 feet square (similar to the one Tutainui) at Taitai on the understanding that the settlers in the District will construct an earthen Redoubt in connection with it. He is to be requested to recommend any other arrangements he may think desirable after visiting the District, and is to inform the settlers that the Government will be prepared to meet one half the expense of whatever may be determined on for the Defence of the Valley [signed] T. M. Haultain 4 Dec 1868.