

John A. Luxford
C.M.G., C.F.



A Biography by
Frank Glen, C.F.

PREFACE

In peace and in war there have always been Methodist ministers for whom the chaplaincy service has provided a challenging field of ministry, and who have tried to bring the support and solace of the Christian gospel to those serving in the armed forces.

While maintaining its abhorrence of war as being inconsistent with the mind and will of God, the Methodist Church has not failed to recognise that men and women in the armed services have a claim upon its ministry, and the church has made chaplains available for this service as required.

Though in many ways an exceptional man with a unique ministry as a chaplain, Padre Luxford may be taken as typical of Methodist chaplains of other generations than his own, who have accepted service as military chaplains in the discharge of the mission of the church.

We of a later generation are proud to salute Padre Luxford as "one of us"; and we are grateful that Frank G. Glen (Chaplain Class IV) has undertaken the task of recording something of Padre Luxford's life and ministry.

R. F. Clement, Senior Chaplain,
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INTRODUCTION

John A. Luxford was born in the Hutt in 1854. At the age of 22 he entered the Wesleyan ministry. During his ministry he served in the following circuits: Rangitikei, Patea, Kaiapoi, Gisborne, Leeston, Oamaru, St. Albans (Christchurch), Palmerston North, Invercargill, Lyttelton, Pitt Street (Auckland), Wanganui and Avondale (Auckland). As a circuit minister he was a wise administrator, an acceptable preacher, trusted pastor and able representative of his Church. In 1903 he became President of Conference and discharged these duties with singular ability. He was one of the youngest Presidents of Conference, then aged only 49 years.

His chief contribution to the Connexional life of the Methodist Church was as a Chaplain to the Forces. His life spanned three unique phases in N.Z. military history. He was officiating Chaplain to the Armed Constabulary during the Parihaka Affair in 1881. In the South African War he served with the last contingent, the 10th, in 1902, and finally at the age of 60 years he served with the ANZAC's on the beaches of

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Gallipoli. It was here he sustained severe injuries which resulted in the loss of a limb. On being appointed senior hospital Chaplain to Walton-on-Thames, Luxford was awarded the highest decoration of any New Zealand Chaplain, being made in 1916 a Commander of St. Michael and St. George. He was three times mentioned in despatches and was for a period Senior Chaplain to the New Zealand Division.

He was promoted in 1920 to Chaplain Class 1, with honorary rank of Colonel. On his return to New Zealand at the conclusion of World War I he suffered a further setback in health and was not able to attend the Conference of 1920. He endured much suffering, and those who saw him during those weary months treasure the memory of his patience.

Rest came to him on January 28th, 1921, when he was borne to a soldier's grave with full military honours, and every tribute of dominion and public regard.

EARLY DAYS — PARIHAKA

"Persecution is a bad and indirect way to plant religion." Thomas Browne.

The Maori Wars were over. Twelve regiments of British Infantry had left the shores of New Zealand, and there remained only the embryo formation of the Regular Army, then called the Armed Constabulary. Still there was unrest, and in 1880 there were rumours of wars, particularly at Parihaka in the Taranaki district.

Eruera Te Whiti (the same Te Whiti who challenged Governor Gore-Brown's Waitara land purchase), had taken himself to the Maori village of Parihaka at the base of Mount Egmont. By 1880, occupied Maori land generally extended from the Whaingaroa River practically to Stratford, and from Stratford in a direct line through Okato to the mouth of the Stony River. In the immediate Parihaka area the land was cultivated by the Maoris of the village.

The historic association of the Methodist Mission with Taranaki from the early 1840's is well-known, and with the defeat of the Waikato tribes the Maoris had retreated to many inaccessible places. They could not be blamed for being critical of their Christian faith and, perhaps not surprisingly, many denounced it. The Waikatos were defeated and their land confiscated. A good number of the colonists were bitter racialists and some were even prepared to shoot a Maori on sight. This feeling was also present within the Colonial Government, where some hot-headed individuals desired an even broader land confiscation policy as punishment to the Maoris who had taken part in the bitter wars from 1860 to 1872. The terrors of those years, both to Maori and Pakeha, were still extremely vivid. Te Whiti had gathered into the Parihaka

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district many homeless Maoris and some who still owned land in the area. He welded them into a community, organized agricultural and light industrial activities and maintained what was undoubtedly recognized somewhat reluctantly as a civilized Maori community. With a mixture of humility and the stubborn pride of a defeated people, he sought to live in peace and at the same time to discourage any fraternization with the Colonial Government and colonists in the district. He was a man of dynamic character, extremely capable leadership, and was not the fanatic that some historians have claimed him to be. Our Colonial administrators were bent on taking this last section of land from the Maori "by hook or by crook". The Parihaka Maoris began fencing off their land in a vain effort to retain it. The administration interpreted this as rebellion against the Crown, and troops were called to the scene.

Into this situation of political ferment John A. Luxford was sent to Patea by the Conference of 1880. He was a young man, 27 years, and it was natural for him to take an interest in the military establishments in the district, concerning himself with both Pakeha and Maori. The following is the text of a letter which he wrote to the "N.Z. Wesleyan" after his first visit to Patea in October 1881 ("N.Z. Wesleyan" pp 248 and 249, 1/11/1881).

"My Opunake appointment was on Sabbath, September 25. After various delays I reached Opunake late in the evening and was disappointed to find three of the principal settlers, who take a great interest in the services, were at New Plymouth, that most of the Constabulary had been ordered to the Pungarehu camp—two miles from Parihaka —and that people were so excited with the inflammatory speech delivered by Te Whiti on the 17th that volunteering and war seemed to have possession of their minds to the exclusion of all other subjects. On Sabbath the weather was unfavourable, still I held three services, and had a congregation of over 50 in the evening. The people seemed anxious to have a minister stationed among them, and several made substantial promises of support.

"There are thousands of acres of good land around, on which may be seen numbers of wild horses, cattle and pigs, and, I may add, Maoris. For years to come an Armed Force must be kept there, and a Minister could do good work among the Constabulary. Again, if a young man who understood the Maori language could be stationed at Opunake, he would have a great field of usefulness among those

'Guilty of a skin
Not coloured like his own.'

Te Whiti's charm cannot last much longer. Immediately that is gone the Church, through the influence of Mr Whiteley and others who counted its members among the Maoris of Whitecliffs and Opunake, will again be able 'to sound the blessed trumpet of the Gospel in dying sinner's ears'.

"On Monday morning I availed myself of the opportunity of visiting Parihaka. Some thought it unwise, and one brother kindly offered to lend me his revolver. I do not believe in gunpowder Christianity, and felt safe with Mr E. Bayley who was visiting the pa to transact some business with the natives. After two hours riding we reached Parihaka about 10 o'clock. We entered the village among the shouts of children, whose parents evidently don't patronize the linen and drapery establishments. A grand work might be carried on among the people of Parihaka if a missionary were tolerated. My heart bled when I thought of these little ones, living in a Christian colony, yet growing up among superstition and sin. We enquired for Te Whiti, but were told that he was outside the village planting potatoes. I took this 'cum grano salis'. Finding the Great Prophet was not to be seen, we asked for Tohu, the second man in rank and importance. We were directed to a large raupo hut—the largest in the village—about 30 x 16. Here we found the chief lying on a mat asleep, surrounded by 15 or 20 of his men. Tohu is a fine specimen of a Maori, a well-shaped head, piercing eyes, but inclined to obesity. He soon awoke, shook hands, lit his pipe, talked freely about missionaries, native troubles, etc. He was anxious to learn all I could tell him about Mr Rolleston, the native Minister. 'Was he a good man?' 'Yes', I said, 'I believe he is'. 'Does he believe in the New Testament?' pointing to a copy of a Maori Testament which I had just picked up in the hut. 'Yes, he will act as this Word of God directs'. 'Then', said Tohu, 'if he is such a man, why does he not remedy three great evils—1. The innocent Maoris are molested when they put up fences. 2. The Pakeha takes the Maori land. 3. The Constabulary lead our women astray, and cause trouble in Parihaka?' I knew there were two sides to complaints 1 and 2, but I fear 3 is by no means an imagined grievance. More stringent rules should be enforced regarding absence from the Constabulary camps. The chief further told us 'there might be war, but it would be the fault of the Pakeha'.

"I knew that in Parihaka there were Maoris who had been converted to Christianity in the early days of the Rev. J. Aldred's ministry in Wellington. A man (Eva) and his wife (Caroline) I was very anxious to see, because I had known them as faithful members of our church in Wellington, and had seen them at my father's house hundreds of times. I soon found them. I shook hands with Eva. After repeating the same process with the wahine, we commenced the Korero. I asked my old friend to take me round Parihaka. This request caused quite a Babel. One of the women insisted I was a 'Government spy'. When Mr Bayley had explained I was a 'minita' from Patea, and that Tohu had talked with me, they ceased their noise and condescendingly shook hands. Eva then accompanied us through part of the village, but angry glances and symbolical remarks from the natives soon made him express a wish to return to his own whare. Before he left I asked him if he still loved the Atua (God). He would not answer. I then asked him if he had any

message to send to his old missionary and friend, Mr Aldred. To which he replied, 'No, I have nothing to say to him'. In the course of conversation he said, 'he believed only in Te Whiti, and would never leave Parihaka'. He is an example of many other backsliders at Parihaka. Several of them have been to Three Kings and speak of Mr Reid. One man among them is an ex-deacon of the Anglican Church. Every Maori in Parihaka is infatuated with Te Whiti. His influence is mysterious. He holds them under a spell.

"The village was a model of cleanliness and compactness. The only wooden building of size is a three-roomed cottage in which Te Whiti resides. Parihaka is in every respect a genuine type of ancient Maori pa.

Next we visited the illegal fences, which were not more than three miles seaward from Parihaka. Their arrest would be a formidable matter to undertake. There were quite 500—men, women and children—at these fences. We dismounted but were not so kindly received as at the pa. The old men were sulky and would not speak. One responded to my salute by a significant shake of his head. The young men were active, jocular and noisy. Several of them were returned prisoners and wore their prison dress. A young ex gaol-bird said, 'Well, minita, are you going to help pull down our fences?' I confess I felt uneasy among this great crowd of law-breakers. The old men around us, too sulky to speak and adepts in using the hatchet, were not fascinating company. I felt quite safe at Parihaka, but did not appreciate the disposition and attitude of the Maoris at the fences. Te Whiti, among other wise regulations, forbids the introduction of spirits at Parihaka. Poverty seemed to prevail throughout the village. We were hospitably treated to a dinner of eggs, potatoes and sour thistle. There was no preparation for war, and the Maoris said 'They were not going to fight, except at the fences and with their tongues'. The clouds of darkness and superstition hanging over their minds were easily detected. When Te Whiti's spell is once broken, then 'the morning will break, day-light will appear, and may the Wesleyan Church be ready to send its missionary to Parihaka, among those thousands of souls who are now dying

'In darkness at our side
Without a hope to cheer the tomb'."

Luxford returned to Patea before the end of the month and preached on October 30th to a far from peaceful congregation, fearlessly condemning the forthcoming invasion. This occurred on 5th November when the Armed Constabulary took and occupied the Parihaka village. The local newspaper reporter at Patea said "John Luxford was listened to attentively but feelings here are unanimously in favour of war". As Luxford's letter indicates, he frowned on preparations for military activities and though he was a loyal colonist it was obvious to him as a minister of the Gospel that

the Maori was attempting something close to pacifism, which in those days was almost entirely unknown to colonial New Zealand. One writer (Scott, "The Parihaka Story") calls Luxford's congregation and the seat of his circuit, "a hotbed of landgrabbers".

Luxford's involvement in the tragedy of the Parihaka incident was a unique one. Not only did he minister to a military establishment but also to the community of Maoris in the district. He sternly rebuked the loose morals of the soldiers in their relationships with the Maori womenfolk and did all in his power to maintain the peace. Involved as he was in the final stages of the Maori wars, John Luxford saw the obvious necessity for Chaplains in the forces who would be men of upright spiritual character, living, sharing, and suffering alongside the soldiers for the sake of the Gospel. These experiences as an officiating Chaplain to the Armed Constabulary introduced him to a full-time career in the Army which led him to give almost eighteen years of his life to the Armed Forces, five of them in the capacity of fulltime Chaplain.

ARMED FORCES CHAPLAINCY

*" Through the battle—through defeat,
Moving yet and never stopping,
O Pioneers, O Pioneers."*

Walt Whitman.

It will be necessary to give some historical background to the development of Chaplains to the Forces in New Zealand.

In 1856 the Chaplains Department of the British Army recognized Methodist ministers as officiating Chaplains. Provision was made for those soldiers claiming to be Wesleyans to attend Divine Worship in a Methodist Church, and Imperial Forces could call a Methodist Minister to officiate when the time or circumstances arose. In 1860 such officiating Chaplains in New Zealand were appointed by the New Zealand District meeting. The Revs. J. T. Wallis, T. Buddle and J. Rishworth served as Chaplains, mainly in the Auckland area during the Maori wars. Rev. John Whiteley did, in fact, carry out the function of an Officiating Chaplain and was made very welcome by military commanders in the Taranaki wars. These Chaplains received only forage and horse allowance. In 1881 by authority of a Royal Decree and Written Charter, Methodist Ministers were acknowledged to have full status as commissioned officers in Imperial and Colonial forces under the authority of the British Crown. Since that time Methodist Ministers in the various Conferences throughout the world have served in uniform as Chaplains within the British Royal Army Chaplains Department or their national Department.

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In 1901 the Australasian General Conference authorized the New Zealand Conference to provide officiating Chaplains to Her Majesty's ships visiting New Zealand, and to seek recognition of Methodist ministers of the New Zealand Conference serving with volunteer units. At the Dunedin Conference of March 1902, the Naval and Military Affairs Committee was established. The Committee consisted of the Revs. H. Bull, W. Lee, W. Baumber and J. A. Luxford (Convener), along with Captain G. J. Smith of Durham Street Methodist Church (later Colonel G. J. Smith, C.B.E., E.D., a Methodist layman and territorial soldier who later became a member of the House of Representatives), and Captain A. F. Drayton, also a Methodist layman. The President was to exercise the powers of the Conference in appointing Chaplains for the following year of 1902. This would regularize the position of a number of ministers throughout the Connexion who held positions as Officiating Chaplains to volunteer units. The Conference further resolved to apply to the Ministry of Defence for the creation of chaplaincies in each of the chief centres in accordance with English practice, and after approval to establish same had been given, chaplaincy appointments were to be made by the Conference. The Conference finally resolved that in the event of a 10th Contingent being sent to South Africa it was willing to supply a Chaplain.

An interesting resolution was passed at the same Conference inviting the Presbyterians to support the Methodist Church in approaching the Ministry of Defence to set up an organization whereby non-Anglican Churches would be granted avenues for the appointment of their Chaplains.

John Luxford was without doubt the strong mind and strong character behind the implementation of the decisions of this Conference. He had, since his experience in Parihaka, maintained a persistent interest in military affairs. Because of his love of the outdoor life, and com-*passion* for young men, he had during the twenty years since the Parihaka affair attended Easter Military Camps, manoeuvres, weapon training and cavalry rides, and con-*ducted* services in the field. Now, largely as a result of his efforts, there had come at last official recognition of the Methodist Church's ministry within the voluntary forces. He was at this time Chaplain to the 1st Battalion of the Otago-Southland Regiment (now 4 R.N.Z.I.R.). Conference of 1902 established firmly, principally through John Luxford's efforts, the recognition of the Church's work in a wider ministry to the Forces.

THE BOER WAR

"I cannot sympathize with the attempt that is being made to wipe the Boer out of existence."

*Hon. Mr Rigg, M.H.R.
28th September, 1899.*

"I will not vote for this motion unless I were convinced in the first place of its clear justice."

*Hon. Mr Scotland, M.H.R.
28th September, 1899.*

On September 28th, 1899, Richard John Seddon addressed the House of Representatives: "Mr Speaker, on no previous occasion have I risen in this House with a greater sense of responsibility. An emergency has arisen. The occasion now exists for us to prove our devotion to the Empire, and Hon. Members are called upon today to pass a resolution offering a contingent for service in the Transvaal."

The war in South Africa had commenced, and for good or ill the Colony of New Zealand was committed to support the Crown. The patriotic emotions of the Victorian era had carried the day. Yet it was not a unanimous view. Robert McNab reproached the Premier, "I myself have a brother in the Transvaal and I know of the opinions of many New Zealanders in the Transvaal. I believe myself that the question of the power of Britain to interfere with the internal government of the Transvaal is not based upon a strictly accurate reading of the letter ... I believe that this is not a question of defence of the Empire, it is a question of an extension of the sovereignty of the Empire over another country."

Basically, England felt she had to support English nationals who had suffered undoubted injustices in the Transvaal. The Rev. J. S. Smalley, President of the Conference for 1900, made this comment in his loyal address to the Crown. "The horizon of the Empire has been darkened by the war cloud. It is satisfactory to note the cordial and ready response that has been given by the Colony, both in men and money, to the call for assistance made by the Mother Country. We rejoice in the inseparable unity of our Empire. That unity cannot now be called a sentiment: it is a fact. We thank God that our prestige has not been lowered before the world, and the lustre of the British arms has not been dimmed. Our prayer is that God will bring the Nation safely through, and that the old flag may float victoriously and peacefully over South Africa." It was obvious that the Church was committed in her loyalties to the Empire. We may debate the pros and cons of British intervention in the affairs of the independent state of the Transvaal. On the other hand there certainly was corrupt Government in Transvaal and basic injustices were being done to British nationals. These people were principally responsible for developing mining for gold and

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exploiting the natural resources of the Republic. Their plea for help had to go somewhere and it was natural that it should go to England. Relationships between Great Britain and Germany were growing in tension and it was evident that there were higher politics than the Transvaal at stake.

The first New Zealand Mounted Rifles arrived in Capetown on 23rd November, 1899. Throughout the period of the 2½ years' war some 6,495 New Zealanders served in South Africa. Our casualties were 218 killed, or died of accident, sickness or wounds. Another 166 were wounded in action.

The greatest casualties occurred in the 7th contingent and it was probably the fact that several young Methodists from prominent families lost their lives in the fateful battle on March 1st, 1902, which further stimulated the offer of the Methodist Church for a Chaplain. The Conference Minutes note:

"This Conference learns with profound sorrow of the disaster that has overtaken the New Zealanders of the Seventh Contingent at Bothasburg. Upholding as it does the policy of the Home Government in prosecuting this war until the last rebel lays down his arms, believing such course to be the only one open for securing a peaceful settlement of the country, it recognizes that New Zealand must bear its share of the horrors necessarily attendant on war, of which this sad calamity is one. It desires to express its admiration at the courage of the gallant lads who bravely fell, and its sympathy with their mourning relatives, and prays for the speedy cessation of hostilities in South Africa."

It was decided in committee at this historic 1902 Conference that John A. Luxford would represent the Methodist Church as a Chaplain to a 10th contingent, if required.

"JOHN LUXFORD GOES"

"I should live the same life over—if I had to live again."

Adam Lindsay Gordon.

"Luxford goes." These were the words of the President of the Conference in his telegram to the Commander in Chief of the New Zealand forces, when two days after the dispersal of the Conference it was decided to send an additional contingent, the 10th, consisting of 1,000 men. The contingent was made up of a North Island and a South Island Regiment, the North Island units sailing on the "Drayton Grange" on April 14th, and those from the South sailing on 19th April in the "Norfolk". The Rev. D. J. Murray, President of the Conference, received a telegram in reply from Lord Kitchener stating that "under special circumstances he had agreed to the appointment of a Wesleyan Chaplain to the 10th contingent, holding the rank of Captain".

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To use a modern term, Luxford mobilized with the men and like them he took his own horse, "Prince". At a dedication service held prior to sailing, at the Durham Street Methodist Church on Thursday, April 17th, the President of the Conference, the Rev. D. J. Murray, in a speech of blessing set aside John Luxford to this great commission. He said, "The prayers of the whole Church will go with you, Chaplain Luxford, on your sacred mission."

During the remaining time of the contingent's training, at Addington, Luxford received many letters from relatives and ministers who commended their young men into his keeping. A note from his diary in Trentham carries these remarks:

"I saw good behaviour, heard little swearing, saw no drunkenness—they were good lads." He set up an emergency fund to provide for wounded soldiers, and from his own funds he purchased a stock of books and writing materials. The late Trooper A. Smiley (9446) has left the writer with these impressions of serving with the 10th contingent.

"Our officers were already in uniform when we arrived. I noticed that Chaplain Luxford had erected a tent in which there was a table and chairs and writing paper and envelopes and a few magazines. This was the only place where we could relax. Embarkation commenced on the afternoon of April 19th. The gates along the pier at Lyttelton were covered with barbed wire to keep the public off until the men were aboard. Streamers, bands and tears were the order of the day. It was a great send-off. We all slept in hammocks, and had about six hundred horses on board. We also carried a cargo of frozen mutton and there were several nurses aboard in the sick quarters. There was no provision for writing or reading or organized sport apart from what Padre Luxford organized. During the trip there was the usual military drill with practice targets thrown overboard.

"One night during the Church parade, and these were generally pretty cramped affairs, each man having to sit where he could, the lights failed and the horses panicked and pandemonium broke loose. Padre Luxford had to halt his service, then went down to help establish some order. At the Church services aboard a band made up of men in the contingent played the hymns and all the officers and nurses were present.

"Two days after our arrival in Durban peace was declared. It all seemed pretty futile. However, we all went into Durban after the march through and set up camp in the Durban showgrounds. During our time in Durban, Church parades were held in Newcastle camp, several miles from the town. They were held in good weather in the open air."

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Trooper Smiley records there was only one day of rain all the time he was in Durban.

"One chap was accidentally killed while racing a horse. Padre Luxford conducted his funeral service in Newcastle camp. Some of our chaps suffered from sickness and died in Africa and others died on our return trip home. Padre Luxford officiated at these funerals. On one occasion we had a fire. It started in the grass accidentally and destroyed a great number of officers' tents, the Padre's included. After our time in Durban we set off for the Transvaal. We went by bullock waggons. Then we transferred into coal trucks which we swept clean as best we could. Some of us made little fires in the middle. They had steel floors. In the middle of our first night of travel our train stopped—the engine had run off the line. In the morning we discovered we were black as sweeps. We had no toilet gear with us as our gear had gone on ahead. When we arrived we had a fine dixie of beer. I remember particularly Luxford moving about the camp and aboard the boat. There was nothing stuck up about him and he was a real gentleman. He regularly visited the hospitals and the sick and nothing ever seemed too big a trouble for him to undertake."

The late Mr L. Richard, one time circuit steward of the Woodville Circuit, who was in the North Island Regiment, writes of Mr Luxford in the following terms:

"John Luxford was about 5ft.10in., with a ruddy complexion, and well set up. Luxford was the officiating Chaplain for Fort Hay camp, which was about four miles or so from Newcastle. The area was thinly populated, chiefly by natives who were apparently good natured and easy going. Luxford was an easily approachable man. On one occasion I rode several miles to a church parade. It must have been something special as there were Imperials as well as Colonials there, also a regimental band. Padre Luxford shared the service with Imperial Chaplains. As in most camps, there was time for gambling. Crown and Anchor was the favourite. There was no wet canteen. On the whole the officers of the 10th contingent were quite a good lot. The adjutant was Captain A. G. Hughes. He was the first New Zealander to be decorated. He was after-wards Sir J. G. Hughes, D.S.O. We also had Lieutenant J. Duigan, who was later Sir John Duigan, Commandant of New Zealand Forces. On 14th July the entire contingent sailed in the troop ship 'Montrose' to return to New Zealand. During our return, two men died of sickness, and Luxford officiated at their burials at sea."

From these men who actually served in the 10th contingent we can gather a picture of Luxford's life. As with all Chaplains it was an arduous one and for a man in his 48th year it must have been physically strenuous. As well as garrison duties in his main camp there were satellite camps at Newcastle and Fort Hay. He was present at skirmish exercises and range shooting and some of the civic functions which officers

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in those days were called upon to attend in Durban. He was an indefatigable preacher. He carried the convictions both of a social gospel and personal evangelical experience.

Luxford returned to New Zealand in September 1902, having only been away for a period of five months. The Minutes note the following: "The total cost to the Conference Naval and Military Affairs Committee was £82 7s 6d. £20 of this had been donated by Luxford himself." Not only in honour of his service as a Chaplain but also because of the respect in which he was held, Luxford was elected President at the Christchurch Conference in 1903, and in his pastoral address he concluded this phase of his life by saying, "Your hearts and ours have been delighted at God's answer to our fervent prayers for the cessation of hostilities in South Africa, where we trust a permanent peace has been established on a solid foundation. New Zealand has won for herself a proud position in the history of the late war. Our gallant troops have won undying distinction in their brave defence of the flag, safety, and honour of our Empire. But while we rejoice at their noble heroism, our hearts go out in deepest sympathy to the homes that have been darkened by the loss of the valiant lads who laid down their lives for their country. While fully recognizing the necessity and justice of this war, we long and earnestly pray for the time when 'wars shall cease unto the ends of the earth'."

WAR

*"But vain the sword, and vain the bow,
They never can wars overthrow.
The hermit's prayer and the widow's tear
Alone can free the world from fear."*

W. Blake.

"The Great War", said Ormond Burton, "perhaps more than any other in history, was able to preserve the sacrificial illusion. The infantry soldier was the backbone of the Army, the fighting man . . . smashed by bombs ... to suffer ... to endure ... to die." It is difficult for us, in our present materialistic generation and with our sophisticated background, who accept as second nature "wars and rumours of wars", to realize that such an aura of spiritual righteousness and sentiment could surround the opening years of the First World War. Those readers familiar with the B.B.C. programme "The Great War" will be more than familiar with this unrealistic spirit and of its transformation into bitter and devastating pessimism, finally dissolving into a philosophical and spiritual vacuum as the war ground to its agonizing halt.

The Church, for good or ill, as part of society was involved in the war. The Conference said in 1915 (Minutes, p. 117) "While deploring the appeal to brute force in differences between rational beings, and mourning over the horrors and miseries of

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the present world-wide conflict, this Conference is profoundly convinced that Great Britain is absolutely innocent of the awful guilt of letting slip the dogs of war, and has a cause transparently just before God and the nations. We rejoice in the unanimity and loyalty of all parts of our far-flung Empire, and particularly of New Zealand, in supporting the Motherland in the hour of her need. We also rejoice in the valour and growing strength of the King's forces, and we join earnestly in prayer that God will defend the right, and cause the grinding militarism of Germany to cease from the earth. We regard the British Empire with all its defects as being, in practical righteousness, the largest instalment of the Kingdom of God that has yet arisen among men, and we earnestly pray that Almighty God will avert calamity from that dispensation of righteousness and liberty which it has been the glory of our Empire to spread over the world.

This Conference notes, with intense satisfaction, the ready and willing response given by the young men of our Church in all parts of the Dominion to the Empire's call. We earnestly pray that the Divine Father may strengthen them in the hour of temptation, protect them in the time of danger, and speedily bring them safely home."



Luxford, with topi, assisting in funeral of three N.Z. soldiers killed in action at Suez, 1915.

John Luxford's prior experience and his conviction of the Chaplain's place in Army life led him immediately to volunteer, despite his sixty years of age. After some hesitation with regard to his age, the Army accepted him because of his previous experience as Principal Chaplain of the Methodist Church. Luxford was appointed to his old regiment, the 1st Battalion Otago-Southland, and sailed with the First

Expeditionary Force for Egypt after some months training. While in Egypt he ministered to soldiers at Lemnos, and later landed at Gallipoli with the ANZAC forces. Writing home after the first several weeks at Gallipoli, Luxford reported:

"In the midst of much that is sad, the men all through keep in good spirits. The pessimist is a 'rara avis'. He would be counted out. I heard him defined the other day as a man continually sick of the voyage of life. We do not believe reports of a discouraging nature and we cheer when the returns are in our favour. You would be surprised at the resourcefulness of many. Here is an illustration: We find the biscuits very hard. They have broken many teeth. Many men have a grater made out of a piece of tin. The points of the bayonets have pierced holes, leaving the outside of the tin rough. It is then shaped so that it will cover a dixie or some receptacle. The hard biscuit is rubbed across the grater and is ground into finest meal. We call it, when cooked, 'ANZAC por-ridge'. Another ingenious contrivance is perfect for its purpose. Flies are a scourge, they are everywhere, but one man has a cardboard windmill which he has placed at the entrance of his dugout. It answers the double purpose of a ventilator and a fly chaser. For every difficulty an escape is found. We do not cave in; jokes are greatly in evidence."

In the savage fighting which followed and the tough physical test, Luxford needed spiritual stamina. Someone who watched this incident wrote these words: "The narrow bands of denominationalism are surrendered. We did not take to Luxford at first because we did not know him. One man was wounded outside our trench. Some of us tied puttees together and tried to drag him in. Major Luxford just climbed out of the trench accompanied by the Roman Catholic Chaplain and under full exposure to fire they both lifted him on to a stretcher and unhurriedly brought him back to the trench." Someone else has recorded these words before Luxford was wounded: "Last I saw of him he had his coat off and was toiling up a steep hill laden with ammunition."

On the afternoon of Monday, 9th October, 1915, John Luxford was seriously wounded. The doctor's note attached to his lapel read, "Bullet wound through right terminal artery. Tourniquet on since 2 p.m. Operation 9.20 p.m. Terminal tied. Appears now to be improving." Luxford was taken aboard the hospital ship and the severity of his wounds was immediately noted. He was evacuated to England where his leg, which had in the meantime been removed, was replaced by an artificial limb. When he visited the Methodist Central buildings in London he said, "I can kneel down to say my prayers. I was afraid I might have had to pray leaning on my staff for the rest of my days." Then came the King's Birthday Honours. A citation read,

"His Majesty the King has been pleased to award the Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George on Chaplain Class 3, J. A. Luxford of the N.Z. Expeditionary Force, Principal Methodist Chaplain, for outstanding services on the beaches of Gallipoli in the execution of his religious duties among the soldiers placed in his care."



Gallipoli, 1915. A padre conducting Communion, Pope's Reserve.

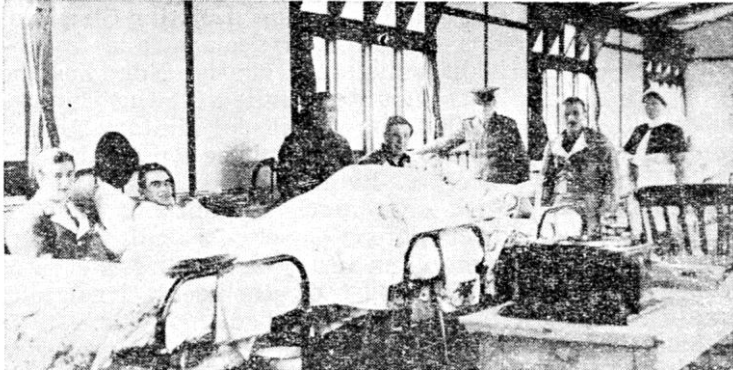
The response to this award was immediate. General Sir W. Birdwood wrote, "It has been most thoroughly well earned. We are all most indebted for the good work you have done for us." General Godley called to congratulate Luxford and said, "No other decoration has given me more pleasure than yours." General Richardson in writing said, "Well earned, Luxford. It is all off your own bat."

When the information reached the New Zealand hospital in Walton-on-Thames where, in the meantime, Luxford had been Chaplain to three hundred New Zealand patients, they called for him and gave him three ringing cheers. Immediately after the honour he was promoted to the rank of Chaplain Class 2 (Lt. Col.) and in association with his duties at Walton-on-Thames he was placed on the London staff with charge of all matters connected with the New Zealand Army Chaplains' Department. About this time the Commander in Chief of New Zealand Forces per-mitted the following gazette notice to appear, "Chaplain J. A. Luxford C.M.G. has been promoted to the rank of Lt. Col. and as from 18th July 1916 is now Senior Chaplain in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force."

Luxford continued at Walton-on-Thames among the New Zealand sick until the conclusion of hostilities. He was at this time 65 years of age. He was affectionately

John A. Luxford by Frank Glen

known as "the old Colonel". During this time he gave himself unstintingly and with deepest compassion served where he was needed most. At the conclusion of hostilities he returned to New Zealand in very poor and failing health. After a brief illness in 1921 he entered into his eternal rest.



Rev. J. A. Luxford visiting No. 6 Ward (Surgical), Walton Thames, London, 1917.

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Transcripts of experiences herein mentioned were collected by the author in 1956 from South African veterans. Material on Methodist Chaplains was supplied by the Deputy Chaplain General of the Royal Army Chaplains Department, the War Office, London.

Frank G. Glen, C.F.

7th July, 1966.

By the same author,

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