

EXPLOITS OF THE "DIE HARDS" RECALLED

REGIMENTAL BUTTON FOUND

A button from the tunic of a soldier of the 57th Regiment, which served in Taranaki during the 1860's, has been discovered by Mr. W. J. Baldock at his home, 4 Brown Street, New Plymouth.

The button, no longer shining as it must have done 90 years ago, bears a wreath of laurel leaves, a crown and the word Albuhera, the name of the Spanish village where on May 16, 1811, the regiment earned its famous nick-name of the "Die Hards."

In this strategic battle of the Peninsular War the regiment had 23 officers and more than 400 men killed or wounded of a total strength of 570. Its colour was pierced by 21 shots, and after the action the regiment was given permission to bear on its colours and appointments the word Albuhera, in consideration of its distinguished gallantry.

On November 3, 1860, the regiment was ordered to New Zealand from India and on January 21, 1861, it arrived at Auckland. The headquarters and band embarked on H.M.S. Niger for Taranaki on February 20 and disembarked at the Waitara River. There, the regiment fought against the Maoris until March 20, 1861. Later, it was stationed in New Plymouth and fought many memorable engagements in keeping with its long, proud history—it was raised in Somerset and Gloucester in 1755.

In 1864 the regiment was ordered to Wanganui.

It is possible that the button found by Mr. Baldock was lost by a soldier during the landing of heavy goods and horses. The history of the regiment records that on one day at New Plymouth its men landed 100 horses, belonging to the Royal Artillery, in 12 hours.

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