

What changes did the new territorial system bring to the Regiment? From 17-25 February 1912 all New Zealand infantry regiments encamped at Piako. The Regiment was at this camp only up to 68 per cent of its total strength, with twenty officers and 401 other ranks in attendance. The Regiment was commanded by forty-six-year-old Lieut.-Col. E. W. Porritt, The Inspecting Officer, Col. C. F. Major, was well pleased with the Regiment's performance and reported that the Haurakis were 'a keen lot. The discipline was excellent...the "tone" of the regiment is distinctly good'⁵.

By 1913 the Regiment was flourishing, with an establishment of twenty-nine officers and 887 other ranks. Again, the scattered geographical location of the Regiment led to a comparatively small turn-out an annual camp — eighteen officers and 384 other ranks — but by this time the Regiment was fully armed, clothed and equipped. The District Commander reported: 'The Regiment would very soon be able to take the field if mobilised'⁶.

On 4 August 1914 New Zealand went to war against Imperial Germany and Austria-Hungary. The second trial by fire had begun, and on 13 August 1914 the first draft of volunteers from the Regiment left Paeroa for Alexandra Park, Epsom. The 6th Hauraki Regiment together with the three other regiments of the Auckland Military District — the 3rd (Auckland), 15th (North Auckland), and 16th (Waikato), — each formed a company in the Auckland Regiment, New Zealand Expeditionary Force. Hauraki soldiers wore Hauraki badges on their lapels and 'Lemon Squeezer' hats and formed the 6th (Hauraki) Company of the Force. The Officer Commanding was Major F. Stuckey and the Second-in-Command, Captain J. Price. The Platoon Commanders were Lieuts. Morpeth, Algie, Flower and Dodson. Ormond Burton tells how on 22 September 1914 the Hauraki Volunteers departed for the Front:

The men marched through a great throng to the wharf. Merry rallery, handshakes, kisses and tears, and then the people were shut off by the wharf gates. . . . North Head was passed, Rangitoto, Tiri, the waters of the Hauraki Gulf, and then the vessel turned northwards.⁷

Overseas the Hauraki Company went into action on 3-4 February 1915 in the Suez Canal, and on 25 and 26 April 1915 took part in the Anzac landings at Gallipoli. At 8 a.m. on 25 April, the Company began to land, under shellfire, and then moved forward up a hill in support of the Australian Division.

After re-embarkation and a landing at Cape Helles the Hauraki Company moved forward on 8 May to within 800 yards of the Turkish trenches. In the fierce fighting that followed, the Haurakis lost three officers killed, including their Commander, and saw one officer seriously wounded.

In August 1915 the Hauraki Company was in action on the Suvela Plain in the Dardanelles. Burton writes that:

The Battalion was drawn up; 6th Company in front and informed roughly of the objective. . . . The moment had come. . . . The men moved, Lieut. Dittmer's platoon of the Haurakis leading. Twenty yards of dead ground and then a hail of fire— fire from a thousand yards of Chunuk; fire from Battleship Hill; rifle fire and machine-gun fire from front and flank; 250 yards to go, and every yard of it raked with fire. There was no faltering; every man went straight for it, running up the hill as fast as he could go. Killed and wounded they went down in heaps, but the survivors pressed on.⁸

From the Dardanelles the Hauraki Company moved to France, to the damp and cold ordeal of trench warfare, with its twin horrors of shelling and disease. Hauraki troops took part in the Battles of the Somme, Merscourcelette, Morval, and Le Transloy ridges in 1916; Messines, Ypres, Polygon Wood, Broodseinde, and the first Passchendale in 1917; the two Somme battles of 1918, and Arras, Ancre, Albert, Hidenberg Line, Bapaume, Havrincourt, Canal du Nord, Cambai, Selle and the Sambre. These fierce blood-lettings cost the Haurakis 170 lives.⁹ This was the costliest war in the Regiment's history and beside death in battle, numbers of disfigured, blinded, and gassed soldiers returned to civilian life never again to live as happy or pain-free citizens.

Throughout the wars the Regiment at home had continued to hold parades, maintained its training programme and acted as a recruiting centre for volunteers. From August 1916 conscripts, who after initial training were posted to the front, were first posted to the Regiment. When, on 11 November 1918, the Armistice was signed, soldiers and civilians alike believed that the Great War had been fought to end all wars, and in the years immediately following, hopeful that the League of Nations would act as a parliament for the brotherhood of man, the Regiments were forgotten and