

RANGIOTU MINIATURE RIFLE CLUB

1925 – 1931

A large and enthusiastic crowd gathered in the Rangiotu Hall in early 1925 to discuss the forming of a miniature rifle club.

Manawaroa Te Awe Awe (Roa Larkins), Chief of the local Rangitane tribe spoke on the social values of having such a club in the district, and was ably supported by Herbert Bond of Bainesse. Twenty six members were signed up and subs were set at 7/6 (75¢) for juniors and 10/- (\$1) for seniors.

An election of officers took place. Patron: Manawaroa Te Awe Awe, President: Mr H Bond, Secretary: Mr F W Searancke, and Club Captain: Mr H Chapman. Several donations and promises of trophies were offered. An order for the purchase of rifles and ammunition was made and it was resolved that work on erecting the butts would be done the next week, subject to the permission of the hall committee. Ammunition costs were set at 1/6 (15c) for a block of eight shots and 6d (5c) for all additional practice rounds.

Shooting commenced in June, when a competition for a gold medal donated by Mr T Simpson was held, which was won by H Chapman. The first year finished with the club in a sound financial position and a membership roll of 51.

1926 saw the club affiliate with the Manawatu Association and on May 27th held its first annual ball which was well supported by a large and enthusiastic crowd, and proved to be the event of the year in Rangiotu.

A unique shooting trophy in the form of a leadlight kiwi was donated by R A Jones and G Findlay of the RSA club for competition between the Oroua Downs, Rangiotu and RSA clubs. Oroua Downs were the first winners with Rangiotu lodging a successful challenge in 1927.

Team shooting met with minor success in the first year, although the Manawatu Championships provided the highlight of the year with H Chapman winning the B grade, L Walker finishing third and J Larkin fourth. A good effort for such a young club in its first year of competition. F Robins went on to win the B grade championship in 1929.

The club suffered a severe setback in late 1929 when Manawaroa Te Awe Awe (Roa Larkins) passed away. This gentleman had been one of the club's founders and mainstays, and had served as Club Patron for the previous five years. He was known as the 'father of the club' and had taken a keen interest as well as an active part in the club. His passing saw the club roll diminish and the club struggled to survive.

In 1931 the Rangiotu Club could not provide sufficient members to compete in interclub team events and did not affiliate with the Manawatu Miniature Rifle Association.

An effort was made to revive the club with the forming of a combined ping pong and rifle club, but after several years the club finally went into recess. Overall the club had played an important part in the lives of the community in promoting entertainment and sport in the district, and it was with regret that a club that had started with so much keenness and enthusiasm was finally forced into recess.