

Travis, Richard Charles Travis, 1884–1918, Horse-breaker, Soldier

Aaron P. Fox



Dickson Cornelius Savage was born at Opotiki, New Zealand, on 6 April 1884, the fifth child in a family of nine. His parents, James Savage from Ireland, a farmer and constable in the New Zealand Armed Constabulary, and Frances Theresa O'Keefe, from Sydney, Australia, married at Opotiki in 1875.

Savage attended the Opotiki and Otara schools, leaving after Standard Four to work on the family farm. He became a capable shepherd, drover and farmhand, and excelled at horse-breaking, which appealed to the fearless, independent and quick-witted youth. After quarrelling with his father he went to the Gisborne district in 1905, where he found work as a farmhand and driver. His reputation as a horse-breaker grew. After further strife in Gisborne, 'where he is thought to have got a young woman into trouble', Savage travelled south, broke off all communication with his family, and changed his name to Richard Charles Travis.

He arrived in Winton, Southland, in 1910, claiming to come from Poverty Bay and even the United States. After working on Southland farms and threshing mills, 'Dick' Travis found employment as a general farmhand with Tom Murray of Ryal Bush. He continued to break horses, and joined an Oddfellows lodge.

On 20 August 1914 Travis enlisted with the 7th (Southland) Squadron of the Otago Mounted Rifles Regiment in Invercargill. When attested he was five feet six inches tall, weighed 133 pounds, had a fresh complexion, blue eyes and fair hair. His stated next of kin was his fiancée, Lettie Murray, Tom Murray's daughter.

Travis sailed with the main body of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, arriving in Egypt in December 1914. Impatient to see action, he unofficially accompanied his regiment to Gallipoli in May 1915. He was returned to Egypt and received 14 days' detention. However, he participated in the final weeks of the Gallipoli campaign, moving with impunity between the New Zealand and Turkish trenches on scouting patrols.

A knee injury led Travis to transfer to the 8th (Southland) Company, 2nd Battalion, Otago Infantry Regiment, on 27 March 1916. He arrived in France in April 1916 and began nocturnal scouting activities in no man's land between the New Zealand and German trenches, mapping the German defences for the first New Zealand trench raids. In July 1916 he received special mention in brigade routine orders for a daylight search for wounded New Zealand raiders and the recovery of equipment, and for night-patrol duty over a six-week period.

Travis displayed 'conspicuous gallantry' on 15 September 1916, eliminating several German snipers during the 2nd Otago Battalion's advance in the Somme offensive, for which he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. He was rapidly promoted to sergeant and given command of the battalion's new sniper and observation section. 'Travis's Gang' became proficient in scouting enemy defences and capturing enemy troops for interrogation. His casual attitude towards rank and dress regulations contrasted with the careful planning, daring and resourcefulness of his anti-sniper work and lone patrols. It was said that, 'His judgement of what the enemy would do under given circumstances sometimes seemed more than human.' Travis was awarded the Belgian Croix de Guerre on 15 February 1918, and the Military Medal in May 1918.

On 24 July 1918 the 2nd Otago Battalion attacked the German salient at Rossignol Wood north of Hébuterne. In daylight, Travis destroyed an impassable wire block in front of the enemy lines prior to the attack. He then captured two enemy machine-guns, shooting down 11 Germans. He was killed by shellfire the following day, and was buried at Couin on 26 July.

The entire New Zealand Division mourned the loss of the 'King of No Man's Land'. For his 'most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty' on 24 July, Travis was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross on 27 September 1918.

Lest We Forget



The Dick Travis VC Trophy

A Competition for Classic .303 Target Rifles

Hosted by Karori Rifle Club
Seddon Range, Trentham
WELLINGTON



PRIZES INCLUDE:

Cloth badges for 1st to 8th places

Cloth badges for Top Shot Aggregates at all distances

Dick Travis VC wooden trophy for the overall winner

KARORI RIFLE CLUB

Sponsored Cash Prizes

FIRST PLACE PRIZE- \$300 & DTVC Trophy

SECOND PLACE PRIZE - \$200

THIRD PLACE PRIZE - \$100

DICK TRAVIS VC .303 NATIONALS 2022 ENTRY FORM

Name

Address

Phone number(s)

Email Address

Firearms Licence Number

Rifle

I wish to compete in the competition for the Dick Travis VC Trophy. I agree to abide by all relevant laws, rules and regulations and follow the directions of the Match Director and Range Officer

Entry fee..... \$70.00

Entry fee payment via direct credit can be made to Karori Rifle Club 02 0524 0031086 00.
Please indicate your name and "DTVC" in the particulars and reference fields.
Cash payments will also be accepted on the day. No Eftpos facility available.

Signed

Contact: Duncan McKee
47 Hohiria Rd
Hataitai
Wellington
le303@xtra.co.nz
(04) 386-3253



PROGRAMME

Saturday 19 March: 07:30 sharp – 8.30 a.m.

Sign In and Scrutineering.

Gunsmith on hand to inspect and approve rifles.



COURSE OF FIRE

Saturday 19 March, 08:45 am

500 yards

2 matches of 10 shots with 2 convertible sighters.

Saturday 19 March, 12:30 pm

300 yards

2 matches of 10 shots with 2 convertible sighters.

Sunday 20 March, 8:45 am

600 yards

2 matches of 10 shots with 2 convertible sighters.

800 yards

1 match of 15 shots with 2 convertible sighters.



PRIZEGIVING

Will be held in Karori Rifle Club after shooting
on Sunday, 20th March 2022

RULES OF COMPETITION

- The Dick Travis VC .303 National Target Rifle Competition is exclusively for the rifles of the British Empire. The variants such as Long Tom, SMLE, No 4 and P14 are all welcome in target trim.
- The current shooting rules and regulations of the National Rifle Association of New Zealand Inc and Trentham Camp, Seddon Range Standing Orders will apply during this meeting. They can be forwarded upon request.
- The competition is open to .303in Target Rifles only. A .303in Target Rifles is defined as a service rifle regulated and modified to increase the rifles accuracy potential to meet target rifle performance.
- The rifle must be improved by a competent armourer to increase its accuracy potential.
- The rifle must have vernier calibrated aperture target sights. The original “Battle Sights” are not permitted.
- Magazines are to be used as a loading platform only.
- Obsolete .303in Service Ammunition is not recommended for use on Seddon Range. The use of match ammunition is encouraged.
- Any rifle presented on the range must be “pre-zeroed” for 300, 500, 600 and 800 yards prior to use.
- The position will be prone and slung.
- Bolts must only be closed when the rifle is on the shoulder.
- Bolts must be removed at all times except when on the mound.
- NRA black bull targets will be used in accordance with Standing Order 49. The mid range target will be used at 300 yards with long range target used at 500, 600 and 800 yards.
- Each match will consist of two convertible sighting shots with ten (and fifteen where applicable) scoring shots in total. All shots will be indicated.
- Each 10 shot match distance is intended to be shot twice.
- A time limit for each match may be imposed depending on the number of entrants and will be decided and notified on the day.
- In the advent of a tie for total score the count back rules will apply.

- The Match Director may change the course of fire on the day to suit range and weather conditions.

Supplementary Rules for Rifle:

- Rifles must retain their full wood stocks and butts. Half stocked rifles are not in the spirit of this competition. Additions such as sniper cheek pieces may be fitted but must be a close to the original as possible.
- Barrels may be of any make or manufacture and must be either in blued finish or have the appearance of a blued finish. Match chambers and improvements are encouraged for accuracy.
- Ammunition – handloaded ammunition must be loaded to the highest standard and the use of match projectiles is encouraged. Ammunition must comply with Range Standing Orders 46-48. Ball ammunition is allowed. Match ammunition in hollow point is recommended.
- Magazines may be present in the rifle but may only be used as a loading platform in accordance with Standing Order 41c(2).
- Shooters may choose any type of front and rear sight provided that the rear sight meets the minimum requirement of being adjustable for wind and elevation.
- Improved triggers are encouraged but must not be below the NRA minimum weight of 500 grams.

Supplementary rules for Equipment:

- Shooting mats are recommended.
- Shooting jackets are permitted and encouraged.
- Gloves are optional.
- Spotting scopes will be needed.
- A sling must be fitted and used. It can be double point or single point.
- Shooting glasses are a good thing for those that need them.
- Shooting hats are optional but recommended.
- Ear protection is compulsory.
- When using electronic targets the shooter must provide a device such as a tablet, smart phone, kindle or the like for viewing their shot placement and for scoring of other competitors.

