



Chubby (left) at his artillery post during the TET offensive



Jim Bleakley, Kelly Commons and Chubby (right) hunting at Pukerewa 1964



A real good Kiwi bloke “Chubby” Wynyard

A “beautiful, beautiful” life

Bruce “Chubby” Wynyard is a real Kiwi bloke, packing a heck of a lot into his 66 years. He has lead an extraordinary life as a farmer, world class shearer, horse wrangler, decorated soldier, hunter, fisherman, rugby player and coach, contractor for local growers, mischievous joker and proud dad of five sons – and despite some rough times that have taken a toll on his health, he's still out there in the bush with his gun and his pig dog.

Chubby went on his first pig hunt as a four year old, riding horses with his cousin to bring out the pigs shot on hunting trips at Waikaretu.

“We went out to Split Rock for crayfish, mussels, paua and kina – fish when the tide was right. Then we would get a pig on the way home, so we took extra horses to carry all the kai.”

By the age of eight, Chubby was milking the cows on the family farm at Naike, often in sole charge when his parents were away. “I used to have a place on the floor at primary school to have a sleep, I was so tired from the early starts.”

By 12 Chubby was off into the bush on his own hunting pigs. As a youngster he took lessons by correspondence until getting his school leaving certificate at 14. Not getting to high school was a combination of the distance involved and his father’s reluctance to send his only son away to board – Chubby was his number one worker on the farm. The young Wynyard earned quite a reputation as a shearer, hitting the headlines at the age of 19 when he set a world record by shearing 626 Romney Cheviot cross lambs in 8 hours 47 minutes, a record that stood for 17 years.

Chubby was a horseman all his life, collecting wild horses and buying others from Matira and Waingaro to drive to the horse fairs at Pukekohe. He broke the wild ones in to fetch a higher price – draught horses, horses for riding and ploughing. As a youngster, he competed at A & P shows in hunting and show jumping – with

a sack or sheepskin as a saddle. “Imagine competing at Pakuranga with all the flash people, and a sheepskin slapped on the back!” Chubby laughs.

At 22, Chubby was in the army and training at Waiouru. “It was like a holiday camp, compared to what I had been doing, shearing and pig hunting,” he recalls. He volunteered for Malaya in late 1964 and was posted with the First RNZIR to Terendak Military Camp at Malacca.

“Malaya was a good ‘initiation’ – I saw enough before posting to Borneo/Sumatra with the 27th Commonwealth Brigade, under the Brits. We spent six months in the jungle and six months out. It was shockingly hot in Malaya. We did beach patrols watching for insurgents coming in by boat at night from Indonesia. In Borneo A company was deployed at Lubok Antu. It was all jungle. We were taken for nine hours by longboat to our base camp, 4000 yards from the Indonesian border.

“Our company was probably the luckiest who went on to fight in Vietnam – we had been through fire fights, had picked up the dead and the wounded, taken POWs. In Vietnam, there was a guy there just celebrating his 18th birthday. He’d never heard a shot fired before – that’s a tough initiation. The New Zealand army was so ill-prepared with no backup artillery. So after our last return from Borneo, 98 of us came back to New Zealand to do a crash course on guns and to replace the boys in Vietnam. By the TET offensive, there was a team of guys there who had already been through initiation by fire.”

Chubby has been passionate about rugby all his life but the game got in the way of him taking his Master Gunner exam when his CO ordered him to turn out instead to play for Waiouru against the army school, who usually won matches. “So two officers later asked me the questions orally and I had no trouble answering them – it was a good thing, because I don’t think I could have sat down and written out answers to questions.”