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Military Intelligence in the New Zealand Wars, 1845-1864

A thesis presented in fulfilment of the
requirements of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
Defence and Strategic Studies

at Massey University, Palmerston North,
New Zealand

Clifford Roy Simons

2012

Abstract

This thesis analyses the nature of military intelligence in the New Zealand Wars and assesses the role that it played in the outcome of the various battles and campaigns. Military intelligence has seldom been identified as a factor in the wars and this is the first major study of it. The thesis examines the way that military intelligence was used in nineteenth century colonial warfare in general, and then applies those concepts to the New Zealand situation by studying four major wars that occurred between 1845 and 1864.

The thesis shows that Maori enjoyed the advantage of fighting in their own environment which meant that they were familiar with all of the features of physical geography such as: routes and tracks, the location of communities, pa and food supplies, and barriers to travel such as rivers and swamps. They were equally aware of the socio-political aspects of the area such as the tribal groupings and political allegiances. The government made little secret of its intentions and through a number of avenues including newspapers and contact with government officers. Maori resisting the government generally had a good understanding of its strategic intentions. They were also able to monitor the activities of the troops by infiltrating military camps, by observation and reconnaissance, and by the transmission of information between Maori supportive of the government and those opposing it. In consequence, Maori generally had a good military intelligence picture throughout the wars.

The thesis demonstrates that the government forces, which comprised the British Army, the Royal Navy, and various militia and volunteer units, usually had a less clear military intelligence picture. The early battles of the Northern War 1845-6 indicated that the British Army had a complete lack of understanding about the physical environment of the Bay of Islands and the enemy that they were fighting. Over the course of the period studied in this thesis, a rudimentary military intelligence system developed until, by the end of the Waikato War and Tauranga Campaign of 1864, it was moderately effective. The government collected information from its own political officers in the regions, and from missionaries, settlers and pro-government Maori to establish a relatively clear idea of the terrain and the socio-political mood within Maori communities. The British Army undertook reconnaissance in a number of ways including cavalry and by river boat. The acquisition of that information allowed the military to plan its campaigns effectively.

The thesis concludes that military intelligence was an important factor in the outcome of the wars that were fought in New Zealand between 1845 and 1864. It shows that the effective use of military intelligence, or indeed the absence of it, were often significant reasons for success or failure of military operations. This new appreciation of the role and effect of military intelligence provides new insights into the battles and enhances an understanding of the whole New Zealand Wars period.

Dedicated to the memory of the early New Zealanders, men and women, Maori and Pakeha on all sides, who suffered and struggled in the building of our nation.

And in memory of my parents
Roy and Peggy Simons

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to the following institutions and their staff for the assistance that I received during my research: Auckland Public Library, Auckland Institute and Museum Library, University of Waikato Library, Tauranga Public Library, Te Awamutu District Museum, Whakatane District Museum, Hawkes Bay Museum, National Army Museum Waiouru, Puke Ariki New Plymouth, Massey University Library, Defence Library Wellington, Victoria University Library, Archives New Zealand, National Library of New Zealand and the Alexander Turnbull Library, Christchurch Public Library, Hocken Library Dunedin.

My interest in the New Zealand Wars was stimulated by Dr Laurie Barber and Lieutenant Colonel Garry Clayton, DPhil. I thank them for igniting an interest that has become an enduring passion. Lieutenant Colonel Richard Taylor, PhD, has been a friend and colleague for many years and we have shared many field trips and discussions about the wars. He has been my secondary supervisor and I thank him for the advice, information and support that he has given to me over a long period of time. Dr John Tonkin-Covell has been my primary supervisor. I have greatly enjoyed our joint interest in the New Zealand Wars and I appreciate the tremendous advice and support that he has given to me over the duration of this project. His guidance, encouragement and support have been major factors in bringing this thesis to fruition. I also wish to acknowledge that my employer, the New Zealand Army, has supported me by funding my tuition fees. The New Zealand Army has a long tradition of encouraging and supporting the academic development of its personnel, and I am grateful to have been part of that process.

I have had willing support from a number of people who have helped with the production of this thesis. I am extremely grateful to my daughter Julia Simons, who proof-read all of the chapters and repaired my grammar, and my son Ben Simons, who adapted the maps and helped me with the photographs. I hope that the experience of helping me with this thesis will serve them well in their own academic careers. My friend and colleague Lieutenant Commander Kevin Sanderson, PhD, gave the thesis a very thorough final proof-reading. I am very appreciative the expertise and enthusiasm that he brought to that task. Lastly I want to acknowledge the assistance that I have received from my wife Paula. She has been a great help in solving various IT and formatting issues, but most importantly, her constant love and support have allowed me to spend the time required to bring this thesis to a conclusion.

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Glossary of terms used

Maori

Atua	Gods, spirits
Hapu	Sub-tribe
Hau Hau	Adjustment cult prominent in the late 1860s
Hui	Meeting
Iwi	Tribe
Kingitanga	The Maori King Movement
Mana	Prestige, moral power
Marae	Formal meeting place
Mere	Short fighting club
Pa	Fortified village or purpose-built fortification
Pai Marire	Religion of the Hau Hau Movement
Pekarangi	Light fence in front of a fortification
Rohe	Tribal territory or domain
Rua	Pit
Tangata-	A hard man
Pakeha	
Tapu	Sacred
Taua	War party
Taua Muru	War party intent on customary plunder
Tikanga	Appropriate customs and traditions
Utu	Make response, revenge
Whare	House

Military

Campaign	A series of operations in a theatre with one overall aim
Commissariat	Supply department
Cordon	A line of troops sealing off or blocking a position
Doctrine	The fundamental principles of a military force
Enfilade	From the flank, particularly sweeping fire along a frontage
Entrenchment	Fortification dug into the ground, including trenches and often covered pits
Killing ground	Area, often in front of a fortification where the defenders have channelled the enemy and plan to destroy them
Sap	An offensive trenching system designed to compromise the opponent's defensive position.
Sharp-end	Combat troops, the front
Turn	By-pass, out-flank

Introduction

Many of us have been brought up on a kind of history which sees the human drama throughout the ages as a straight conflict between right and wrong. Sooner or later, however, we may find ourselves awakened to the fact that in a given war there have been virtuous and reasonable men earnestly fighting on both sides. Historians ultimately move to a higher altitude and produce a picture which has greater depth because it does justice to what was thought and felt by the better men on both sides. Sir Herbert Butterfield¹

The New Zealand Wars were a series of small, sharp wars interspersed with longer periods of low-intensity conflict fought between Britain, its colonists and the nascent government of New Zealand, and some of the Maori inhabitants. They spanned a period of nearly thirty years between 1845 and the early 1870s and have had a dramatic effect on the subsequent governance, land ownership and development of the nation through to the present day. The first of the wars flared up a mere five years after the two races had appeared to have made an encouraging start towards building a nation together. The Treaty of Waitangi, signed in 1840, promised a partnership between the two peoples, but by 1845, underlying concerns about chiefly authority and their changes in economic status provoked militant factions of the Nga Puhi iwi into challenging the new British authority by force of arms; and so erupted The Northern War of 1845-6.

The wars of the 1860s were mainly fought over a combination of the issues of land and sovereignty. The rapid influx of settlers eager to begin new lives in the fledgling colony created an insatiable demand for land, and the conflicting European and Maori attitudes to, and demands for, that commodity, soon brought the two peoples into conflict. There was a growing realisation among the Maori that the sovereign power of their chiefs, and the economic and social survival of their people, lay in their ability to retain land. The government used British imperial troops supported by local volunteers and militias, as well as Maori allies, in wars in the Taranaki (1860-61), Waikato (1863-64) and Bay of Plenty (1864) regions. It seized land and imposed its authority over many of the iwi in those areas. The final drawn out chapters of the wars

¹ Herbert Butterfield, New York Times 3 Jan 1977, p.34, cited in Thompson, K., 'Idealism and Realism: Beyond the great debate' p.199, in *British Journal of International Studies* 3, Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp.199-209.

North Island of New Zealand

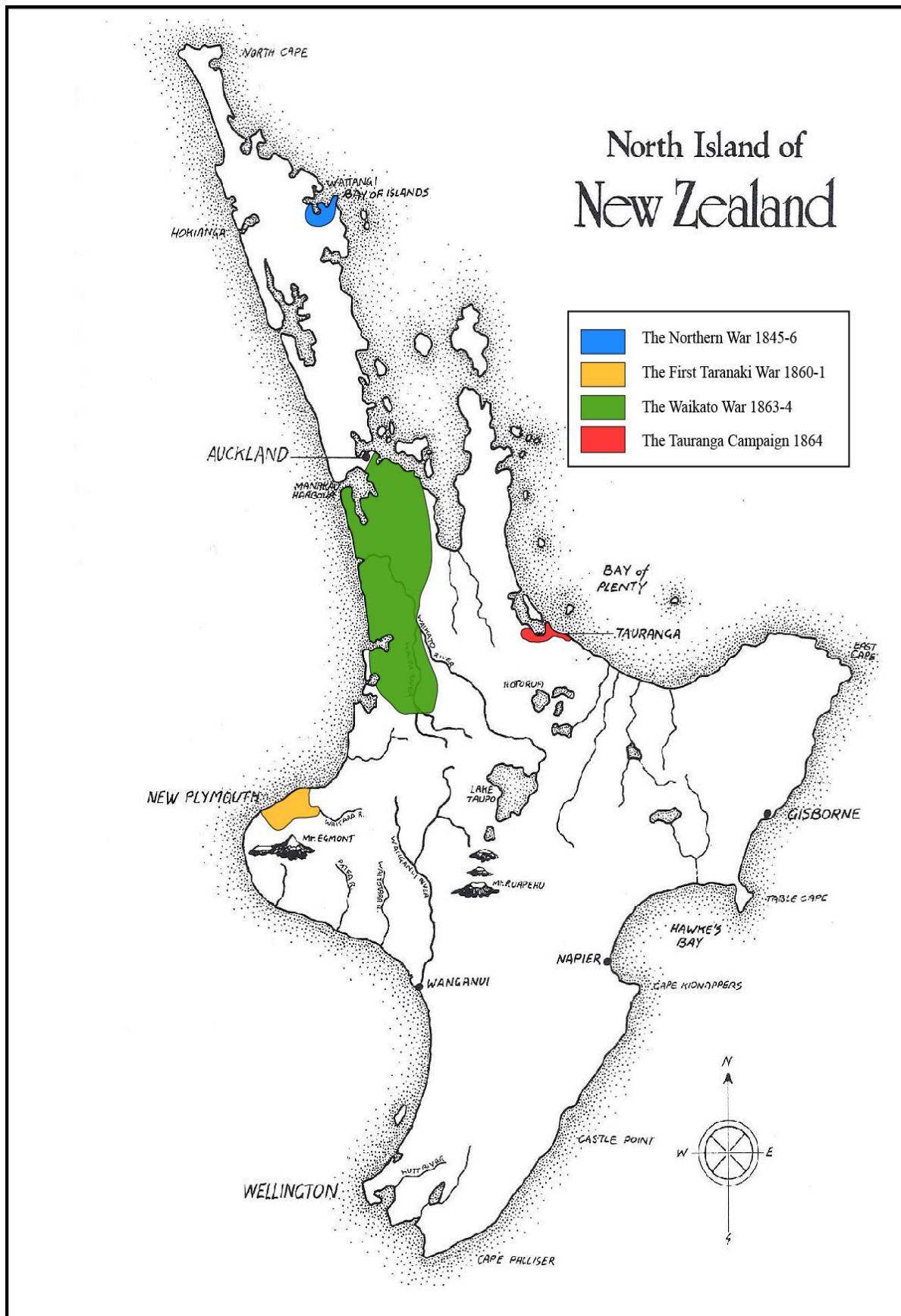


Fig.I.1. Map of the North Island of New Zealand showing the four theatres of war studied in this thesis.
Adapted by author from Ryan and Parham, *The Colonial New Zealand Wars*, p.220.

were the guerrilla campaigns of the Hau Hau (Pai Marire) movement and those of the charismatic leaders Titokowaru and Te Kooti between 1865 and 1872.

The British Army and Royal Navy were among the finest in the world at the time, and were large, organised, professional forces of the European model. By contrast, the Maori warriors who opposed them were the part-time indigenous fighters of a subsistence society that valued martial skill as a fundamental and noble quality. The fighting between these two forces took on a range of guises; at times bloody and intense and at times slow and incremental. The battles ranged in nature from set piece assaults against well constructed fortifications to guerrilla campaigns amid the dense and trackless bush; but Maori were nearly always on the back foot. Britain was a military and technological superpower of the time, and was able to draw upon the latest developments in areas such as artillery, telegraph, small arms, and naval craft. The Maori countered with innovative and rapid tactical responses which were primarily based around developments in the design of pa.

This thesis analyses the role of military intelligence in the New Zealand Wars during the period 1845-1864. It compares and contrasts the British and colonial forces' acquisition and use of military intelligence to that of the Maori forces that were resisting them, and assesses the effect of intelligence upon the outcome of the wars. In some cases military intelligence was an important factor in the success of a battle, and in other cases, the lack of military intelligence contributed to disastrous defeats.

This chapter examines the historiography of the New Zealand Wars and charts the ways that different generations of historians have written about the conflicts. It shows that military intelligence has been barely addressed as a factor in the wars and suggests that one of the main reasons for this is the difficulty of researching colonial military intelligence as a subject. The chapter introduces the three fundamental questions that the thesis seeks to answer, and finally, it outlines the structure of the thesis and provides a summation of the content of each chapter.

The historiography of the New Zealand Wars

The earliest writings on the New Zealand Wars were reminiscences and first hand accounts from people who were involved in, or who witnessed, the conflict. They

tended to be narrative in style, often had an agenda and were sometimes published to justify the writer's own actions. Notable works from this period include: missionary accounts by Archdeacon Henry Williams² and Reverend Robert Burrows,³ accounts from soldiers such as Major General Sir J.E. Alexander⁴, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Carey⁵, Major Cyprian Bridge⁶ and Lieutenant H.F. McKillop,⁷ and by government officers such as John Gorst⁸ and John Featon.⁹ Thomas Gudgeon produced two books after the wars had finished, one of which was the extraordinarily titled *The Defenders of New Zealand* (1886),¹⁰ which was in fact about the deeds of men who had come to New Zealand to defeat the Maori. His work reflected the settler attitudes of the post-war period; massive European immigration, hope, optimism, and a belief in a brave new future carved out of the bush and wrested from the natives of the land, in the name of progress and civilisation.

Erik Olssen¹¹ has argued that two parallel paradigms developed in late nineteenth and early twentieth century New Zealand history, and that they have been constant and often complementary themes, that have characterised the nation's perception of itself. The first paradigm held that colonisation was inevitable and Maori were blessed to be colonised by the British.¹² The settlers then went on to develop a nation that became more English than the English; a newer and better version of the old country. The new and better version retained the values and qualities of English culture and government institutions but avoided many of England's problems; partly because it had been settled by selected stock.

² Henry Williams, *Plain Facts Relative to the Late War in the Northern District of New Zealand*, Auckland: Philip Kunst, 1847.

³ Robert Burrows, *Extracts From a Diary Kept by the Reverend R. Burrows During Hekes War in the North 1845*, Auckland: Upton and Co, 1886.

⁴ James E. Alexander, *Incidents of the Maori War in New Zealand 1860-61*, London: Richard Bentley, 1863; James E. Alexander, *Bush Fighting*, London: Richard Bentley, 1873.

⁵ Robert Carey, *Narrative of the late War in New Zealand*, London: Richard Bentley, 1863.

⁶ Cyprian Bridge, 'Journal of Events on An Expedition to New Zealand, commencing on 4 April 1845', (1845-6).

⁷ H.F. McKillop, *Reminiscences of Twelve Months Service in New Zealand*, London: Richard Bentley, 1849.

⁸ John E. Gorst, *The Maori King*, London: MacMillan, 1864.

⁹ John Featon, *The Waikato War 1863-64*, Christchurch: republished by Capper Press, 1971.

¹⁰ Thomas W. Gudgeon, *The Defenders of New Zealand*, Auckland: H. Brett, 1886.

¹¹ Erik Olssen, 'Where to from Here? Reflections on the Twentieth Century Historiography of Nineteenth Century New Zealand', *The New Zealand Journal of History*, vol. 26, No1, April 1992.

¹² Olssen, p.55.

The second paradigm, which was probably first enunciated by William Pember Reeves in *The Long White Cloud* (1898), is that settlers:¹³

...absorbed certain elements from ‘the more English than the English’ but stressed the importance of Maori, the frontier, the wars of the 1860s and the gold rushes in emancipating the country’s British colonists from the Old World traditions so as to create an adventuresome democratic society which, in pioneering bold new reforms, had become the world’s social laboratory.¹⁴

This paradigm validated the study of New Zealand for its own sake, not as a reflection of England or a small component of the vast and glorious British Empire.

The first comprehensive history of the New Zealand Wars came in 1922 with the publication of James Cowan’s two-volume *The New Zealand Wars and the Pioneering Period*,¹⁵ a work that fell primarily within the second paradigm. Cowan was not an academically-trained historian, but a journalist, and he had grown up on a farm in rural Waikato close to the Orakau battle-site. He was in tune with the land and bush and had fledged alongside Maori. Veterans of the wars of the 1860s were old men by then and many of the battle fields still had recognisable features remaining. Cowan visited the battlefields and spoke to the veterans, and explained the battles in great detail; an account so readable and thorough that it, ‘dominated the study of the New Zealand Wars for more than half a century’.¹⁶

Cowan saw the wars as a heroic period in New Zealand’s history, a romantic time that had passed forever. The government and the British military invariably acted from virtuous motives and the Maori were noble warriors of a type long gone. In fact the work was a chronicle told in adventurous terms, with the unspoken idea that the problems of the past had been forgotten and forgiven, and that New Zealand had become a socially harmonious society as a result of a pioneering spirit and sense of endeavour. Tales of chivalry in battle helped wash the slate clean. Cowan provided enormous detail about the battlefields, the course of the battles and the composition of the sides which are still of enormous value, but his work contained very little analysis of

¹³ William Pember Reeves, *The Long White Cloud*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1924.

¹⁴ Olssen, p.57.

¹⁵ James Cowan, *The New Zealand Wars and the Pioneering Period*, (2 vols), Wellington: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1922 and 1923.

¹⁶ Richard J. Taylor, ‘British Logistics in the New Zealand Wars 1845-66,’ PhD Thesis, Massey University, 2004, p.3.

the underlying reasons for the wars. Lindsay Buick's 1926 account of the Northern War, titled *New Zealand's First War or The Rebellion of Hone Heke*,¹⁷ was a similarly flavoured account of the Northern War in the same genre as Cowan.

The next seminal work on the wars themselves was Keith Sinclair's *Origins of the Maori Wars* (1957).¹⁸ It had been traditional for young New Zealand history academics to take their doctorates overseas in non-New Zealand subjects, but Sinclair's research interests lay in New Zealand. Rather than extolling New Zealand's English heritage, he saw that the conflict and values underpinning the colonisation period had bequeathed the nation an inheritance of difficulties in race relations; 'Waitara became synonymous with the "Maori Wars" and settler greed for land was presented as the main cause of those wars.'¹⁹ This new 'why' history was a departure from Cowan's 'how' history,²⁰ and following Sinclair, a new generation began to see New Zealand as an adolescent South Pacific nation that was worth studying in its own right, and they started to untangle the complex reasons for the wars. Through this different lens, the notion that New Zealand was the model of successful racial amalgamation was challenged and the pivotal role that the wars of the 1860s played in that process began to be reassessed. Edgar Holt's *The Strangest War* (1962)²¹, B.J. Dalton's *War and Politics in New Zealand, 1855-1870* (1967)²², Ian Wards' *The Shadow of the Land* (1968)²³ and Tom Gibson's *The Maori Wars* (1974)²⁴ still generally remained within the same paradigm as Cowan's *New Zealand Wars and The Pioneering Period* but their analysis of the wars started to chip away at the beliefs and myths that had developed over the previous century. Alan Ward's *A Show of Justice* (1974)²⁵ illuminated the ways the judicial system had been racially biased and had disadvantaged Maori.

¹⁷ T. Lindsay Buick, *New Zealand's First War or The Rebellion of Hone Heke*, Wellington: Government Printer, 1926.

¹⁸ Keith Sinclair, *The Origins of the Maori Wars*, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1957.

¹⁹ Olszen, p.58.

²⁰ Michael King, Introduction to reprint of Cowan's *New Zealand Wars*, Wellington: Government Printer, 1983. p.vi.

²¹ Edgar Holt, *The Strangest War*, London: Putnam and Co, 1962.

²² Brian J. Dalton, *War and Politics in New Zealand, 1855-1870*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1967.

²³ Ian Wards, *The Shadow of the Land, A study of British Policy and Racial Conflict in New Zealand, 1832-1852*, Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1968.

²⁴ Tom Gibson, *The Maori Wars*, Wellington: A.H. and A.W. Reed, 1974.

²⁵ Alan Ward, *A Show of Justice*, Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1974.

Research and writing about the early contact and colonial periods blossomed in the 1980s and there was a considerable outpouring of research in areas related to the New Zealand Wars. Claudia Orange's *The Treaty of Waitangi* (1987)²⁶, Jack Lee's *The Bay of Islands* (1983), and *Hokianga* (1987)²⁷, Anne Salmond's *Two Worlds* (1991), *Between Worlds* (1997), and *The Trial of the Cannibal Dog* (2004),²⁸ and Angela Ballara's *Taua* (2003),²⁹ were some that widened and deepened the understanding of the period. However it was James Belich's *The New Zealand Wars, and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict* (1986),³⁰ that had the most profound effect on the study of the wars themselves. Belich's revisionist assessment, based on his doctoral thesis, had the goal of erasing the myths of 150 years and proposing a new understanding of the period. He argued that Maori had developed a strategic approach to the fighting and had gone considerably closer to winning than had been previously acknowledged. The development of an innovative pa strategy and the creation of a pan-Maori type of strategic command were central planks in his argument. For the first time, Maori were presented as the strategic and intellectual equals of the British. The book was soon accepted as the new orthodoxy and acclaimed as a brilliant demolition of the received version. It influenced a generation and is still the reference point for any subsequent analysis of the wars.

The interest in the early contact and colonial periods has continued to grow, and coupled with the Maori Renaissance, it has led to an enormous range of works on countless subjects, as writers have examined the complexities and uniqueness of modern New Zealand with reference to its past. Belich widened his focus to the broader colonisation process with *Making Peoples: A History of the New Zealanders from Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century* (1996).³¹ Paul Moon has produced a prolific range of work that spans the colonial period including *Hone Heke*,

²⁶ Claudia Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi*, Wellington: Allen and Unwin, 1987.

²⁷ Jack Lee, *The Bay of Islands*, Auckland: Reed, 1983; Jack Lee, *Hokianga*, Auckland: Reed, 1987.

²⁸ Anne Salmond, *Two Worlds: First Meetings between Maori and Europeans 1642-1772*, Auckland: Viking, 1991; Anne Salmond, *Between Worlds: Early Exchanges between Maori and Europeans 1773-1815*, Auckland: Viking, 1997; Anne Salmond, *The Trial of the Cannibal Dog*, Auckland: Penguin Books, 2004.

²⁹ Angela Ballara, *Taua*, Auckland: Penguin Books, 2003.

³⁰ James Belich, *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1986.

³¹ James Belich, *Making Peoples: A History of the New Zealanders from Polynesian Settlement to the end of the Nineteenth Century*, Auckland, Penguin Books, 1996.

Nga Puhi Warrior, (2001)³² and *Fatal Frontiers: A New History of New Zealand in the Decade before the Treaty* (2006),³³ and Edmund Bohan has highlighted the complexities and factionalism within the various governments during the Taranaki and Waikato Wars in *Climates of War* (2005).³⁴ Bohan showed that the Waikato War, in particular, was seen at the time by many, and certainly in the southern colonies, as a problem caused by Auckland avarice. *Contested Ground Te Whenua I Tohea: The Taranaki Wars* (2010),³⁵ edited by Kelvin Day, has set a new benchmark for addressing successive wars in a specific region.

Jeff Hopkins-Weise, *Blood Brothers, the Anzac Genesis* (2009),³⁶ and Frank Glen, *Australians at War in New Zealand* (2011),³⁷ have shown that there was a much greater involvement in the New Zealand Wars by the Australian colonies than has previously been understood, and that many citizens felt duty bound to come to the aid of their fellow colonists. The most recent book to tackle the wars in their totality, rather than just specific aspects of them, is Danny Keenan's *Wars without End* (2009),³⁸ which presents a Maori perspective of the wars by a 'senior Maori historian'. Keenan emphasises the socio-political aspects of the New Zealand Wars and identifies land as the enduring and unresolved factor in the continuation of the Maori struggle.

Various writers have criticised Belich's original arguments and military historians in particular have criticised his apparent lack of understanding about the mechanics of war.³⁹ Belich himself has provided some reassessment of his work while still holding to his central argument.⁴⁰ In a milieu where writers are searching the nation's colonial history for an understanding of the roots of today's racial and political issues as well as its unique character and strengths, it may seem somewhat callous to

³² Paul Moon, *Hone Heke, Nga Puhi Warrior*, Auckland: David Ling Publishing, 2001.

³³ Paul Moon, *Fatal Frontiers: A New History of New Zealand in the Decade before the Treaty*, Auckland, Penguin Publishing, 2006.

³⁴ Edmond Bohan, *Climates of War: New Zealand in Conflict 1859-69*, Christchurch: Hayward Press, 2005.

³⁵ Kelvin Day, (ed.), *Contested Ground Te Whenua I Tohea: The Taranaki Wars 1860-1881*, Wellington: Huia, 2010.

³⁶ Jeff Hopkins-Weise, *Blood Brothers and the Anzac Genesis*, Auckland: Penguin Books, 2009.

³⁷ Frank Glen, *Australians at War in New Zealand*, Christchurch: Wilsonscott Publishing International, 2011.

³⁸ Danny Keenan, *Wars without End*, Auckland: Penguin Books, 2009.

³⁹ Taylor, p.3-5.

⁴⁰ Belich's keynote address at New Zealand Wars Conference, Tutu Te Peahu, Massey University, Wellington, 11-13 February 2011.

take a specific military interest in the battles themselves. The modern writer also runs into the problem of apparently taking sides or being accused of cultural or racial bias if he or she is too critical of one side. This was not an issue for earlier writers such as Cowan, and neither is it for today's historians of conflicts that were fought by New Zealanders overseas like the First and Second World Wars; such is the emotion of the colonial legacy that New Zealand has inherited. Even so, several writers have focussed on aspects of the actual fighting itself. Gilbert Mair's *The Story of Gate Pa* (1926)⁴¹ was a very early analysis of that battle that is still valuable. Similarly, Maurice Lennard's *The Road to War: The Great South Road 1862-64* (1986)⁴² provides an invaluable resource for the present-day scholar. Michael Barthorp's *To Face the Daring Maori* (1979)⁴³ illuminates the tactics used during the wars, and Chris Pugsley's series of 'Walking the Wars'⁴⁴ articles analyses many of the battles and campaigns with the insight of an astute professional infantry officer and historian.

Richard Taylor observed in his doctoral thesis, 'British Logistics in the New Zealand Wars 1845-66' (2004)⁴⁵ that the study of the campaigns themselves has reflected a pre-occupation with strategy, tactics and the effectiveness of commanders. He argued that logistics has been given only cursory attention, and that the British superiority in logistics and Maori inability to supply a force capable of fighting long campaigns were critical factors in the eventual British victory. The victory though, was not just a matter of more men, materiel and technology as most writers have assumed, but of the well planned and executed implementation of a logistics strategy that was based on proven doctrine. An understanding of British logistics at a deeper level than simply noting that *the British had more* provides an enhanced understanding of the course and eventual outcome of the wars.

If the historiography of the New Zealand Wars has underestimated the true nature and importance of British logistics, then it has almost completely failed to recognise the role of military intelligence, both British and Maori. There has been very

⁴¹ Gilbert Mair, *The Story of Gate Pa*, Tauranga: The Bay of Plenty Times, 1926.

⁴² Maurice Lennard, *The Road to War: The Great South Road 1862-64*, Whakatane: Whakatane District Historical Society, 1986.

⁴³ Michael Barthorp, *To Face the Daring Maoris*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979.

⁴⁴ Chris Pugsley, Walking the Taranaki Wars and the Waikato Wars, a series of 22 articles in the 'Walking the Wars' series between Spring 1988 and Winter 2000 in *New Zealand Defence Quarterly*

⁴⁵ Taylor 2004

little attention paid, in the increasing literature about the period, to the role and influence of military intelligence. The well known story of Thomas McDonnell and Gustavus von Tempsky's mission to Paparata and the role of the Forest Rangers have entered folklore, and Kerry Howe's MA thesis, 'Missionaries, Maoris and Civilisation on the Upper Waikato 1833-63' (1970)⁴⁶ highlighted the Reverend John Morgan's role as a spy at Otawhao. Other than that, there is very little understanding about the use of military intelligence and the effect that it may or may not have had in the outcome of the various battles and campaigns.

The result of individual battles and campaigns in the New Zealand Wars have often been explained in terms of tactics, weight of numbers, firepower, logistics, courage, chance, and even the brilliance or stupidity of individual commanders; but military intelligence, the knowledge of the enemy, his strengths, weaknesses and plans, and the physical and political environment, is almost never discussed as a decisive factor. In the introduction to his monumental study on military intelligence in the United States Civil War, *The Secret War for the Union* (1996), Edwin Fishel noted a similar pattern:

...but intelligence—the business of acquiring that knowledge—has not been a favourite subject for those who study the Civil War. They find explanations of victory and defeat in the skill of commanders, the fighting qualities of troops, and resources in men and material. This book adds intelligence to those factors; it is the first one to examine at length the effect that information about the enemy had on those marches and battles. In every case this 'intelligence explanation' changes, sometimes radically, the known history of a campaign.⁴⁷

The reasons why intelligence has seldom been considered in nineteenth century colonial warfare such as the New Zealand Wars may be two-fold. Firstly, it was not a concept that was clearly identified as a specific military category or discipline at the time. The word intelligence was often used in correspondence and official reports, but it simply meant information, not the whole process of planning what information was needed; acquiring it, and then most importantly, processing and disseminating it. Secondly, by its very nature intelligence is secretive. There are no files or folders from the period standing on the shelves of the nation's archives with the label 'intelligence'

⁴⁶ Kerry Howe, 'Missionaries, Maoris and Civilization on the Upper Waikato 1833-63', MA Thesis, Auckland University, 1970.

⁴⁷ Edwin C. Fishel, *The Secret War for the Union: The Untold Story of Military Intelligence in the Civil War*, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996, p.1.

on them, and clearly many of the secretive arrangements or reports have not left a physical paper trail. But as with the United States Civil War, the ‘intelligence explanation’ in the New Zealand Wars does provide a different and instructive lens through which we can view the conflict and deepen our understanding of the campaigns and the individual battles.

This thesis poses two fundamental questions. Firstly, did each side employ military intelligence, and if so, what was the nature of that military intelligence? Secondly, what was the effect of military intelligence and was it a factor in the final outcome of the battles and campaigns? The thesis also pursues a subsidiary line of inquiry by exploring the inter-relationship between military intelligence and geography. In particular it examines how the geography of nineteenth century New Zealand affected the acquisition of military intelligence. The Maori race saw the New Zealand environment as an extension of its own physical and spiritual self, an ancestral home. To Europeans, it was a wild frontier on the very edge of the empire that offered all of the dangers, excitement, hardships, promise and toil of an alien land. Consequently, the third major question posed is: how did the geography of New Zealand affect the acquisition and use of military intelligence?

This thesis focuses on the major campaigns that involved the British Army and the Royal Navy and the Maori who opposed them in significant numbers. These campaigns were: the Northern War 1845-46; the First Taranaki War 1860-1; the Waikato War 1863-4; and the Tauranga Campaign 1864 (see Fig I.1). It does not include the campaigns of the later 1860s and early 1870s, by which time the nature of the warfare had changed and taken on an increasingly irregular and dislocated form. Small Wars are defined as those in which one side is a regular conventional army and the other is an irregular force. The wars studied in this thesis clearly fall into that category because in each of them, the main government force was primarily made up of British imperial troops, supplemented to a greater or lesser degree, by volunteers and Maori allies. That pattern started to change after the Tauranga Campaign as the British imperial regiments began to withdraw from New Zealand, and had virtually all gone by 1866. The later campaigns of the 1860s were increasingly fought by the Armed Constabulary and various Maori units raised by the government, against small elusive Maori groups. Both sides in these campaigns tended to use irregular methods and the

fighting developed quite different characteristics to the wars up to 1864, and might profitably be studied in a separate and subsequent analysis of military intelligence.

The structure of the thesis and the general content of each of the chapters are as follows:

Chapter One, ‘Military Intelligence in a Nineteenth Century Context’, surveys developments in military intelligence throughout the nineteenth century, with particular reference to Great Britain. It argues that Britain’s military intelligence capability was much neglected in the European theatre and was almost non-existent in the colonies. Even so, necessity dictated that organic systems tended to develop in colonial theatres and unique intelligence structures usually evolved. The chapter introduces the ideas of Charles Callwell as a yard-stick against which military intelligence in the New Zealand Wars can be assessed. The chapter also develops a secondary, but related, theme, which is an examination of the relationship between military intelligence and geography with particular reference to New Zealand as an example of nineteenth century colonial warfare. The Maori use of military intelligence is also addressed as a continuation of skills developed in earlier tribal conflicts.

Chapter Two, ‘Blurred Images’, surveys the interaction of Maori and European, particularly the British, from the early contact between the two peoples through to the outbreak of the Northern War in 1845. In doing so, it attempts to provide an understanding of the strategic intelligence that each side gained about the other over the very long time before the outbreak of hostilities. The chapter attempts to answer a number of questions: How well did Maori and Europeans really understand each other? How well did they understand each other’s military capabilities and to what extent were the images that had been built up over many decades a blurred perception of the actual situation?

Chapter Three, ‘The Northern War 1845-6’, discusses the way that each side used military intelligence, how that use changed over the course of the war, and what effect it had in the outcome. The Northern War was fought at a time when Maori vastly outnumbered the European population. The battles were fought in a relatively confined area, but even so, the British Army had great difficulty adapting to the demands of the physical and human geography of the region.

A study of military intelligence requires an understanding of the social and political situation within which the fighting took place to a greater degree than any other aspect of military endeavour. A study of tactics or logistics, for example, can be pursued more or less in isolation, but intelligence is anchored in the activities of the combatants and non-combatants and the world in which they lived. Consequently, chapters' three to six will include discussion of the socio/political background of each war or campaign in order to set the intelligence activities in the relevant context.

Chapter Four, ‘War in the Taranaki 1860-1’, examines the use of military intelligence in The First Taranaki War, which was similar in size and scale to the Northern War, but was fought in a different social and political environment. New Zealand had changed considerably in the fifteen years since the conclusion of the Northern War, and the new environment was reflected in the way the war was fought and the way that military intelligence was employed.

Chapter Five, ‘The Waikato War 1863-4’, provides an analysis of military intelligence in that conflict. The Waikato War was the most significant campaign of the whole colonial war period and it effectively broke the Maori military resistance and opened the door for extensive confiscation of land, the influx of settlers and the imposition of new government legislation and institutions. The British operations were meticulously planned and methodically executed, and the chapter assesses the role of military intelligence in that process. The Kingite use of military intelligence is also examined with the conclusion that they made fatal errors which contributed to their defeat and the subsequent loss of their lands.

Chapter Six, ‘The Tauranga Campaign 1864’, examines the fighting in the Bay of Plenty region in the first half of 1864. The campaign was an offshoot of the Waikato War and although it was relatively short in duration, it featured two major battles which had quite different military intelligence profiles and very different outcomes. Military intelligence failures contributed to the defeat of the combined British Army and Royal Navy force at Gate Pa, but contributed to a decisive victory at the battle of Te Ranga.

Chapter Seven is the conclusion of the thesis. It draws together the main themes and focuses on the issues that have been raised by the analysis of military intelligence in the wars in the previous chapters. Importantly, it answers the questions posed in this introduction. The New Zealand experience of military intelligence in colonial warfare is compared to Callwell's principles to assess how closely the former mirrored the overall colonial experience that Callwell outlined, and to identify the ways in which the New Zealand experience of colonial warfare, particularly in military intelligence, was unique.

Sources of information

The challenge of this thesis has been to develop a coherent understanding of intelligence activities in the New Zealand Wars from the written information that remains in existence today. The intelligence activity has not left a large footprint because, by its very nature, it was secretive. Some of it would have been gained and transmitted through observation and conversation, and if it was committed to writing at all, it would probably have been on hastily written scraps of paper. There are no specific files available on the subject so the search for information has had to be extremely broad and deep. A thesis of this nature must, of course, use primary documents wherever possible, and that has been particularly so in this case. Primary documents have been scoured for snippets of information, for example; a report from an official that includes a comment about 'the state of the natives' in his region; the observations of a missionary who remarks on the outcome of hui in his parish area; or a line in a soldier's diary noting that the British troops were being constantly watched in a particular location.

The researcher has to accept that the full extent of intelligence activities will never be known, but even so, much of the picture can be pieced together. When the documents are searched with the specific goal of looking for references to spies, informers, guides, reconnaissance activities and maps, they reveal clues that can be followed up and fitted together. Valuable information comes from a variety of sources: the reports of military officers, officials and missionaries in the regions; correspondence between military commanders, government officers, politicians and missionaries; letters from Maori chiefs, and journals, diaries and reminiscences. Newspapers provide copious amounts of information although the reliability of stories 'from our

'correspondent' is sometimes questionable and must be treated as such. Maori intelligence activities are tricky to assess because there is almost no written record and the oral record is usually not specific or detailed enough, even if there is access to it. As a consequence, it is not possible to draw such a clear picture of Maori activities as it is for the British forces, but yet again, it is possible to make general observations, and in some cases to be quite specific about activities that took place.

Secondary sources, including a wide range of books and articles, have been useful to provide a broader understanding of the wars and the context within which they were fought. As already noted, the study of military intelligence draws upon a deep understanding of the social and political environment within which the fighting took place. Chapter One will develop this theme further and discuss the relationship between military intelligence and the human and physical geography of the area of operations.

Chapter One

Military Intelligence in a Nineteenth Century Context

Lord Raglan, for his part, sent out no force to reconnoitre. Next day the position on the Alma must be attacked, but of the formation of the ground, the depth and current of the river his Army must cross, the position of the enemy's guns and the disposition of his troops, he was perfectly ignorant.

Cecil Woodham-Smith¹

This chapter sets out the theoretical framework for the thesis and develops the major underlying themes. It demonstrates that military intelligence is essentially the physical and human geography of the area of conflict. It assesses the British military's understanding of the role of intelligence and its technical capability, and puts them into an appropriate historical context. Importantly, the chapter discusses military intelligence in a nineteenth century colonial setting and demonstrates that the indigenous fighters usually had an advantage over the imperial powers in colonial warfare. The themes developed in this chapter are subsequently applied to each of the wars or campaigns discussed later in the thesis.

The military commander needs to know about those things over which he has no control; the enemy, the weather and the terrain. Sun Tzu, the Chinese ruler and military strategist who lived over 2,400 years ago explained this military truth:

Know the enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be defeated. When you are ignorant of the enemy but know yourself, your chances of winning or losing are equal. If ignorant both of the enemy and yourself, you are sure to be defeated in every battle.²

The acquisition of this information about the enemy forms the basis of military intelligence. However intelligence is far more than mere information about the enemy; its numbers, strengths or dispositions. It is the collation of that information; the processing of raw data, which in itself is useless, into a clear and coherent picture. In the present day this involves the formulation of a collection plan and the decision about what information is actually required, the collection of that information, its careful and

¹ C. Woodham-Smith, *The Reason Why*, London: Penguin Books, 1953, p.183.

systematic analysis, and finally the production and dissemination of an overall picture of the enemy and its strengths, weaknesses and possible intentions. Practitioners in the nineteenth century were not trained to that level of sophistication and their processes were rudimentary in nature.

Intelligence is generally divided into three main types that conform to the accepted levels of military endeavour; strategic, operational and tactical. These levels can be defined in terms of each other in the way that we might define ships and boats;³ it is difficult to say precisely where one type ends and the other begins, but we understand that there is a difference in scale. Strategic intelligence relates to the long term assessment of a potential enemy nation. Such intelligence will assess that nation's capabilities and intentions at a national or international level in respect to political goals, industrial capacity, military developments, national infrastructure, demographics and a wide range of other factors. Operational intelligence focuses on the battlefield or a theatre of war, and includes such factors as the terrain and local population, as well as the enemy's dispositions, logistics, intentions and morale. Tactical intelligence gives a more immediate picture with a much closer resolution and is concerned with the enemy's immediate plans and dispositions. Military intelligence in the nineteenth century was not categorised into those three types, but those three intuitive levels of military activity did exist: nations took a long term strategic view of each other and commanders naturally planned their campaigns at operational and tactical levels.

Just as one commander is desperately seeking as much information about his opponent as possible, it is obvious that the opponent will be seeking the same about him. It is the goal of counter-intelligence to deny or corrupt that information. This is primarily achieved by employing effective security (making it difficult for the enemy to obtain information), or by releasing false material in order to mislead him. If the enemy commander has insufficient information, or if he is fooled or even just confused by conflicting reports, he will be at a disadvantage and will be less likely to act decisively.

Military intelligence and geography

Geography has been seen as a vital factor in military success throughout the history of warfare. Sun Tzu wrote that there were four indispensable factors to be taken

² Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1993, p86.

³ P. O'Sullivan, and J.W. Miller, *The Geography of Warfare*, London: Croom Helm Limited, 1983, p.8.

into consideration before making decisions and laying out plans; geography, your own situation, the enemy's situation, and time.⁴ Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery attributed victory in battle to transportation, administration and geography, with an accent on the latter.⁵ Commanders have always needed to know as much as possible about the geography of the battlefield, and this is true for battlefields of all sizes. At the strategic level the geographic information is geopolitical in nature, encompassing the capabilities and vulnerabilities of opposing nations. At the operational level it includes communication networks, main areas of population, areas of political power, friendly and hostile regions and physical barriers such as rivers, lakes and mountains. At the tactical level, it implies an intimate knowledge of the local landscape and its population.

Peltier and Pearcy point out that 'the efficiency of military activities and the solution of military problems are influenced by the physical and social characteristics of different places or regions'.⁶ In respect to physical geography, military planners need intelligence in two broad categories; terrain, and climate and weather.⁷ The terrain is the physical makeup of the surface of the battlefield, including natural and artificial features. The commander needs to know the terrain in detail because its characteristics will determine strategy and tactics. Sun Tzu asserted that a senior commander must be fully aware of the degree of difficulty and distances of terrain.⁸ At the strategic level, the geo-political alignment of nations and their location and physical structure are relevant. This equates to the first element in Jomini's theory of lignes d'operations, in which he attempted to define where and how armies can fight. His first line, which he called the natural kind, includes the major physical features such as mountains, rivers, sea coasts, oceans, deserts and sheer distances through, over and around which military operations must be conducted.⁹ At the operational level, terrain dictates where and how those operations may be fought, and at the tactical level, a more intimate understanding of the immediate terrain, or 'ground', is a key element in the deployment of troops and weapon systems. Knowledge of the terrain tells the commander where to attack, defend, land, encamp, ambush or move. A thorough understanding of the physical makeup of the landscape will point to the likely location of the enemy and his intentions and plans.

⁴ Sun Tzu, p.75.

⁵ O'Sullivan and Miller, p.8.

⁶ L.C. Peltier, and G.E.Pearcy, *Military Geography*, Princeton: D Von Nostrand and Co, 1966, p.15.

⁷ Peltier and Pearcy, P.53.

⁸ Sun Tzu, p.71.

⁹ John Shy, 'Jomini', in Peter Paret, *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986, p.166.

It is not coincidental that many of New Zealand's early European artists were military officers.¹⁰ The art of sketching was an important skill learnt by officers in the era before photography. All officers, and particularly engineers, were taught to accurately draw what they saw in the landscape. Today, the same skills of interpreting the terrain of the battlefields are taught through the analysis of maps, photographs, satellite and other images. Success in battle requires comprehensive knowledge about the terrain at all levels of abstraction, from broad strategy down to intimate tactical details.

Because they can have a major effect on military operations, climate and weather are the other main component of physical geography that planners need intelligence about. Logistics and communication routes might become crippled in adverse weather and the ground conditions can deteriorate to the extent that armies become helplessly and totally immobilised. The effects of seasonal climate patterns often mean that fighting can only occur at certain times of the year and this has given rise to 'campaign seasons' which have been common throughout history. Even localised weather patterns, as well as countless other variables, can affect visibility and the traction and functioning of equipment. Most seriously of all, adverse weather can completely incapacitate and kill individual soldiers which can totally destroy the fighting capability of a force.¹¹ Weather and climate have a profound effect on military operations at all levels. Cowan's graphic description of the difficulties of soldiering during the New Zealand Wars neatly sums up the effect of human and physical geography:

And exasperated Imperial commanders, from Despard down to Cameron and Chute, realized as their columns toiled ponderously and painfully over unmapped country in search of a too-mobile foe, through unroaded swamps, bush, and ranges and unbridged rivers, the truth of the dictum that geography is two-thirds of military science.¹²

The human geography of the area of operations includes all the components and characteristics of the indigenous population. The political structure, settlement patterns,

¹⁰ For example; Major Cyprian Bridge, Sergeant John Williams, Major Ferdinand von Tempsky, Captain Charles Heaphy.

¹¹ Examples of this phenomenon are endless. Two examples are: The failure of Hitler's invasion of Russia, Operation Barbarossa in 1941, see A.J.P. Taylor, (ed.). *The Illustrated History of the World Wars*, London: Octopus, pp. 307-317 for one account. The agonies of the poorly equipped British soldiers in the Crimean winter of 1854. see B.A.H. Parritt, *The Intelligencers, The Story of British Intelligence up to 1914*, Templar Barracks, Ashford Kent: Intelligence Corps, 1971, p.77.

¹² James Cowan, *The New Zealand Wars and the Pioneering Period*, (vol 1), Wellington: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1922, p.4.

transportation and communication routes, economic infrastructure, religion and culture of the country will all influence the strategic and tactical decisions made by the combatants. Clearly, a commander who wishes to make the correct decisions will spend time studying the human geography of the area in which he proposes to fight, and will keep himself updated with changes. Failure to correctly assess these human factors can have tragic consequences.

Belich argues that British Victorian attitudes to the Maori, which were characterised by cultural arrogance, insensitivity and a sense of superiority, led to wrong perceptions of the Maori.¹³ Such perceptions develop when the combatants come from different racial or cultural backgrounds, and they have developed false notions about their superiority and their opponent's weaknesses. A commander's view of the enemy appears to pass through a variety of cultural filters which may cloud an accurate appreciation of the capabilities of the two forces. Early assessments of the fighting strength of the Northern Maori tribes of New Zealand, based on ill-thought-out perceptions of European superiority in battle, were disastrously awry.¹⁴ Bitter experience gradually modified the British commanders' cultural misperceptions and they were able to develop a clearer understanding of the Maoris' ability, and adapt their strategy and tactics over time.

John Keegan analysed four great commanders in his book *The Mask of Command* (1987) and he noted the relationship between geography and military intelligence. His comments are worth quoting at some length:

Action without fore thought or fore knowledge is foolhardy. Commanders must know a great deal before they act and see what they are about when they do. These prerequisites are defined in the military vocabulary as intelligence and control and form two of the major elements of what analysts of strategic affairs have recently come to call C³I; Command, Control, Communication and Intelligence. New definitions, however, do not change old realities. The essentials of action by the commander are *knowing* and *seeing*.

...Alexander's youthful obsession with the human geography of the Greek and Persian worlds-Who lived where? What did they grow? How did one travel from here to there? - was to be matched by Wellington's appetite for topographies and Grant's fascination with maps; even Hitler, indiscriminate as he was in choice of reading...took trouble to supply himself with exact military knowledge, if of a strictly limited usefulness. He certainly knew a great deal about the equipment of his armies and believed he knew all that was essential about soldiering, but he

¹³ James Belich, *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1986, pp.311-355.

¹⁴ Cowan, p.4.

had an ignorance of climate and terrain difficulties in the east, where he had never served, which was to prove fatal. Alexander, Wellington and Grant, on the other hand, knew their armies inside out, their theatres of campaign; and also a great deal about their enemies.¹⁵

The process of obtaining intelligence in each of the three levels, strategic, operational and tactical, is more or less analogous to a study of the respective regional geographies of those areas of operations.¹⁶ In this sense, military intelligence is really the knowledge of the physical and human geography of the war zone; whether anticipated or real. Geography, the element that both Sun Tzu and Montgomery identified as a key factor in military success, is the domain of military intelligence; the study of the physical environment of the war zone and of the activities and characteristics of the human population living in it. These ideas are frequently expressed in current terminology as the physical and the human terrain of the battlefield.

The development of British military intelligence

Spying is as old as warfare itself and there are numerous references to it from ancient and classical times. The Egyptians and classical Chinese both used military intelligence. Alexander the Great frequently employed cipher systems for passing secret information,¹⁷ and Phillip Knightley simply entitled his book on intelligence and espionage *The Second Oldest Profession* (1986).¹⁸ To give a perspective on the attitudes about military intelligence that the British commanders brought with them to New Zealand, it is necessary to briefly trace the development of that art within the British Army up until the time of the New Zealand Wars. In the early 1500s, Henry VII appointed a scout master whose job it was to advise where the enemy was and to provide early warning of its intentions. Elizabeth I also had an effective network which was masterminded by Walsingham. His intelligence network was so effective that through progressive reports, he was able to follow the progress of the Spanish Armada up the French coast. Sir Francis Drake's legendary confidence arose from substantial English knowledge of the armada which allowed him to plan its defeat.¹⁹

Intelligence organisations were certainly used by both sides in the English Civil War. In the 1650s Cromwell had a vast network of spies gathering information about the

¹⁵ John Keegan, *The Mask of Command*, London: Jonathon Cape, 1987, p.325.

¹⁶ E.G. Palka, 'Geographic Information in Military Planning', *Military Review*, March 1988, p.53.

¹⁷ M. Lloyd, *The Guinness Book of Espionage*, Enfield Middlesex: Guinness Publishing Limited, 1994, p.11.

¹⁸ Philip Knightley, *The Second Oldest Profession*, London: Andre Deutreal Limited, 1986.

enemy both within and outside England, and also conducting counter-intelligence.²⁰ However administrative changes after Cromwell meant that for over a century, no one specialist appointment or organisation was given responsibility for intelligence, and it became the *de-facto* responsibility of every commander. This era coincided with the period when the command of great armies was still very personal. The Duke of Marlborough, for example, had only a small headquarters staff during his campaigns on the continent. He personally commanded the army in the field and also took personal control of the intelligence network.²¹ He developed two organisations during the War of Spanish Succession (1701-1713), one each for close tactical and deep political intelligence. That pattern of networks of spies and paid informers centrally controlled by the commander continued more or less throughout the eighteenth century. Interestingly, two famous men of letters, Daniel Defoe and Christopher Marlowe, spent part of their careers as English spies.

A return to the philosophy of a specialised intelligence organisation developed in response to the threat of Napoleon's invasion of England. A Corps of Guides modelled on some of the continental armies and charged with the collection of tactical intelligence, was established. However, by the early nineteenth century, uniformed British officers considered intelligence-gathering to be 'nothing more than common spying', and as such it was thought of as un-gentlemanly and bad form. The early stages of the French Revolutionary Wars demonstrated Britain's inability to provide any maps or real information about the French military situation.²² As a consequence, the Depot of Military Knowledge was established in 1803, even though it remained relatively ineffective throughout the wars. Gradually by the early 1800s, the need for both tactical and strategic intelligence had been appreciated once again, even if little of practical value grew out of it.

The Duke of Wellington developed his own intelligence network during the Napoleonic Wars (1803-15). He attached great importance to information about the enemy and precise topographical detail of this area of operations and 'he later said that he thought much of his success was due to his care in studying what was happening on

¹⁹ Lloyd, p.16.

²⁰ Parritt, p.7.

²¹ Parritt, p.11; Montgomery, Field Marshall Viscount of Alamein, *A History of Warfare*, London: Collins, 1968, p.296.

²² T.G. Fergusson, *British Military Intelligence 1870-1914*, Frederick Maryland: University Publications of America, 1984, p.18.

the other side of the hill.²³ Indeed, his organisation proved to be relatively successful,²⁴ but the agents still reported directly to him.²⁵ By the time of the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, Wellington had devolved that responsibility and the British Army once again had a head of intelligence with his own separate department. That effective organisation was disbanded after the wars and military intelligence, yet again, became seen as an unnecessary art.²⁶

The early Victorian army was a very conservative organisation that was resistant to change. The Duke of Wellington, the Commander-in-Chief, was a deeply conservative man himself and Queen Victoria tended to see the army as her own personal possession that was not to be tampered with.²⁷ The Royal Navy was considered to be the primary means of defence, the guarantor of the expansion of the empire and the protector of the ability to trade. As a consequence, the army was small in comparison to those of the major European powers, and poorly organised.

The period between 1815 and 1848 was known as the Great Peace. There were few wars in Europe and a general decline in interest in Great Britain for things military. Even so, the British Army was actively engaged in fighting all over the world, with eighty percent of her battalions deployed overseas.²⁸ The army had become the cutting edge for the unplanned, piecemeal expansion of the British Empire, and between 1854 and 1914, although Britain did not face any European power in battle, not a year passed when British soldiers were not involved in fighting somewhere in the world.²⁹

Until the 1880s no strategic intelligence was provided by the War Office about any of the various theatres of conflict.³⁰ The Depot of Military Knowledge had declined along with many other aspects of the military, and was incapable of meeting the need for exact intelligence. The reasons for a lack of detailed knowledge about most of the areas in which the British Army fought are obvious and understandable. However the absence of any organisation for that purpose at the time of the New Zealand Wars indicates that

²³ Montgomery, p.360.

²⁴ Fergusson, p.19.

²⁵ P.J. Haythornthwaite, *Wellington's Military Machine*, Spellmount Limited, 1995, p.64.

²⁶ Jock Haswell, *British Military Intelligence*, London: Weindenfeld and Nicolson, 1973, p.23.

²⁷ Christopher Brice, 'The Military Career of General Sir Henry Brackenbury 1856-1904: The Thinking Man's Soldier,' PhD Thesis, De Montfort University, 2009, p.31.

²⁸ 59 in the colonies, 22 in India and China, and 22 at home, see Parritt, p.59.

²⁹ Brice, p.53.

³⁰ Fergusson, p.20.

the collection of strategic intelligence was seen as unimportant. In fact the Commander-in-Chief had no authority over the expeditionary forces or colonial troops fighting in the colonies, and in his final term as Commander-in-Chief from 1842 until 1852, the Duke of Wellington claimed to rely on the newspapers for progress in colonial conflicts.³¹

The Crimean War (1854-1856) was fought on the continent of Europe and was much closer to home for Britain than the fighting in her distant colonies. One might therefore have expected that the military had a clearer intelligence picture of the area and the enemy, but this was not the case. As Britain's largest conflict during the era of the New Zealand Wars, (it was fought in the same ten-year period as the First Taranaki War, the Waikato War and the Tauranga Campaign), it is instructive to use the Crimean War as a measure of the British military intelligence capabilities of the time.

In an amazing stroke of good fortune when holidaying in Belgium, Major Thomas Best Jervis located extraordinarily valuable Russian General Staff maps of the Crimean War had just broken out, but even so, the War Office reaction to this find was ambivalent. The Office could see little use for them and Jervis was asked to reproduce the maps at his own expense, which he did.³² He did so because, in his opinion, Britain's only maps of the continent of Europe were no more than school atlases.³³ The lack of knowledge about the theatre was extraordinary, and, 'apart from Jervis' maps, the only source of information concerning the Russian military situation in Turkey came from the British Minister and Consuls in Russia',³⁴ and that information was unreliable and highly variable.

The conduct of the Crimean War was appalling and the poor planning shocked the British public and wasted thousands of British soldiers' lives. Military intelligence had disappeared as a function of the army and because commissions were still largely gained through purchase, patronage and favouritism, there were virtually no trained staff officers. The whole war was remarkable for the fact that there seemed to be little understanding that information about the enemy and the terrain was important:

After the charge of the Heavy Brigade at Balaclava, Lord Lucan did not have one scout posted, he took no steps to find out what was happening beyond the

³¹ Christopher Andrew, *Secret Service, The Making of British Intelligence Community*, London: Heinemann Limited, 1985, p7.

³² Fergusson, p.21.

³³ Parritt, p.69.

³⁴ Parritt, p.72.

mounds and hillocks which surrounded him, and when the breathless Captain Nolan reined up with a brief critical message, ‘Attack and prevent the enemy carrying away the guns; Lord Lucan could only reply, ‘Attack Sir! Attack what? What guns Sir?’³⁵

The attempted surprise attack on the Russian naval base at Sebastopol reflected a similarly benign grasp of realities as Hamley so poetically described:

They set out with very little exact information about their objective. Of a sea famous for its Fall storms, they knew ‘as little ...as knight errant’s, heroes of the romances of Don Quixote, knew of the dim, enchanted region where amid vague perils, and trusting so much to happy chance, they were to seek some predatory giant.³⁶

Mr Cattely, a civilian and one-time consul at Kerch, had considerable local knowledge of the Crimea and he eventually took over the role of head of intelligence, albeit largely on his own initiative. He established a spy network and spent considerable time interviewing prisoners and deserters. It fell to a civilian to undertake work beneath the dignity of the British Officer. Forty years of relative inactivity, save for the Hyde Park ceremonials, had produced a continental army, and particularly an officer class, that had a flawed and tragically foolish understanding of the realities of war. But this was the attitude at the time, and ‘the official history of the Crimean War proudly, not apologetically states, the gathering of knowledge by clandestine means were repulsive to the feelings of the English Gentleman’.³⁷

Intelligence gathering was poor, but counter-intelligence was almost completely overlooked. Officers were in the habit of writing home with long descriptions of the operations. Censorship of the mail was considered unethical and much of the sensitive military information that was sent home in letters ended up published in the British newspapers as ‘observations from the front’. Furthermore, the Crimean was the first war to be covered by newspaper reporters and their precise descriptions of activities and dispositions undoubtedly cost many British soldiers their lives. Napoleon was known to have relied on the British press for information during the Napoleonic Wars, and it was even more the case in the Crimean War with the Czar reportedly observing, ‘we have no need of spies...we have *The Times*’.³⁸

³⁵ Parritt, p.74; Woodham-Smith, p.233.

³⁶ E. Hamley, ‘The War in the Crimea’, London 1981, cited in T. Roop, *War in the Modern World*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1959, p.147.

³⁷ Roop, p.80.

³⁸ Roop, p.84.

The Crimean War illustrates the capabilities of British military intelligence in a conventional war of the mid nineteenth century. There was virtually no strategic intelligence available to the commanders and usually no tactical intelligence either.³⁹

So it was, that in all aspects of intelligence, the British Army had been found wanting. Strategical, tactical and counter intelligence were at the beginning of the war non-existent and by the end of the war just developing. The only consolation was that these weaknesses had been exposed to public opinion, and the public demanded improvement.⁴⁰

In March 1855, the Topographical and Statistical Branch of the War Office was established. This was the beginning of the development of an intelligence service in the British Army and, as Fergusson suggests, the beginnings of a General Staff.⁴¹ The success of the Prussian Army and its General Staff may have stirred the British into realising the need for a dedicated intelligence function. In fact the administration of the British Army was completely revolutionised between 1854 and 1871. In 1873 an Intelligence Department, incorporating the run-down Topographical and Statistical Branch, was established. Britain now had an organisation concerned solely with strategic intelligence, even though it was small in comparison to that of other armies.⁴² The organisation concerned itself primarily with the collection of maps of the continent and the assessment of the various European armies.

Throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century, the British Army continued to be active in many theatres outside Europe. Intelligence in the field continued to rate as a low priority, but even so, it did undergo a slow development. The difficulties of controlling the vast Indian sub-continent after the mutiny of 1857 necessitated good information. Similarly, the experience of fighting the indigenous people of a variety of other lands led to a realisation of the need for intelligence. The Zulu and Ashanti campaigns of the 1870s, for example, both began without any intelligence organisations but soon developed them based around local language speakers, guides and informants. Intelligence was still not considered the proper employment for regular troops and the general practice was to develop an organisation around volunteers and civilians in theatre once hostilities had broken out.

³⁹ Andrew, p.8.

⁴⁰ Parritt, p.86.

⁴¹ Fergusson, p.21.

⁴² Parritt, p.104; Brice, pp.168-207.

There was also a divergence in opinion between the Continental and Imperialist (colonial) schools of thought. Despite the scale of their colonial adventures, the European powers, Britain included, primarily retained a focus on warfare on the continent of Europe, and there was always tension between Continentalism and Imperialism. The defence of the homeland and the furtherance of national interests in Europe had to remain the priorities, despite the fact that most of the military enterprises were outside Europe. In fact the only war fought by Britain in Europe between 1815 and 1914 was the Crimean, even though there was a common theme in defence policy of the need to guard against a possible invasion by France. But even France, which was more active in Europe than Britain, had the majority of her regiments overseas.⁴³ Continentalists were pre-occupied with the study of the major land battles of the Napoleonic Wars, and later, with the Prussian Army's successes and they considered that little could be learned from warfare in the remote parts of the empire:

An Officer who has seen service must sweep from his mind all recollections of that service, for between Afghan, Egyptian, or Zulu warfare and that of Europe, there is no similarity whatever. To the latter the former is merely the play of children.⁴⁴

The obsession with the study of warfare in Europe meant that colonial warfare was not taught in the war colleges, and new commanders who arrived in the colonies had to relearn the lessons that had been learnt by their predecessors. These individual commanders in the colonies found that they had to adapt their European tactics to the harsh climate and terrain, and the unconventional enemies that they encountered. And so commanders like the Frenchman Marshall F.R. Bugeaud, who led the French Army in Algeria in the 1840s, emphasised, 'the value of scouting parties and intelligence reports in locating enemy forces against which troops could be rapidly deployed'.⁴⁵ It was in the colonies, confronted with an unfamiliar environment and strange enemies against whom conventional tactics were of little use, that European officers rapidly learnt the need for military intelligence. Stephen Manning argues that in the British Army's colonial campaigns of the 1870s, there was a direct correlation between military success and failure in the field and successful use and application of intelligence. The victorious

⁴³ Douglas Porch, 'Bugeaud, Gallieni, Lyautey: The development of French Colonial Warfare', in Paret, p.376.

⁴⁴ Brice, p.55, quoting Colonel Lonsdale Hale.

⁴⁵ Porch, p.378.

British commanders were those, ‘who understood the vital importance of this correlation and acted upon it’.⁴⁶

As previously noted, in Europe itself there was a very gradual realisation of the value of strategic intelligence. Progressive officers such as Baden Powell spent their leave on ‘boys own’ style adventures as volunteer intelligence officers, spying out foreign ports and their defences and bringing back copious amounts of ingeniously disguised information. The initiative for these adventures usually lay with the individual officers themselves, and formal progress was slow. Even by 1900, intelligence officers were still only provided down to divisional level, although this situation changed very quickly during the Boer War.⁴⁷

The preceding discussion illustrates that the British Army paid little attention to the need for intelligence gathering for most of the nineteenth century. Peace is usually harmful to military preparedness; the public and the politicians quickly forget the dangers of war and look to save money by cutting military spending. Consequently, when the politicians declare the next war they often do so with depleted forces. Military intelligence is a long term commitment. Spying on potential enemies in time of peace in case there is a war in the future is always hard to justify in times of economic constraint, and in such an environment intelligence-gathering at the strategic level was given a very low priority. When Britain finally did turn her mind to the problem of a lack of knowledge about her enemies, it was to Europe and not to the colonies that she looked; Continentalism remained dominant. But the army was involved in almost continual conflict overseas in its colonial possessions, usually in several different theatres at the same time. Even if the will had been there, which it was not, the War Office simply had insufficient resources to produce strategic intelligence for each theatre of operations.

Hew Strachan argues that even though there had been no wars that Britain was involved in on the European continent during The Great Peace, it had been a period of

⁴⁶ Stephen Manning, ‘Learning the Trade: Use and Misuse of Intelligence during the British Colonial Campaigns of the 1870s’, *Intelligence and National Security*, vol.22, Number 5, 2007, pp.644-5.

⁴⁷ Andrew, p.29. Robert Stephenson Baden Powell, hero of the siege of Mafeking in 1900 in South Africa was a dynamic and eccentric officer, described by one commentator as ‘part conventional pig sticking officer, part overgrown school boy.’ He was promoted to Major General for his efforts at Mafeking. He went on to found the Boy Scout movement which was based upon military tracking (or scouting) techniques and was later made Lord Baden Powell of Chigwell for his services for youth. Also see J. Duncan, and J. Walton, *Heroes for Victoria*. Spellmount Limited, 1991, p.164-9, and Lloyd, p. 30.

significant military development in equipment, tactics and military thought.⁴⁸ There was lively debate in professional journals and magazines, and a number of theorists published works on aspects of warfare. The dominant thinker of the time was Baron Jomini who had a very utilitarian approach to the science of war. He and many other writers of the period sought to understand warfare in the light of Napoleon's genius as a military commander, but according to Strachan, they failed to understand the true nature of war:

He [William Napier] did not in the end embrace the fact that if war had any purpose it was as an instrument of policy, and that strategy at its highest level involved the integration of what was politically desirable with what was militarily feasible. The consequence of this bifurcation was the invasion of the Crimea by generals who realised that militarily they were insufficiently prepared, but who, because of their lack of strategic insight, could not express their opposition effectively.

Napoleon's achievements-and arguably his failure- had sprung from his control of both war and politics, and his consequent ability to produce an integrated strategy. However because Jomini and Napier could not elevate themselves to this plane of military thought, Napoleon's contribution was obscured from them.⁴⁹

Strachan is of course offering a Clausewitzian analysis. Clausewitz taught that there was an inextricable relationship between political and military objectives, but by 1850 he was all but unknown in Great Britain, and the idea that politicians should get involved in matters of warfare was anathema to the officer class. The military had a pre-occupation with tactics, and soldiers were well drilled to fight on the battle field, but there was often little strategic appreciation of what they were trying to achieve.

Strachan argues that this was the nub of the problem for the British; their tactics and equipment were not inferior to that of their opponents, but they did not have a settled doctrine. One of the major reasons for this was the incessant campaigning in the colonies, each one of which was a unique set of circumstances and challenges that required a unique solution. So the colonial experience and the complication caused by having so many diverse colonies enhanced the tactical capability of commanders, the skill and resourcefulness of the individual soldiers, and the army's ability to put together expeditionary forces by gathering up available regiments and moving others from

⁴⁸ Hew Strachan, *From Waterloo to Balaclava Tactics, Technology, and The British Army 1815-1854*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985

⁴⁹ Strachan, pp.4-5.

different theatres,⁵⁰ but it befuddled thinking at the operational, and particularly, at the strategic level. Although there had been some attempts to try to develop a more global view of British troop dispositions, it was impossible to know where the army might fight next, and the strategic considerations were subsumed under the urgency of an immediate tactical response:

As one of Britain's leading military thinkers, G.F.R. Henderson, put it in [*and as late as*] 1900: 'It is useless to anticipate in what quarter of the globe our troops may be next employed as to guess the tactics, the armament and even the colour...of our next enemy. Each new expedition demands special equipment, special methods of supply and special tactical devices, and sometimes special armament'.⁵¹

In such an environment, the little 'native rebellion' in the distant, small colony of New Zealand was regarded for what it was; merely an incident on the farthest frontier of the empire. The War Office had neither the ability nor the inclination to provide strategic intelligence about the situation. The wars were to be handled by the commanders on the spot. But those commanders had grown up with little understanding about military intelligence, as it had not been part of their training. Some arrived in New Zealand steeped in the use of conventional European tactics, with little knowledge of the strange country or the enemy they were to confront. Some came from other colonial theatres and they may have had a more realistic appreciation about the situation that they were entering.

Of the fourteen infantry regiments that served in New Zealand between 1840 and 1870, seven came from Australia where they had been for varying lengths of time, four came directly from India, and one each came directly from England, Ireland and Burma.⁵² In every case, they had very little idea about the situation that they were entering, but in their minds at least, was the sure belief that they would prevail because of the inherent military and racial superiority of the British soldier.

Infantry regiments were the fundamental self-contained fighting units of the British Army, and the composition of the individual regiments that arrived in New Zealand confirms the low priority placed on intelligence gathering. The 58th (Rutlandshire) Regiment of Foot, which served in New Zealand between 1845 and 1858,

⁵⁰ Brice, p.37.

⁵¹ Strachan, p.143.

⁵² Tim Ryan, and Bill Parham, *The Colonial New Zealand Wars*, Wellington: Grantham House, 1986, p. 159.

was a typical line regiment and it provides a useful model. Commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel, it had a headquarters staff of an Adjutant, a Quartermaster, a Paymaster, a Surgeon and two Assistant Surgeons.⁵³ The fighting element of the battalion was split into two wings, each commanded by a Major. Each wing comprised four or five companies, each commanded by a Captain. Lieutenants and Ensigns held appointments within the companies. By comparison to modern-day regiments, the 58th had an extremely small number of headquarters staff. It certainly did not have specialised staff trained in intelligence and most probably had insufficient personnel to assume that responsibility on a temporary basis even if required. The individual regiments did not have the structure to analyse information and to turn it into tactical intelligence. That responsibility, if he realised it, lay with the commander of the whole force, and yet he also had few specialised staff to carry out the task.

The personnel that he did have who were best suited for that role were his engineer officers, and there was a pattern in New Zealand from early on of engineers reconnoitring routes, sketching pa and investigating the physical features of the terrain. Engineer and artillery officers were given specific technical training in specialist colleges that infantry line officers did not receive. They had a scientific approach to their discipline, and of course, they needed to be interested in the terrain and any obstacles or issues that might lie ahead. As a group they were better educated than the average infantry line officer and were likely to have been more concerned with practical results than discipline and glory. Consequently, they were more open to the type of thinking required in intelligence gathering, and although they were certainly not an intelligence corps, it appears from the evidence available, that engineer officers, in particular, provided significant information about the physical geography of the theatre to their commanders. The other aspects of intelligence were primarily left to non-military groups, and strategic intelligence, as we shall see later, was largely left to the politicians.

Intelligence in nineteenth century colonial warfare

Britain had not been alone in her expansionism. All of the other colonial powers had spent the nineteenth century carving out empires of their own, and their military experiences had been similar. Strategy and tactics conceived for the continent were mostly useless and new methods had to be devised to cope with the new enemy and

⁵³ Michael Barthorp, *To Face the Daring Maoris*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979, p.19.

environment.⁵⁴ Set piece battles were not usual, but when they did occur, they were usually decided in favour of the imperial power. The wide diversity of terrain ranging from desert to jungle, the demands of the climate, and the strange and extraordinary cultures and political structures all presented enormous difficulties for the European armies. Their lack of knowledge about the physical environment of the country and the characteristics of its people, were significant impediments to making any military progress. In particular, the irregularity of the warfare and enemy tactics, lack of knowledge about the capabilities of the local populace as warriors, and the mode of warfare they employed were obvious problems that made the task even more difficult:

Each area of operations presented a radically different set of climatic and topographical conditions and the military organisation of the indigenous populations passed through a similarly bewildering series of combinations.⁵⁵

The battles in the distant corners of the empires might now be described in modern parlance in a number of ways such as; asymmetric, unconventional, low-intensity, irregular, guerrilla or counter-insurgency wars. In 1896, Colonel C.E. Callwell, a Royal Artillery officer, published *Small Wars, Their Principles and Practice*⁵⁶ [referred to henceforth in this thesis as *Small Wars*] defining the term ‘small wars’ as:

...all campaigns other than those in which both sides consist of regular troops. It comprises the expeditions against savages and semi-civilised races by disciplined soldiers, it comprises campaigns undertaken to suppress rebellions and guerrilla warfare in all parts of the world where organised armies are struggling against opponents who will not meet them in the open field, and it thus obviously covers operations very varying in their scope and in their conditions.⁵⁷

The central idea behind the term ‘small war’ was not the size of the conflict, but the fact that one side was a regular ‘trained and organised army’ and the other was irregular. The book was a summary of a century of colonial warfare by different imperial powers in many different colonial settings, but most importantly, it was a distillation of the knowledge acquired and a manual about how to do it. It has since

⁵⁴ Montgomery, p.450.

⁵⁵ Strachan, p.1.

⁵⁶ Charles E. Callwell, *Small Wars, Their Principles and Practice*, 3rd edition, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996.

⁵⁷ Callwell, p.21.

become a minor classic that is regarded as a definitive work of the period,⁵⁸ and interestingly, its lessons have resonated through to the present day.

The book was written at the height of the imperial period, an era that is commonly derided today. Yet in his introduction to the 3rd edition of *Small Wars* in 1996, Douglas Porch argues that although Callwell was definitely a man of his time, he strangely also offers a vision of the future of combat.⁵⁹ The First World War was thought to have completely changed military thinking and it appeared that Callwell's world of small wars and colonial conflict was no longer relevant. However, the United States Marine Corps published a *Small Wars Manual* in 1940 which contained lessons from conflicts in the Philippines, China and the Caribbean, and it has recently been updated. Australian Army doctrine recognises that warfare in the modern age has many of the characteristics of the colonial conflicts, and that there is some continuity of thought from Callwell's writing through to today's complex theories about how to wage asymmetric warfare.⁶⁰ As Porch notes:

Commanders in Callwell's time, like those in our own day, must realise that every insurgency assumes a different complexion given the circumstances-political, ideological, cultural, and geographic-which shape it. It remains to the commanders to define what they wish to achieve, to determine "what the enemy prizes the most", and to remember that technological superiority in no way relieves them of the obligation to craft a viable strategy based, at least in part, on a range of operational methods documented by Callwell.⁶¹

In *Small Wars*, Callwell discussed all elements of colonial warfare in great detail and he devoted a chapter to intelligence, in which he observed:

Of late years it has become the practice at the headquarters of all regular armies to study the strength and organization of other countries in view of possible eventualities, and to collect information as to, and to prepare plans of, theatres of war which may some day take place. Accurate information as to the organized forces of other leading nations is not difficult to obtain; the topographical features, the communications and military resources of civilized countries are well known. But it is a very important feature in the preparation for, and the carrying out of, small wars that the regular forces are often working very much in the dark from the outset.

The reasons for this are obvious enough. Small wars break out unexpectedly and in unexpected places. The operations take place in countries often only partially

⁵⁸ This work is described by Montgomery, as one of the outstanding writings of the period, p.450. J. Shy, and T.W. Collier, 'Revolutionary Warfare', in Paret, note that Callwell distinguishes between colonial (small) wars and regular campaigns thoroughly and well, p.830.

⁵⁹ Callwell, p.vii.

⁶⁰ David. Kilcullen. *Complex Warfighting (draft)*, Australian Army 2004.

⁶¹ Douglas. Porch, 'Introduction', in Callwell, p.xviii.

explored if not wholly unexplored. The nature of the enemy, his strength, his weapons, and his fighting qualities can be only very imperfectly gauged. The routes which the troops will have to follow are little known. The resources of the districts to be traversed cannot be estimated with any certainty. What is known technically as ‘intelligence’ is defective, and unavoidably so.⁶²

Callwell had a thorough understanding of military intelligence and had served as an intelligence officer, having joined the staff of the Intelligence Branch in 1887. He argued that the problem of ignorance of the enemy and his country fell into two categories. The most important was difficulties arising from a lack of knowledge about the theatre of war, and the second was difficulties caused by doubts about the strength, organisation and fighting qualities of the enemy. Again, we can see the centrality of physical and human geography in his thesis. He observed, ‘it is perhaps the most distinguishing characteristic of small wars as compared with regular hostilities conducted between modern armies that they are in the main campaigns against nature’.⁶³ By nature, Callwell primarily meant the environment, (terrain, climate, vegetation, rivers, diseases and so on), but there is also an implied reference to the population as well, because indigenous peoples tended to be seen, along with the plants and animals, as part of the ‘natural history’ of a country.⁶⁴ Other writers have also noted the crucial importance of nature in colonial warfare. Porch observed that, ‘in a real sense, all colonial campaigns are fought *against nature*, as much as, and perhaps even more than, against the enemy’.⁶⁵ Featherstone concluded that, ‘often sickness caused greater losses than did battle, as most campaigns degenerated into struggles against *nature* rather than hostile armies’.⁶⁶

Callwell conceded that as the conditions vary so greatly in small wars, the principles which govern them are very elastic and that tactics must be modified to fit each unique situation. Even so, he identified a general set of principles which apply to varying degrees in each situation. The principles within his first category; ‘want of knowledge about the theatre of war’, are (in his words):

⁶² Callwell, p.43.

⁶³ Callwell, p.44; Brice, p.34.

⁶⁴ As an example, see J. Drummond, *Nature in New Zealand*, Public School Series, Whitcombe and Tombs, 1902, a school text book written in 1902 which deals with the Maori very much as part of the natural environment. Anne Salmond, *Two Worlds: First Meetings between Maori and Europeans 1642- 1772*, Auckland: Viking, 1991, p.114, notes that in the time of Cook’s voyages to New Zealand, natural history covered the study of people as well as plants, animals and minerals, and that the Royal Society had published guidelines for writing useful accounts of peoples encountered.

⁶⁵ Porch, in Paret, p.398.

⁶⁶ D. Featherstone, *Victoria’s Enemies: An A-Z of British Colonial Warfare*, London: Blandford Press, 1989, p.13.

1. The route to be followed may not be accurately known.
2. The resources of the theatre of war in supplies of water and in transport may not be perfectly estimated.
3. Doubt exists in the mind of the commander as to the exact position of localities.

His second category; ‘difficulties consequent upon doubts about the strength, organisation and fighting qualities of the enemy’, contains the following principles:

1. Uncertainty in the mind of the commander upon his decision making processes.
2. Difficulty assessing the strength of the enemy.
3. Uncertainty as to the extent to which the hostile population itself and the neighbouring tribes will take part in the campaign.
4. Difficulty gathering correct information from the inhabitants of the country.
5. Treachery on the part of ostensibly neutral bodies or tribes, and the standard of ‘honour’ displayed by the enemy.
6. Uncertainty about the movements and intentions of the enemy.

Small Wars reflects the thinking of the time and it contains comments and assumptions about the European races and their, ‘comparatively perfect army organisation’, and the shortcomings of the ‘semi-civilised or barbarian nations’.⁶⁷ But if we look beneath his assumption of racial superiority, his argument may be paraphrased in the following way.

In an unknown environment, an army has no first hand appreciation of the terrain ahead, and most probably no access to good maps. Without a clear understanding of topographical features such as routes, waterways, resource areas, obstacles and barriers, the commander will experience doubts and he may, as a consequence, employ a very conservative strategy. He may employ guides and he will seek advice, but he may never be sure in his own mind whether or not he is being misled. Similarly, if he is unsure of the enemy’s location, strength or capabilities, he will be reluctant to commit himself to any course of action which excludes reverting back to other safer options. Lack of information may breed timidity and caution; the initiative will be lost and the commander may become reactive rather than proactive.

In colonial warfare the enemy’s military organisation may be difficult to understand, if indeed there is a coherent organisation at all. The fighting strength in numbers and the quality of the enemy warriors will be difficult to gauge. The enemy’s

⁶⁷ Callwell, p.53.

tactics will be hard to understand, and it may be difficult to predict their next moves because their methods of warfare are different to those of the regular armies of Europe, and reliable information is unobtainable. Similarly, the degree of trust that can be placed in an agreement or treaty, or with tribes or individuals who ally with him, is highly problematic. The enemy's intimate knowledge of the landscape, ability to live off the land and relative lack of equipment, make them very mobile. Consequently, it will be difficult to know when and where they will strike.

The political situation may be quite confusing. The attitude of the neighbouring tribes and the basis for any stance that they take will be hard to judge. It will not be known whether their attitude will be constant, or whether they will suddenly switch allegiance. The cultural problems of understanding the local population may be overwhelming. Their languages, religions, social customs, political thinking and even their treatment of prisoners of war and battle casualties, will be quite different to European concepts.

Success in colonial campaigns often came after inauspicious starts or 'embarrassing' defeats, and such defeats were often a result of arrogance or underestimation of the enemy's capabilities.⁶⁸ The assumed superiority in all aspects of culture and of course, in military capability, that characterised imperial powers meant that the European armies had even greater difficulty in really understanding the people against whom they were fighting and, 'doubtless innumerable soldiers died knowing little of their enemy, except their own ribald version of his native name'.⁶⁹

It is a failing of Callwell's that he only focussed on the tactical and operational aspects of warfare, and he completely failed to see the potential of political solutions to the issues of colonial conflict at a strategic level. To some extent, that was because his book was a manual of the military technician, but it also reflects the thinking of military commanders at the time that war was a particular endeavour best left to the generals, and that once the fighting started the solution had to be a military one. Some modern day armies realise that the local populace must be understood and won over with 'hearts and minds' campaigns in which the military and political goals are complementary and inextricable. The British success in the Malayan Emergency 1955-60, demonstrated the

⁶⁸ Brice , p.35.

⁶⁹ Featherstone, p.11.

evolution of their policies in this respect and may very well have been the distillation of years of colonial experimentation and experience in small wars.

In an environment where the geographical information about the land and its people is lacking, the task of the intelligence operative and the commander are even more demanding than usual. In small wars, it is even more the case that the problems of military intelligence are substantially problems of the physical and cultural geography. As well as pointing out the disadvantages under which the European troops laboured, Callwell argued that ‘their enemy enjoyed several advantages in this intelligence battle’:

1. Far greater mobility than regular troops.
2. Far greater knowledge of the theatre of war.
3. The indigenous fighter always seems to know the movements of the regular army.

Again Callwell’s argument can be paraphrased and explained. Although he may be technologically inferior in weaponry, the indigenous fighter potentially has three advantages. Firstly, he has greater mobility than the conventional forces opposing him. Nineteenth century European armies tended to rely on large logistical support. The artillery train, with its guns, horses and ammunition alone, was usually large and ponderous. In addition, the normal commissariat of supplies and feed required to sustain the force, meant that movement was slow and laborious, and to use a cliché, they were in danger of merely transporting and guarding their own food. By contrast, the indigenous fighter tends to live off the land and the local populace, so he has no need for large logistic support. His weapons are unlikely to include artillery, and each man will carry his own small-arms and ammunition. Horses, if he has them, are not used as beasts of burden but in the mounted rifle role to provide greater mobility for warriors who dismount to fight.

The second advantage that the indigenous fighter enjoys is his detailed and intimate knowledge of the countryside where the fighting takes place. This advantage is multiplied by the fact that, as a native of the country, he is at one with it in a myriad of ways that range from practical skills such as knowing how to live off the land, to intangible but powerful factors such as a spiritual connection with his environment. Consequently, he knows all of the routes, the quickest way between two points, locations for ambushes, food and water supplies and so on.

Thirdly, he has a superior intelligence service than his enemy and is able to maintain better security of his own plans and movements.⁷⁰ As with guerrilla warfare, the quantity and quality of the intelligence available depends to a large extent on the relationship that the two sides develop with the local population.⁷¹ The indigenous fighter can usually utilise the local population as an intelligence network far more effectively than the invading force can. Similarly, he can compromise the invader's security by moving behind the lines in the guise of an innocent civilian and get in and out of camps, learn from careless talk and watch troops prepare for operations. By contrast, the indigenous fighter's own preparation for battle will be in seclusion and he will be able to move freely, appearing and disappearing almost at will.

The second and third of these potential advantages are both important factors in military intelligence. In combination, they give the indigenous fighter a potential superiority in the intelligence battle. Even the first factor, greater mobility, is related to intelligence, because it allows him to exploit benefits from the other two factors more quickly than his enemy, and it makes the enemy's estimates of his whereabouts more difficult. The imperial force can glean information from a variety of sources, such as expatriates living in the country, 'friendly natives', captured enemy, reconnaissance patrols and spies. However they are not necessarily reliable, and in the highly confusing environment of a small war, they may do little to dispel the doubts in the commanders mind.

To summarise Callwell's argument, it is generally the case that within the area of military intelligence, the European armies were at a disadvantage in the campaigns that they fought in their colonies. The odds were against regular troops because of the natural advantages that accrued to the indigenous fighters, the problems arising from a lack of knowledge about the country and its people, the difficulties understanding the culture, and the problem of actually gaining reliable and accurate information. Over and above Callwell's principles, we can, in hindsight, add that the cultural attitudes of many officers and soldiers of the time complicated their dilemma. Furthermore, their lack of training in the need for intelligence obscured from them the realisation that there was a problem, and denied them the skills to solve it.

⁷⁰ J.E. Cross, *Conflict in the Shadows: The Political Nature of Guerrilla Warfare*, London: Constable and Co, 1964, p.28.

The characteristics of frontier colonial communities also influenced the nature of the military intelligence used. Because the societies were young and raw they had not developed established institutions. In such societies, it is to be expected that military activities, including intelligence gathering, would be *ad hoc* and informal. Indeed as we have already noted, military intelligence structures within the British Army as a whole were not yet fully organised and also depended upon informal networks.⁷² John Connor has demonstrated with reference to the Australian colonies, that a characteristic of frontier colonial societies was that there was no real separation between the military and civilian elements. In times of conflict, all elements of the community could be readily mobilised and co-ordinated to work in concert to defeat their indigenous enemy.⁷³ Leading members of such communities were often current or retired military officers, and many of the male population had military links or would readily take up arms. Ian Beckett has shown that the British tradition of volunteer auxiliary forces has been a very powerful factor in colonial societies where citizen soldiers formed links between the army and the wider society.⁷⁴ An example of this can be seen with Canada, where even as late as 1914, the informal nature of volunteering was such that Sam Hughes, the Militia Minister, was able to create the Canadian Expeditionary Force by sending personal telegrams to unit commanding officers and by using business and personal contacts.⁷⁵ Garry Clayton has demonstrated that the practice of forming militias and volunteer units was also powerful in New Zealand colonial communities.⁷⁶

In the wars analysed in this thesis, each of the settler communities had unique characteristics. Consequently, some of them mobilised with a communal effort and some did not, and some co-operated with the British regulars to a far greater extent than others. In the Taranaki War for example, the European community was more homogeneous than the disparate European community in the Northern War, and its response to the outbreak of fighting reflected the citizens' sense of having a common

⁷¹ Cross, p.35.

⁷² Brice pp.168-207

⁷³ John Connor, British Frontier Warfare Logistics and the "Black Line", Van Diemens Land (Tasmania) 1830, *War in History*, Vol. 9 No. 2, 2002; Lorenzo Crowell, 'Logistics in the Madras Army *circa* 1830', *War and Society*, Vol. 10, No 2, 1992.

⁷⁴ Ian Beckett, *The Amateur Military Tradition 1558-1916*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992.

⁷⁵ Ron Haycock, *Sam Hughes: The Public Career of a Controversial Canadian, 1885-1916*, Waterloo Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986.

⁷⁶ Garry Clayton, 'Defence not Defiance, The Shaping of New Zealand's Volunteer Force', DPhil Thesis, University of Waikato, 1990.

purpose and something to fight for. A militia and a volunteer unit were quickly formed, and as well as participating in the fighting, they fulfilled a useful intelligence function.

We have already noted Edwin Fishel's 'intelligence explanation' of the United States Civil War. Fishel identified nine different factors about intelligence that were significant in that war: espionage; the interrogation of deserters, prisoners and refugees; scouting by individuals and small parties; reconnaissance by cavalry *en masse*; visual intelligence from balloons; interception of flag messages; serendipity resulting from massive intelligence effort; home advantage; and the commander's role.⁷⁷ The list includes some of the practical modes of intelligence gathering that were available with the technology of the time, and some elements that are timeless. The Civil War was not of course a colonial war (the so called 'Indian Wars' of the 1870-80s are more analogous), but the nine modes offer a useful guide to the intelligence technology available at the time of the New Zealand Wars.

This chapter has provided a theoretical and technological context for the study and has placed it in the appropriate historical period. A number of inter-related themes have been developed that will be explored in the succeeding chapters:

Britain was adept at raising expeditionary forces at relatively short notice and was able to supply initial numbers of troops, and then supplement them with additional contingents when required. Despite this, it was unable to provide strategic intelligence about the political or military situation in New Zealand. There was a tendency among newly arrived commanders to underestimate the military capabilities of the Maori as fighters, and they were often defeated in early battles until they developed an understanding of the nature and capabilities of their enemy.

Colonial warfare was very much a war against nature for the imperial power, and it was necessary for it to develop a workable understanding of the physical and human geography of the area of operations; a process that often took some time. Maori usually had an advantage in the intelligence battle that accrued from their thorough local knowledge. Conversely, the imperial forces were usually at a serious disadvantage

⁷⁷ Edwin C. Fishel, *The Secret War for the Union: The Untold Story of Military Intelligence in the Civil War*, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996, pp.569-571.

because of their lack of knowledge of the country and the Maori socio-political state of affairs.

The British military was not trained in intelligence gathering apart from the ability to conduct reconnaissance. The role played by individual commanders was crucial, and those who acquired good military intelligence were more likely to be successful in their operations. Over time, successful intelligence gathering by the government forces was gradually built on a network of Maori allies, and civilians and government officers who had developed an understanding of the Maori language and society, and who had access into the Maori communities.

In frontier colonial communities, the relationship between the military, branches of the government and the citizenry was close and all aspects of the community could be mobilised to defeat an indigenous enemy. In Maori society too, particularly as the role of warriors was essentially part-time, whole communities could be rallied in the war effort. Information gathering was part of that process.

Chapter Two

Blurred Images

The official mind was at this period passing through the evolutionary process under which the Maori as a fighter was at first despised, then feared, then respected. At the moment it had progressed no more than the first phase, and was accordingly arrogant and bombastic in the attitude. Lindsay Buick¹

This chapter takes a broad view of the concept of strategic intelligence and traces the development of the picture that Maori and European formulated about each other prior to the outbreak of the Northern War in 1845. It traces the growth of the relationship between Maori and Europeans and highlights the general impressions that each group had about the other. It argues that the early settlers and British administrators made inaccurate and distorted assessments about the Maori ability to wage war, and that Maori assessments of the military strength, capability and motives of the British were also flawed.

World views

The ancestors of the New Zealand Maori began moving from South East Asia before 2500 BC, spread across the islands that dotted the Pacific Ocean in one of the great colonising movements in history,² and by 1300AD had reached New Zealand.³ All phenomena in their world could be explained by reference to the actions of one or more of the many gods that influenced their lives, and they lived in a complex spiritual inter-relationship where the people, their ancestor gods and the environment were one in kinship.⁴ Pre-European Maori had no concept of a world outside of their own, believing

¹ T. Lindsay Buick, *New Zealand's First War, or The Rebellion of Hone Heke*, Wellington: Government Printer, 1926, p.49.

² Anne Salmond, *Two Worlds: First Meetings between Maori and Europeans 1642-1772*, Auckland: Viking, 1991, p.24.

³ J. Wilmshurst, T. Hunt, C. Lipo, and A. Anderson, 'High-precision radiocarbon dating shows recent and rapid initial colonization of East Polynesia,' www.pnas.org/ggi/doi/10.1073/pnas.1015876108, accessed 10 December 2011. There has been considerable debate about the likely date that Maori ancestors arrived in New Zealand. The most recent estimate using carbon dating is approximately 1300AD.

⁴ Salmond, p.39; H.M. Wright, *New Zealand, 1769 -1840: Early Years of Western Contact*: Harvard University Press, 1967, p14.

that they were the only people in existence.⁵ They had no word to describe themselves as a race, as there previously had been no need to differentiate between themselves and any other people. The unexpected arrival of alien beings from across the water was an extraordinary surprise.

By contrast, the first Europeans to visit New Zealand were actively looking for new and exotic lands and people. Western thought believed in the existence of a fabled realm at the bottom of the world, a counterweight to the mass of the European continent, and in the period 1560-1770 Europeans began to search for the lost continent Terra Australis Incognita. The impetus for the search had three elements; intellectual, commercial, and national rivalry. In the sixteenth century, Spanish and Portuguese explorers spread their nation's empires for the glory of their kings and the church.⁶ In the seventeenth century Dutch explorers set sail for primarily commercial reasons, while in the eighteenth century, British and French explorers and scientists combined all three motives.

The English and French desire to discover new lands grew out of a period of intellectual ferment which began in the sixteenth century and was in full bloom by the eighteenth century. This spirit of inquiry, known in German as 'Die Aufklarung', and now commonly known as 'The Enlightenment' or 'The Age of Reason', saw new ways of thinking in every field of endeavour. Following Immanuel Kant's command to, 'dare to know', thinkers pursued knowledge of a great range of phenomena with fascination and zeal, and this included the subject of exotic lands and people. Travellers brought tales to Europe of people from other lands that were non-Christian, but never-the-less virtuous with high standards of conduct and morality. Rousseau developed his concept of the 'noble savage', a pure soul at one with nature and untainted by the poisons of western life, and when compared to the lot of the Christian poor of Europe, the noble savage lived a utopian life-style which cast doubts on the church's teaching of original sin.⁷

⁵ The only possible image of a world outside the New Zealand archipelago lay in the memories of their ancestral home, Hawaiki. Their limited horizons may even have rejected the word now used to describe all of New Zealand - Aotearoa, which originally may have referred only to the North Island, see Salmond, p.437, Note 8.

⁶ Douglas L. Oliver, *The Pacific Islands*: University Press of Hawaii, 1961, p.90.

⁷ Salmond, p.46.

William Dampier's book, *A Voyage around the World* (1697), inspired European interest in the Pacific itself. The demand for exotic tales of adventure was met by writers such as Daniel Defoe with *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and Jonathan Swift with *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) who both set their stories in the Pacific.⁸ With intellectual curiosity high, the great mass of the European population gave impetus to the development of overseas trade,⁹ and Britain and France in particular, began to extend their rivalry to the Southern Pacific. New developments in the design of ships and navigational equipment provided the ability to stay at sea for up to three years. The Pacific Ocean, that vast expanse of water and tiny islands that spread over a third of the earth's surface, and which was so alien and yet enticing to the European mind, was finally becoming attainable.

France's defeat, humiliation, and subsequent loss of her North American colonies after the Seven Years War, which ended in 1763, led to new initiatives to restore national pride and acquire colonial possessions. So inspired, the French explorer Bougainville, acquired and settled the Falkland Islands in 1763 and the Englishman Wallis made the important 'discovery' of Tahiti (The Society Islands) in 1767. Britain and France were both fascinated by this supposed utopia and soon the Southern Pacific was alive with ships from both nations as they pushed ever further southwards in search of the fabled southern continent, and the commercial opportunities it was believed to hold. The scene was now set for both nations to 'discover' New Zealand. Cook proved that Australia and New Zealand were not part of the Great Southern Continent as Tasman had thought, and that the mythological landmass did not lie in the temperate zone or even further to the south. The search for Terra Australis Incognita was over, but the struggle between Maori and European had just begun.

First contacts between Maori and European

The first contact between Europeans and Maori occurred when Abel Tasman's ships sailed into Tai Tapu (Golden Bay) in 1642, the home of the Ngaati Tumatakokiri. Attempts to communicate with each other were frustrated by the immense gulf in understanding between the two races. The confusion ended tragically when the cockboat from one of Tasman's ships was unexpectedly rammed by a Maori canoe. Four of the

⁸ G. Williams. 'The Pacific Adventure', *Winds of Revolution*: Time Life Books, 1991, p.79.

⁹ Salmond, p.47.

sailors were crushed to death and one of the bodies was hauled aboard the canoe and hastily spirited ashore. As eleven canoes approached the ship later, Tasman ordered grape-shot to be fired at them and at least one man, possibly the chief, was hit. The Dutch sailors were furious, and as they sailed away, they named the place ‘Murderer’s Bay’, their assessment being that, ‘the detestable deed of these natives against our four men of the Zeehaen’s crew perpetrated this morning, must teach us to consider the inhabitants of the country as enemies.’¹⁰ Tasman’s next and last attempt to communicate with a party of Maori was as futile as the first. His men landed on an island in the Three Kings group in search of fresh water, and were stoned by Maori standing on the cliffs above.

Tasman departed New Zealand waters little the wiser about its inhabitants, and the information that he conveyed back to Europe did little to dispel the wild speculations about the creatures that peopled the southern lands. Excerpts from his journals were published and they formed the first concrete elements of European knowledge about New Zealand, and through the journals Maori acquired a bloodthirsty reputation in Europe.¹¹ The Maori too must have struggled to make sense of their pale-skinned visitors, with their floating islands and guns, who departed just as abruptly as they came. However, the oral tradition mentions very little of the events in Tai Tapu, and the Ngati Tumatakokiri were subsequently wiped out by another tribe, so nothing of lasting significance appears to have been taken from the brief encounters.¹² In light of the disastrous nature of these first meetings, it is perhaps fortunate that after Abel Tasman’s visit, ‘the European records fall silent about ‘Zeelandia Nova’ for more than 120 years.’¹³

James Cook’s voyage to observe the transit of Venus and to search for the great southern continent brought him to New Zealand in 1769. The expedition was a true voyage of scientific discovery and included among its members an extraordinary complement of talented scientists and artists. Cook too, had a capable and enquiring mind and a keen interest in human nature. *Endeavour* carried a comprehensive library which included volumes to assist in identifying flora and fauna, and most importantly, a

¹⁰ Salmond, p.82.

¹¹ Salmond, p.82.

¹² Salmond, p.82.

¹³ Salmond, p.84.

definitive collection of European knowledge about the South Pacific: ‘a large collection of voyages and sailing directions (a translation of van Nierop’s account of Tasman’s voyages, Campbell, de Brosses, Anson, Dampier, Byron, and manuscript journals from Wallis’ voyage among others); de la Landes and Pingre’s memoirs on the transit; [and] an advance copy of Dalrymple’s *Voyages in the South Pacific Ocean*, with its map showing Torres’ passage through Torres Strait.’¹⁴

The land Tasman had visited was now called New Zealand by Europeans, but whether it or Tahiti was part of the southern continent was still widely debated. Cook’s instructions ordered him to investigate each landfall, ‘to describe the soil, animals and birds, fish, mineral resources and flora; to cultivate a friendship with the inhabitants and to observe their “Genius, Temper, Disposition and Number,”...all log books and journals were to be collected at the voyage’s end and sealed for delivery to The Admiralty.’¹⁵

Endeavour made landfall in several places around New Zealand during its six-month stay. A Tahitian priestly high chief, Tupaia, carried on board was able to communicate with the Maori. Even so, these early meetings were so charged with tension created by the huge difference in social customs, that there was considerable bloodshed, however this time at Maori expense. Cook had no intention to harm the Maori and he was distressed that the communication and cultural difficulties caused both parties to quickly lapse into violence. The warlike nature of the Maori was always apparent and whenever the Englishmen came upon a party, even in boats, they were challenged, presented with a war dance (haka) and usually attacked.¹⁶

Cook’s detailed observations of the Maori included scrutiny of their political structure and methods of warfare. He noted an absence of iron or projectile weaponry

¹⁴ Salmond, p.102.

¹⁵ H. Morton, and C. Morton-Johnson, *The Farthest Corner- New Zealand – a twice discovered land*, London: Century Hutchinson, 1988, p.102; Salmond, p.98.

¹⁶ A.H. and A.W. Reed (eds.), *Captain Cook in New Zealand - the Journals of Captain Cook*, Wellington, Reed, 1951, p.144. The first meetings between British and Polynesians in Tahiti were similarly aggressive when Captain Wallis first called there in 1767, see P. De Decker *The Aggressions of the French at Tahiti: and other islands in the Pacific*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1983, p33. It is also likely that the British misunderstood the ritual challenges and took them to be more hostile than the Maori intended, see Salmond, p.1.

and correctly assessed the strength and virtual impregnability of pa.¹⁷ The tribal nature of Maori society led to fractious groupings and Cook observed ‘they generally told us that those that were at a little distance from them were their enemies; from which it appears to me that they were very much divided into parties which make war one with the other.’¹⁸

When the practice of cannibalism was discovered, Cook’s men were horrified and the common seamen were aghast to find themselves face to face with the people eaters of the Southern world that their legends and superstitions had foretold. Many of the crew became obsessed with the idea of cannibalism and the pagan practises associated with it, and naturally communicated the horror of their discoveries upon their return home.¹⁹ In this way, the fear and fascination of New Zealand’s cannibal coast grew in the minds of seafarers, adventurers and the European public, whose views were still governed by superstition, fear of supernatural beings, and the belief that weird and evil creatures peopled the undiscovered portions of the globe.

Both Maori and European interpreted each other in terms of their own yardsticks and values. For Maori, the sight of Cook’s ship was far outside any frame of reference that they had, so they conceptualised it in terms of the phenomena they knew.²⁰ At Tuuranga-nui (Poverty Bay), the ship was mistaken for a giant bird of unequalled beauty and size which was similar to those spoken of in tribal legends. The rowing boats were un-feathered fledglings and the pale skinned sailors were divine creatures.²¹ Elsewhere the Europeans were described as atua (gods), goblins or visitors from Hawaiki, the Maori peoples’ ancestral home. A chief from Whitianga explained later that his tribe thought that Captain Cook’s vessel was a large kind of whale and the men on board were gods, ‘when we saw them pulling with their backs to the bows of the boats we thought they must have eyes in the backs of their heads.’²² The Maori greeted their strange visitors with a mixture of fear and fascination. Cook himself made a strong impression and the magic and horror of the musket left the Maori enthralled and puzzled.

¹⁷ Morton and Morton-Johnson, p. 87.

¹⁸ Reed and Reed, p.144.

¹⁹ Salmond, p.244; Morton and Morton-Johnson, p.94.

²⁰ Salmond, p.244.

²¹ Salmond, p.124.

²² Salmond. p.87.

Perhaps the greatest legacy for both races from Cook's visit was the vast amount of information that went back to Europe. That information included drawings, scientific data, and of course, stories about the remarkable indigenous people and their wild and beautiful land. Cook's excellent nautical charts made it easier for adventurers to indulge their fascination with the Pacific. In a very real sense, the voyage of the *Endeavour* opened doors between the cultures of Europe and the South Pacific, which could never again be closed.

The Frenchman de Surville was in New Zealand waters at the same time as Cook and the paths of their ships actually crossed at one point, although neither knew the other was close by. As with Tasman and Cook, de Surville's attempts to communicate were frustrated by the huge cultural gaps that again led to hostilities, and he departed New Zealand with a Maori prisoner on board after having burned a fishing village in reprisal for perceived wrongs. A more serious incident occurred three years later in 1772 when another French expedition, this time led by Marion du Fresne, visited the Bay of Islands. The Maori were initially welcoming, perhaps in response to Cook's earlier use of firepower. However, the Frenchmen unwittingly breached a tapu and the Maori were culturally obliged to punish them.²³ Du Fresne's apparently naïve assessment of the danger of their situation was not shared by his subordinates who realised that the mood of their hosts had become ominously hostile. Du Fresne was eventually deceived, killed and eaten; an act for which his second in command, Crozet, exacted a terrible revenge by killing at least 250 Maori. Again the problem arose out of misunderstandings about what the actions of each party actually meant.

Despite being conscious of the danger Maori presented to isolated groups of Europeans, Crozet's perception of their military power in the face of European muskets was unflattering, and he correctly assessed, and proved, that the Maori weapons were no match for European muskets:

All of these murderous instruments are carved and worked with care and the savages possess large quantities of them. Nevertheless all their arms are ridiculous and contemptible when opposed to men armed in the European fashion; fifty fusiliers with sufficient ammunition, and who might have to revenge themselves on these people, could without danger destroy them like wild beasts and entirely exterminate them.²⁴

²³ Salmond, p.402.

²⁴ Salmond, p.414.

These early visits by European explorers were peripheral to the mainstream of Maori tribal histories and therefore of little interest. Certainly the vast majority of Maori were sublimely ignorant of the fact that Europeans had even visited their land. However in the Bay of Islands at least, a rudimentary intelligence picture was developing, and the events surrounding the visits of Cook and du Fresne were within the living memory of the generation that survived until the eve of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840.²⁵ These Maori had seen something of the apparently supernatural military power of the Europeans, and realised that they were an equally aggressive people who were capable of great violence and destruction. European technology awed them, and although they did not understand how the ‘walking sticks’ worked, the seed of desire to acquire muskets had been planted. The Nga Puhi chief, Hongi Hika, later drew the same conclusions as Crozet about the musket’s superiority over traditional weapons, but the enemies on his horizon did not extend as far as France.



Fig. 2.1 Augustus Earle: Meeting of the artist and Hongi Hika at the Bay of Islands, November 1827. Alexander Turnbull Library.

The first European explorers to visit New Zealand were operating at the very forward edge of European knowledge. They had almost no idea of what they would encounter and their minds reflected the conflicting theories and beliefs that were current in Europe. Consequently, different parties viewed indigenous peoples in different ways, but even educated and enlightened men, such as Joseph Banks, regarded them as curiosities.²⁶ Europeans had learnt some lessons from these very early encounters with

²⁵ Salmond, p.401. Three men who witnessed the death and eating of Marion du Fresne were Tohitapu, Tarewarewa and Takarua. Tohitapu died in 1833 and the other two in 1839.

²⁶ Paul Moon, *Fatal Frontiers: A New History of New Zealand in the Decade before the Treaty*, Auckland: Penguin Publishing, 2006, p.217. An example of similar thinking by naturalist and explorer John Bidwell: ‘Bidwell was categorically no sentimentalist when it came to Maori society. As much as he basked in the wonders of New Zealand, and had a rush (continued on next page)

Maori. Firstly, there was a major problem with communication and of understanding each other's customs. Initial meetings were tense with a palpable sense of hostility and conflict, and they often ended in violence. Secondly, there was a revulsion and fear in the European minds about Maori cannibalism and some of their other practices. Thirdly, there was a realisation that the Maori were an intelligent, healthy, strong, aggressive and warlike people, but that their society was politically fractionated. Fourthly, there was a realisation that the islands of New Zealand were well endowed with natural resources that could be used by the European technology of the time, and that they may also have some long-term strategic value.

A commercial dawn

The explorers were followed by several other groups of visitors to New Zealand. Commercially motivated whalers, sealers and traders operated from 1790 onwards, missionaries started their activities in 1814, and then a growing number of permanent settlers established themselves in the 1830s. European traders or agents, who settled more or less permanently, generally lived within Maori societal protocols and at their sufferance. Mutual benefit was the over-riding factor in such relationships, and they were usually relatively peaceful.²⁷ Maori placed great value on access to European goods and the resident Europeans, including missionaries, were primarily valued in that capacity. They in turn, required the patronage and protection, (and sometimes the food) of the local chiefs to survive. Nevertheless, the potential for conflict was never far below the surface and it did occasionally erupt. Indeed one commentator, Dr Thompson, went as far as to describe the violence between groups of whalers and Maori during the period 1809-1820 as the 'war of the races'.²⁸ Sinclair has suggested that the relationship between the two races always contained elements of cultural arrogance on the part of the Europeans²⁹ and suspicion on the part of the Maori. Indeed, some Maori were aware of the harsh treatment of the aborigines in New South Wales and elsewhere, and were beginning to perceive a similar threat to themselves and their land.³⁰

of nostalgia when he recalled his exploits there, it was still proving difficult for him to accept Maori as anything other than quaint amusements- a counterpart to the mature and inevitably triumphant culture into which he had been born.'

²⁷ J.M.R. Owens, 'New Zealand Before Annexation', in G.W. Rice, (ed.) *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, (2nd Edition), Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1992, p.3.

²⁸ Keith Sinclair, *The Origins of the Maori Wars*, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1957, p.16.

²⁹ Sinclair, p.17.

³⁰ F.E. Maning, *Old New Zealand and A History of the War in the North*, Christchurch: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1906, p.205.

John Savage's account of his stay in New Zealand, *Some Account of New Zealand*, was published in London in 1807.³¹ It contained lengthy descriptions of many aspects of Maori life including warfare and weaponry, and gave a lurid and sensational account of a culture radically different to that of his European readers. Savage's account was followed in 1817 by J. Liddiard Nicholas' *Narrative of a Voyage to New Zealand*, which was also published in England and gave interested readers more information in a similar vein. There were very few, if any, Europeans in New Zealand at the time of Savage's visit and hardly many more at the time of Nicholas'. The massacre of the crew of the *Boyd* in 1809 and the burning of the ship curtailed trade because captains became reluctant to venture into narrow harbours or rivers where they could not manoeuvre in a hurry and might be attacked and boarded by Maori. New Zealand gained a reputation as a dangerous place and the Maori were particularly known for their cannibalism and trade in preserved shrunken heads.³²

Fear of Maori was so widespread amongst European seafarers that Samuel Marsden waited for three years for a ship to take him to New Zealand to establish the first Christian mission. He was eventually forced to buy his own ship, *Active*, and send it on a trial visit, before the Governor of New South Wales gave him permission to go to New Zealand in December 1814.³³ Only 14 vessels visited the Bay of Islands between 1816 and 1819, and the European population in New Zealand in 1819 numbered just 52,³⁴ the vast majority of whom were mission families. Maori had reason to be wary of seafarers, and those who signed on as crew were often badly treated, and indeed this was the underlying cause of the *Boyd* massacre.

The Musket Wars: Maori martial power on display

Maori society in the north was in a disordered state in the early 1800s³⁵ and any security concerns individual chiefs may have had about European intentions were complicated by endemic warfare between tribes and sub-tribes. The destructiveness of that warfare was about to explode on a scale previously unknown in New Zealand, with the adoption

³¹ Paul Savage, *Some Account of New Zealand*, London: 1807.

³² Wright, p.38.

³³ Wright, p.22.

³⁴ Wright, p.23. Thomas Kendall wrote in 1819, that the European inhabitants of New Zealand consisted of 52 people, (the mission establishment founded by Marsden, and the seven Hansons) Mr Hanson was the captain of the 'Active' but had left the employ of the mission by 1819.

³⁵ Sinclair, p.16.

of new military technology; the musket. Major Cruise was the next Englishman to publish an account of a visit to New Zealand with his *Journal of Ten Months Residence in New Zealand* (1824). He was in New Zealand to obtain spars for the Royal Navy and noted great tension in the Bay of Islands and Hokianga in 1820.³⁶ He witnessed a frantic arms race as each tribal grouping tried to acquire muskets from whalers or traders. The demand for muskets was so great that it was impossible to trade without them, and even some missionaries were forced to enter the musket trade in order to obtain food.³⁷ The Northern tribes had been at war for several years at the time of Cruise's visit and many Nga Puhi had also died of starvation.³⁸ Cruise commented on a passion and frenzy in the Maori and a thirst for revenge which, 'they boast to be inherent in their nature.'³⁹ Nevertheless, he reported that Europeans were generally safe in New Zealand as long as they had sufficient force to back themselves up in time of trouble.

Muskets had been used by the Nga Puhi as early as 1807 in the politically significant battle of Moremunui. They were inexpertly handled in that battle and had little physical effect but great psychological impact.⁴⁰ The next decade saw the beginning of the arms race observed by Cruise, and the development of musketry skills to an extent that his 1818-20 campaigns confirmed in Hongi Hika's mind, the real value of the new weapons and the urgency of acquiring them in numbers:

...he told a military officer visiting the Bay that, 'he should die if he did not go - that if he once got to England he was certain of getting twelve muskets and a doubled barrelled gun.'⁴¹

³⁶ R.A. Cruise, Maj. *Journal of Ten Months Residence in New Zealand (2nd edition)*, London: 1824, reprinted by Capper Press, Christchurch, 1974. Cruise and his party of 60 soldiers from the 69th and 84th regiments were the first recorded British soldiers to set foot in New Zealand. They came as a protection party aboard the store ship *Dromedary* whose role it was to obtain spars of Kauri and Kahikatea for Royal Navy ships.

³⁷ Wright, p.87; Judith Binney, *A Legacy of Guilt: A Life of Thomas Kendall*, Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2005, p.51.

³⁸ Kevin Ashcroft, 'The Northern Account of the Flagstaff War', Research Paper, History Department Waikato University, 1993, p.18; Belich, *Making Peoples: A History of New Zealanders from Polynesian Settlement to the end of the Nineteenth Century*, Auckland: Penguin Books, 1996, pp.157-159. Food, and in particular potatoes was one of the key resources fought over during the wars.

³⁹ Cruise, p.303.

⁴⁰ Wright, p.84. Cruise noted that when hunting birds, the Maori crept up so close that they shot the bird at point-blank range; clearly still unfamiliar with the weapons potential. The Maori had problems with the poor quality of the weapons supplied to them by traders. They also had trouble with the technology of the flintlock system - poor powder and shot, difficulty keeping the powder dry in the New Zealand climate, and an unfortunate habit of disassembling the muskets so often that they became useless.

⁴¹ Ormand Wilson, *From Hongi Hika to Hone Heke: A Quarter of a Century of Upheaval*, Dunedin: John McIndee, 1985, p.17; Belich, *Making Peoples*, Nga Puhi musketry skills improved dramatically once they obtained sufficient powder and shot. Hongi shot two ducks on the wing as early as 1815 when John Nicholas could not, p.162: see Maning, p.195, for an indication of the effort required to obtain muskets.

Hongi Hika did get to England, in the company of the missionary Thomas Kendall, and upon his return to the Bay of Islands in 1821, he had, ‘perhaps a thousand muskets and plenty of ammunition.’⁴² Nga Puhi had enjoyed a great advantage over the inland and more southern tribes in their ability to acquire muskets, and they now pressed home that strategic advantage. The following years witnessed destruction on a scale previously unparalleled in New Zealand as William Colenso described:

Nga Puhi being well armed with muskets revelled in destruction, slaying thousands. At Kaipara, Manukau, Tamaki, the Thames, the interior of the Waikato on to Rotorua, and even to Taranaki; and they also came in their canoes, as far South as Ahuriri or Hawkes Bay, remorselessly destroying everywhere they went. The tribes further north were also destroying each other; the Rawara destroying the Aopouri, who were very numerous about North Cape. Te Wherowhero at the head of his people was slaughtering, for many years, on the West Coast; from Taranaki, to Wanganui; Te Waharoa and other chiefs in the interior and overland to Hawkes Bay; the Rotorua tribes in the Bay of Plenty; and Te Rauparaha exterminating in the neighbourhood of Cook Straits and along the East Coast of the Middle [South] Island.⁴³

The exact number of deaths during this period is difficult to determine for several reasons and there was no reliable base figure from which to begin calculations. Maori casualty reports were notoriously unreliable and likely to be overestimated, and the subsequent depopulation of areas as tribes moved South in the face of invasion make it difficult to determine either casualties or survivors. Colenso over-estimated the figure as 60,000 deaths both as a direct result of the warfare and as a consequence of it,⁴⁴ and Maning, another contemporary observer, estimated a total of 20,000 deaths.⁴⁵ In fact estimates range from 20,000 to 80,000 deaths with up to a further 30,000 displaced⁴⁶ out of a total population of about 100,000.⁴⁷ Belich is probably correct in his observation that: ‘They killed more New Zealanders than World War One- perhaps about 20,000.’⁴⁸

The Musket Wars honed the Maori skills and tactics in the new musket technology and also led to effective counter measures with a parallel revolution in pa

⁴² Wilson, p.17.

⁴³ W. Colenso, ‘On the Maori Races in New Zealand’, 1868, cited in Ashcroft, p.17; Owens, p.44.

⁴⁴ Colenso, p.17.

⁴⁵ Maning, p.221.

⁴⁶ Owens, p.45.

⁴⁷ Wright, pp.6-11, proposes a figure between 175,000-200,000; J.M. Davidson, ‘The Polynesian Foundation’, in Rice, (ed.) considers that 100,000 seems probable.

⁴⁸ James Belich, *Making Peoples*, p.157.

technology, both in location and design. Pa locations moved down from high prominences where they had traditionally been built to low ground which afforded better fields of fire and, most importantly, better protection. The defenders of the new pa now concealed themselves in trenches and fired upon their enemy from positions that offered them protection from enemy fire. Hongi's wars finally ended long after he died in 1828, when a parity of sorts had been achieved in the number of muskets each tribe could muster; an effective balance of terror.⁴⁹

European settlers were witnesses to the Musket Wars and although they were not directly harmed, it was a period of great uncertainty. Colenso observed that, 'from 1822 to 1837 was truly a fearful period in New Zealand. Blood flowed like water.'⁵⁰ Europeans were appalled at the wild scenes of cannibalism and cruelty that they witnessed upon the return of the war parties,⁵¹ and the missionaries who, as 'kept pakeha' often had to endure the contempt and threats of their protectors, were as horrified by the barbarity as they were anxious for their own safety. The news that Hongi had been wounded in battle caused such panic within Nga Puhi and missionary circles about the probable ensuing chaos, that even the resolute Henry Williams seriously contemplated heading back to the safety of New South Wales with a party of refugees from both races.⁵²

European perceptions of the Maori: a developing view

It seems extraordinary then, that the European settlers appear to have taken very few lessons about Maori military capability out of the Musket Wars. James Busby, the British Resident, made essentially the same assessment in 1837 as Crozet had made sixty-five years earlier, when he asked the Governor of New South Wales for troops to uphold both his and the Nga Puhi Confederation of Chiefs' authority:

With regard to the number of troops which it might be necessary to maintain, it would, I think, require little knowledge of military tactics to satisfy one who has witnessed the warfare of the natives that one hundred English soldiers would be

⁴⁹ Wilson, p.187.

⁵⁰ Colenso, p.17.

⁵¹ Wilson, p.23.

⁵² Wilson, p.49; Binney, p.90-1. Hongi Hika had been the protector of the missionaries after Ruatara, their initial sponsor, had died in 1815.

an overmatch for the united forces of the whole islands. But in fact there is little risk of even two tribes uniting to oppose them.⁵³

Had the settlers learnt nothing about Maori military capabilities? Cowan observed that it is curious to discover in the early records just how little the military commanders and officials realised the military quality of the Maori.⁵⁴ Several factors may account for this phenomenon. The Europeans were not participants in the battles and were seldom directly threatened.⁵⁵ They were unimpressed with the tactics they saw the Maoris use, and they were revolted by the cannibalism and cruelty that they saw, considering it to be the barbaric behaviour of a morally-inferior and uncivilised race. Such a race could surely be little threat to British soldiers.

Europeans were aware that much of Maori warfare was strictly regulated by custom and involved shows of strength which often stopped short of major bloodshed. But even when war parties had a serious intent, the European perception of them was often unfavourable. Two reports give us an insight into typical war party expeditions at the time. Pakira accompanied Hongi to Te-ika-a-Ranganui near Whangarei in 1825 and gave an account of the expedition to the missionary George Clark. Henry Williams gave an account of an expedition he accompanied to Tauranga in 1832.⁵⁶ Both accounts talk of inefficient logistics, uncertain plans, muddled and ineffective command, an overriding concern for superstition and consulting omens and a general reluctance to engage in battle itself. And so the Europeans tended to view the Musket Wars as a series of unsophisticated battles fought by uncivilised savages for the pettiest of reasons. To them they were proof, not of great military prowess, but of the instability of the political structure of Maori tribal society that had been apparent to Cook, Marsden, Busby and countless other European observers

The interface between European and Maori, 1820-1840

Fundamental changes occurred in Maori society and in the European community in New Zealand in the 1830s. Up until the 1830s, the European population in the Bay of

⁵³ James Cowan, *The New Zealand Wars and the Pioneering Period*, vol.1, Wellington: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1922, p.4.

⁵⁴ Cowan, p.4.

⁵⁵ The case of Captain John Stewart of the *Elizabeth* is the major exception. His behaviour in assisting Te Rauparaha capture the Ngai Tahu chief Te Maiharanui in Akaroa so horrified the authorities that he was arrested in Sydney for murder, but eventually freed for lack of witnesses, and the fact that the offence was committed outside of the Governor of New South Wales' jurisdiction.

Islands was tiny, and by 1833, no more than 20-30 Europeans, exclusive of mission families, lived permanently in the bay itself.⁵⁷ Clearly, very few reliable Europeans had seen the Musket Wars at first hand. A population boom in the late 1830s saw the settler population expand to perhaps 200-300 in the bay by 1839.⁵⁸ The expansion coincided with a period of peace. Large scale Maori warfare had ceased and cannibalism, tattooing and slavery had begun to disappear.

At long last the missionaries' labour seemed to be paying off as sizable numbers of Maori appeared to embrace Christianity. The relative peace allowed the Maori to turn their attention to commercial activity, and there was a clear move to acquire more western goods and the trappings of western lifestyles and values. New goods and technology helped the Maori in this transition, and by 1840 they appeared to European eyes, to be making good progress towards assimilation into the European, Christian, capitalist world.⁵⁹ Along with this apparent metamorphosis, there was a shift in the way that some Europeans viewed the Maori.

The information that went back to Europe in the 1830s was subtly different to that that had been reported in the 1820s. In 1820, Surgeon Galkin of the Russian Bellinghausen-Lazara expedition, which had come to New Zealand to conduct strategic intelligence, described his feelings as he approached the coast of New Zealand and saw fires in the night:

...perhaps we thought, they are even now roasting creatures like themselves on those fires...so we approached the land where Captain Marion and several English and French sailors had been eaten by the natives.⁶⁰

Other Russian sailors echoed the knowledge that passed amongst seafarers, 'of the well known and perfidious character of New Zealanders who wage constant war on one another and consume the flesh of enemies'.⁶¹ French visitors to New Zealand in the

⁵⁶ Wilson, pp.32-35; Maning, p.34; Owens, p.46.

⁵⁷ Wright, p.26. The mission families numbered well over 60 persons in total in 1830. A good majority of the European residents in the bay were supposed runaway convicts and sailors who lived in one of the pas, and who apparently disappeared when the British resident Busby arrived.

⁵⁸ Wright, p.26. Calculated from Henry Williams' figures. Williams estimated a total number of approximately 1200 Europeans in New Zealand in 1839.

⁵⁹ Wright, p.151.

⁶⁰ Morton and Morton-Johnson, pp.135 and 141. The Bellinghausen-Lazara expedition called into Queen Charlotte Sound in 1820. The Institute of Anthropology in Leningrad still holds considerable information about the expedition.

⁶¹ Morton and Morton-Johnson, p.141.

1820s were as shocked by the cannibalism as the Russians were, and made similar observations about the state of Maori society. Jules de Blosseville visited New Zealand in 1824 in the ship *Coquille*:

The inhabitants of the Northern part of the country seem to respect the missionaries but they do not accept their rules of conduct...the state of hostility in which they take pleasure incite them to take from our arts only the means to destroy one another ...gunpowder and firearms...obtaining what they need to carry out their unspeakable aims is the sole reason for the safety which the Europeans find among them today.⁶²

The effect of such reports must have confirmed the wildness of New Zealand and its indigenous population in the minds of seafarers and the public in Europe. But the 1830s saw a quickening of interest in New Zealand and many more books, pamphlets and articles were published. A new theme developed promoting the ideas of European settlement of New Zealand where the Maori would be under benevolent protection. The artist, Augustus Earle, visited in 1827 and lived amongst the tribes in the North. He reported back a very favourable and idealised view, likening the Maori to figures from the classics.⁶³ Robert Hays' *Notices of New Zealand* (1832), which was based upon Colonial Office documents, was read to the Royal Geographical Society in London. In it he argued:

...the natives have an instinctive respect, blended with fear, for the English - the chiefs for the main part wishing to place themselves under British protection. They do not possess courage but are cunning, easily bought, clever, fond of show, hardy and capable of undergoing great fatigue. They require to be treated with a mixture of firmness and kindness.⁶⁴

Hays' observation led him inexorably to the conclusion that, 'the natives are anxious to be placed under the protection of British law and would be willing to receive any person vested with power to explore it'.⁶⁵

Another paper on New Zealand was read to the Royal Geographical Society in 1834. In a similar vein to Hays', Thomas McDonnell's paper gave extensive coverage of many aspects of New Zealand, echoing typical sentiments of the time. McDonnell was overwhelmed by the physical beauty and richness of New Zealand, and he

⁶² Morton and Morton-Johnson, p.141.

⁶³ E. McCormick,(ed). *Augustus Earle, Narrative of a Residence in New Zealand*: London. 1832.

⁶⁴ Robert William Hays, 'Notices of New Zealand', 1832, reprinted in *New Zealand in the 1830s*, Hocken Library, 1979, p.7.

⁶⁵ Hays, p.11.

considered the Maori to have a better intellect than the Aborigines or other Polynesian groups:

...the New Zealanders generally speaking are a fine athletic race of men, capable of bearing much fatigue. They are keenly alive to shame, fond of military show, and those who have had intercourse with Europeans are bitterly sensible of their own degraded state... in aggregate however, I do not consider the New Zealanders as a brave race of men. Stratagem and cunning are the weapons chiefly used in their wars with each other.⁶⁶

McDonnell argued that New Zealand needed colonisation, and added from a strategic viewpoint, that in the event of a war between Great Britain and the northern powers of Europe, the value of New Zealand would be felt in its ability to supply timber and flax.⁶⁷

Edward Markham also visited New Zealand in 1834, travelling around the Bay of Islands and Hokianga. He reported broadly about his observations of Maori customs and lifestyle, food, and New Zealand's flora and fauna in a frequently employed style. Markham highlighted the missionary perspective of the Maori, quoting Marsden's aim to free these very interesting people from their cruel spiritual bondage and misery.⁶⁸ *An Account of New Zealand* (1835) by William Yate is interesting because it was written on his homeward voyage, the only published missionary account of this period not written in old age. His account, based on over six year's residence in New Zealand, gave a comprehensive description of the country and its inhabitants. In particular he observed:

...the New Zealanders are by no means suspicious of foreigners. It is true that they dislike the French, and have done so ever since the destruction of Captain Marion in the Bay of Islands, but the English and the Americans, notwithstanding the many injuries they have received from them, are always cordially welcomed, and in most instances, sought after and welcomed.⁶⁹

He made the now common observations that, 'the inhabitants of these islands are much inclined to war, which is installed at a young age', that 'there is no national bond or union between them,' and that, 'it is rarely the case that a New Zealander will attack

⁶⁶ Thomas McDonnell, 'Observations', 1834, reprinted in *New Zealand in the 1830s*, Hocken Library, pp.12-13.

⁶⁷ McDonnell, p.14.

⁶⁸ Edward Markham, *New Zealand or Recollections of it*, 1834, reprinted New Zealand Government Printer, 1963, p. 24.

⁶⁹ William Yate, *An Account of New Zealand: and the Church Missionary Society's Mission in the North Island*, 1835, reprinted by A.H. and A.W. Reed, Wellington, 1970, p.102.

unless he is sure of victory.⁷⁰ He provided considerable information about Maori warfare and described pa accurately and in detail, noting that in the opinion of military men, Hongi's lakeside pa at Mawhe showed the mark of military genius.⁷¹ As for their modes of warfare, he considered that, 'cruelty and the desire to inflict pain, mark all the proceedings of a New Zealand battle.'⁷² Yate accurately predicted that a, 'severe struggle would ensue before they would allow any force to take possession of their soil, or any portion of it.'⁷³

J.S. Polack's *New Zealand, being a Narrative of Travels and Adventures, 1831 - 37* (1838) made the claim that in 1837 in a Nga Puhi battle at Kororareka, 3000 men were engaged, at least 20,000 rounds were fired, and nobody was killed or wounded; show and fury without substance.⁷⁴ He went on to add:

To call these people brave would be sadly prostituting the word; their obstreperous noise and gesticulations have nevertheless scared some white people.⁷⁵

...They admire the courage often shown by their European friends, who are regarded as an iwi toa, a courageous tribe.⁷⁶

In 1839, the year before the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, J. Ward, Secretary to the New Zealand Company published his handbook for intending colonists called *Information Relative to New Zealand*. The book, a distillation of accounts from a large number of sources, was a summary (albeit a rosy one), of much that had been hitherto published about New Zealand. As such, it gives an interesting insight into British perceptions of New Zealand in 1839, particularly those of the colonisation lobby. Ward's tone is one of condescension. He portrayed the Maori as good savages, but far beneath the European in capability and sophistication:

They are both physically and intellectually superior to the New Hollanders; but although their capabilities of cultivation are great, they are as yet essentially a savage people...their conspicuous passion is war, and they kill and sometimes

⁷⁰ Yate, p.114.

⁷¹ Yate, pp.122-125. Hongi's pa at Mawhe was close to the pa Heke built at Puketutu. Heke chose the location partly for its political significance.

⁷² Yate, p.129.

⁷³ Yate, p.103.

⁷⁴ J.S. Polack, *New Zealand being a Narrative of Travels and Adventures, 1831-37*, London: 1838, p.40. By contrast the Girls War fought at Kororareka in 1830, (just before Polack's time), in which Nga Puhi wrested control of Kororareka from Ngati Manu saw over 100 deaths, see Angela Ballara, 'Pomare II', in *The New Zealand Dictionary of Biography*, Wellington: Allen and Unwin and The Department of Internal Affairs, 1990, p.347.

⁷⁵ Polack, p.43.

⁷⁶ Polack, p.54.

eat their vanquished enemies, scalping and exhibiting their heads as trophies.⁷⁷

While acknowledging the Maori warlike nature, Ward was at pains to assure intending colonists of their personal safety, noting that to his knowledge, not one European settler had been killed by a Maori since residents first settled in 1814.⁷⁸ These assurances of course, were designed to promote New Zealand in accordance with Ward's central theme of colonisation:

If...lawless settlers have received from the aborigines the utmost degree of toleration; ... if, as we have already shown, the missionaries have always been, and still are, regarded with a respect bordering on veneration, is it not reasonable to suppose that an orderly and peaceable British Colony, carrying with it the arts, conveniences, and comforts of European civilisation,...should be cordially welcomed by the natives of New Zealand.'⁷⁹... 'The most powerful chieftains of New Zealand consider it almost a personal insult that we settle among the Australian negroes rather than amongst them. They are offended that we do not colonise their country.⁸⁰

The selection of comments quoted in the previous two or three pages illustrate the difficulties early Europeans had in really understanding the Maori personality and culture. As Wright has explained, the Europeans at the time were not equipped, either in disposition or experience, to understand the actions of the people of another culture.⁸¹ They were unable to step outside their own cultural framework, and consequently the Maori were described in terms of what was acceptable or not in nineteenth century Victorian England. Even the great mind of Charles Darwin who visited the Bay of Islands in 1835 was euro-centric. His description of the Waimate Mission Station reveals a belief that Englishmen could, and should, civilise the Maori in their own image:

After having passed over so many miles of uninhabited, useless country, the sudden appearance of an English farm house, and its well dressed fields, placed there as if by an enchanter's wand, was exceedingly pleasing... When I looked at this whole scene I thought it admirable. It was not merely that England was vividly brought before my mind; yet, as the evening drew to a close, the domestic sounds, the fields of corn, the distant country with its trees now appearing like pasture-land all might well be mistaken for some part of it. Nor was it the triumphant feeling at seeing what Englishmen could effect, but it was something of far more consequence; the object for which this labour had been

⁷⁷ J. Ward, *Information Relative to New Zealand*, 2nd edition, London: W. Parker, 1839, p. 62.

⁷⁸ Ward, p.77.

⁷⁹ Ward. p.73.

⁸⁰ Ward. p.78.

⁸¹ Wright, p.106.

bestowed - the moral effect on the aborigines of this fine country.⁸²

Almost without exception, European commentators believed that Christianity and the Anglo-Saxon civilisation were synonymous, and that the western lifestyle was the goal less civilised races should strive for. By the 1830s and early 1840s, there was good reason to believe that Maori, in the Bay of Islands at least, were going through that transformation and that western values were beginning to prevail. In 1844 this popular view was echoed by the *Illustrated London News*:

A correspondent from New Zealand reported there is some difficulty in giving what may be considered a general description of the natives, they being at present in a state of transition from barbarism and hereditary love of war, to peace and the art of civilised life. Tribes exist in the interior, which from their little intercourse with Europeans remain in a savage state; others by the exertions of missionaries experienced a complete change in their habits and disposition.⁸³

The perception each commentator had of the Maori depended upon his or her own attitudes, personal agenda and the circumstances surrounding his or her own experience. As the cannibal coast label was gradually replaced by more optimistic assessments in the 1830s, individuals, and in particular the missionary and pro-colonisation lobbies, all waged their own public relations campaigns. Consequently there was considerable variation in the portrayal of New Zealand and of the activities of the various groups within it. An example of the difficulty Europeans had in objectively assessing a culture so different from their own can be seen in the relatively simple task of describing the Maori form of government: to Joseph Savage it was 'aristocratical and hereditary,' to John Nicholas it was feudal, while Robert FitzRoy described it as essentially democratic.⁸⁴

European visitors to New Zealand also looked upon the Maori from a position of self assumed superiority. As Sinclair has pointed out:

...to most European settlers who looked upon primitive peoples with the sympathetic eye of neither the romantic nor the anthropologist, the Maoris were simply savages. There was little or nothing to be said in favour of the way in which they lived.⁸⁵

⁸² Ward, p.80.

⁸³ *Illustrated London News*, 23 May 1844, p.18. First published on 14 May 1842, the Illustrated London News aimed for broad popular readership. It brought the British public news and drawings from the Empires colonies.

⁸⁴ Wright, p.106.

⁸⁵ Sinclair, p.6.

This attitude was sometimes malicious, but just as often grew from a paternalistic and condescending humanity. The belief that the brown skinned peoples of the world were inferior to the white led to a further distortion of Europe's view of the Maori. As Belich has argued in respect to military capabilities, the process led to a stereotyping and rationalisation, 'a reluctance to credit the Maori with the higher military talents: the capacity to co-ordinate, to think strategically, and to innovate tactically and technically'.⁸⁶ Even in 1896, Callwell was at pains to distinguish between the many types of enemy that imperial forces faced in small wars around the world. He described a hierarchy and at the top were the organised armies of 'semi-civilised races' such as Chinese, Egyptians and Afghans, that could manoeuvre and fight in a disciplined way. In the middle were disciplined armies such as the Zulu, that could manoeuvre but were equipped with savage's weapons, and at the bottom were savages, deficient in courage and provided with poor weapons; and Maori, according to Callwell, occupied that category.⁸⁷

Growing European interest in New Zealand and Maori reaction to it

The Musket Wars resulted from long term structural pressures that were internal to the Maori society. The fact that European technology, and to a lesser extent, economic factors, gave the Maori the ability to kill each other more efficiently and in vastly greater numbers, is peripheral to the long standing and underlying causes. At the same time, Maori society was subject to increasing external pressures. Hongi is reported to have spoken the famous words below on his deathbed in 1828. They imply that the great warrior who had spent considerable time in England, and who had fought a decade of inter-tribal warfare, was aware that the British military presented an external threat to the security and survival of the Nga Puhi and all Maori:

Children and friends pay attention to my last words. After I am gone, be kind to the missionaries, be kind also to the other Europeans: welcome them to the shore, trade with them, protect them and live as one people; but if there should land on this shore a people who wear red garments, who do not work, who neither buy or sell, and who always have arms in their hands, then be aware that these people are called soldiers, a dangerous people whose only occupation is war. When you see them, make war against them. Then O my children be brave!

⁸⁶ James Belich, *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1986, pp.311-335.

⁸⁷ Charles E. Callwell, *Small Wars, Their Principles and Practice*, 3rd edition, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996. pp.29-31.

Then O my friends be strong! Be brave, that you may not be enslaved and that your country may not become the possession of strangers.⁸⁸

Presumably, the internal turmoil in New Zealand had not distracted Hongi from the greater threat on the horizon. During his visits to Australia and England he would have seen British military power at first hand and would have been aware of its potential usage in New Zealand.⁸⁹ However at that stage, the British Government had not settled on a policy about New Zealand. The entrepreneurial initiative displayed by the early whalers, sealers and traders had been laudatory, but the Crown did not initially see them leading it into any formal arrangement with the Maori people. Neither did it see possession of New Zealand as a strategically important counter to the other powers that were beginning to show a growing interest in the South Pacific region at the time.

The Admiralty took no interest in New Zealand and wanted nothing to do with policing the scoundrels and doubtful characters from Europe who pursued their activities there.⁹⁰ The Foreign Office brought the attention of the matter to the Admiralty on several occasions, but it continued to refuse to act.⁹¹ In November 1830 and September 1831, the British whaling industry ran a series of false reports in London newspapers calling for the annexation of New Zealand before some other nation did. In particular, the Russians, French and Dutch were mentioned as powers seeking a colony to hamper the trade and prosperity of Britain.⁹² Still, the official Admiralty assessment at the time was that any trouble in New Zealand was likely to be internal rather than from an outside force, and that British men o'war need only visit the islands

⁸⁸ Maning, p.215. Although there is some suggestion that the saying may not be Hongi's actual words, (see Wilson, p.50.) they probably neatly summarise the Maori position at the time.

⁸⁹ Hongi's experience may well have been similar to that of Moehanga who accompanied John Savage to England in 1805. Savage described Moehanga's arrival on the island of St Helena, '...we now went on shore, and nothing escaped Moyhanger's observation. The quantity of large anchors, ordnance, and other articles formed of iron astonished him; he seemed to have hitherto entertained no adequate idea of our national wealth. Upon arriving in London, '...the number of ships from which he estimated our wealth and population, was a constant source of wonder, which upon sailing up to the port of London became perfect astonishment.' John Savage *Some Account of New Zealand*, cited in Gorden Ell, and Sarah Ell, (eds.), *Explorers, Whalers and Tattooed Sailors*: Random House, 2008, pp. 60-62.

⁹⁰ Glynn Barratt, *Russophobia in New Zealand 1838 –1908*, Palmerston North: The Dunmore Press, 1981, p.14.

⁹¹ Barratt, p.14.

⁹² Barratt. p.14.

periodically. In fact a permanent naval force was not based in Sydney until 1848 and that station did not receive independent status until 1859.⁹³

The early settlers tended to hold a similar view to the Admiralty's, however they did perceive the possibility of external threats. Their appreciation was dictated by two indisputable facts; their obvious geographical isolation from the rest of the world, and the continual reminder that they were vastly out numbered by the Maori. Although most Europeans considered that the Maori were no match for regular troops, they were aware as individuals, that they lived a perilous lifestyle within an alien and aggressive culture and that their lives were at risk.⁹⁴ The residents and businessmen, who had amassed enough possessions to feel the need to protect them, formed the Kororareka Association in 1834.⁹⁵ It was a volunteer vigilante group that developed in response to the law and order problem. Its main aim was the protection of persons and property from the rough element which lived around the town, (mainly runaway prisoners from New South Wales and sailors who had jumped ship), or who visited on ships. It was not intended to protect the town from an organised armed attack by either the Maori or any European power.

The 1830s was a period of turmoil in the Bay of Islands. Maori warfare had decreased but the interface between the two cultures became more of an issue. Law and order problems worsened and land sales became uncontrollable. The settlers were increasingly aware of the internal problems, but as the decade progressed and their numbers increased, they began to perceive the potential of a raid from one of Britain's enemies as well.⁹⁶ They were aware that if they were drawn into a war, their tremendous isolation and lack of military protection made them vulnerable to even the lowest level of attack.⁹⁷ Britain provided no land forces for New Zealand until after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. The first governor, Hobson, had no ship at his disposal and Royal Navy support, as noted above, was only intermittent. Indeed from 1840

⁹³ Ian McGibbon, *The Path to Gallipoli*, Wellington: Government Printer, 1991, p.2.

⁹⁴ Barratt, p.15.

⁹⁵ Garry Clayton, *The New Zealand Army: A History from the 1840s to the 1990s*: Wellington, New Zealand Army, 1990, p 9.

⁹⁶ Barratt, p.15.

⁹⁷ McGibbon, p.3.

onwards, the Admiralty was less than confident in its own power to provide Imperial Defence, especially in the Pacific.⁹⁸

By contrast, the French were on the move in the Pacific with warships permanently in the area from 1837 onwards. The French established a colony near Akaroa in 1840 and had well advanced plans to proclaim sovereignty over parts of the Middle [South] Island. Great Britain had kept her intentions and treaty negotiations with the Maori secret. When Captain Lavaud, the commander of the French colonising expedition, called at the Bay of Islands in July 1840 *en route* to Akaroa to communicate with Bishop Pompallier, he learnt to his horror that Hobson had proclaimed sovereignty over the whole country on 31 May 1840.⁹⁹

As early as 1843, there were settler plans to erect a substantial battery of guns on Somes Island to protect Wellington's Harbour from raiders.¹⁰⁰ It is also interesting to note that France protected her colony in Akaroa well, equipping it with six field guns and three redoubts in addition to the man o'war. The activities of the French missionaries in the north, particularly in Kororareka, were another reason for suspicion by the predominantly British settlers. The relationship between the French catholic priests and the influential Church Missionary Society (CMS) missionaries was nearly always confrontational. Bishop Pompallier was commonly suspected of inciting Maori discontent with British authority, although no substantial evidence for that claim has been produced.

Second only to the French as bogey men were the Russians. Barratt argues that the colonists inherited Britain's dislike of the Russians, and that New Zealand was the most apprehensive of all of Britain's colonies in that respect.¹⁰¹ There is no evidence to show that Russia ever planned to attack New Zealand, but even so, she practised the art of intelligence-gathering with surprising thoroughness. The Russian Naval Ministry and the Naval Staff gathered information about New Zealand in the event that Russia and Britain should go to war. The Bellinghausen-Lazara expedition of 1820 collected data

⁹⁸ McGibbon, p.4.

⁹⁹ Claudia Orange, *An Illustrated History of the Treaty of Waitangi*, Wellington: Allen and Unwin, 1990, p.35.

¹⁰⁰ McGibbon, p.3.

¹⁰¹ Barratt, p.15.

on New Zealand's resources (food, water supplies, coal, timber, harbours and commerce), and the Maori people. It is important to note the emphasis given to those two elements already established in this thesis as the two components of military intelligence; physical and cultural geography. Russia sought the information for two inter-related reasons; knowledge of resources important to Britain gave a point of vulnerability, and they could also be exploited by Russian forces in the area. Gathering of data continued until 1882 and many books about New Zealand were translated into Russian.

The third major national group with an interest in New Zealand was the Americans. Whalers from New England had been amongst the earliest callers to the country, and by 1840 Americans had considerable economic interest in New Zealand. In 1838, American vessels represented by far the largest number of ships from a single country visiting the Bay of Islands.¹⁰² In 1839 alone, eighty American whaling ships were operating in New Zealand waters and even the British Admiralty was becoming concerned about the American presence in the area.¹⁰³

The role of American nationals in inflaming Maori disaffection has long been a matter of speculation. That question is addressed in more detail in the following chapter. There is very good evidence to show that Heke was made aware of the parallels between the Maori situation and that of America when it was a British colony. A natural political antagonism and a threat to their trading activities seem to have occasioned meddling in the internal politics of the fledgling British colony by some Americans. The United States Consul in the Bay of Islands was the highest ranking foreign official in New Zealand before the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, and this may have been a reason to be aggrieved when the country came under British control.

As one might expect, the Maori had drawn different lessons with respect to the process of contact between the two races. Maori society had no concept of nationhood that embraced all peoples of their race, and indeed the word Maori was not in common use at that time. Individuals had a tribal allegiance and identified themselves in that

¹⁰² J.H. Wallace, *Manual of New Zealand History*, Wellington: 1886, p.15. In 1838, ship visits to the Bay of Islands were: American 56, New South Wales 24, British 12, French 21, others 7.

¹⁰³ McGibbon, p.5.

way, i.e. Nga Puhi, Ngati Whatua, or Ngai Te Rangi. Within these self-governing tribal and sub-tribal groupings, each chief was largely autonomous in his authority. In the 1830s, there was for the first time, the embryonic development of a supra-tribal perspective.¹⁰⁴ The arrival of the strangers from across the water and the increased settlement and problems it brought, forced the chiefs who had contact with them into strategic considerations never before relevant. How were they likely to deal with these visitors? Were they all to be considered in the same light, or were some to be preferred?

In general, the Maori in the Bay of Islands feared the French, whom they called, among other things,¹⁰⁵ ‘the tribe of Marion’ in reference to Marion du Fresne. The unhappy memories of du Fresne’s visit and the contact with the French sailors caused disquiet amongst the Maori when the French ship *La Favorite* was noted to be in New Zealand waters. The day it anchored in 1831, thirteen Northern chiefs of the newly formed Confederation of Chiefs signed a petition to King William IV stating, ‘we have heard that the tribe of Marion is at hand coming to take our land, therefore we pray thee to become our friend and guardian of these islands.’¹⁰⁶ The activities of some other Europeans had also become a cause for concern. Samuel Marsden and Governor Ralph Darling of New South Wales were worried about the increasing trade in shrunken heads. The inability to prosecute Captain Stewart of the *Elizabeth*, who assisted Te Rauparaha in his massacre of the Nga Tahu at Akaroa, finally prompted the need for some controls over the Europeans in New Zealand. Interestingly, Moon has argued that the *Elizabeth* incident proved to Maori that Europeans could be useful allies.¹⁰⁷

The response was to send James Busby as British resident, ‘to live among the Maori for their better protection.’ By 1835 a larger number of chiefs from a greater geographical area had added their voices, writing to the King urging him to protect their country and ensure its independence.¹⁰⁸ News of the Frenchman Baron de Thierry’s intention to establish a kingdom in the Hokianga concerned Busby enough for him to call together the chiefs in October 1835, to declare, as the United Tribes of New Zealand, that New Zealand was a free and independent country. Although the hands of

¹⁰⁴ Sinclair, p.18. Supra-tribal at least for the Northern tribes around the Bay of Islands/ Hokianga.

¹⁰⁵ Another name for the French was ‘wee wees’, after the French words Oui Oui – yes, yes.

¹⁰⁶ J.C. Anderson, and G.C. Peterson, *The Mair Family*, Wellington: A.H. and A.W. Reed, 1956, p.18.

¹⁰⁷ Moon, *Fatal Frontiers*, p.37.

¹⁰⁸ Patricia Bawden, *The Years Before Waitangi*, Auckland: Published by the author, 1987, p.144.

the settlers, missionaries and Busby are clearly seen in these Maori resolutions,¹⁰⁹ it remains apparent that the chiefs of the Bay of Islands area saw the British as some kind of friend and ally and the French as a potential enemy. A more cynical interpretation may construe the Maori assessment of the British as the lesser of the two evils.

The reasons why the Maori in the Bay of Islands may have preferred the British can be fairly deduced. The massacre by du Fresne's men clearly left residual ill-feeling. The majority of settlers and missionaries were British and they too must have influenced Maori attitudes. Many Maori had been educated in mission schools, both British and French (after 1838), and the missionaries took the opportunity both formally and indirectly, to praise their own countries and to roundly condemn the others.¹¹⁰ The British were there in greater numbers, had been there since 1814 and had more stations, both Church Missionary Society and Wesleyan, in key locations, and Henry Williams, the leading CMS missionary was a strong personality and indefatigable traveller and peacemaker. It is also interesting to speculate about the relative prestige of the respective countries. The Maori would have been aware that Britain had defeated France in a major war in 1815; did they prefer to ally themselves to the superpower of the day?

In 1837, settlers and missionaries who were unconvinced about the ability of the chiefs to control the growing law and order problem petitioned the king for his protection. To the Crown, the Kororareka Association, and a similar organisation formed by the Wellington citizenry for their protection, smelt of republicanism, and in view of the deteriorating circumstances and the imminent mass migration from England, Lord Glenelg decided in December 1838, that New Zealand should have a consul.¹¹¹ In so doing, he set in train events which led inevitably to the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi on 6 February 1840.

¹⁰⁹ Bawden, p.144.

¹¹⁰ Moon, *Fatal Frontiers*, p.54; Jinty Rorke, (ed.), *Fr. J.A.M. Chouvet, A Marist Missionary in New Zealand 1843-1846*: Whakatane: Whakatane and District Historical Society, Jul 1985, p.16. Chouvet presented the typically hostile view of a French Catholic Missionary towards the British CMS missionaries. He also made an insightful observation about the Maori penchant for warfare: 'after having drunk a warlike temperament from their mothers milk, they hear, everyday of their childhood, their fathers, their mothers and their neighbours praising the glories of arms, singing of the courage and deeds of warriors and applauding the massacre of their enemies. It is easy then to understand why men brought up this way think only of fighting.'

¹¹¹ Anderson and Peterson, p.22.

The signing of the treaty reflected, among other things, the threat assessments of each of the three principal parties; the Crown, the Maori and the settlers. The Crown was seemingly unconcerned with the expansionism of the French and the activities of the Americans in the region.¹¹² It came to the treaty table primarily for the protection of the British citizens (current and imminent) and their livelihoods, partly for trade and partly for the humanitarian protection of the Maori. The Crown did not fear the Maori as a military power, and any concern that Maori military opposition would endanger British settlement was not a factor in its decision to treat with the chiefs. However there was a realisation that the process of colonisation carried with it the risk of war. The British had seen this phenomenon previously and understood that if their interests and welfare were over-ridden, the indigenous people would fight for their survival. The Marquis of Normandy's orders to the first governor, Hobson, are instructive:

Several hundred people have recently sailed from this country to occupy and cultivate these lands...Unless protected and restrained...they will repeat unchecked, in that quarter of the globe, the same process of war and spoilation under which uncivilised tribes have almost invariably disappeared...To mitigate, and if possible, to avert these disasters...is the principal objective of your mission.¹¹³

Sinclair argued that, 'above all, the aim of the authorities was to avoid Maori war...to avoid if possible, the disasters and the guilt of a sanguinary conflict with the Native Tribes...and the peaceful settlement and Maori conversion to Europe, amalgamation without war.'¹¹⁴ War was to be avoided, not because of the threat that Maori posed, but because of the damage it would do to them. Neither the British government nor the settlers feared war with Maori. Both had failed to make the correct assessment about Maori military capability, and in fact Busby was more concerned about desperadoes than the Maori.¹¹⁵ The settlers' concerns were more about the lack of law and order and the need to protect their own commercial interests. This was best achieved, in the view of the majority, by establishing British authority over the country before some other power took the opportunity to do so. It must be remembered however, that the settlers represented a variety of nationalities, religions and

¹¹² Owens, p.51.

¹¹³ Sinclair, p.66; H. Miller, *Race Conflict in New Zealand 1814-1865*, Auckland: Blackwood and Janet Paul, 1966. The Marquis of Normandy to Captain Hobson 14 August 1839. These were instructions to Hobson as he prepared to negotiate the Treaty of Waitangi.

¹¹⁴ Sinclair, p.20.

¹¹⁵ C.T. Brooking, 'The Defence of the New Zealand Colonies against the Maoris during the Governorships of Hobson and Fitzroy'. MA Thesis, Auckland University, 1947, p.22.

occupations, and that they all had their own self-seeking interests for living in New Zealand.

If it is difficult to identify a general settler viewpoint, it is almost impossible to speak about a collective Maori assessment of their future enemy. With no central government or policy, Maori society was confused and divided about how to react to the increasingly large number of Europeans. In fact its highly factionated political structure rendered Maori society, in 1840, incapable of holding a broad view of its circumstances, or of coalescing a substantial united military force beyond individual tribal boundaries. The defence of all of the islands of New Zealand was neither a consideration, nor a possibility.

By 1840, Maori society had a serious problem to confront. It had accepted the fruits of trade with the Europeans, and in the early stages, it had been able to control the process. But now it had become more difficult to control the relentless pressure of European settlement, the hunger for land, and the intrusion of western influences, many of which were deleterious to Maori health and social structures. Whilst the sharp land dealers, shrewd traders and drunken sailors presented enough immediate problems, those Maori who had travelled abroad must surely have had a sense of the immense power and resources of the British Empire which lay, both figuratively and literally, just over the horizon.

The debates amongst the various chiefs during the treaty discussions clearly summarised the Maori situation. How were they to make the best use of the relationship between the Europeans and Maori without losing control of the process? At the immediate level in the Bay of Islands, the situation was rapidly moving out of their control, and at the strategic level, decisions that had been made and events that were in progress had moved the situation beyond the point where Maori could control it, even though most had not yet realised that fact. Sorrenson observed:

...some chiefs expressed doubts over their future if they signed, but the more prescient of them saw that it was impossible to turn back the British and necessary to come to terms with them.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ M.P.K. Sorrenson, 'Maori and Pakeha', in G.W. Rice, (ed.) p.14.

Hakiro and Tareha were among the majority of chiefs who were initially hostile to the idea of signing the treaty. Their assessments are reflected in their comments to Hobson:

Some might tell you to stay here, but I say this is not the place for you. We are not your people. We are free. We don't need you and we don't want you. *Hakiro*

We chiefs are the rulers and we won't be ruled over. If we were all to have rank equal to you that might be acceptable. But if we are going to be subordinate to you, then I say get back to your ship and sail away. *Tareha*¹¹⁷

Comments like these tended to emphasise the importance of tribal rivalries; chiefly mana and concerns about lost land.¹¹⁸ Waka Nene took a more pragmatic approach and Heke too, shared an awareness of the broader strategic issues:

I'm going to speak first to you [the chiefs]. Some of you tell Hobson to go. But that's not going to solve our difficulties. We have already sold so much of our land here in the north. We have no way of controlling the Europeans who have settled it. I'm amazed to hear you telling him to go! Why didn't you tell the traders and grog sellers to go years ago? There are too many Europeans here now and there are children that unite both races.

[To Hobson] Don't be too concerned about what these others are saying. We need you as a friend, a judge, a peace maker and as governor. You must preserve our customs, and never permit our lands to be taken from us. *Waka Nene*.

Governor you should stay with us and be like a father. If you go away then the French or the rum sellers will take us Maori over. How can we know what the future will bring? If you stay we can be 'all as one' with you and the missionaries. *Hone Heke*¹¹⁹

A deteriorating situation

Despite the earnest hope that the New Zealanders would be all as one, and that the treaty would prevent conflict, the situation steadily deteriorated. With hindsight, it is possible to trace quite clearly, the developments between 1840-1845 which led to war between the British Crown and some of Nga Puhi. These developments have been well documented elsewhere and need not be repeated here. However, the role of military intelligence and the picture that each party developed about the other's military capabilities and intentions has been ignored.

¹¹⁷ Orange, p.16.

¹¹⁸ Owens, p.51.

¹¹⁹ Orange, p.17.

Law and order, and internal security and inter-tribal warfare, so much topics of debate in the years leading up to the treaty, were not addressed with the urgency required after the treaty had been signed. The first governor, Hobson, brought four constables of the New South Wales Mounted Police with him, but they were his personal bodyguard rather than a police force. Squabbles between the two races made Hobson keenly aware of the isolation and fragility of the new colony. The responsibilities of the task before him weighed heavily on him, and he perhaps more than anyone else became constantly aware of the potential danger.

The colony of New South Wales provided 100 officers and men of the 80th Regiment under the command of Major Bunbury, who landed on 16 April 1840 in order to help Hobson assert his authority.¹²⁰ Hobson hoped that the presence of the troops would overawe the Maori whom he considered were in an ‘excited state’. Even so, he became aware that his force was inadequate and he continually badgered both the British government and New South Wales for more troops, arguing that the ‘native population are a warlike race, well armed and ever ready to use those arms on the slightest provocation’.¹²¹ Bunbury too, was aware that the veneer of British power and authority was extremely thin, and although the Maori, ‘had an almost superstitious dread of encountering the military, [Bunbury] was shrewd enough to see that the least check would dissolve the charm’.¹²² The Maori were fascinated by the fact that the British soldiers were full time warriors who had no other function in life other than to fight. As Bunbury explained:

The Maoris seemed impressed with the very extraordinary idea of what soldiers were, conceiving them to be a peculiar race, distinct from all other Europeans, and in combat not to be overcome, and it was by keeping up this prestige that so small a force was, for the four years that I remained in the country, to keep them in subjugation. They had also an idea that every military man down to the private soldier ranked as a chief.¹²³

Bunbury was a very large man with a strong and forceful personality. His size, manner, and the personal bravery that he displayed on several documented occasions, must have been a factor in the continued illusion of British military invincibility. He

¹²⁰ Buick, p.14.

¹²¹ Buick, p.15.

¹²² Buick, P.16.

¹²³ Brooking, pp. 52-55, (cites Bunbury, Vol. III).

considered that a force of at least ‘200 bayonets’ would be required to put down any native uprising, and that the force should be based in the capital at Auckland. This was achieved towards the end of 1842, by returning troops of the 96th Regiment from the settlement of Wellington to Auckland. Settlers south of Auckland reacted angrily to this policy because they felt isolated and defenceless. Hobson had already banned the New Zealand Company Militia, which was an armed volunteer unit of adult males in each company settlement, because as an essentially private army, it would not represent his fragile authority.¹²⁴ The response of the settlers was simply to reform the units unofficially, and in 1841, units were again established in Auckland and Wanganui, as well as Kororareka.¹²⁵

Settler demand for land was rapidly becoming a major problem, carrying with it the potential for armed conflict. Minor skirmishes over land took place in New Plymouth and Wellington, and in June 1843, hostilities finally erupted between the races at Wairau. Armed settlers and officials of the New Zealand Company’s Nelson settlement tried to force their claim on an area of disputed land and tried to arrest the chief Te Rauparaha. In the ensuing skirmish, six Maori and 19 Europeans were killed.¹²⁶ A number of the Europeans killed had actually surrendered and were subsequently tomahawked by an enraged Te Rangihaeata whose wife had been killed in the *fracas*.¹²⁷ The European settlements throughout New Zealand panicked and racial tension reached new heights. Militia units were formed in a number of communities, and news of the massacre, (as Europeans called it), reached Britain where it caused outrage and halted emigration to New Zealand for a time.

Clarke, the Chief Protector of Aborigines, concluded in his report on the incident that the settlers and magistrates had been in the wrong in attempting to enforce by arms a policy of pushing the Maori off their lands, and he praised those Maori involved for

¹²⁴ Buick, p.9. Bunbury claimed that Hobson was very jealous of his authority and was obstinate. One of Bunbury’s main difficulties was preventing Hobson dissipating his meagre force by posting detachments to each settlement.

¹²⁵ Clayton, p.10.

¹²⁶ This is the figure calculated by Clarke, Chief Protector of Aborigines, see Ashcroft, Appendix 8. Several other sources state that that 22 Europeans were killed.

¹²⁷ Sorrenson, p.150.

their forbearance.¹²⁸ Although his attribution of guilt for provoking the incident was probably correct, Clarke also endorsed, rather naively, the assurance that:

It is a principle with the natives, in all cases of extremity between themselves and the Europeans, to act only on the defensive. ‘We will not’ say they, ‘fire a gun at a European until we see our people first murdered.’¹²⁹

Governor Hobson died in September 1842 and his replacement, Robert FitzRoy, inherited an extremely awkward situation. He had to deal with the problem in a way that



Fig.2.2. Captain Robert FitzRoy circa 1860.
Alexander Turnbull Library.

FitzRoy’s estimation, provoked the sacking of any number of towns including Auckland and Wellington:

...a gentleman at Wellington, one of the Company’s settlers was right in asserting that the colonists were living on a volcano, yet how little did he and

¹²⁸ Wallace, p.22.

¹²⁹ Ashcroft, Appendix 8

¹³⁰ The colony was in a poor state when Fitzroy assumed office in December 1843. Hobson had died on 10 September 1842, and for the intervening sixteen months it was administered by Acting-Governor, Lieutenant Shortland. Shortland was not up to the task and the colony, finance and racial situation included, steadily deteriorated.

¹³¹ Robert FitzRoy, *Remarks on New Zealand in February 1846*, London: W. and M. White, 1846, p.19.

others then know of the really formidable character of the New Zealand warrior.¹³²

The British military force in the colony at the time was comprised of two companies of the 80th Regiment and one of the 96th, all garrisoned in Auckland. The settlers had an estimated 400 muskets in the whole country, little ammunition and no defensible position or place of shelter for the women and children. FitzRoy felt that there was no military option immediately open to him, and even to prevaricate, he argued, was likely to initiate a general preparation for hostilities amongst the Maori population. Consequently, he accepted Clarke's advice, rebuked the magistrates and the New Zealand Company for their role at Wairau, and praised Te Rauparaha for his forbearance. The Maori response to FitzRoy's actions was one of amazement. Whilst the majority of Maori probably agreed with Te Rauparaha's motives, they did not approve of his methods. Maori, and Te Rauparaha himself, feared *utu* (customary revenge) which would have been a correct response according to Maori lore. FitzRoy's legally correct but lenient response was seen as the action of a weak man. His justification of his actions reveals his assessment of the relative military strength of Maori and the government:

My object always was to avoid bringing on a trial of physical strength, with those, who in that respect, were overwhelmingly our superiors; but gradually to gain the necessary influence and authority by a course of scrupulous justice, truth and benevolence.¹³³

The paradox is clear. FitzRoy needed to assert his authority as governor but was afraid to do so for fear of provoking a Maori uprising. Meanwhile, the Maori expected him to act with the power and authority of his status as the highest rangatira (chief), and doubted his resolve because of the lenience he had shown. Slowly the mask was falling and the nature of British authority was beginning to be revealed as illusory. The actions of the British officials had not lived up to the Maori expectations of them. The colony had not been well served by its governors who had failed to control the developing problems. Busby had been derided as a weak man because he had been incapable, both in personality and resources, of enforcing his decisions. Hobson, the first governor, had a difficult personality, was insufficiently resourced and suffered poor health. Shortland,

¹³² FitzRoy, p.20.

¹³³ Brooking, p.146. FitzRoy addressing the citizens of Auckland on 5 December 1845, soon after his dismissal as Governor.

who acted as a caretaker until FitzRoy arrived, proved to be unequal to the task and he simply let the colony drift. FitzRoy as we have seen felt unable to act in a way to impress his authority on either the settlers or the Maori and he was constantly undermined by settler groups and the New Zealand Company¹³⁴. In the north, the Nga Puhi who had many reasons to feel aggrieved, watched the events with great interest, and a new saying passed from some of their lips, ‘is Te Rangihaeata to have the honour of killing all of the Pakeha?’¹³⁵ Major Bunbury’s fear that the charm the Europeans held over the Maori would dissolve, was becoming a reality.

Summary and discussion

From the very first meeting, the relationships between European and Maori were charged with hostility. The huge gulf in understanding between the two cultures led to misunderstandings, and those misunderstandings quickly led to violence. Amongst Europeans, the Maori acquired a bloodthirsty reputation and New Zealand was known as the cannibal coast. The Maori thought that the first Europeans were supernatural creatures, but even once they appreciated European mortality, they still held their military technology and the idea that they had full-time soldiers in awe. The acquisition of muskets became the single-minded goal of most chiefs.

The musket wars provided the opportunity to master the new technology, and to modify tactics and pa design to meet the different capabilities of the musket. European commentators considered that the chaotic political structure of Maori society and the ill discipline of individual warriors meant that they could be bested by a force of only several hundred regular troops. Consequently, Maori military power was continually underestimated. The Europeans knew that the Maori were aggressive, that they carried arms openly and used them expertly and often, and that they valued martial endeavour in their men. In short, they were a warrior race. They had seen the Maori desire to obtain muskets and their growing proficiency with them. They had witnessed or heard about their ability to raise large armies and travel long distances with all the attendant logistic and co-ordination problems, and still they did not take them seriously as a military threat because they simply considered them to be savages.

¹³⁴ Paul Moon, *FitzRoy Governor in Crisis 1843-1845*, Auckland: David Ling Publishing, 2000, p.235.
¹³⁵ Holt, p.78.

By 1840 each race really knew very little about the other and their fundamental aims and values remained obscured. Many Maori of course had never seen a European, but in areas such as the Bay of Islands the contact had been constant. Many Europeans had committed their observations to writing, and a large body of information about the country and the Maori people existed. Much of this information was superficial and there was hardly an overall or coherent picture. From the Maori perspective, men of Hone Heke's generation had grown up in an almost bi-cultural world. Many had been educated by the missionaries and some had travelled abroad or worked in and around towns such as Kororareka. In fact, the young Maori warriors probably had a higher literacy rate than either the settlers or the British soldiers.¹³⁶

The British government initially saw little strategic value in possessing the islands of New Zealand, but once the decision to annex the country had been made, its appreciation of the potential for race warfare led to policies designed to minimise that circumstance. The colony got off to a poor start. The early death of Hobson and the directionless stewardship of Shortland, meant that by 1843 the colony had many problems, of which the sale of land and the governor's authority over the Maori chiefs were the two most volatile.

Maori dissatisfaction had grown rapidly since the signing of the treaty. With the cavalier nature of some settler actions and attitudes, and the growing Maori intransigence over land sales, armed conflict seemed inevitable. Sinclair argued that the parties learned different lessons from the events surrounding the Wairau Affray, 'the Maoris came to believe that they could beat Europeans in battle; the settler discovered the value of military action in settling disputes with the Maoris.'¹³⁷ Although the *combined* military power of the Maori was easily the match for Europeans in New Zealand at the time, the simple fact was that it was not combined. Maori society was not in general agreement about how to deal with the European problem, and unlike the Waikato War twenty years later it did not have the political ability to attempt to co-

¹³⁶ Miller, p.14. Governor Grey to Secretary of State, 9 July 1849, 'Instructed by the missionaries, probably a greater proportion of the population than in any country in Europe, are able to read and write.' Hursthouse, *An Account of New Plymouth*, 1949, 'Of males, between 15 and 30 it is estimated that 3 out of four can both read and write.' J. Duncan, and J. Walton, *Heroes for Victoria*, Spellmount Limited, 1991, p.43. '10% of all British soldiers were literate at least until the last quarter of the century.'

¹³⁷ Sinclair, p.64.

ordinate a resistance. Thus in the Northern War of 1845-46, Nga Puhi factionalism resulted in a much weaker resistance than would have been the case if all of that tribe's power had been directed against the British.

Such an assessment also failed to account for the immense power and vast resources of the British Crown. Although the Maori would win some battles, they should have learned they would lose the last battle,¹³⁸ such was the military power of the Crown. Again this was the case in the Northern War. Although Heke and Kawiti were able to win the first three battles, they eventually could not counter the continual escalation of British manpower and resources. In this way they were just another page in the story of world-wide nineteenth century colonial warfare:

Native states were hard-pressed to resist European encroachment. ...In most cases, indigenous forces simply incorporated modern weapons into familiar tactical systems, rather than evolve methods that allowed them to be used to advantage. Many of these armies were designed for raiding rather than for total war, a concept in itself alien to most indigenous societies. The prospect of fighting a series of bloody battles against a relentless European invader caused empires to shatter, subject groups to rebel, and isolated villages or tribes to make their own peace with the invader.¹³⁹

The Bay of Islands was the area with the longest and most intensive contact between the two races, and it is not surprising that it was the area where tension was the greatest and where war first broke out. It is important to appreciate that war erupted, not as a result of the initial meeting of two alien cultures, but rather when the two had reached some kind of parity of power and influence in particular locations. The first major conflict, the Northern War, was more about sovereignty than land. It was the first serious clash of arms between the two races, and the British showed that they had learned nothing more about Maori military capabilities from the Wairau Affray than they had from the Musket Wars.

By 1845, it had been just over 200 years between the first contact between Maori and Europeans and the outbreak of war between the two races. The establishment of a rudimentary Intelligence Branch in the War Office in London was still thirty years away. Despite all that had been written about New Zealand and all of the information that had gone back to England, the military commanders who arrived to fight the Maori

¹³⁸ Sinclair, p.64.

had very little knowledge about the situation they were entering. As the next chapter will illustrate, they underestimated their enemy and the difficulties of campaigning in New Zealand and they paid a high price in battle casualties for doing so.

¹³⁹ Porch, Introduction to Callwell, p.xvi.

Chapter Three

The Northern War 1845-46

I beg to say that my observations regarding information were general. I have never received any that was of use. That given me regarding the roads was decidedly wrong. It was told me at Auckland that there was a capital dray road to Waimate. I found it execrable. I never could obtain the slightest correct information regarding the localities of the pah itself, either of its internal form or its defences, or even of the probable number of its defenders. Lieutenant Colonel Henry Despard¹

A brief overview of the war

The Northern War was a series of battles fought over a ten month period between 11 March 1845 and 11 January 1846. The war began when the Nga Puhi chiefs Hone Heke and Kawiti attacked the flagstaff above Kororareka, and the town itself, on

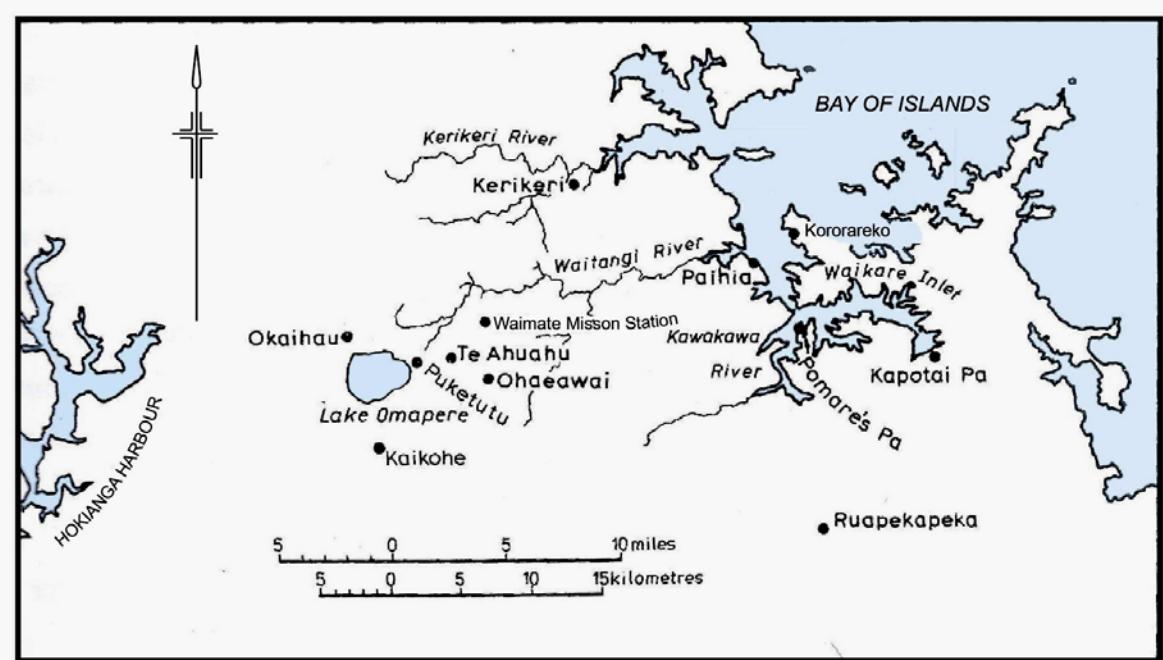


Fig.3.1 Map showing the theatre of operations in the Northern War. Adapted by the author from Belich, *The New Zealand Wars*, p.31.

11 March.² The precision of the Maori attack was in sharp contrast to the ineptitude of the British defence of the town. After a morning of fighting which saw the British lurch

¹ Henry Williams, *Plain Facts Relative to the Late War in the Northern District of New Zealand*, Auckland: Phillip Kunst, 1847, p.21.

² T. Kawiti, 'Heke's War in the North', undated, (WPL), p.39.

from disaster to disaster, Kororareka was abandoned, and most of it was subsequently looted and burned by Heke and Kawiti's men on a drunken rampage.³

Heke had only intended to make another gesture by felling the flagstaff for a fourth time, and he and his followers watched in amazement as the towns-folk abandoned their shops and homes. He had not reckoned on starting a war, but that is exactly what he got. The British response was to undertake offensive operations in an effort, initially at least, to capture Heke.⁴ A force of 470 men under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Hulme sailed from Auckland to the Bay of Islands in April 1845, and after some confusion about routes and locations, Hulme decided to attack Heke's pa at Puketutu near the eastern shores of Lake Omapere (see Fig.3.1). The battle fought on May 8th 1845, was a victory for Heke and Kawiti, and showed that Maori pa and their defenders were more formidable adversaries than the British had previously imagined.

A minor and unsuccessful operation against the Kapotai tribe by Major Bridge was followed by the battle of Ohaeawai on 1 July 1845. Colonel Despard attacked Kawiti in his brilliantly engineered but lightly defended pa in a display of asininity which confounded all observers and participants. A period of peace negotiations which followed proved fruitless, and on 18 November 1845, Governor Grey arrived to replace Governor FitzRoy, whom the British Crown had dismissed in the belief that he had mismanaged the colony.

Grey had the good fortune to bring a great increase in money and military resources with him. He immediately asserted his authority as Governor over the neutral and pro-government Nga Puhi chiefs, and put an end to the procrastination of peace talks with the rebel chiefs. A force of almost 1200 troops and 450 Maori allies attacked Kawiti's pa at Ruapekapeka on 11 January 1846. The pa was taken under controversial

³ James Cowan, *The New Zealand Wars and the Pioneering Period*, Wellington: Government Printer, vol. 1, 1922, p.33; James Belich, *The New Zealand Wars, and the Victorian interpretation of Racial Conflict*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1986, p.37; Chris Pugsley, 'Walking Heke's War, Kororareka', *New Zealand Defence Quarterly*, No.1, Winter, 1993, p.16. All agree that it was not until the citizens abandoned the town that the looting began. Williams points out that under Maori lore, the abandonment signalled that the town's treasures now belonged to the attackers, see Henry Williams, Archdeacon. *Fall of Kororareka in 1845*, Auckland: Creighton and Scales, 1863, p.5.

⁴ Cyprian Bridge, Maj, 'Journal of Events on an Expedition to New Zealand, commencing on 4 April 1845', (WTU), pp.1-2.

circumstances still debated today.⁵ All parties were now war weary, and the issues which inspired Heke and Kawiti to take up arms, essentially economic and sovereign, seemed far removed as British troops marched across their lands and Royal Navy men o'war dominated the bay. Heke had lost his stomach for war⁶ and Kawiti too had had enough of war although his reputation remained intact.⁷ The British had not eaten those who were slain so there was no call for retribution:⁸

To continue would have meant a struggle to the point of extermination. Reckoning up the costs in lives lost during the fighting everyone appeared to have arrived at the same conclusion, that an honourable peace should now be concluded.⁹

And so the Northern War which had been fought in such a chivalrous way was concluded in an equally gentlemanly manner. No recriminations were made and both sides withdrew from the field with honour more or less intact. The fighting was concluded in a way that ensured the peace would be lasting. But what was the impact of military intelligence? How much had those battle field enemies known about each other? To what extent had the combatants used military intelligence, and how did it influence the course and outcome of the war?

British knowledge of the geography of the area of operations

The Northern War was fought in a geographically small area measuring only 20 by 30 kilometres. Heke's tribal area and power base was to the western side of the area of operations in the region of Lake Omapere (see Fig. 3.1). Kawiti's power base was to the eastern side in the vicinity of the Kawakawa River. Travel and communication throughout the region was not difficult for the local Maori and consequently there was a rapid flow of information and manpower throughout the area.

European knowledge of the physical geography of the Bay of Islands in 1845 was far from complete, being limited mainly to the major communication routes and the

⁵ The traditional 'Sunday Prayers' explanation for the fall of the pa had been persuasively dismissed by Belich who maintains that the pa was intentionally abandoned, not accidentally lost. He further argues that Kawiti's plan was to fight the battle behind the pa from ambush positions. His argument here is less convincing. In reality the pa had become untenable and Kawiti was forced to abandon it, possibly covering his retreat with an ambush which allowed his main body to make a clean getaway; a common military tactic.

⁶ K. Martin, 'Kawiti Te Ruki', *The Dictionary of New Zealand Bibliography*, vol.1. Wellington: Allen and Unwin and Department of Internal Affairs, p.220.

⁷ Cowan, p.4.

⁸ Kawiti, p.41.

⁹ Kawiti, p.45.

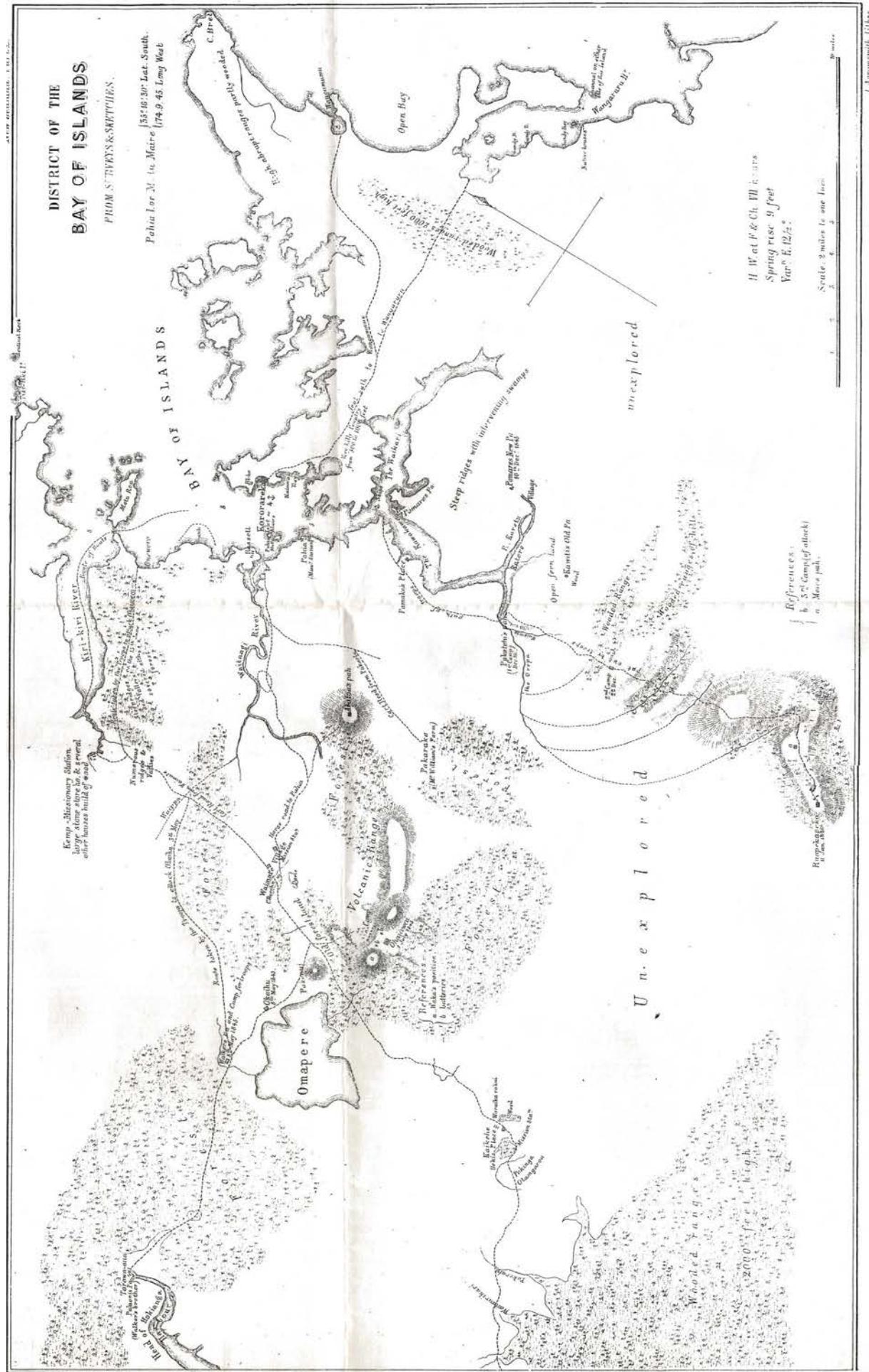


Fig. 3.2. Map drawn by John Arrowsmith of the District of the Bay of Islands, surveyed after the Northern War and published in 1853. It shows large tracts of the area as 'unexplored' which indicates the limited European knowledge of the area at the time. Auckland War Memorial Museum.

coast. It was the region of New Zealand which had had the longest and most intensive contact with Maori, but even so, few Europeans could claim to know the area well. The waterways of the bay were more familiar for obvious reasons. European shipping had used them for over 50 years, and charts and local knowledge provided enough information for reasonably accurate navigation. European trading activities were based around the coastline in major settlements or small enclaves, and the residents of these had some knowledge of the surrounding countryside. Similarly, the few European farmers had a tolerable knowledge of their surroundings, but this group was not great in number and, as with the traders, they still tended to be located near the coastline.

Several missionaries had settled inland in what was known at the time as the 'interior'. The Church Missionary Society had a station in the Bay of Islands at Paihia and the French Catholics had one at Kororareka, but it was the inland CMS stations which really took the Europeans into the heart of the Nga Puhi domain. The two inland stations were at Kerikeri and Waimate, and they were linked by a rough cart road. Other communication routes in the interior were primarily Maori foot tracks. The Waimate station had been established on fertile soil as a food basket for all of the northern CMS mission activities. It was deep into Heke's territory and close to Okaihau where Nene established a pa as the base for his operations during the war.¹⁰

Arrowsmith's 1853 map of the area (see Fig 3.2), drew upon contemporary survey and sketch information, and provides an indication of the European knowledge of the interior at this time. Even by 1853, seven years after the Northern War, large areas of the map were labelled as unexplored. Only major geographical features such as inlets, lakes and large volcanic cones are shown, and even the shoreline is generalised in many places. The communication routes drawn were essentially those used by the British troops to move to and from the battle sites. The route to Ruapekapeka is instructive. It shows the dotted line of the route of march and only very generalised information to either side of it; presumably obtained by viewing the surrounding countryside from the track itself. So even by 1853, it appears that European knowledge of the interior was substantially restricted to those routes which had been used in the war seven years earlier.

¹⁰ The missionaries were familiar with certain parts of the interior within their parishes. Reverend Robert Burrows from Waimate for example, appears to have visited his flock and journeyed as far as Kaikohe for that purpose. French Catholic priests also travelled the interior and were (continued on next page)

The limited European knowledge of the interior, particularly for military purposes, is confirmed by two further sources. The first concerns the reports of two British officers. Captain Bennett, a Royal Engineer officer reported in 1844 that the country around Waimate was so difficult as to be impracticable for the troops then in New Zealand.¹¹ Bennett's opinion was corroborated by Captain Collinson, another Royal Engineer officer, who visited the Northern War battlefields in 1853 and was surprised that Lieutenant Colonel Hulme attempted the expedition at all through country, 'utterly impracticable for the evolutions of disciplined troops'.¹²

Secondly, it had been Hulme's intention to open the British campaign in early May 1845, by attacking Kawiti in the Waiomio area. Hulme and the naval commander, Sir Everard Home, were devising plans for the operation, using a map drawn on the deck of HMS *North Star* by Maori informants. The plan to attack Kawiti was hurriedly dropped when Archdeacon Henry Williams, the head of the CMS, was invited to comment. He pointed out that the lines on the map that the officers understood to be roads were in fact rivers, adding, 'you may go to Waiomio but you will never get back.'¹³ The officers had expected to find roads through an area which was essentially impassable to British troops. Homes' response summarised this first salutary experience of their knowledge of the physical geography of the area, 'Colonel you are going you know not where; you had better re-embark the men'.¹⁴

Edward Meurant who was aboard HMS *North Star* as an interpreter witnessed the incident. He noted that Nene later confirmed Williams' observations, and that the plan for operations was subsequently changed, and the decision was made to attack Heke's pa at Puketutu, instead of Kawiti.¹⁵ Nene provided two vital pieces of information during this process. Firstly, he confirmed Williams' observations by explaining the physical geography of the area, particularly the routes in the interior which were tracks and rivers. Secondly, he provided information about Heke's location,

seen as far inland as Ruapekapeka. It is probable that government officials travelled inland to the main centres of Maori population from time to time, but only on the existing foot tracks.

¹¹ Robert FitzRoy, *Remarks on New Zealand in February 1846*, London: W. and H. White, 1846, p.33.

¹² T.B. Collinson, Capt. *Remarks on Military Operations in New Zealand*, London: John Weale, 1853, p.56.

¹³ T. Lindsay Buick, *New Zealand's First War, or the Rebellion of Hone Heke*, Wellington: Government Printer, 1926, p.109.

¹⁴ Buick, p.109.

¹⁵ E. Meurant, 'Diary kept between 17 April – 24 December 1845' (AIML, NZMS 205), entry for 1 May 1845.

information that the British command had been unable to obtain from any other source. As Quartermaster Sergeant Richardson of the 58th Regiment noted:

...no European could give us any information about Heke's position, it was ultimately ascertained by our allies (Tamati Waka and his followers), that Heke was at Okaihau a pa belonging to Kawiti some eighteen miles distant.¹⁶

This change of plan no doubt suited Nene who had established his base at Okaihau in order to campaign against Heke. Nene had been engaged in military operations against Heke since early April 1845, and had sent the chief Paratene to Auckland to urge FitzRoy to send troops against Heke as soon as possible.¹⁷ It seems quite possible that Nene may have used the British officers' lack of knowledge about the physical geography of the region as an opportunity to manipulate them to fight the war to his agenda and against his principal foe.

The British really had very little idea where they were going and the whole campaign strategy was based on flimsy shreds of information. As much as anything else, the campaign was a punitive action to punish Heke and to recover plunder. Their need for military intelligence placed them heavily into the hands of the two main agencies that could provide it; their Maori allies under Nene and the CMS missionaries under Henry Williams. In so doing, they laid themselves open to the possibility of manipulation, for, as the age old dictum suggests, knowledge is power.

As one would expect, information about the cultural geography of the region came from the same sources that supplied information on the physical geography. As the war progressed, the Governor and the British commanders relied heavily upon a small group of missionaries, one or two government officials, and Nene's loyal chiefs to provide the raw information that they required, and often for interpretation of it as well. The missionaries had a reasonable feel for the political climate within Nga Puhi and in theory as ' neutrals' they were able to move around the theatre at will. Reverend Robert Burrows and Henry Williams had tried to use their influence to deter Heke from attacking the flagstaff, and thereafter they tried to prevent the continuation of the

¹⁶ J.R. Mitchell, 'Diary', (AIML, NZMS 1060), p.2. Quartermaster Sergeant, 58th Regiment. Richardson was wrong about the ownership of the pa. Puketutu was built by Heke. He had built the pa, not as Belich suggests as an inland fort designed to draw the British attackers into the interior, but because it lay at the heart of his home area. Situated next to Hongi's historic Mawhe Pa, it provided spiritual and political credibility for the young chief. Heke had simply chosen to make his stand in the area which offered him the greatest chance of success.

¹⁷ FitzRoy, p.109.

hostilities. At the same time they kept the authorities aware of developments. Burrows sent information to Williams, who kept in close touch with the British command. He also wrote to Governor FitzRoy, and later George Grey, as he had done previously to Governor William Hobson.¹⁸ The local government officials, primarily the Police Magistrate Thomas Beckham and his successor James Clendon, had a direct and official line of communication with the Governor and the military and they too supplied advice and information.

At a wider level, the same process was occurring throughout the whole North Island. By 1844 land, for example, had become a major problem and the government purchasing agents and other officials sent back a flood of information about the political situations they encountered in the course of their travels. FitzRoy was kept aware of major developments in Wellington, Wanganui, New Plymouth and even the South Island settlements of Nelson and Otago through a variety of means. His information came primarily from government officials and missionaries such as Reverend Hadfield at Otaki.¹⁹ But there was no clear delineation of a command chain, or an understanding about who was responsible for what and this was the case in the Bay of Islands. The missionaries had a kind of moral authority by virtue of their role and time in the place, but only indirect channels to government, and of course no legal authority. Beckham and Clendon were not qualified to do their jobs and represented very much a settler-trader mentality. The military officers, as the new boys in town, had little understanding about how things worked or where things were, and their relationship with the police magistrates was unclear.

The political climate within Nga Puhi

The political climate within Nga Puhi was extremely volatile in 1844–45 and the war was largely a product of that tension. Dissatisfaction with their post-treaty circumstances was widespread, but finding an appropriate response to the new problems they faced caused a split within the tribe along traditional and geographical lines. The British were fortunate to have a major ally in Tamati Waka Nene, chief of the Ngati Hao hapu of Nga Puhi from Hokianga. Nene had fought alongside his cousin Hongi Hika throughout the musket wars and was considered to be the leading Nga Puhi chief

¹⁸ Robert Burrows, Rev. Governor's Papers, Miscellaneous Inwards and Outwards Letters. (ANZ, G/13/1).

¹⁹ Burrows, (ANZ, G/13/1), Items 8-20.

at the time of the signing of the treaty.²⁰ Nene had been relatively constant in his support of the treaty and the British, and his actions in the Northern War can be seen as an extension of that policy.²¹ However, his involvement introduces another theme to the conflict; that of a Nga Puhi civil war. During the early 1840s Heke, who was a much younger man than Nene, had grown in confidence and stature as a chief. His active assertion of Nga Puhi sovereignty had gained him an increasingly powerful reputation, so that by 1845, he was clearly the most influential chief within the Tai Tokerau, or Bay of Islands branch of Nga Puhi, and he was increasingly seen as the standard bearer of their dissatisfaction.²² The hapu which comprised the Hokianga and Tai Tokerau branches of Nga Puhi had a traditional enmity towards each other and were rival houses of Nga Puhi power, as an ancient saying illustrates:

When the spring of Hokianga dries up, the spring at the Bay of Islands flows and when the Bay of Islands spring is dry, that of the Hokianga flows.²³

Hongi's influence and power had united all of Nga Puhi to some extent, (even though his local wars and inter-hapu rivalry created many reasons for on-going grievances) but his death in 1828 created a power vacuum which allowed old rivalries to flourish again.²⁴ According to Kawiti, 'Nene was continually naming his dead, and he fought Heke and Kawiti to avenge them.'²⁵ That Heke was beginning to assume some of the mantle of Hongi (his uncle and father-in-law), that he was Tai Tokerau, and that he was a rival to Nene's authority, were all reason enough for conflict between the two chiefs²⁶ without the tremendous pressure that the new British sovereignty was imposing upon Nga Puhi. Heke's concerns about the problems affecting Nga Puhi drew encouragement from the activities of some foreign nationals who deliberately sought to undermine the fragile British authority.²⁷ The economic downturn in the bay made times hard for Nga Puhi and traders alike.²⁸ Heke's own finances were drastically cut as the government's customs men now took the five pounds revenue that he had once levied

²⁰ Kevin Ashcroft, 'The Northern Account of the Flagstaff War', Research Paper, (WU), p.2.

²¹ Ormand Wilson, *From Hongi Hika to Hone Heke: A Quarter of a Century of Upheaval*, Dunedin: John McIndee, 1985, p.26.

²² Robert Burrows, Rev. *Extracts from a Diary Kept During Heke's War in the North in 1845*, Auckland: Upton and Company, 1886, pp.5-7.

²³ Jack Lee, *The Bay Of Islands*, Auckland: Reed, 1983, p.289; Ashcroft, p.6. An old Nga Puhi saying.

²⁴ H. Carleton, *The Life of Henry Williams, Archdeacon of Waimate*, Auckland: Upton, 1887, p.97.

²⁵ Ashcroft, p.31; Wilson, p.263.

²⁶ For a more in-depth discussion, see Wilson, pp.261-5.

²⁷ H.F. McKillop, *Reminiscences of Twelve Months Service in New Zealand*, London: Richard Bentley, 1849, p.26; Belich, p.34. Heke was aware of the fate of other colonial peoples, and was perhaps the first Maori leader to articulate these concerns and enunciate parallels in his own tribe's situation.

from every ship entering the bay. Similarly, the downturn in trade hurt all European traders, some of whom were quick to impress upon Heke that the Union Jack flying on Maiki Hill above Kororareka, was a symbol of British oppression of the Maori.²⁹ The acting United States consuls, Captain Mayhew and his successor Green, inflamed Heke's discontent.³⁰

Heke may have begun to see the United States as a role model for overthrowing the British, and a potential ally. Beckham and Clendon kept a close eye on the relationship and reported their views to the Governor.³¹ Americans were also suspected of gun-running³² and on 19 May 1845, Mr. Waitford, an American trader at Waihapu, was arrested for receiving property looted from Kororareka and was imprisoned in Auckland.³³ United States traders had certainly lost out with the annexation of New Zealand by the British and the movement of the capital to Auckland. The United States consul had been the highest-ranked civilian before the treaty but now had little status, and United States traders had certainly lost income with the downturn of trade in the bay. There were many reasons for Americans to be unhappy with new government of New Zealand.

Suspicion also fell upon Bishop Pompallier and his French Roman Catholic priests whose religion and nationality provided the parochial British authorities with ample reason to question their fidelity. Fortescue, taking a very English perspective on the matter, overstates the case in claiming that French interests made mischief among the Maori in revenge for Waterloo³⁴ but there is no doubt that there was intense competition between the British and French nationals. Rivalry in the quest for Maori souls was exacerbated by long standing national rivalry, and the ferocious competition between CMS and Roman Catholic priests in the Bay of Islands, was just a fore-taste of the animosity that would accompany the spread of the two missions throughout the country from the 1840s onwards. As a result of a widespread belief that they were

²⁸ Wilson, p.256.

²⁹ J. Fortescue, *A History of the British Army*, Vol.12, London: MacMillan and Company, 1927, p.399.

³⁰ Cowan, p.20; Buick, p.54. Heke was acquainted with details of the United States War of Independence against Britain.

³¹ Beckham to FitzRoy, Correspondence, 10 Jan 45, 16 Jan 45 and 25 Jan 45. (APL, NZMS 240) The US traders were based at Waihapu, close to Kororareka. Beckham was the Police Magistrate until April 1845.

³² J.R. Clendon, 'Journal 1839-1872'. 27 May 1845- 17 December 1846, (APL, NZMS 476).

³³ J. Kemp. Correspondence 1823-6, 1831-46, May 19th 1845, (APL, NZMS 559). Kemp was a missionary at Kerikeri.

³⁴ Fortescue, p.400.

undermining the government, Grey later investigated allegations against the French clergy but found no substance in them.³⁵

Due to the number of different interest groups, the war was carried out in a complex political environment which provided a good climate for rumour, misinformation and intrigue.³⁶ Even in 1846, Grey found reason to complain about anti-government sympathy. All operations he said, ‘were conducted in the presence of an European population, divided into violent factions, who distracted the camp, encouraged the natives by spreading unfavourable reports [about the military] and gave the rebel Maoris accurate information of the movements of troops by publishing them in newspapers.’³⁷ And so when war did break out, it did so in an increasingly volatile environment. There were huge rifts in the Nga Puhi tribe who had essentially developed into two armed camps. The European population contained some hostile elements and some individuals who were political enemies or representatives of foreign powers. In the middle of it all, the hapless military commanders had little knowledge of the country and had to rely upon Nene and the missionaries, both of whom had their own distinct agendas.

Kororareka: a town needlessly lost

The battle of Kororareka was an unmitigated disaster for the British. The town was lost in a dismal chapter of mistakes which left Heke and Kawiti with a far greater prize than they had sought. FitzRoy later wrote:

...this result astounded everyone. The natives were as much astonished at their own success as the whole colony was at so un-thought of a disaster.... for the first time since the establishment of the colony, our troops had been engaged with the natives and had failed. Their imagined superiority was gone.³⁸

The loss of the flagstaff, and then the town, had much to do with military intelligence; poor military intelligence on the part of the British and good intelligence on the part of the attackers. Beckham and FitzRoy had ample opportunity to study the political and military developments in the six months prior to the attack. They made frequent reports but they drew the wrong conclusions. Heke also had time, and he used it to plan the attack in great detail.

³⁵ FitzRoy, p.9. FitzRoy noted that the French Romanist missionaries, the Americans and a considerable number of natives looked upon the treaty with displeasure and distrust which were but ill concealed.

³⁶ Selwyn to FitzRoy, Nov 45, Governor's Papers (ANZ, G19/1,9306022).

³⁷ Fortescue, p.418. Grey to Secretary of State, 17 June 1846.

³⁸ FitzRoy, p.39.

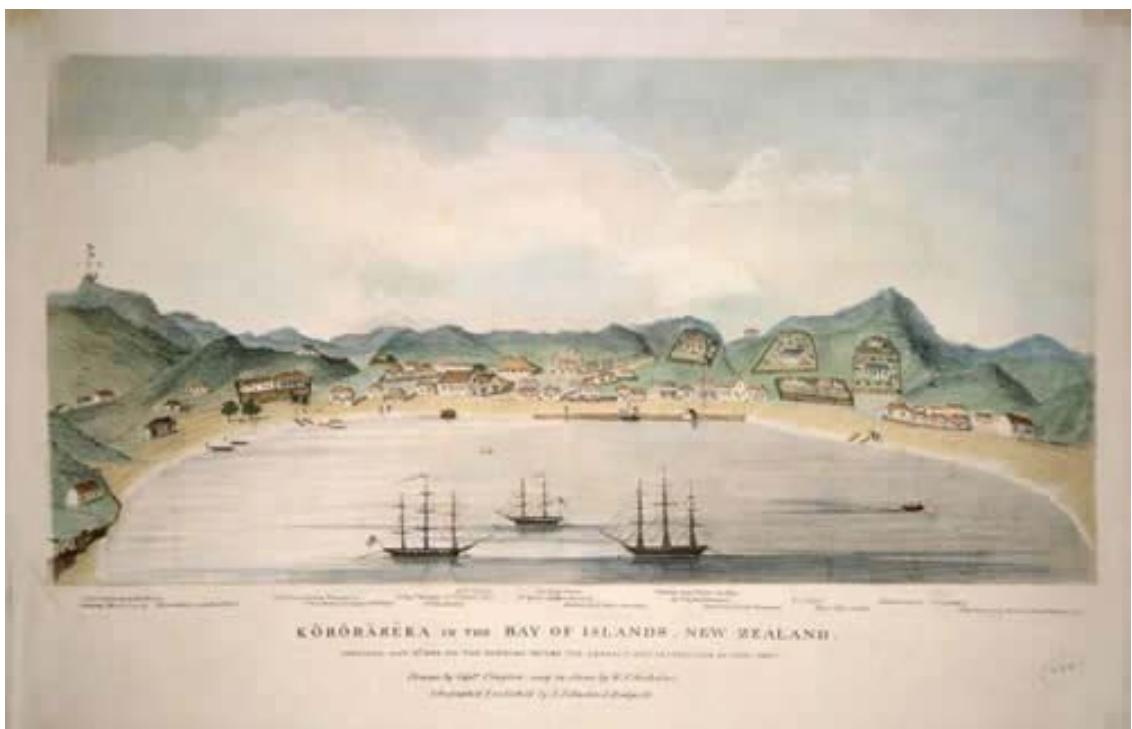


Fig.3.3. Painting of Kororareka by Captain Clayton, 10 March 1845, the day before the town was attacked. The flagstaff on Maiki Hill can be seen on the left. The ships in the foreground are *HMS Hazard*, *Victoria* and *Matilda*. Alexander Turnbull Library.

Heke's first opportunity to openly assert his resistance to British authority was the so called 'Lord Affair'. Heke took a taua muru³⁹ to demand recompense from the trader, Lord, whose Maori wife had insulted him. Lord had cheated on the agreed compensation, and on 8 July 1844, the taua maru went on a three day rampage in Kororareka which included felling the flagstaff that flew the Union Jack above the town. The flag was actually a signal flag that was sited in a prominent position so that ships rounding the headland could navigate into the bay. The position was chosen for that specific purpose, but it seems likely that certain elements, probably American, persuaded Heke that it signified that Maori were now subservient to the new British Government. FitzRoy acted promptly and appealed to Hobart-town for more troops. Thirty soldiers soon garrisoned Kororareka and by the end of August, a force of 250 men was stationed throughout the whole country. A conciliatory meeting at the Waimate Mission Station in September 1844 saw FitzRoy declare Kororareka a free port, thereby abolishing customs duties in an attempt to placate Heke and his followers. Nene and several other senior chiefs brokered the deal by virtually guaranteeing Heke's good

³⁹ A war party intent on plunder. This was a customary way to gain redress for perceived wrongs.

behaviour.⁴⁰ Although Heke was not present, assurances were extracted from him, but not from Kawiti.⁴¹

Some troops returned to Sydney and Auckland, but the unrest continued, tension mounted and Heke felled the flagstaff again on 10 January 1845. The first felling had given Heke confidence in his ability to enter the town militarily. The second felling re-tested the European temper and resolve, and again found them wanting.⁴² In his capacity as Police Magistrate, Beckham had overall responsibility for the defence of the town.⁴³ He reported to FitzRoy that there, ‘seems to be a general dislike of the British Government,’ and that Heke had been at the United States consul’s the night before the second felling, and that Heke now flew the United States ensign.⁴⁴ Four days later he advised FitzRoy that Heke’s depredations had become so reckless ‘that it is impossible to tell where his mischief might end,’⁴⁵ and on 16 January he reported that Heke now flew the United States ensign from his war canoe, and that the United States consul and all United States shipping in the harbour flew the flag as well; an unusual practice which confirmed his suspicions about the involvement of United States nationals.⁴⁶



Fig.3.4. Hariata, Hone Heke and Kawiti. Painting by Joseph Merrett 1846. Alexander Turnbull Library.

⁴⁰ Buick, p.42.

⁴¹ Cowan, p.22.

⁴² Cowan, p.17.

⁴³ FitzRoy to Beckham, (GBPP 517-11), vol. XXX111, p.549; Ian Wards, *The Shadow of the Land. A Study of British Policy and Racial Conflict in New Zealand 1832-1852*, Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1968. p.117; Pugsley, ‘Kororareka’, p.13.

⁴⁴ Beckham to FitzRoy, (APL, NZMS 240), 10 January 1845.

⁴⁵ Beckham to FitzRoy, (APL, NZMS 240), 14 January 1845.

⁴⁶ Beckham to FitzRoy, (APL, NZMS 240), 16 January 1845; FitzRoy, p.42. ‘Heke had been led to believe that the Americans would assist him, and appeared to be very much disappointed when the captain of this ship [the US frigate St Louis] obliged him to haul down the United States ensign, then flying from his canoe. This ensign had been given to him by a person who was acting as a vice-consul of the United States.’ It is interesting to note that Heke eventually attacked the town just when a US warship had arrived in port.

By this stage the town was being protected by the pro-government chiefs. Beckham himself, and Kemp the Protector of Aborigines, were so anxious that they did not go to bed at night.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the temporary pole which now served as the flagstaff was severed by Heke on 19 January.⁴⁸ FitzRoy was now in a quandary. He was aware of the discontent among the Nga Puhi but probably underestimated it.⁴⁹ Beckham, Williams and others suggested leaving the flag prone, but FitzRoy felt that he could not allow the Queen's sovereignty to be challenged in that way and was keen to re-assert the crown's authority by having a new staff erected. The new mast was sheathed in iron around its base and protected by 20 soldiers and a blockhouse which surrounded it. By early March a total of 140 soldiers and sailors defended the town. They were supplemented by approximately 200 townspeople and merchant seamen who had been hastily armed and drilled.⁵⁰

In addition to the blockhouse which protected the flagstaff on Maiki Hill, several other fortifications had been developed by the crew of the HMS *Hazard*. Part way down the hill and overlooking the town was Fort Philpott, a three gun battery.⁵¹ Lower down, in the town itself, Polack's house and outbuildings had been fortified as a stockade and refuge for the women and children, the buildings being in range of HMS *Hazard*'s guns.⁵²

Heke remained in Kaikohe during February but he kept vigilant and was well informed.⁵³ The Maori awe of the soldiers was such that news of the arrival of reinforcements in the bay reputedly spread great fear amongst the Nga Puhi.⁵⁴ Heke tried to rally support to resist the soldiers but received a poor response from the chiefs who preferred to 'sit on the fence' for the time being. Consequently, Heke's followers predominately came from his own hapu and numbered about 400.⁵⁵

⁴⁷ Beckham to FitzRoy, (APL, NZMS 240), 16 January 1845.

⁴⁸ Beckham to FitzRoy, (APL, NZMS 240), 20 January 1845.

⁴⁹ Buick, p.42.

⁵⁰ The soldiers were a detachment (90 men) of the 96th Regiment and the sailors were from the 18 gun sloop, HMS *Hazard*. The figure for the town's people and merchant seamen is disputed. Buick says 110 townspeople while Belich says 200 townspeople and sailors were involved. The Civic Guard (townspeople) was probably 110 with the balance being merchant seamen and other ring-ins.

⁵¹ Beckham to FitzRoy, (APL, NZMS 240), 4 March 1845. Beckham refers to this gun emplacement as Fort Philpott. Lt Philpott was second in command of HMS *Hazard*.

⁵² Beckham to FitzRoy, (APL, NZMS 240), 29 February 1845.

⁵³ Buick, p.57.

⁵⁴ F.E. Maning, *Old New Zealand*, Auckland: Robert J. Creighton and Alfred Scales, 1887, p.233.

⁵⁵ Maning, p.56.

If Heke was well informed about developments in the bay, Beckham was almost as equally well informed about Heke. Reverend Burrows visited Heke in Kaikohe and noted, ‘on the morrow I rode down to Paihia to report to Archdeacon Williams my visit to Kaikohe and the result of my interview with Heke.’⁵⁶ Williams had been to see Kawiti and both men found a similar pattern; Heke and Kawiti preparing for further operations. Williams, Davis (another missionary from Waimate), and Burrows spent the last days of February travelling the district in an attempt to dissuade more Maori from joining Heke. They met Heke several times and debated his concerns at length. The missionaries kept Beckham as well informed as they could about Heke’s strength, intentions and location, and Beckham’s letters to FitzRoy during this period gave an accurate picture of Heke’s movements.

On 30 January, Beckham informed FitzRoy that Heke would be joined by, ‘most of the Hokianga natives and also those in the vicinity of Wangaroa and Munganui who will increase his force by a considerable amount.’⁵⁷ By mid-February, the good intelligence work of the missionaries enabled him to report; ‘Rev Davis of Waimate says things look much better, if he attacks, Heke will not now be joined by as many tribes as first thought.’⁵⁸ Similarly, on 20 February he reported Williams’ opinion that an attack on the blockhouse was certain to take place, and enclosed a letter from Davis giving the current state of Heke’s supporters.⁵⁹ Beckham also travelled through the district himself, to assess the political temperature of the tribe and to reassure the pro-government and neutral chiefs.

Although Williams’ prediction that Heke would attack the blockhouse eventually proved to be a correct one, it was made in an environment of great speculation and rumour. The flag was an obvious target, but there were plenty of stories to suggest that Heke had other objectives as well. At one stage Beckham believed that Heke intended to pull down the jail and all of the government offices.⁶⁰ Much of the information came from the pro-government chiefs,⁶¹ but Beckham’s problem was to distinguish fact from rumour. FitzRoy too, felt the need for a more objective view, and

⁵⁶ Burrows, *Diary*, p.8.

⁵⁷ Beckham to FitzRoy, (APL, NZMS 240), 30 January 1845.

⁵⁸ Beckham to FitzRoy, (APL, NZMS 240), 17 February 1845.

⁵⁹ Beckham to FitzRoy, (APL, NZMS 240), 20 February 1845.

⁶⁰ Beckham to FitzRoy, (APL, NZMS 240), 10 January 1845.

⁶¹ Beckham to FitzRoy, (APL, NZMS 240), 25 January 1845.

in February he sent George Clarke Jnr. to spy on the Nga Puhi to gauge the degree of support for Heke:

In the beginning of February the Governor who was in great trouble, and in some doubt about what was really going on in the Maori mind asked me to go to the Bay of Islands and quietly find out how the chiefs of the north would be likely to range themselves if, as he feared, conflict with Heke was inevitable.⁶²

Clarke had grown up in the Kerikeri-Waimate region and was said to have been a childhood playmate of Heke's. He spent a week in the area, spoke to the chiefs and listened to the common talk of the people. Upon his return he wrote:

There can be little doubt that Heke carries with him the sympathies of nearly the whole of the natives of the Bay of Islands. There is a strong and general feeling of dislike and contempt for the authority of Her Majesty's government.⁶³

Clarke advised FitzRoy that as the chiefs were all blood relations, it was difficult to assess which direction their loyalties would eventually take, however despite a widespread disillusionment, not all would take up arms. He gave detailed secret information about who he thought would fight and those who would support Heke discretely and he was convinced that there would be another attack on the flagstaff.⁶⁴

In the final weeks of February, FitzRoy and Beckham had enough information to confirm that an attack on the flagstaff, and possibly the town itself, was imminent. At the strategic level, they had watched the situation moving towards a climax for the previous nine months. They had a feel for the political reasons underlying the problem, they had an approximate idea of the size of Heke's force and the chiefs who would support him, either openly or clandestinely, and they knew that Heke had already succeeded in cutting down the flagstaff three times. They knew who the pro-government chiefs were,⁶⁵ but their reluctance to stop Heke from felling the flagstaff the third time whilst supposedly defending the town, led Beckham to conclude that they could not be relied upon.⁶⁶ Consequently their offer to defend the town again was not

⁶² G. Clarke, Jnr., *Notes on early life in New Zealand*, Hobart: 1903, p.70.

⁶³ GBPP 1845/517:2, p.10; Every, A.J. 'The War in the North 1844-1846', MA Thesis, Auckland University, 1940, p.24.

⁶⁴ Clarke, p.70.

⁶⁵ Every, p.38. The pro-government chiefs were said to be:

Tamati Waka Nene 'Walker'	Moehau
Mokoare Taonui 'Macquarie'	Wiremu Repa
Mohi Tawai 'Moles'	Paratere Kekeao
Nopera Panakareao 'Noble'	Tamati Pukututu
Ranitira	Arama Karaka

⁶⁶ Beckham to FitzRoy, (APL, NZMS 240), 20 January 1845.

accepted. Beckham has been criticised for this decision, but it is important to note that he did so because by this time he thought that he had sufficient regular troops to defend the town.

Mindful of the delicate political situation, FitzRoy had specifically forbidden any offensive moves against Heke, preferring that the ‘rebel’ chiefs, and not he, be seen to be the aggressor. Because of this, the British troops were forced to adopt a defensive stance at Kororareka but even so, the authorities appeared satisfied with their defensive measures.⁶⁷ There was a certain satisfaction that the town was defended by regular British troops, even though most of the soldiers themselves had not been in combat before.⁶⁸

Hostilities commenced on 3 March 1845 when one of HMS *Hazard*’s boats chased some of Kawiti’s men in canoes, ‘who had been committing depredations near the town of Kororareka.’⁶⁹ The boat became grounded and Kawiti’s shore party fired on the sailors. The next day, ‘Heke came from the interior to the bay to join Kawiti,’⁷⁰ lingering in Paihia until 6 March when he finally joined up with the older chief. On the same day Burrows, who was still keen to gain information, noted in his diary:

[I]...rode to Waitangi with a view to gaining information as to Heke’s movements; learned that Kawiti had joined him with almost a hundred men, and that both parties were encamped within a mile of the town, also that some of their canoes, in crossing the bay had been fired at from the Hazard’s gun boat.⁷¹

Beckham was kept abreast of developments by a number of informants and he himself, in the company of Williams, visited Heke’s camp on 8 March in an attempt to halt the escalation of hostilities. Heke apparently told Williams privately that he would have killed Beckham had he came alone. Beckham described the meeting as ‘far from satisfactory’ and reported to FitzRoy that Heke’s force now numbered 6-700 and that the town was completely besieged.⁷²

Armed groups tried to enter the town on 8 and 9 March and were repelled by the HMS *Hazard*’s crew and the civic guard. Burrows visited Kororareka on the 8th and

⁶⁷ FitzRoy, p.38.

⁶⁸ FitzRoy, p.39.

⁶⁹ McKillop, p.59.

⁷⁰ Williams, *Plain Facts*, p.15.

⁷¹ Burrows, ‘Extracts from a Diary.’ p.10.

⁷² Beckham to FitzRoy, (NZMS 240), 9 March 1845.

found the inhabitants in a great state of alarm, ‘the male population making such preparations as they could for the attack which was reported to be about to take place on the Monday [10th].’⁷³ Heke himself provided information about the impending attack when he spoke to Gilbert Mair J.P., on 10 March. In accordance with custom he made no secret of his intention;⁷⁴ giving Mair details of the time, direction and manner of the intended attack.⁷⁵

Mair had met Heke by chance that day, and realising the value of the information he had learnt, he quickly went to Kororareka by boat to personally inform Beckham that Heke intended to attack the town the next day in three or four divisions.⁷⁶ The information was independently confirmed the same evening when Williams sent a note to Beckham stating, ‘understand that the natives intend to make an attack on the morrow in four divisions.’⁷⁷ Mrs Williams wrote in her journal, ‘the natives gave out this day [10th] that the battle was to be next morning, my husband went across to inform Mr. Beckham.’⁷⁸ Buick claims that, ‘as usual this information [Mair’s] was treated with derision and contempt by many of the inhabitants, who professed to believe that no natives would dare to attack them, surrounded as they were by so substantial a naval and military force.’⁷⁹ Beckham is purported to have greeted Mair’s news with the famous reply, ‘...how will the Maoris like cold steel Mr. Mair?’⁸⁰

The next morning, Heke and Kawiti attacked the town. The flagstaff was immediately lost through foolishness, and the various parties of soldiers and sailors fell back upon the defences at the northern end of the town under the weight of the number of Maori attackers. The events of that day are well documented in the literature⁸¹ and need not be repeated here, apart from making one or two observations. Heke and Kawiti’s attack was as well planned as the defence of the town was inept. The defenders appear to have had no real plan and once the battle began, ‘there was no proper co-

⁷³ Burrows, *Diary*, p.10.

⁷⁴ Buick, p.63.

⁷⁵ Buick, p.37.

⁷⁶ J.C. Anderson, and G.C. Peterson, *The Mair Family*, Wellington: A.H. and A.W. Reed, 1956, p.39.

⁷⁷ Williams, *Fall of Kororareka*, p.4.

⁷⁸ Every, p.32; Carleton, Vol. II, Appendix B, p.XII.

⁷⁹ Buick, p.63.

⁸⁰ Belich, p.37; Anderson and Peterson, p.40.

⁸¹ Belich, pp.36-41; Cowan, pp.14-43; Buick, pp.55-84.

ordination of operations in the defence: the naval authority, the military and the Police Magistrate each gave orders and acted as they saw fit, independently of the others.⁸²

The town's defences were not well sited and they certainly did not comprise the, 'integrated main position of the northern end of the town,'⁸³ claimed by Belich. Although Heke and Kawiti did not follow up their initial successes at the flagstaff and Matavia Pass by taking the town immediately, the chaos and panic among the defenders was such that by early afternoon the decision was made to abandon the town.⁸⁴

How could such an event have happened? Certainly there were problems defending the flagstaff and the town with such a small force,⁸⁵ but the authorities had seemed relatively confident of success on the eve of battle. The answer may be reflected in Beckham's attitude. In January he was extremely worried, and yet by March his mood had changed and he was much more confident. Two factors may have influenced his assessment of the situation. Firstly, the Maori had not shown themselves to be particularly dangerous or militarily skilful in the intervening period. On 19 January, the pro-government Maori defending the town, for example, had shown little stomach for conflict and had simply stood aside whilst Heke felled the flagstaff for the third time. In addition, the armed bands marauding near the town the week before the attack on 11 March had been of little more than nuisance value, and their attempts to enter the town had been relatively easily repulsed. Secondly, and more significantly, the town's defences were bolstered by the arrival of elements of the 98th Regiment and HMS *Hazard* in February. The note of panic evident in Beckham's January correspondence to FitzRoy had gone by late February, and he seemed confident of the troops' ability to defend the town, even if some of the ordinary townsfolk themselves had reservations.⁸⁶

⁸² Cowan, p.30.

⁸³ Belich, p.36. The flagstaff had been erected on Signal [Maiki] Hill to signal shipping. The blockhouse was subsequently built around the flagstaff to protect it, not to act as part of the town's defence. The main part of the town cannot even be seen from the flagstaff; that is why Ensign Campbell moved forward to a better vantage point when he heard firing in the town, and in so doing, lost his blockhouse, the flagstaff and some of his men.

⁸⁴ Beckham to FitzRoy, (APL, NZMS 240), 11 March 1845; Cowan, p.32; Belich, p.37; Pugsley, 'Kororareka' p.16. Heke only intended to attack the flagstaff, not the town. Kawiti's motives are more open to speculation; he was certainly a diversionary force, yet his family's version of the attack speaks of 'Kawiti's role to attack the town' noting that his sacking of it was successful, see Kawiti, p.39. It is generally agreed that it was not until the Europeans abandoned the town that the sacking and looting began; in Maori lore, its abandonment meant that its treasures now belonged to the attackers.

⁸⁵ Collinson, p.54.

⁸⁶ Williams, *Fall of Kororareka*, p.5. As with Burrows, found the townsfolk in 'a great state of unease', noting that the residents thought the British force was so small and would only act on the defensive.

The real problem lay in the flawed British assessment of the military capability of the two sides. FitzRoy later conceded that they were overconfident, holding far too low an opinion of, ‘native enterprise and valour.’⁸⁷ In fact he was so confident about the town’s defences that he did not even require his senior military officer, Lieutenant Colonel Hulme, to be present at Kororareka, although this was partly because he felt that there was potential for co-ordinated trouble in New Plymouth, Wanganui and elsewhere.⁸⁸ Consequently, the town was defended by soldiers who had never seen combat before and was commanded by junior officers (Lieutenant Barclay and Ensign Campbell), who both proved to be so hopelessly out of their depth that they both later faced courts martial for their efforts.⁸⁹ The more seasoned crew of HMS *Hazard* performed somewhat better, and Acting Commander Robertson showed the most initiative of any of the uniformed defenders. He was severely wounded early in the battle and it is interesting to speculate whether his presence throughout would have altered the course of events. The panic and confusion that occurred, and the flurry of contradictory orders from various people, indicates that there was no commonly understood plan for the defence of the town. Indeed the British tactics throughout the battle seemed to change according to the last person to have had a good idea.

The town had been under threat for eight days and Beckham had clear information that it was to be attacked on the morning of the 11th, yet neither Campbell nor Barclay appears to have been aware of that latest information. Campbell’s party was about to continue digging entrenchments around the blockhouse when it was attacked. A routine work party is not a task undertaken by troops who expect to be attacked in their blockhouse that morning, especially when their primary job is to defend the flag that it protects. In his report about the battle Barclay noted that after the departure of Robertson’s party which was also going to undertake routine defence works, he turned out the detachment, ‘by way of a precaution, not having at the same time any reason to suspect a movement on the part of the natives towards the town.’⁹⁰ Not only was there

⁸⁷ FitzRoy, p.38 and p.48.

⁸⁸ Wards, *The Shadow of the Land*, p.116; Beckham-FitzRoy 25 January 1845; Meurant, 18 July 1845. FitzRoy expected trouble elsewhere as well, including New Plymouth, and kept Hulme there ready to intervene if necessary. FitzRoy was aware that the Nga Puhi chief Pomare was rumoured to have received correspondence from Wanganui tribes (and possibly Waikato and Thames Valley tribes) asking if they should rise up simultaneously.

⁸⁹ Pugsley, p.17. Barclay was found not guilty. Campbell was found guilty of ‘highly un-officer-like conduct’ and severely reprimanded.

⁹⁰ Selwyn to FitzRoy, November 1845, Governors Papers, Letters from Bishop Selwyn and other Clergymen 1845-60, (ANZ, G/19/1).

no plan for the defence, but Beckham appears to have taken no action to inform the military about the information given to him by the two reliable men of significant standing in the community; Mair and Williams. Subsequent claims that Williams contributed to the disaster by assuring the townsfolk that the Maori would not attack, were simply excuses to disguise the fact that the British had suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of a skilful enemy, and that they had contributed in large part to their own demise.⁹¹

There was no real plan for the defence of the town because Heke and Kawiti were thought to be no match for the British troops. Bishop Selwyn later noted that all persons, ‘under-rated the power and courage of the native,’⁹² and FitzRoy conceded that, ‘an attack on Kororareka was not expected to be of much consequence...an event which was rather hoped for as a means of punishing Heke by the reception he would meet with.’⁹³

By contrast, Heke and Kawiti’s battle plan was well thought out and it relied upon effective military intelligence. They had an excellent knowledge of the geography of the town, and they also studied the number and routine of the troops defending their primary objective; the flagstaff. Excellent preparation allowed Heke to make best use of the British tactical mistakes at the flagstaff, and as the troops emerged he counted them until he knew that only few remained within.⁹⁴ They were quickly killed and the battle for the blockhouse was over almost before Campbell realised that it had ever been under threat. Heke’s military intelligence and planning were very good, and they ensured that he quickly secured the primary objective.

The loss of the town was due, in large part, to appalling military intelligence. Although the authorities did not really actively seek information, they received enough incidental information to give them a reasonably accurate picture of what was going to happen. Their analysis (although that is too grand a term) of that information was tragically flawed and they came to the wrong conclusions. They failed to have a

⁹¹ FitzRoy to Lord Stanley, Correspondence Relative to the attack on the settlement in the Bay of Islands, GBPP/ 1845/517-11), p.6. ‘on the previous day distinct assertions were made that the natives would not attack the town, by which the harassed and fatigued settlers, tired with constant drilling and labouring at temporary of defence, were thrown off the guard’. Also see also Every, p.33; Williams, *Fall of Kororareka*, for Williams’ defence of his actions.

⁹² Selwyn to FitzRoy, Governors Papers, Letters from Bishop Selwyn and other Clergymen, (ANZ, G/19/1), November 1845.

⁹³ Buick, p.48.

⁹⁴ Every, p.33.

workable plan for the defence of the town, and it appears that the communication between the various groups involved in its defence was almost non-existent. Up-to-date information was not disseminated, so that when the attack did occur, the first British parties engaged were taken completely by surprise.

Into the interior

The news of the fall of Kororareka spread quickly throughout the country, carrying with it the information that the settlers could not defend themselves and that the soldiers were not invincible. Heke's fame grew among Maori, and Europeans everywhere began to predict terrible consequences. Auckland was thought to be under threat of imminent attack, and while fortifications were in the process of being erected, many citizens sold their possessions at fire-sale prices and sailed off to safer destinations.

It has been traditionally held that while FitzRoy pondered his options and waited for troop reinforcements from New South Wales, Nene and the other pro-government chiefs began hostilities against Heke on their own accord. Their intervention apparently ended any perceived threat that Heke posed to Auckland because all of his resources and energy were required to counter his new adversaries. Nene's animosity towards Heke came to a head with the sacking and burning of Kororareka. By commencing hostilities against Heke, Nene was continuing his policy of support for the government which dated right back to the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi.⁹⁵ It also gave him the opportunity to deal with an increasingly powerful rival at the same time.

FitzRoy claimed to have actively discouraged war between the Nga Puhi factions arguing, 'that it was only the realisation that the assistance of the loyal natives was necessary and the lesser of the two evils,' that he began to support Nene with supplies and weapons.⁹⁶ Clarke's evidence contradicts this and shows that FitzRoy became involved in the Nga Puhi conflict far earlier than he admitted. All government officials had fled the north after the fall of Kororareka and FitzRoy needed an agent in the area, someone to encourage the pro-government chiefs and to pass back information to him. Clarke was approached again and went north once more with instructions to make his way to Nene's camp:

⁹⁵ Burrows, *Diary*. p.14.

⁹⁶ FitzRoy, p.47.

...to do all in [my] powers to stop the threatened advance on Auckland by keeping Heke employed in his own district... my duty was to watch and strengthen what was at first a very shaky alliance of our Maori supporters; to report the movements of the northern tribes; to keep the government in touch with the friendly natives; and to be an organ of communication between them and the authorities in Auckland.⁹⁷

Clarke encountered Heke almost as soon as he was put ashore and Heke immediately understood his purpose for being there. The whole mission could have foundered at that point, but Heke allowed him to remain and carry out his spying, although he was occasionally searched for documents.⁹⁸ At one point Clarke claimed to have met Heke's wife Hariata who enquired how many letters Nene had given him for the governor, and then preceded to check his pockets before letting him go.⁹⁹

An agreement between Heke and Nene prohibited raids, ambushes or sackings of neutral villages. The British army was so vulnerable on the march that ambushing would have prevented it from getting anywhere near Heke or Kawiti's pa, but the agreement not to ambush appears to have applied to it as well. Ambushing was a common Maori tactic, and with their ability to move silently through the bush and appear and disappear at will, they were masters of it. Nene's warriors later operated as a screen out in front of the British troops on the move, so any ambush set by Heke would have drawn Nene into the battle as well, which was a situation Heke would have wanted to avoid. In any case, Heke didn't ambush the troops at any time and he even allowed contractors to get food to the soldiers on occasion because, 'there was no glory in fighting half starved men.'¹⁰⁰ Similarly, Clarke's presence was tolerated even though everyone knew he was a channel for communication between Nene and Auckland,¹⁰¹ but only as long as his actions were not too overt. It was an unstated point of honour that he should never attempt to see inside Heke's pa while he still occupied them.

When Clarke first arrived at Nene's camp he found that some of the Hokianga chiefs there were wavering in their support for Nene and the governor. Nene immediately realised that Clarke's mission could be compromised and cautioned him to reserve his confidences until they were both alone. Both Nga Puhi factions had spies who watched each other's movements closely, but armed hostilities between the

⁹⁷ Clarke, p.73.

⁹⁸ Clarke, p.74.

⁹⁹ Clarke, p.80.

¹⁰⁰ Clarke, p.75.

¹⁰¹ Clarke, p.77.

factions had not actually broken out by the time Clarke arrived. Clarke credited himself with preventing the march on Auckland by persuading Nene to attack Heke.¹⁰² For his part, Nene held Heke until he received support from the British troops, and in the interim, Clarke arranged a shipment of gun-powder to help Nene continue the hostilities.

Clarke was withdrawn after the battle of Puketutu but came back to the Bay of Islands with Governor Grey just before the attack on Ruapekapeka. His role in the early stages of the war may well have been crucial in stabilising the uneasy alliances between Nene and the Crown and prompting Nene into action against Heke. The information he sent back to FitzRoy kept the governor abreast of political and military developments. In that respect, his intelligence gathering was focussed more on the political situation in the north, for it appears to have had little effect in preparing the troops for the difficulties they were to encounter in the Battle of Puketuku.

The Battle of Puketuku

In the lead up to the battle for Kororareka, the British authorities had adequate information but had not used it well. In contrast, the expedition sent to attack Heke in his pa at Puketuku went in almost complete ignorance. With hindsight it seems extraordinary that Lieutenant Colonel Hulme even entertained the idea of attacking the pa when he knew almost nothing about the route, the mode of construction and characteristics of the pa itself, or the real strength or capability of Heke's force. Throughout the whole enterprise Hulme was in an information vacuum that put him completely in Nene's hands. In every sense it was a journey of faith; faith in Nene's fidelity and faith that the supremacy of the British soldier as a fighter would overcome any odds or problems that he might encounter.

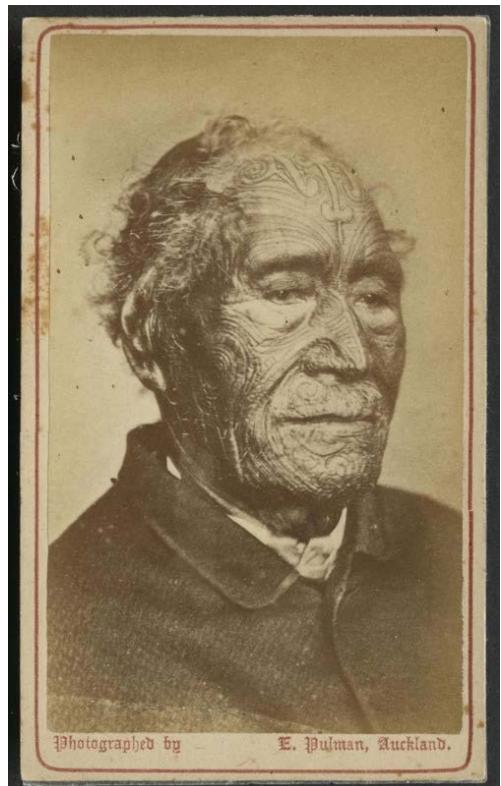


Fig.3.5 Tamati Waka Nene. Photograph by E. Pulman circa 1870. Alexander Turnbull Library.

¹⁰² Clarke, p.88.

The first indication that the British knowledge of the interior was less than desirable was the incident previously mentioned, where Hulme's plan to attack Kawiti was overturned with the realisation that Hulme had almost no idea about the geography of the area. Prior to that, the British had re-established their presence in Kororareka by raising the Union Jack and re-naming the ruins of the town Camp Victoria. The ceremony was watched by many Maori on the hills, no doubt watching and assessing the British force.¹⁰³ In the next few days the left flank of the proposed advance on Kawiti's pa was secured by capturing and burning Pomare's pa at the mouth of the Kawakawa River. His allegiance was uncertain at best and the pa was thought to contain a large amount of property looted from Kororareka. Once the change of plan had been agreed upon and Heke's pa at Puketuku became the new target, 470 troops were landed at Onewhero Bay near Kerikeri. Nene's party met them on the morning of 3 May and proceeded to guide them to their base at Okaihau which Nene had been using to operate against Heke.

The British advance to Okaihau was a trial of logistics and a battle against the terrain and climate of northern New Zealand. The Maori, who slipped so easily through the bush, were amazed and appalled at the agonies the British troops underwent. The route chosen by Nene bypassed the CMS Waimate Mission Station because he respected the missionaries' wish not to have the station's tapu broken by the presence of soldiers. Nene could not have realised the difficulties the British troops would encounter as he took them straight through the heart of the countryside that had previously been assessed by Captain Bennett as untenable for British soldiers.¹⁰⁴ Hulme's complete lack of knowledge about the area meant that he could do nothing but follow Nene's footsteps. The troops travelled lightly, too lightly, but even so, their burden was greater than the Maori would have imagined. Clendon had arranged for some bullock drays but these were of limited value and the troops back-packed their equipment, plus ammunition and stores, the eighteen miles of the advance. The terrain and vegetation were bad enough but the soldiers suffered a major set-back on the first night of the march when torrential rain fell. Without tentage, the force was in a sorry state by morning as Major Bridge described:

...we were in a pretty plight in the morning-officers and men wet through-arms ammunition and everything; therefore it was considered expedient to proceed to

¹⁰³ Beckham to FitzRoy, (APL, NZMS 240), 1 May 1845.

¹⁰⁴ FitzRoy, p.33.

the nearest missionary station, Kiri-Kiri, in order to get out things dry and the arms. Etc put to right.¹⁰⁵

Kemp, the CMS missionary at Kerikeri, billeted the troops and noted in his journal that the men had gone through a great trial and were without food and wet to the skin.¹⁰⁶ The march to Okaihau resumed on the 6th and by nightfall the force had arrived at Nene's base, two miles away from Heke's pa. Throughout the day the bush had been almost impenetrable in parts, the drays unreliable, and the progress slow and frustrating. Every probably overstates the case by claiming that, 'the cart road to Omapere condemned the expedition to failure,'¹⁰⁷ but the troops were certainly in a poor state when they arrived at Okaihau. Nene provided food and makeshift shelter, both of which were inadequate.¹⁰⁸ The troops had performed poorly on the march and were clearly not prepared for the New Zealand bush. An 18 mile advance should not have been as difficult as it was and the troops certainly did not cope well with their first foray into the New Zealand interior.

Heke had been aware of the presence of the troops from the morning of their arrival in the bay and he was able to monitor their progress inland. The arrival of the British force in the area had caused great concern among the Maori population. The Pakeha-Maori Maning, noted that many of Heke's men left him in fear when they heard that the soldiers were coming, and it was subsequent to this that Heke moved from Te Ahu Ahu to Puketutu (Te Kahika) to erect his new pa. By Maning's estimate Heke's force was drastically reduced in this way from 700 down to 200 men.¹⁰⁹ Clendon too, saw the effect of the arrival of such a large body of troops, and noted that it had a 'beneficial effect on the natives,' many of them being neutrals, 'pleading for protection of themselves and property.'¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ Bridge, 4 May 1845; Maning, p.246; A. Whisker, 'Memorandum Book', (AIML, NZMS 327), p.4. The troops became lost on the way to Kerikeri mission and Maning tantalisingly suggests that Hulme may have been misled by Nene and other Europeans who knew of an easier route, 'Heke had many friends,' but there appears to be little evidence to support him.

¹⁰⁶ Kemp to Secretary of CMS. 'Correspondence to Secretary CMS, 1823-26, 1831-46', (APL, NZMS 59). 19 May 1845.

¹⁰⁷ Every p.43.

¹⁰⁸ Meurant, (AIML, NZMS 205), 6 May 1845. Meurant noted that only half of the force could fit under the shelter.

¹⁰⁹ Maning, pp.233 and 245.

¹¹⁰ Clendon, (APL, NZMS 476), 12 May 1845. In fact the Maori population was in a great state of alarm and divided over loyalties to Heke, Nene, or the British. Many tried to adopt a neutral position which became increasingly unacceptable to Clendon and many feared punishment for their support of Heke and Kawiti prior to the sacking of Kororareka.

Burrows at Waimate heard much of the local gossip and was fully aware, at his inland location, of the troops' movements. There is little doubt that Heke was equally well informed. Burrows was in frequent contact with Heke and his diary entry on 30 April 1845 noted:

[I] Saw Heke this morning; my chief object being to ascertain his views and feelings now that the soldiers are actually in the Bay. He was very civil but said he meant to wait the result. He had heard that Waka (Nene) with a party of his men had gone down to welcome the troops, and to show them the way inland. 'He should watch their movements but not go away.'¹¹¹

The debacle of Kororareka had not completely destroyed their mystique and reputation, and the awe associated with British troops was still apparent. Heke's men feared the British soldier's reputation for ferocity in battle, but the heavy guns and rockets filled them with an even greater dread. It was commonly believed that the rockets could seek out and pursue men until all were killed.¹¹² Heke contemplated destroying a bridge near Kerikeri to prevent the soldiers bringing up their rockets, but decided against it when he learnt through intelligence sources that Nene was using another route.¹¹³

On the morning of 7 May 1845, Hulme, Major Bridge, and Lieutenant Egerton who commanded the rockets, set out from Nene's pa at Okaihau to reconnoitre Heke's pa at Puketutu. They observed Heke's men carrying flax which they used to plug the gaps in the palisade to stop musket balls passing through. They discovered that the pa had two strong sides, and were told, presumably by Nene's men, that two sides were weaker because they were unfinished. Each side consisted of two or three rows of palisades, ditches and a stone breastwork.¹¹⁴ The pa design also incorporated angles to allow the defenders 'to bring crossfire on the assailants'.¹¹⁵ Burrows had seen the pa at close hand but there is no evidence that he communicated any information about it to Hulme. Hulme has been criticised for his 'hurried reconnaissance',¹¹⁶ and he certainly did not see all of the pa or the important ground at the rear. Bridge's diary notes show that the reconnaissance was cursory indeed.¹¹⁷

¹¹¹ Burrows, *Diary*, p.24. Burrows often spoke to Heke at this time and obtained information and impressions directly from him or from the gossip and rumour which flowed through the Mission Station

¹¹² Maning, pp.233-252.

¹¹³ Burrows, *Diary*, p.24.

¹¹⁴ Bridge, 7. May 1845. Also see Aidan J. Challis, 'The Location of Heke's Pa, Te Kahika, Okaihau, New Zealand: a field analysis', in the *New Zealand Journal of Archaeology*, vol. 12, 1990, pp.5-7, for a very detailed archaeological discussion about the location and design of the pa.

¹¹⁵ Bridge, 7 May 1845.

¹¹⁶ Buick, p.114.

¹¹⁷ Bridge, 7 May 1845.

However Hulme's lack of detail about Heke's force or pa did not overly worry him. His confidence was high and he fully expected to carry the day. His soldiers appear to have shared their commander's views, as an old soldier of the 58th recalled later that, 'we expected to make short work of Johnny Heke.'¹¹⁸ In any case, Hulme had very few options. He had come so far with the objective of engaging Heke in battle (and perhaps, as Bridge alluded, to take him prisoner),¹¹⁹ that he had to go ahead and attack the pa. His plan for battle employed the standard method of infantry assault, but he also hoped that the rockets would terrorise the pa defenders into submission or flight. Unfortunately for Hulme, Egerton's aim was poor and the unreliable and erratic rockets flew harmlessly over the pa. Maning tells us that Heke's warriors had faithfully observed all sacred rites and customs in the construction of the pa, and that the poor performance of the rockets proved to the defenders that their atuas (gods) were protecting them, and this gave them confidence for the rest of the battle.¹²⁰



Fig.3.6. The British attack on Heke's Pa at Puketutu, 8 May 1845. Lake Omapere is on the right and the rectangular pa is at the left middle-distance. Soldiers are providing covering fire as the assault party makes its way to high ground on the right of the pa. Watercolour by Major Cyprian Bridge May 1845. Alexander Turnbull Library.

¹¹⁸ Cowan, p.39.

¹¹⁹ Bridge, 22 April 1845

¹²⁰ Maning, p.246.

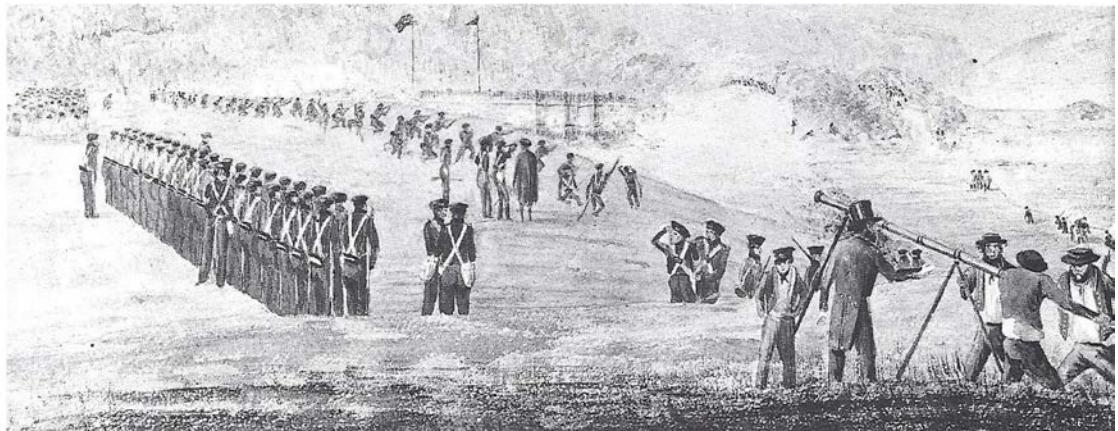


Fig.3.7. The Congreve Rocket troop in action at Puketutu Pa on 8 May 1845. The troop, commanded by Lt Egerton R.N. was from *HMS North Star*. Water-colour probably by Major Cyprian Bridge. Alexander Turnbull Library.

A ‘friendly scout and guide’ John Hobbs led the troops to the forming up place for the assault.¹²¹ As they moved onto the piece of high ground where they intended to form up they unexpectedly encountered a Maori party already there. After a quick skirmish the British took possession of the ground but were then attacked in the flank by a larger party of up to 200 warriors under Kawiti’s command. The battle developed and remained in that location as the troops fought off co-ordinated attacks from Kawiti’s force as well as Heke’s, which sallied out from the pa. It was heavy hand-to-hand combat with bayonet and mere that lasted for several hours. Finally, the retreat was sounded and the British troops fought a withdrawal leaving the field to its Maori victors.¹²² By Cowan’s estimate, the casualty figures for the British were 14 killed and 40 wounded, and 30 and 50 Maori respectively.

Once again, the British commissariat system was deficient. The troops, dispirited and exhausted, spent the night at Nene’s camp lying amongst the fern in the rain and sleet without food until some killed a wandering bullock.¹²³ Major Bridge, who had never been in battle before, complained, ‘[we]...reached our camp after dark and found nothing to eat but potatoes, poor fare after fighting all day’.¹²⁴ Quartermaster Sergeant Mitchell had no food that day or the day before, but obtained a cob of corn

¹²¹ Cowan, p.42.

¹²² Cowan, p.44; Belich, pp.41-44; Clarke, p.81. All give good descriptions of the battle. Belich and Clarke both emphasise the planned role of Kawiti’s force in disrupting the assault and preventing the troops from attacking the pa itself.

¹²³ Buick, p.120.

¹²⁴ Bridge, 8 May 1845.

from a Maori the following day and shared it with his brother.¹²⁵ The day after the battle was very wet, Bridge noted, '[I]...passed a miserable day and had wretched food.'¹²⁶

Hulme wisely decided to make no further assault on the pa, 'not being provided with guns...the rockets proved a complete failure'.¹²⁷ The force retraced its steps back to Kerikeri fully exposed and constantly expecting to be attacked. Its bravado gone, the British force now fully realised its vulnerability in the harsh and alien land. The campaign had been a disaster for the British and there was now little doubt that the mystique of the British regular soldier had gone. Unlike the battle at Kororareka, the British had taken the initiative at Puketutu and a sizeable force of regulars had pursued Heke, but the result was still the same, the Maori had bested them.

From an intelligence perspective, there were several lessons that the command should have learned. Hulme had almost no knowledge of his enemy or the route that he must follow to get to him, and he had made only weak attempts to gain any knowledge. He had relied too much on Nene for information, and Nene had not realised the difficulties the troops were to have. The terrain had proven extremely difficult for Hulme's force to traverse and the high rainfall drastically reduced their combat effectiveness, particularly because they had inadequate shelter at night.¹²⁸ Inadequate food supplies and serious transport problems were other areas of major difficulty. In short, the British troops had simply underestimated the difficulties of moving through and moving in the physical environment of the interior of northern New Zealand and they had failed to cope. The difficulties they had moving over the relatively short distance to Okaihau seem extraordinary in comparison to what modern armies can achieve, but nevertheless they were real. They indicate that the British troops, at that stage, were ill-prepared and ill-equipped to cope with the challenges presented by the physical geography of New Zealand.

Hulme had also underestimated the fighting qualities of his enemy. The rockets had not put Heke's men to flight and they had fought bravely and well in front of the pa.

¹²⁵ Mitchell, p.3.

¹²⁶ Bridge, 8 May 1845.

¹²⁷ Bridge, 10 May 1845.

¹²⁸ The poor performance of the British troops on this their first foray into the New Zealand interior may seem remarkable to the modern reader. After all, they only had to march 18 miles to Heke's pa. However the first hand reports, and especially Collinson, all indicate that the difficulties were very real indeed.

The Congreve Rockets were only signal rockets and their main purpose was to have been a psychological one. The strength of the pa itself had been seriously miscalculated and it was obvious that artillery would be required to batter down the palisades in the future.¹²⁹

The strength of the pa should not have been a surprise to Hulme. Major Bunbury, the senior British officer in New Zealand in 1843, and Captain Bennett his Royal Engineer Officer, had sent plans of pa to the Inspector General of Fortifications that year, suggesting ways to attack, and requesting advice.¹³⁰ Bennett had originally written the report on the assumption that British troops might one day need to attack pa to stop inter-tribal warfare and cannibalism which was still occurring at the time. He recommended that 12-pound guns would be required to create a breach in the palisades, and that if artillery was not used, considerable loss of life for the assailants would result. He further recommended that grapeshot and canister rounds would be necessary and that mortars and hand grenades would prove extremely useful. Hulme's force carried none of that equipment on its Puketutu campaign.

It seems almost certain that Hulme had no knowledge of Bennett's report which makes a plan to frighten Maori out of their pa with rockets seem nothing less than foolish. Collinson observed that, 'it does not appear that Lieutenant [later Captain] Bennett's recommendations were attended to, for no equipment was provided until the difficulties had arrived at too great a height for them to be of the use expected.'¹³¹ FitzRoy, smarting from his dismissal as governor, saw the matter as proof of the lack of military support the colony had received during his tenure:

No public effect was caused by his (Bennett's) application, sent carefully through the proper channel, (to the knowledge of the colonial authorities in New Zealand) and the apparent indifference to this and other applications for military aid, caused bad effects in the colony – where loyalty is not so influential a feeling as at home.¹³²

London had failed to act upon good and timely information received from New Zealand. Hulme was despatched on an operation without the important information that

¹²⁹ Meurant, 7 May, 1845, (AIML, NZMS 205). As soon as he saw the pa, Meurant concluded that it could not be reduced without cannon.

¹³⁰ G.A. Bennett, Capt. 'Report on Pah's of New Zealand (with plans)'. 1843. (AIML, MS 1224). The report is also reproduced in Collinson pp.47-9, and referred to in FitzRoy p.54.

¹³¹ Collinson, p.50.

¹³² FitzRoy, p.54.

he needed to conduct the Puketutu campaign. Even so, it seems surprising that Hulme had not learned about the strength of the pa he was supposed to attack, after he had arrived in New Zealand. Apart from those by Bennett and Bunbury, there were several other reports by Europeans who had seen pa not dissimilar to Heke's from the 1820s onwards.¹³³ Pa of that period had many of the features found in Heke's one at Puketutu. Pugsley has shown that the fighting pa of the Northern War were evolutionary, rather than revolutionary in design.¹³⁴ Therefore by 1845, there was a body of knowledge that Hulme could have tapped into to find out about the strength and nature of Maori defensive fortifications. Even FitzRoy, who in 1846 was so eager to heap blame upon London for lack of military support and advice, must have seen numerous pa, and possibly even read Bennett's report. Yet there is no evidence in Hulme's behaviour that the governor gave him appropriate advice, and much less that it was adhered to. The reason that Hulme set out to attack Puketutu without artillery lies heavily in the poor use of information that could have become intelligence, in both London and Auckland. It also points to Hulme's failure to understand that such information was necessary, and a failure to go out and actively collect it.

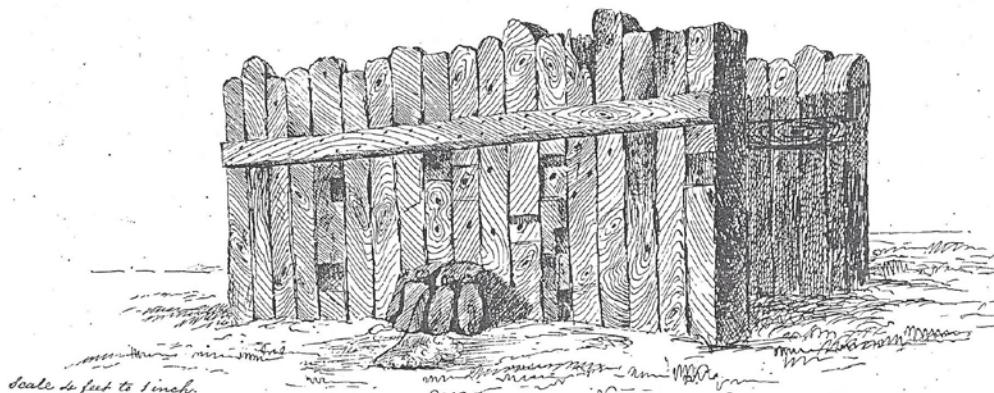
An interesting post-script to this situation was a report received by Governor Grey from Downing Street in 1847.¹³⁵ The report detailed experiments conducted by the Royal Engineers at their base in Chatham. Oak stockades were built in various styles to resemble Maori pa, including one, 'constructed as near as possible upon the plan of Heke's Pa [Puketutu] in New Zealand.' The stockades were blown up by placing bags of gunpowder against, or in one case, beneath them. The results were recorded by sketches and notes, (see Fig. 3.8 on the following two pages), and comprehensive recommendations about the most effective ways to make a breach in the stockades were made. A report of this nature would have made the British Northern War commanders' tasks a lot easier. Engineering techniques were not used to attack pa in the Northern War, but not surprisingly, the Royal Engineers' report included information about sapping and mining as ways of investing pa in its recommendations. In so doing it foreshadowed Major General Pratt's successful tactics in the Taranaki War thirteen years later.

¹³³ Chris Pugsley 'Belich's Modern Pa Theory: Evolution or Revolution?' Unpublished manuscript in author's possession. p.5.

¹³⁴ Pugsley, 'Belich's Modern Pa Theory.' p.5.

¹³⁵ A copy of the report, dated 8 July 1847, is attached to Pugsley, 'Belich's Modern Pa Theory,' It can also be located in National Archives (G31 Military Despatches, 31 Dec 42 - 28 Nov 54).

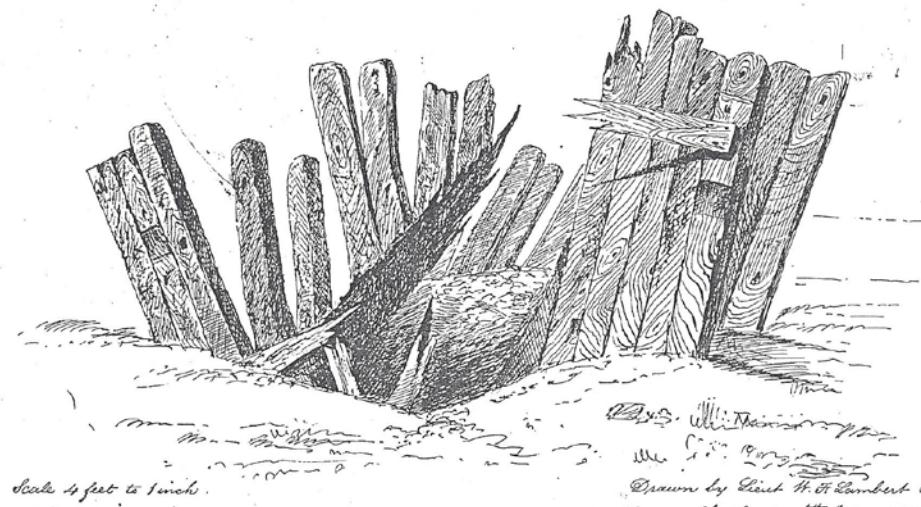
Sketch N^o1, illustrative of the construction of a Double Stockade, consisting chiefly of old oak timbers, averaging 18 inches square, and 18 feet long, fixed upright in Trenches 4 feet deep, so as to leave 9 feet above the surface. The Timbers of each Row connected together by Abands of Pitch Pine, 12 inches by 4 inches, and secured to the Timbers by 10inch Spikes, the upper Abands being 7 feet above the ground, and the upper edge of the lower Abands flush with the Surface. The interval between the two Rows of Timber was 4 feet 6 inches.



Drawn by Lieut H. S. Lambert R.E.
Chatham, 8th July 1847.

Sketch Col A
8/1847

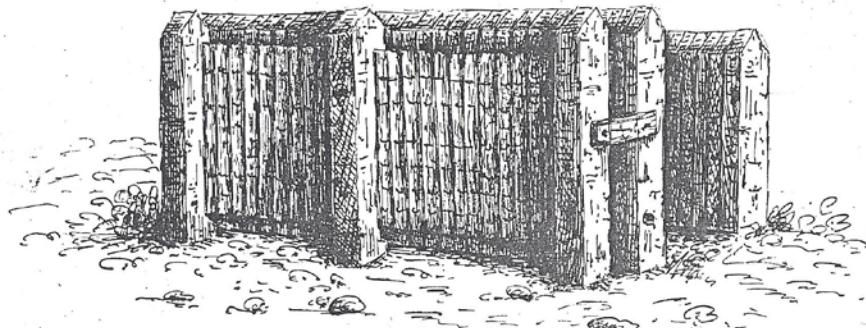
Sketch N^o2, illustrative of the effect produced by a charge of 200 lbs of Gunpowder, contained in 4-tiered Sandbags, and lodged at the foot of the outer line of the double row of Stockades represented in Sketch N^o1. This charge was weighted with 6 sandbags filled with earth. (2 on top of the upper Bag, 2 in front of the charge, and 1 at each end.)



Drawn by Lieut H. S. Lambert R.E.
Chatham, 8th July 1847.

Sketch Col A
8/1847

Sketch N°9 of a Stockade constructed as near as possible upon the plan of Hekes Pa in New Zealand, having a double line of Timbers 10 feet apart, and a third line composed of fascines to represent the line of fence used by the Natives of New Zealand. The interval being more considerable in this instance than in the previous experiments, it was considered useless to attempt the destruction of this triple enclosure by means of one large charge of Gunpowder, more especially as great danger would have resulted by the explosion to the adjacent buildings. It was therefore determined to operate by the sappers, an Approach and Lodgement were made in the Flying Step, and from that Lodgement a gallery was driven so as to admit of a Branch and two chambers proceeding from it, being excavated so as to give a line of least resistance of 7 feet to the surface, and 4 feet to the heel of the Timbers. A charge of 200 lbs of Gunpowder was lodged in each chamber and the Branch torpeded. On both charges being exploded simultaneously the effect shown in Sketch N°10 was produced. The Pensioners assisted in the whole of this operation.

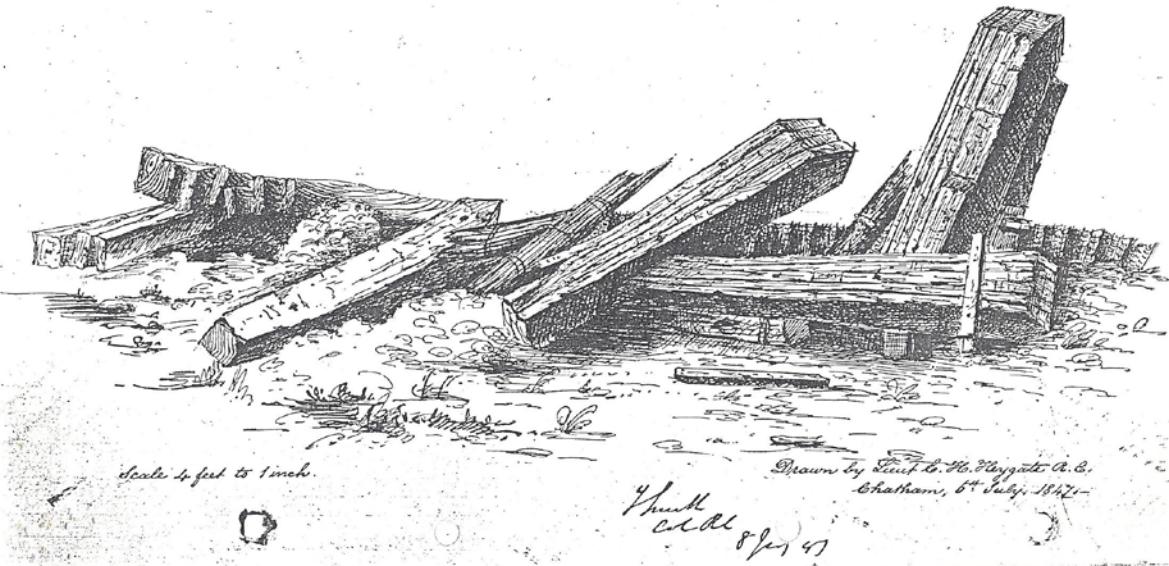


Scale 4 feet to 1 inch.

Drawn by Lieut. C.H. Higgate R.E.
Chatham, 6th July, 1847.

Sketch N°9
8 July 47.

Sketch N°10, illustrative of the effect produced by the explosions described in Sketch N°9.



Scale 4 feet to 1 inch.

Drawn by Lieut. C.H. Higgate R.E.
Chatham, 6th July, 1847.

Sketch
N°10
8 July 47.

Fig. 3.8. Detail from a report on experiments to breach Maori stockades carried out at the Royal Engineer base at Chatham, United Kingdom. Five different constructions designed to simulate pa stockades were built and different placements and quantities of gunpowder were used to determine the best method to create a breach. The first pair of sketches show the effect of 200lbs of gunpowder placed against the stockade, and the second two sketches which simulate 'Hekes Pa in New Zealand' show the effect produced by mining under the stockade and placing gunpowder beneath it. National Archives.

An operation on the Waikare River

After the Battle of Puketutu, the government stepped up its intelligence gathering activity. Much of it centred on Clendon who replaced Beckham as Police Magistrate at Kororareka on 10 April 1845, and who seems to have had a better understanding of the need to seek out and disseminate information. Clendon passed a continual flow of information on to FitzRoy about the situation in the north. He gained his information from a variety of sources. The missionary network still extended right into Heke's territory, and the observations of men such as the Wesleyan missionaries White and Hobbs and the CMS missionaries Williams and Burrows, all found their way back to Clendon. Much of the information was informal and on its own, trivial, but nevertheless of value to FitzRoy. For example, on 24 April 1845 Clendon advised FitzRoy that White of Hokianga had passed through Kororareka the evening before, having seen Mr Hobbs on the previous Monday. Hobbs had told White that the tribes in the area had conferred and decided to remain neutral. Considerable information reached Auckland in this fashion.¹³⁶ Clendon also kept in close touch with Waka Nene and George Clark Jnr and informed FitzRoy on 10 June 1845 that he kept up a daily communication with both men.¹³⁷

Clendon appears to have kept a particularly close eye on the activities of United States citizens in the bay, especially Mr Waitford. He accused Waitford of, 'reaping a rich harvest' from the war by selling gunpowder to Heke, and by purchasing goods plundered from Kororareka from the Kapotai and other hostile tribes.¹³⁸ In May, Clendon learned from Hobbs that, 'half a ton of gunpowder was expected at the Hokianga and that it would fall into Heke's hands.' He advised FitzRoy of the activities of American whalers and other ships operating in the vicinity of Manganui and Mangaroa, 'from which the natives of Mangaroa principally derive their supplies,'¹³⁹ and urged FitzRoy to expand the naval blockade. He even reported that Heke, in conjunction with Waitford, had reserved a tract of land for an American settlement.¹⁴⁰

Clendon took a hard line against the Maori tribes who had participated in the attack on Kororareka, and advocated, and even took part in, punitive actions against

¹³⁶ Clendon to FitzRoy, (APL NZMS 476), 24 April 1845.

¹³⁷ Clendon to FitzRoy, (APL NZMS 476), 10 June 1845.

¹³⁸ Clendon to FitzRoy, (APL NZMS 476), 18 April 1845. According to Clendon, Waitford sold 80 casks of gunpowder to Heke.

¹³⁹ Clendon to FitzRoy, (APL NZMS 476), 27 May 1845.

¹⁴⁰ Clendon to FitzRoy, (APL NZMS 476), 18 April 1845.

them. He believed that they still held much of the plunder and pushed for the destruction of villages in the vicinity of Kawakawa and Waikare where the Maori were, he said, ‘in much dread of punishment.’ He accompanied seamen from HMS *Hazard* and HMS *North Star* when they destroyed villages loyal to Heke near Waitangi in May 1845.¹⁴¹ The most useful application of his considerable local knowledge came in the attack on the Kapotai Pa on the Waikare River. Hulme had returned to Auckland after the battle at Puketutu, leaving Major Bridge in command of the force, with a free hand to use his discretion about conducting operations against the Maori in the Waikare area.¹⁴² Bridge quickly took the chance to try out his independent command and planned what superficially appeared to be a well conceived punitive raid on the Kapotai Pa. On 13 May he consulted with Clendon and Williams to gain as much information as possible. Clendon in particular was a great help, providing detailed information, and even a spy named Cook who knew the area well, to do a reconnaissance.¹⁴³ On 15 May Bridge held another meeting aboard HMS *Hazard* with Clendon, Cook and Repa (one of Nene’s lieutenants), to plan the final details of the attack which was to begin at 11pm that evening.

Bridge appears to have planned and consulted well and he made a genuine attempt to gather information from a variety of sources before finalising his plan. Unfortunately for him, the plan was overly ambitious and provided too many opportunities for failure. It involved ferrying a composite force of over 200 troops and 100 Maori in boats and canoes, complete with a 12-pounder gun, up a tidal river bedevilled with shallows, at night. It proved to be, in Clendon’s words, ‘a most disgraceful failure.’¹⁴⁴ Even Bridge admitted, ‘but when we approached the creeks there was a great confusion among the boats, some sticking in the mud flats, others going up the wrong creek. In fact it was most infamously managed.’¹⁴⁵ Every aspect of control and co-ordination collapsed and the operation descended into farce as small parties wandered through tidal swamps attempting to meet up with each other or pursue their will-o-the-wisp enemy.

Even the element of surprise, upon which the whole enterprise hinged, was lost

¹⁴¹ Clendon to FitzRoy, (APL NZMS 476), 5, 12 and 13 May 1845.

¹⁴² Bridge, 12 May 1845.

¹⁴³ Bridge, 14 May; Buick, p.122; Clendon, (APL NZMS 476), 19 May 1845.

¹⁴⁴ Clendon, (APL NZMS 476), 19 May 1845.

¹⁴⁵ Bridge, 15 May 1845.

when the wild ducks which nested on the river were alarmed by the approaching boats and flew screeching over the pa.¹⁴⁶ Burrows visited Paihia the following morning and learned of the skirmish. He noted in his dairy that day (16 May) that the Kapotai, 'had due warning of the approach of the troops and, as a matter of course, had cleared out all they possibly could.'¹⁴⁷ There is a suggestion in Burrows' words that humans had pre-empted the ducks' warning about the approach of the raiders, and it is quite likely that the Kapotai knew about the planned attack long before Bridge's force arrived. Clendon had provided Bridge with considerable information and advice; the approximate number of inhabitants of the pa, the need to use light boats on account of the shallows, the preference for Maori paddles over oars (less noisy and they allowed more troops to be carried per boat), a list of privately owned boats and the numbers that they could carry, tide tables because of the absolute necessity to go up the river on the flood tide, and the location of suitable landing spots. He also supplied a number of guides who had lived in the area for between four and six years.

Clendon blamed the failure of the expedition on a number of factors, and his assessment seems to be largely correct; the boats set off too late, they became separated and arrived at different times, and the 12-pounder gun was in one boat while its powder was in another. The guides supplied by Clendon were not used as guides at all because that task was given to another man who volunteered on the spot and who made wrong decisions.¹⁴⁸ Although Bridge had gathered more information before this battle than Hulme had at Puketutu, or Despard was to at Ohaeawai, he did not use it well enough. He showed more understanding about the need to acquire intelligence than his superior officers, but his plan was too complicated and in the end he failed just as dismally as they did.

Despard and Kawiti: the Battle of Ohaeawai

Bridge received orders to return to Auckland with his force and arrived there on 28 May. In consultation with Hulme and Bridge, FitzRoy decided to resume hostilities as soon as possible. After a brief rest, a force of 300 men plus artillery was to go north under Bridge's command, Hulme having decided, for reasons unknown, to remain in

¹⁴⁶ Maning, p.258.

¹⁴⁷ Burrows, *Diary*.16 May 1845.

¹⁴⁸ Clendon, (APL NZMS 476), 19 May 1845. Also see Bridge's description of the skirmish, May 15 1845, in which he confirmed, 'there required to be a guide in each boat.'

Auckland.¹⁴⁹ The force was to proceed to the Waimate Mission Station and use it as a base because it was close to Heke's new pa at Ohaeawai. The British command already knew the location of Heke's new pa because Nene had advised Bridge of it by letter when he was still in Auckland.¹⁵⁰ Nene had urged the major to attack the pa then, so the British command was able to assume that Nene would guide them through the interior once again.

While preparations were being made, Colonel Despard and two companies from the 99th Regiment arrived in Auckland from Sydney. As the senior officer, Despard immediately took command of the military forces and announced his intention to command the next operation against Heke. He was aware that it was now approaching mid-winter but he needed to strike a decisive blow against Heke before he became too strong. The opportunity to engage him with artillery in a newly developed pa offered a chance to end the rebellion in one decisive encounter.

Despard's force entered the bay in the evening of 10 June having been preceded by an advanced party two or three days earlier. News of that party's arrival had travelled quickly and at Waimate, Burrows noted in his dairy on 9 June:

Our usual Monday morning school. A large number present; but I have no doubt a desire for news as to the movements of the troops now in the bay brought in many of them. Some two or three who were there had come in from the bay on Sunday [8th] and brought with them the news they had collected there, which was to the effect that the whole force was to be marched into our settlement. They could scarcely believe I had received no intimation of the kind from the government officer in command.¹⁵¹

Later that morning, Heke, who had been further inland, moved through Waimate with a party of 100 armed men. He had heard of the arrival of the troops as well and quizzed Burrows for information because he was well aware that the troops were coming for him. He contemplated destroying the Waimate bridge to slow down the progress of guns and supplies, but eventually decided, 'the want of a bridge would only give them a little extra trouble... and that we in the interior would be the greatest losers by the destruction of the bridge.'¹⁵² Heke and Nene had used warriors to spy on each other's forces for some time and Nene's knowledge of Heke's movements seems to

¹⁴⁹ Bridge, 15 May 1845.

¹⁵⁰ Bridge, 18 May 1845.

¹⁵¹ Burrows, *Diary*. 9 June 1845.

¹⁵² Burrows, *Diary*. 10 June 1845.

have been fairly complete. Heke too, appears to have had a system in place that gave him the latest information very quickly. Burrows noted this on 11 June, writing, ‘Heke has evidently more certain information than I have as to the movements of the troops, and also of Waka’s movements.’¹⁵³

It was probably good intelligence that led to Heke’s next move. He became aware that many of Nene’s warriors were away in the Hokianga and decided to attack Nene in his unfinished pa near Puketutu. Estimates of the size of the two forces vary but it appears that Heke may have had about 500 men and Nene somewhere between 150 and 300.¹⁵⁴ Heke may have seen two benefits in the attack. Firstly, he stood a good chance of defeating his mortal foe while his numbers and fortifications were weak, and secondly by defeating Nene he could severely hamper, and possibly paralyse, the British attempts to reach and attack him.

However events did not transpire the way he would have hoped. Nene responded quickly to Heke’s surprise attack and defeated his superior force in an open battle in front of the pa. Three of Heke’s leading chiefs were killed and Heke himself was severely injured by a musket ball through the thigh. The wound caused him great pain, and from that point onwards he ceased to play a leading role in the war. The battle, now known as Te Ahu Ahu, was fought on 12 June. Williams and Burrows were in the area and moved between both parties after the event. Despard learnt of the battle the following evening when several of Nene’s chiefs visited him aboard HMS *British Sovereign*, bearing a letter from Nene. Bridge, who was present at the meeting, noted that Williams also came on board and confirmed all of the chiefs’ statements. He had just returned from the Waimate district and had seen Heke. He reported the severity of Heke’s wound and the disconsolation of his warriors. Nene (by letter) and Williams, urged Despard to follow up this unexpectedly fortunate turn of events with all speed. The colonel agreed and plans were drawn up late into the night for a start at 4 am the next morning.¹⁵⁵ Valuable information corroborated by two reliable sources, Nene and

¹⁵³ Burrows, *Diary*. 11 June 1845.

¹⁵⁴ Very little is recorded about the battle of Te Ahuahu. Belich gives a good discussion of the probable numbers on pp.45-46, and concludes that Heke may have had 400-500 men and Nene 300. Burrows reported that Heke had 450 and Nene 120, while Bridge reports Heke 600 and Nene 150. Belich gives an account of the battle based on the recollections of Maning which paints Nene as the aggressor. This thesis has also used accounts by Burrows, 12 June 1845, Bridge, 13 June 1845, and Buick, pp.136-9, all of which clearly paint Heke as the aggressor on this occasion

¹⁵⁵ Bridge, 13 June 1845.

Williams, had helped Despard to see an opportunity and quickly formulate plans to exploit it.

The intention to move to the Waimate Mission Station was immediately thrown into disarray when HMS *British Sovereign* ran onto a reef the next morning, and it was not until 16 June that the troops landed once again at Kerikeri. Much has been written about the march to Waimate which began the next day, most of which seems extraordinary in hindsight. The troops took more or less a full day and a night to reach the mission station, and had a difficult job of it, experiencing much the same problems that they had *en-route* to Puketutu.¹⁵⁶ The route was wet and muddy and streams flowed across the dray road.

Despard later complained bitterly about the road and the quality of the information he had been given about it, ‘I was told in Auckland that there was a capital dray road to Waimate. I found it execrable.’¹⁵⁷ Clendon knew the area well and had written in his journal on 19 May, after learning that Heke and Kawiti were building their new pa, that, ‘there is a good dray road to Ohaeawai.’¹⁵⁸ The information from Auckland and Clendon’s independent comments are not consistent with the reality of the march. This might be explained by the fact that it was winter, the weather was poor and the road which may have been adequate in drier conditions had quickly turned into a bog after heavy rain. It is also difficult to avoid the conclusion that the march, and the indeed the whole campaign, was badly organised and poorly led, and the troops, many of whom were fresh from Sydney, could barely cope with the conditions.

Despard brought two horse carts from Auckland and four guns on makeshift carriages that had been constructed in Auckland. When he landed at Kerikeri he began casting around to see what other transportation could be acquired. The Resident Magistrate from Hokianga provided three ox-drays but nothing more could be obtained.¹⁵⁹ The implications were serious as Despard later complained:

This obliged me to leave half of the ammunition behind; no private baggage for officers or men could be taken, and the greatest part of our provisions was obliged to be placed in store at Kiri, and there wait for favourable opportunities

¹⁵⁶ Meurant, (AIML, NZMS 205), 18 June 1845.

¹⁵⁷ Williams, *Plain Facts*, p.21.

¹⁵⁸ Clendon, (APL NZMS 476), 19 May 1845.

¹⁵⁹ The Resident Magistrate from Hokianga arranged three drays from Kerikeri for the use of the troops. Two horse carts were brought from Auckland. The gun carriages were a makeshift arrangement made in Auckland.

of having them sent after us. The officers hired natives to carry their baggage, each officer having, only a knapsack, haversack and blanket.¹⁶⁰

Two of the borrowed drays and one of the horse carriages broke down. Little prior thought appears to have been applied to the movement of the guns and they were eventually attached to the back of the drays. This was unsatisfactory and they proved to be unstable and difficult to control. Even so, the whole march took only thirteen hours, a task that present day troops, and even recreational hikers, might consider routine, and the fact that the force covered twelve miles in thirteen hours indicates that progress was in fact easier than Despard later portrayed when he was looking for reasons for his failure.¹⁶¹ In fact Despard was very fortunate that Heke had decided not to destroy the bridge, and even more so that he decided not to ambush the troops. Indeed, Heke's men did watch the troops on the road throughout the campaign, but as he told Burrows, 'they did not wish to use treachery but *he riri awatea*, (fighting in broad daylight).¹⁶²

The march to Waimate again showed that the British troops at that stage were unsuited to campaigning in the New Zealand bush. They were poorly organised, poorly equipped and provisioned, poorly trained for such an enterprise, and on this occasion poorly led. Despard was 60 years old and had not seen active service in 30 years. He was stubborn, bad tempered and was suffering from neuralgia.¹⁶³ His complaints about the route and tendency to blame others for his problems indicate an elderly man out of his depth, and they set the tone for his behaviour throughout the rest of the campaign.

The British force remained at Waimate for five days. For Despard, it was a chance to gain information, organise his troops and prepare for battle. At Waimate he had three men who knew virtually everything that he needed to know about the pa and the general political situation; Burrows, Williams and Nene. Burrows was not pleased to have his oasis of Christian virtue invaded by the troops who used his fences for firewood and ate his chickens and a pig. He was also aware that their presence placed the continued existence of his mission in a precarious position because he could not be

¹⁶⁰ Collinson, p.60.

¹⁶¹ Collinson, p.69; Bridge, 17 June 1845. Bridge, who was duty field officer and therefore had extra responsibilities, notes that he was occupied with the march and then housing the men at Waimate for a total of 22 hours before getting to bed.

¹⁶² Williams, *Plain Facts*, p.20.

¹⁶³ John A.B. Crawford, 'Henry Despard,' *The New Zealand Dictionary of Biography*, vol.1. Wellington: Allen and Unwin and Department of Internal Affairs, 1970, p.104. Crawford gives a picture of Despard's character which is generally considered to be accurate.

seen to take sides. A difficult situation arose when Maori discovered that the mission's blacksmith had been forced into service making bar-shot for Despard's guns, and later confronted Burrows accusing the missionary himself of making weapons for use against them.¹⁶⁴ Ironically, the CMS missionaries were also later accused by Despard and Grey of disloyalty to the government.¹⁶⁵ To some degree, they were able to walk a middle road between the two antagonistic parties, but it was a difficult situation that eventually contributed to the tarnishing of their reputation.

There is no evidence whether Burrows helped Despard with information or not, but he could have been of considerable use. He knew the local Maori well, and Waimate was at a crossroads for the flow of information and rumour in the area. Burrows had seen the pa at Puketutu, he had seen Heke soon after he was injured and he received daily information and rumour about Heke's condition and the location and morale of this force. He had visited Kawiti at Ohaeawai and had seen his warriors in the process of constructing the pa. When Burrows and Williams visited Kawiti together at Ohaeawai on 12 June the old chief drew them aside, not wishing them to see the inside of the pa on that occasion.¹⁶⁶ He was clearly concerned that they may relay information about it to the British military. Burrows also knew that a party of warriors had recovered two small cannons which had been hidden from Heke in the mission's millpond.¹⁶⁷ The missionary could have been of great assistance to Despard, but that would have depended upon good relations between the two men and Burrow's willingness to divulge what he knew, and it is not apparent that either was the case.

Williams' knowledge was as complete as Burrows'. He had a meeting with Despard on 20 June at Ohaeawai, when he probably conveyed details about the condition of the pa, including the information that the sticks of the palisade were no thicker than his thigh and the posts were no thicker than his body.¹⁶⁸ Nene was also a potential source of limitless intelligence for Despard. He arrived at Ohaeawai on 19 June, no doubt in order to meet his new ally. His experience of the Puketutu expedition

¹⁶⁴ Burrows, *Diary*, 2 July 1845.

¹⁶⁵ Williams, *Plain Facts*. This is a pamphlet by the Archdeacon himself, defending his role throughout the war. The issue of neutrality was a difficult one for the missionaries who were torn between the cause of their flock, and the demands of their countrymen. Most equated civilisation with Christianisation and westernisation.

¹⁶⁶ Burrows, *Diary*, 12 June 1845.

¹⁶⁷ Burrows, *Diary*, 30 May 1845.

¹⁶⁸ Williams, *Plain Facts*, p.22. He was later confronted by officers who accused him of underestimating the strength of the pa. Williams attributed their ideas to Despard's excuses for his failure.

must have made him aware of the shortcomings of the British commissariat and he brought with him a very large quantity of food as a gift to the soldiers, which they already desperately needed.¹⁶⁹ He greeted Despard and offered his services, but was apparently told, ‘when I want the help of savages I will ask for it.’¹⁷⁰ Fortunately this was not translated for Nene, but it indicated that Despard was not open to information and advice from his ally. During his five days at Waimate it appears that Despard did gain some information, but with his arrogant and racist attitude and his distrust of the Maori, one wonders how much he actually learnt.

Back in Kororareka, Clendon was playing a co-ordinating role. Nene and George Clark Jnr. communicated with him frequently¹⁷¹ and he wrote to FitzRoy on a regular basis. On 4 June he told FitzRoy that Heke was hard at work on his new pa and that the two 12-pounder cannonades had been recovered from the millpond. He arranged the oxen for the drays and asked Nene to protect the bridge on the route to be used by the troops. He also requested information from Nene so that he could furnish Despard with the exact state and position of Heke’s pa.¹⁷² It is likely then, that Despard was aware that Heke and Kawiti had two artillery pieces, and that he also received other information from Clendon. Clendon’s actions at this point, and prior to the attack on the Waikare Pa, illustrate that he saw more clearly than most the importance of good intelligence and appropriate logistics for the military operations.

The arrival of 600 armed men at the Waimate Mission Station was clearly a startling occurrence, and it generated considerable excitement and rumour. It was difficult to distinguish rumour from fact and Burrows noted daily the rumours about Heke’s condition. It was reported on 22 June, and widely believed, that he had actually died.¹⁷³ On the same day Despard did a reconnaissance of the road to the pa and on 23 June moved his force into a position in front of it. There are enough reports about Heke and Kawiti’s men watching the troops *en route* and in camp¹⁷⁴ to conclude that they had a fairly clear idea of the British movements and strength.

¹⁶⁹ Burrows, *Diary*, 17 June 1845. Burrows, described the food as one ton of potatoes, while Bridge, (18 June 1845), added that it included potatoes, pigs, ducks and geese.

¹⁷⁰ Burrows, *Diary*, 19 June 1845.

¹⁷¹ Clendon, (APL NZMS 476), 4 June 1845.

¹⁷² Clendon, (APL NZMS 476), 10 June 1845.

¹⁷³ Burrows, *Diary*, 22 June 1845; Bridge, 22 June 1845.

¹⁷⁴ Bridge, 18 June 1845. He notes that a European arriving at Waimate had seen 100 of Heke’s men watching the troops. Burrows also saw many warriors watching the mission station from the hills.

The mission was a focal point for much activity in the region. Many families lived in and around the buildings and many more came in for schooling, worship, medicine and commerce. Given that there was a steady and quick flow of information and much coming and going of people, it seems clear that Heke and Kawiti could have used informers and spies who could have passed freely between the mission and the pa. Williams observed that, ‘the natives were perfectly well aware of the formidable preparations being made to attack them.’¹⁷⁵ FitzRoy tantalisingly suggests that Maori women were encouraged to visit the camp and have sex with the soldiers in order to gain information, although his suspicions are not confirmed elsewhere; ‘they were dangerous as spies while prejudicial to strict discipline.’¹⁷⁶

Much has been written about the British attack on Ohaeawai Pa, which was defended by approximately 200 warriors under Kawiti’s command. The ineffective and poorly devised bombardment which continued intermittently for eight days; Despard’s frustration; Kawiti’s sally out from the pa to try to capture the newly arrived 32-pounder, or Despard, or Nene; Despard’s anger and the subsequent futile assault on the still intact pa; Kawiti’s well executed defence and the bravery on both sides; have all been well discussed elsewhere and need not be revisited in detail in this thesis.

From an intelligence perspective however, it is clear that patterns established before the battle continued throughout it. Many of the problems Despard had fighting the battle lay in his attitude towards Maori, both enemy and ally, and with his tactical ineptitude. Frustrated by the inability of the artillery to create a breach, he ordered preparation for an assault on three separate occasions. The first, on the morning of 25 June was countermanded because of heavy rain. This was to the relief of Major Bridge who wrote, ‘[I] hope some less hazardous mode of attacking the pa may be fixed on.’¹⁷⁷ The second order was countermanded on 29 June after a deputation of senior officers prevailed upon Despard to await the arrival of a heavy 32-pounder cannon which was already *en route* from Kerikeri. This was a good decision, because when the 32-pounder did open up on the morning of 1 July, it immediately began to inflict damage on the pa’s palisades. An attack by Kawiti’s men on Nene’s position on the hilltop which housed the battery forced Despard to run for his life, and in anger he ordered another assault on

¹⁷⁵ Williams, *Plain Facts*, p.20.

¹⁷⁶ FitzRoy, p.53.

¹⁷⁷ Bridge, 25 June 1845; Fortescue, p.406.

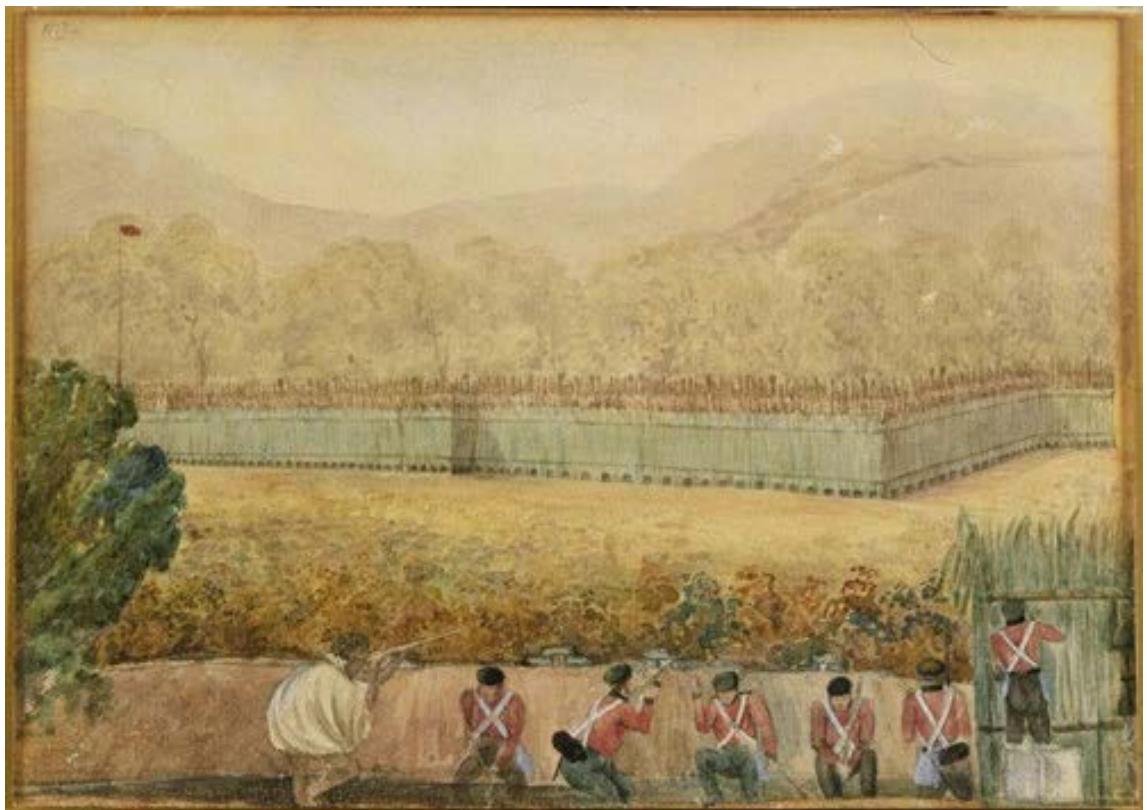


Fig.3.9. British troops in front of Kawiti's Pa at Ohaeawai. The pa featured double palisades with flax matting on the front, trenches with firing steps, loopholes for musket fire through the palisade at ground level, bastions and a network of covered trenches and bomb-proof shelters. Alexander Turnbull Library.

the yet unbreached pa. The attack was to take place at 3 pm, which gave three hours notice.¹⁷⁸

Again, the wisdom of Despard's decision was challenged. The civilians Webster and Maning, along with Nene, attempted to reason with the colonel arguing that they knew how well the pa was constructed and they predicted a great loss of British lives. Despard again refused to listen and threatened to arrest them. The exchange ended with Nene telling Despard (through the interpreter Meurant), that he was a 'very stupid person.'¹⁷⁹ Even Nene's offer to conduct a feint attack at the rear of the pa to draw off some defenders was refused. It appears that several officers were opposed to the attack and they understood that it would fail if it went ahead as Despard had planned it. Even the sailor Lieutenant Phillpotts R.N., who was killed in the assault, could see that it was foolhardy. According to Cowan he was so indignant about the decision that he threw off

¹⁷⁸ Kawiti's sally occurred about noon on 1 Jul. Despard ordered the attack for 3 pm. This gave just enough time for the men to have their lunch and prepare for battle.

¹⁷⁹ Cowan, p.61.

his uniform (presumably to avoid disgracing it), and attacked in his underwear.¹⁸⁰ Despard's decision was a military intelligence failure of enormous proportions. He failed to appreciate the strength of the pa and the capability of his opponents and he failed to listen to his subordinates or allies.

The attack was a disaster for the British who sustained a total of 114 casualties,¹⁸¹ almost fifty percent of the 243 men who actually took part in the futile slaughter in front of the intact palisades. The predictable outcome of Despard's ill-considered attack then created even greater difficulties. In the next few days after the battle he became extremely worried about how to get his injured men back to the relative safety of the Waimate Mission Station. He had insufficient men to do the two tasks of carrying the wounded back and providing security for the force. He was extremely vulnerable to counter attack and knew that his men, who were only then just beginning to build protective works with scoria rock, could not withstand a concerted attack by Kawiti. The weather continued to be appalling and he was concerned that the constant rain was having an adverse effect on his men's health.¹⁸²

Despard's relationship with Nene and his chiefs had seriously deteriorated and the latter demanded payment in blankets for carrying the wounded back to Waimate. He had no supply of blankets and the Maori would not accept his word on future payment. In the light of such troubles, he planned to withdraw his whole force back to Waimate as well as he could, whilst leaving Kawiti still in possession of the pa. Nene and his chiefs learned of his intentions and requested a meeting. In that meeting on 5 July, tempers ran high. Despard berated his supposed allies for their lack of assistance and poured out his problems. The equally angry chiefs, for their part, shouted that, 'they came for revenge and would not go without it...that they cared nothing for [the British] wounded ...we might let them rot and die.'¹⁸³ Despard and his senior officers realised, probably for the first time, that they and their allies sought quite different outcomes from the battle. Bridge wrote in his diary that night, 'they evidently care nothing about us, or what becomes of us as long as they get what they want, the lands and the plunder

¹⁸⁰ Cowan, p.61.

¹⁸¹ Cowan, p.465. Killed 41, wounded 73. Cowan estimated Kawiti's casualties as 10 killed. Despard's force numbered just below 600 but only 243 men actually took part in the assault, see Cowan, pp.63-64.

¹⁸² Henry Despard, Lt Col. 'Narrative of an Expedition into the Interior of New Zealand, During the Months of June and July 1845', *United Services Magazine*, 215, Aug- Nov 1846, p.37.

¹⁸³ Despard, p.37; Bridge, 5 July, 1845. Bridge who was present at the meeting reports the chiefs' speeches in very similar terms to Despard, 'never mind your wounded, let them die and rot.'

of their enemies, and we are to stop and keep guard over them, and force the enemy to leave the pa that they might take possession and derive all the benefits.¹⁸⁴

Despard's dilemma was complete. Bridge observed, 'we certainly are in no enviable position, and have a very difficult card to play – surrounded by savages and cannibals – those professing to be our friends scarcely to be depended on, who at the slightest cause of offence, might turn against us.'¹⁸⁵ Despard resolved the situation by promising to wait another two or three days to see what Kawiti would do. Although he had managed to get some of his wounded back to Waimate, he desperately needed to maintain some goodwill with the chiefs. Even so, he tried hard to maintain the façade that he was in complete command, and his form of dealing with the chiefs during the meeting was, in his own words, 'by carrying on everything with a high hand, and shewing that you were conscious of a decided superiority.'¹⁸⁶

The following morning the chiefs were in a more conciliatory mood and offered help and protection for Despard's force. This eased his anxiety, but the alliance remained very tense throughout the rest of the campaign.¹⁸⁷ Nene and his chiefs knew that the pa would be vacated according to custom, and they were quick to take possession of it when it was found to be abandoned in the early hours of 11 July. Because he had resumed an intermittent bombardment of the pa the day previous to its evacuation, Despard was able to claim that he had actually captured it.

The pa was so well designed and so stoutly built that Despard was convinced that a European skilled in the science of fortification must have been involved in its construction.¹⁸⁸ Superficially this reinforces the common view of Despard as a cantankerous old bigot who was unable to credit the Maori with military excellence, but the situation was more complex than that. It is true that Despard ignored the advice of everybody; Nene, his chiefs and Lieutenant Philpotts R.N. who did a close reconnaissance of the stockades. But for the first time, the British had been actively denied information as well. Kawiti had employed a greater degree of secrecy than usual in the lead-up to the battle. The missionaries Burrows and Williams had been unable to

¹⁸⁴ Bridge, 5 July 1845.

¹⁸⁵ Bridge, 5 July 1845.

¹⁸⁶ Despard, p.38.

¹⁸⁷ Despard, p.38; Bridge, 11 July 1845. Bridge commented on the reluctance of the Maori allies to share the captured food in the vacated pa.

¹⁸⁸ Fortescue, p.408.

get inside the pa, and even observing it from outside had been difficult because of the mat of woven flax hung over the outer palisade (the pekerangi). The flax stopped musket balls passing through gaps between the palisade logs, obscured any damage during the battle and made it difficult to see if any breach had been created.¹⁸⁹ Kawiti appears to have decided that the missionaries were an intelligence source for the British.

Pugsley has shown that Ohaeawai was an evolutionary development in pa design; that it was an improvement on Puketutu and not a revolutionary new concept.¹⁹⁰ One would assume that Hulme, Bridge and the other officers who had fought at Puketutu would have briefed Despard on what to expect at Ohaeawai. The fact that even Bridge was surprised by the strength of Ohaeawai and the complexity of its underground protection indicates that Kawiti had taken the Puketutu concept much further in the development of Ohaeawai:

It was a remarkably strong and well defended place, very cleverly fortified with trenches inside and a double row of strong palisades, bombproof pits, huts with side walls of stone and loop-holed embankments etc. Some of the posts of the fences were as thick as a stout man's body.¹⁹¹

Kawiti had built an exceptionally strong and complex pa, and yet he had been able to mask many of its features from the attackers. It seems that he also made two more related assessments. Firstly, he appears to have realised that the British would use more powerful artillery than the rockets they had used at Puketutu, and developed the bomb-proof shelters and underground passages as a consequence of this. Secondly, he appears to have realised that the Ohaeawai pa was inherently vulnerable to artillery fire. The pa had been developed around an older fighting pa that had been built before artillery was a consideration. It was not well sited for its modern purpose because it was overlooked by a hill from which artillery fire could be directed into the pa itself.¹⁹² The British did just that and put a battery part-way up the hill to lob shells into the pa. Kawiti's bomb-proof shelters were equal to the task, at least until the 32-pounder started firing from the elevated battery.

It is interesting to note that Kawiti launched his sally out from the pa at the time the 32-pounder began to do some damage. Was it his intent to kill Nene, as Bridge

¹⁸⁹ Belich, p.51.

¹⁹⁰ Pugsley, 'Belich's Modern Pa Theory', pp.7-9.

¹⁹¹ Bridge, 11 July 1845.

¹⁹² The pa was a development of an earlier pa built by the chief Pene Taui who would not have had to consider the effect of artillery when he originally sited it.

suggested, or was Kawiti trying to wrest back the initiative that he had held for the majority of the campaign by trying to stop the destruction caused by the 32-pounder? Despard finally had a weapon that could breach the pa, and it is tempting to conclude that the purpose of the sally was not to capture Nene, but the weapon that was taking control of the battle-field away from Kawiti. Nene's flag was captured in the sally, and it seems that Despard had to run down the hill to avoid the same fate. His indignation turned to fury when he saw Nene's flag, which may have been a British Ensign, flying from Kawiti's flagpole beneath what may have been Maori underwear. The colonel's outrage provoked him into the rash decision to assault the unbreached pa, and he played right into Kawiti's hands.¹⁹³

Despard eventually moved his force back to Waimate. He was recalled to Auckland and Bridge was left in command in Waimate in what effectively became the winter quarters. Despard complained about the lack of information and help he had received and embarked upon an acrimonious exchange of correspondence with Archdeacon Henry Williams.¹⁹⁴ He seems to have felt that people should have come forward with information at their own initiative but he often refused to accept advice or even listen to opinions when they were offered to him. There is no evidence that he initiated the collection of any information other than his initial rudimentary, and ultimately inadequate, reconnaissance of Ohaeawai.

Belich has argued that Despard was not as incompetent as historians have traditionally held him to be; 'Despard was no genius, but [the Duke of] Wellington was right in concluding that he was moderately competent...',¹⁹⁵ That argument simply cannot be substantiated, and there seems little point in trying to build up Despard in order to enhance Kawiti's reputation. Kawiti's performance stands up well in its own right. He was the master at Ohaeawai and he far outshone his opponent. Despard managed almost every aspect of the battle poorly, including military intelligence. As a result, he drastically underestimated the strength capabilities of his enemy. His final condemnation came when he was chastised in the United Services Magazine for not

¹⁹³ Bridge, 1 July 1845; Cowan, p.60. Half an hour after Kawiti's attack on Nene's position a flag was run up on the flagpole inside the pa. Burrows p.39, says it was Waka's flag which had been captured during the sally, and that it was flown below Heke's fighting flag. Cowan says that Nene's flag was a British Ensign and that it was flown beneath a Maori garment, possibly underwear. Cowan argues that this action turned Despard's alarm and disgust into fury, 'then it was that the colonel made up his mind to storm the pa that day.'

¹⁹⁴ Williams, *Plain Facts*, p.21. Despard's main letter reproduced.

¹⁹⁵ Belich, p.46.

knowing how to attack stockades.¹⁹⁶ Too many of Despard's men paid for his string of blunders with their lives. His reputation is irretrievable and at Ohaeawai he came close to becoming the definitive military buffoon.

Before leaving discussion of the Ohaeawai campaign entirely, it is pertinent to briefly consider the impact that the physical geography of the region had on its outcome. As noted above, the troops had some difficulty moving from Kerikeri to Waimate. The force was not well equipped for the move and the guns, in particular, caused many problems. The smaller guns proved to be of limited use against the palisades (even accepting that Despard used them in the wrong way), but the 32-pounder was so heavy that it was very difficult to move in that type of terrain.¹⁹⁷ There was also a major problem getting the 32-pounder's ammunition up to the battle which was why Despard couldn't open fire on the pa again until 9 July; he simply didn't have the ammunition until then.¹⁹⁸ The dilemma was clear; the small guns were not effective but the big guns were too heavy to use in that type of country. Sappers and miners would have been extremely useful troops in such an environment, but they were not a component of Despard's force.

The campaign was fought in the middle of winter. Although Despard was aware of the risks that this entailed, the weather was probably a lot worse than he had expected. It rained almost continually between 30 June and 9 July, and one twelve-hour period was described by Despard as, 'the heaviest rain I ever saw in the tropics.'¹⁹⁹ The men of the 96th and 99th Regiments were armed with flintlock muskets that were virtually useless in such conditions because the rain wet the powder. The ration of biscuit was ruined by the constant wet, there were insufficient tents available for all of the troops, and the men were in a state of continual discomfort.²⁰⁰ The heavily swollen rivers that cut across the dirt roads and tracks made progress even more difficult than normal. After suffering several weeks in that environment, Despard, perhaps with a note of relief, concluded, 'I cannot venture following the enemy into the interior, as the

¹⁹⁶ Comments made in a presentation by Professor Beckett , University of Kent, at the Tutu te Puehu Conference, 11-13 February 2011, at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand

¹⁹⁷ Collinson, p.63.

¹⁹⁸ In fact Bridge notes that some ineffective shots were lobbed into the pa on the 7th. These rounds were the remainder of the original ammunition brought up with the 32-pounder a week earlier. The new supply of ammunition used in the final bombardment of the pa arrived on 9 July.

¹⁹⁹ Fortescue, p.406.

²⁰⁰ Fortescue, p.407.

season of the year is so unfavourable, and there shall be scarcely any possibility of me obtaining supplies.²⁰¹

Writing with hindsight a year later, FitzRoy noted that, ‘the greatest difficulty under which officers - especially commanding officers - labour in New Zealand must not be overlooked: namely, the want of information, and the means of communicating with the natives.’²⁰² He also observed that the drill and habits of the regular soldiers were unsuited to what he described as the guerrilla warfare style of fighting. The Maori, he argued, had an intimate acquaintance with the British habits and realised that they were unsuited to fighting in their almost impracticable country.

After Ohaeawai, the two parties entered into a period of peace negotiations. FitzRoy made a number of demands, which in summary, hinged around the return of plunder taken during the sacking of Kororareka, the re-erection of the flag in Maiki Hill, and the ceding of a small amount of land to the government. It has been argued that FitzRoy was negotiating from a position of weakness,²⁰³ but his correspondence at the time indicates that he, at least, did not see it that way. He assessed that the Maori were feeling the economic effects of the naval blockade and would therefore be more conducive to negotiation.²⁰⁴ He was confident that reinforcements would come from Britain soon, and advised Despard of that in late September.²⁰⁵ FitzRoy told Heke that ‘bad Europeans’ had urged him into rebellion and threatened him with the enormous military might of Britain; ‘many ships and a great many soldiers are coming but at my word they will stop or they will act.’²⁰⁶ FitzRoy had made the obvious assessment about the military capabilities of the two sides and was keen that Heke should understand it too. It was self evident to FitzRoy that the British would eventually prevail because they had more resources to call upon and they would not give up, but he wished to do it with the minimum amount of effort and bloodshed. He urged Heke and Kawiti to make the same assessment:

The loss to the English is trifling, because they have thousands to fill the places of those who are killed, but the loss to the Natives, who are so few, is great. The

²⁰¹ Michael Barthorp, *To Face the Daring Maoris*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979, p.209.

²⁰² FitzRoy, p.53.

²⁰³ Belich, pp.54-57.

²⁰⁴ FitzRoy to Despard, (APL, NZMS 227 45/16), 20 September 1845,

²⁰⁵ FitzRoy to Heke, (APL, NZMS 227 56/165), 29 September 1845.

²⁰⁶ FitzRoy to Heke, (APL, NZMS 227 45/146a), 6 August 1845,

English could continue the war until you are all destroyed, but neither the Queen, nor the governor, nor the English people wish to destroy you.²⁰⁷

FitzRoy placed great faith in the ability of Burrows and Williams to arrange the peace deal. The two missionaries acted as couriers for correspondence between the governor and the two chiefs, all the while strenuously arguing the governor's case. Burrows was particularly diligent about reporting back with his observations, and he was in regular contact with Despard as well. FitzRoy also corresponded with Nene who continued supplying him with information, opinion and advice. In return, the governor provided Nene with powder, lead, percussion caps, flints, blankets and tobacco.²⁰⁸ On 11 October, and in optimistic mood, he advised Despard that he expected peace soon, and was making plans to return the militia to Auckland. However a week later his hopes had faded and he told Despard that, 'it appears that peace will not be made so easily'.²⁰⁹ In fact the peace negotiations dragged on without resolution and there may have been an element of stringing the governor along. Burrows, who was continually assessing Maori feeling, reported that Heke's people were much more anxious for peace than Heke himself. Heke was determined to stand by Kawiti as long as the governor stood by Nene. Kawiti, Burrows advised, wished to fight on because he had not had enough revenge for his fallen.²¹⁰

FitzRoy was in a difficult situation and the strategic picture did not look good. He had insufficient troops available, his senior military commander had shown an inability to win, the colony was still in desperate financial straits, and other tribes from Waikato and Thames were believed to be threatening to join Heke or attack Auckland,²¹¹ and worst of all, his personal influence was crumbling. His desire to enforce fairness in the land dealings between the settlers and the Maori had earned him the wrath of the New Zealand Company and many of the settlers.²¹² His reputation and authority were continuously attacked by the company, settler groups and the

²⁰⁷ FitzRoy to Heke, 1 October 1845, (APL, NZMS 227) 47/165a.

²⁰⁸ Burrows, 6 September 1845, to unknown recipient, ALS re the War in the North (NZMS 308).

²⁰⁹ Grey to FitzRoy, 11 October 1845, 45/170a, 17 October 45/174 (APL, NZMS 227).

²¹⁰ Burrows, 6 September 1845, (APL, NZMS 308).

²¹¹ Meurant, E., *Diaries*, 1842-1847, 3 vols. (APL, NZMS 234-236), 18 September 1845. Nene told Meurant that he had received a letter from the Waikato's saying that they were not happy with him helping the British, and the British would later attack other tribes. Tareia of Ngati Manu in Thames also wrote threatening to join Heke. Nene wanted Meurant to go to the Waikato to calm them down. It was continually rumoured that the Waikato's would attack Auckland, see Whisker, p.26.

²¹² Ian Wards, 'FitzRoy Robert,' *The New Zealand Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 1. Wellington: Allen and Unwin and Department of Internal Affairs, pp 130-2. Also see 'Letters from Bishop Selwyn and other Clergymen 1845-60,' (ANZ, G/19/1), November 1845.

newspapers. In addition, some Maori had developed the idea that he was a weak or even a ‘bad man’ who would not, and could not, carry out his threats. Certainly after three victories, Heke, and in particular Kawiti, were not of a mind to seriously negotiate and were not intimidated by FitzRoy’s words. The Colonial Office too had finally been influenced by all of the adverse comments about FitzRoy, and in early November the governor learnt that he was to be replaced.

The talk about the new governor was different. Bishop Selwyn observed that a report circulating Auckland immediately after FitzRoy’s recall was that the new governor was to be a ‘tangata pakeha’ (a hard man),²¹³ and at Waimate, Burrows recorded in his diary:

A message arrived yesterday from Auckland and Paihia. The natives flocked around me to hear the news. When I told them that a new Governor had arrived in Auckland, Governor Grey, and that Governor FitzRoy had been recalled, an old chief remarked, ‘this is the Governor, I suppose, who has been sent to punish us more severely, as Governor FitzRoy has been too merciful and wished to put a stop to war.’²¹⁴

In fact Selwyn observed that news travelled very quickly through New Zealand at the time and many chiefs were well informed about the political situation. For example, ‘Iwikaw’, a chief from Taupo, which was far away from any European settlement at the time, was found to be well acquainted with the part of the report at the House of Commons which related to the appropriation of native lands. Similarly, Maori in Thames were well informed about the reverses of the British Army in Kabul and knew the amount of its losses.²¹⁵ News about New Zealand’s domestic politics no doubt spread just as rapidly. Captain George Grey, the new governor, arrived in Auckland on 14 November 1845 and demonstrated his determination to deal with the problem by immediately journeying to the Bay of Islands. He had received some advice from Lord Stanley, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, about how to deal with the situation in New Zealand. Stanley cautioned him not to risk failure through undue contempt for the power of the natives. He noted that both Hulme’s and Despard’s expeditions were undertaken at a time of the year when the weather was bad. He observed that Hulme had no artillery and that his safety was solely in the hands of the natives. Had their allegiance been less, he wrote, the whole party could possibly have been destroyed. He

²¹³ Selwyn, (ANZ, G 19/1), November 1845.

²¹⁴ Burrows, ‘Extracts from a Diary,’ 16 November 1845.

²¹⁵ Selwyn, (ANZ, G 19/1), November 1845.

advised Grey to prepare well and campaign in the right season. Stanley had also formed an opinion about the Maori as fighters which he passed on:

...they have already given ample proof that they are not to be despised; we know them to be personally brave, well armed and, as we are led to believe, not without countenance of advice from those far more conversed than themselves with the science of war. In dealing with such people, you should always take care that you attempt nothing to which your means are not more than equal.²¹⁶



Lord Stanley's comments indicate a realisation at the highest level that the British Army had not performed well in New Zealand. It was up against a skilful foe in a hostile and difficult environment, both of which had to be accorded greater respect than had been the case up until then. Stanley backed up his words by providing Grey with the money and troops that had been denied to FitzRoy.

Fig.3.10. George Grey. A painting by Daniel Mundy circa 1860. Alexander Turnbull Library.

Whether or not Grey took Stanley's advice to heart is difficult to judge. Nevertheless he tackled the problem with a degree of energy, determination and political acumen that far surpassed his predecessors. He was not happy with FitzRoy's peace demands which he felt were weak and an embarrassment for the government. He considered that Heke and Kawiti were not serious in their negotiations, but were merely playing for time for three main reasons; to shake the faith in the government of the neutral chiefs, to buy time until the potato crops were ready to dig, and to gain time to complete their new pa which were in even more difficult and remote locations than their previous ones.²¹⁷ Consequently, he gave the chiefs only five days to agree to FitzRoy's terms; a period that he knew was unreasonably short. He did this to force them to negotiate separately and not in concert. The two chiefs, especially Kawiti, were initially

²¹⁶ Lord Stanley to Grey Military Despatches 1842-54 Governor Series 3, Item1, 1845.

²¹⁷ Grey to Despard, (APL, NZMS 227), 5 December 1845.

ambiguous in their replies, and then defiant. Grey had anticipated such a response and on 5 December 1845 he ordered Despard to prepare for operations.²¹⁸ In fact Grey had been extremely busy in his short time in the Bay of Islands. He consulted widely and quickly came to grips with the situation. Despard had briefed Grey about Burrows' unique position among the Maori, and the new governor was quick to tap the missionary's knowledge during their first meeting on 23 November with Burrows noting that, 'the Governor asked many questions as to the present state and feelings of Heke and his people.'²¹⁹ Two days later Grey interviewed Burrows again, asking him among other things, whether a new pa was being constructed and whether the two chiefs were serious about peace. Burrows left the meeting with letters for Heke (to be conveyed by Burrows), and Kawiti (to be conveyed by Williams).²²⁰

Grey was far keener to assert his authority than FitzRoy had been. He believed that the position of governor held great mana that Maori would respect if the person in the office lived up to it. As a consequence, he refused to recognise neutrality and forced the neutral chiefs, some of whom were supplying Heke and Kawiti with men and provisions, to declare their position. For example, he wrote to the chiefs Tareka, Hakero and Waikato and said that it would have been proper for them to have come to see him by then (1 December), to have offered him assistance. He accused them of ignorance and lack of respect and said that if they didn't come they would be regarded as rebels.²²¹ He courted the pro-government chiefs, bestowed favours on them, and included them in his plans.²²² Unlike Despard, he realised that the pro-government Maori were his greatest asset and he did all he could to keep them on side. One of the main fears of all Maori was that their lands would be taken. Grey allayed these fears, and in doing so he won more over to the government side.

His greatest ally was of course Waka Nene. The two men quickly established a rapport and Nene provided invaluable advice and information. A major entry in Grey's letter book for 29 November 1845 details a long conversation between Nene and the governor, and it is apparent that the two men were jointly formulating plans for the

²¹⁸ Grey to Despard, (APL, NZMS 227), 5 December 1845.

²¹⁹ Burrows, 'Diary', p.51.

²²⁰ Burrows, 'Diary' p.51

²²¹ Grey, Grey's Letters, 1845-49, (ANZ, G 36) Item 2, 1 December 1845.

²²² Grey, (ANZ, G 36) item 2. 1 December 1845. See letters to McQuarrie, and Morehau and Waikare. McQuarrie is given the task of hounding Heke. Morehau and Waikare are told what good allies they are.

forthcoming battle. The plan required taking naval vessels up the lower reaches of the Kawakawa River to a base depot at the pro-government chief Pukututu's pa. The security on the route from there on to Kawiti's stronghold at Ruapekapeka, and the security of the left bank of the river were to be Nene's responsibility. Nene advised Grey about the various routes the troops could take to the pa, and convinced him to take a road along the top of the ridges which was easier for carts and guns.

Grey had been provided with a map that showed routes to Ruapekapeka and other settlements. The most likely source for the map seems to have been Nene. Nene advised that Kawiti had two guns but that they would only make a noise because Kawiti's men did not know how to use them. His spies had told him that Kawiti's people feared rockets (which may have actually included heavy guns) most of all, and that they would hold the pa against small arms fire, 'but if 32 pounders are brought up they have arranged to abandon the pa, and they do not hope to be able to make a stand in any other position.'²²³ Nene gained intelligence from spies planted inside Kawiti's pa who brought back the latest information; for example Grey noted, 'a native who comes back on Monday from Kawiti's pa will bring more intelligence.'²²⁴ Nene was also able to give Grey information about the relative strengths of the two sides. He assessed that Kawiti could muster 400 men and Heke 200-300. Nene himself could not release his whole force of 700-800 men because he needed some to stay behind to protect his plantations from Heke, and because he could not provision such a large number in the field. He considered that Heke would place his warriors inside the pa to reinforce Kawiti once the troops began their march towards it. Kawiti had a beacon with which he could summon Heke. Nene also gave Grey information about the political situation in the bay. Two supposed neutrals, Pomare and Waikato, were considered by him to be unreliable, but the Kapotai tribe which took part in the attack on Kororareka was now desirous of peace and should be forgiven.

Kawiti's force was not all concentrated at Ruapekapeka. Many of his warriors had dispersed to their home locations but could be called to assemble at short notice. Still others were undecided until the last moment whether to go up to the pa to fight, or remain neutral. Consequently there was a continual movement of people throughout the region. It seems probable then, that Kawiti and Heke received a steady stream of

²²³ Grey, (ANZ, G 36), 29 November 1845.

²²⁴ Grey, (ANZ, G 36), 29 November 1845.

information about the size and location of the British force from their spies, or from warriors moving about the district.

Grey's relationship with Despard was different to FitzRoy's and he took a far more direct form of control. He was right there in the theatre of operations, he consulted with the allied chiefs, he negotiated in a more immediate way with Heke and Kawiti, he initiated the collection of information and he formulated the overall plan for the campaign. Despard's role in this arrangement was simply to carry out the governor's wishes militarily. Grey had been an army officer, and with his authority as governor he intervened and directed whenever he thought it necessary. In this respect he added a whole dimension to the British effort that had been missing in the previous campaigns. He understood those things that Hulme, and particularly Despard, did not. He operated at a political level that was beyond their comprehension, and he quickly developed an understanding of the Maori which would have been impossible for those who let fixed and superior attitudes influence their judgement.

In this spirit, Grey became the focal point for intelligence activity, and he obtained information that Hulme, Despard or FitzRoy would have been unable to acquire. In doing so, he solved the difficulty that FitzRoy had lamented was the biggest problem for British commanders; the want of information. He promised to send all information to Despard in 'hearty co-operation'²²⁵ and on 30 November 1845, gave him information that had been unobtainable in the previous campaign:

I send to you the information I promised you. I am glad to say that I find I can obtain for you a plan of Kawiti's pa which has been made by the natives. I have also obtained a plan of part of the country between Pukututu and Kawiti.²²⁶

The large amount of information that Grey obtained, and the open minded way in which he mentally processed it, allowed him to summarise the situation in a very perceptive way. He put his thoughts down in a document which was, in essence, an intelligence summary. It shows a very thorough understanding of the military situation for someone who had been in the country for just three weeks. His conclusions were as follows: The Maori were a brave race trained in martial endeavour since boyhood. Their thickly wooded country was ideally suited to ambushes and defensive positions. They had good weapons and adequate stockpiles to last for two to three years. Their preferred

²²⁵ Grey to Despard, 11/45, (APL, NZMS 227), p.74.

²²⁶ Grey to Despard, (APL, NZMS 227), 30 November 1845.

mode of warfare was to skirmish, and then if necessary, to withdraw inside a very strong pa. The minimum size gun required to attack those pa was an 18-pounder, but a battery of guns, preferably lightweight (25 cwt) 32-pounders, could destroy their palisades relatively easily. The Maori required little logistical support in their style of fighting but British troops were seriously hampered in the New Zealand environment by their tactics, logistics and individual soldier skills which were unsuitable. There was an absolute necessity for any British force to have locally recruited pioneers or sappers to clear tracks and roads so that the logistically heavy column could advance.

Grey further concluded that although British artillery could be the decisive factor in a set-piece battle, the Maori had a decisive advantage in skirmishing and musketry because they used higher charges, double barrelled guns, and were better clothed and acquainted with the country. Any British force engaged in such a way would suffer severe losses. Therefore it was essential to attach to the British force a body of natives, led by their chiefs, to go in advance to detect ambushes, to skirmish and to drive the enemy into their pa. The British force could then use its artillery and discipline to destroy the enemy in a set-piece battle. In order to use native allies in this way, the chiefs should be treated with more consideration than has been the case up until then. They should be consulted on battle plans and they must be rationed by the government. Finally, the governor, whom the Maori considered in some ways as the greatest of chiefs and from whom they would take orders, should take the field himself and direct the Maori force.²²⁷ The outcome of the next battle, Ruapekapeka, largely confirmed Grey's assessment and showed that he had made a dramatic change in the respective power of the two sides. (Grey's intelligence assessment is reproduced in full as Appendix 1).

In a last peace effort he twice tried to arrange a meeting with Kawiti and Heke in early December, but to no avail. The British had of course been making their own plans in case the negotiations failed, and when Despard was ordered to prepare for operations on 5 December, he was able to begin the advance on Ruapekapeka three days later. Despard was also ordered to set up a native corps of 60 men and to arrange rations for Nene's warriors.²²⁸ Grey departed for Auckland on 6 December to deal with urgent

²²⁷ Grey, Letters 1845-9 'Memorandum upon the mode in which military operations can be most advantageously conducted in New Zealand.' (ANZ, G36), Item 2.

²²⁸ Greys Letters, 1845-49, (ANZ, G36), Item 2. pp.16-7.

legislative matters, and as he left he indulged in a rare case of counter intelligence in his campaign to sway the neutral chiefs. Sir Everard Home, his senior naval officer, was directed to spread word that the governor was away getting more troops and supplies, ‘in the hope of alarming more of the rebels’ adherents who at present are anxious to abandon them.’²²⁹

The advance to Ruapekapeka was slow and methodical. The base depot at Pukututu’s pa was as far up the Kawakawa River that the British could bring boats. From that point the troops and sailors toiled for almost a month, carting guns, stores, and heavy ammunition over the 24 kilometres of steeply dissected, rough hill country to Ruapekapeka. It was a far harder march than those to Puketutu or Ohaeawai. Temporary bridges were built over streams and swamps and the guns were sometimes winched up steep hills using blocks and tackle. At times 50-60 men and a team of eight bullocks were required to haul each gun. Despard had a choice of two routes which he reconnoitred carefully. An impassable ravine was discovered well along the preferred route, so it was necessary to take the longer one. Tracks wide enough for the guns and drays were cut by a detachment of pioneers that Grey had sent from Auckland. The slow pace of the advance was dictated by the speed at which the road could be built. It was summer and the weather was far kinder than on the previous two campaigns, but even so, heavy rain made the transportation of equipment over steep terrain on freshly cut tracks very difficult.²³⁰

Again the commissariat was found wanting and Nene had to supply the troops with potatoes on occasion,²³¹ making rather a mockery of the governor’s effort to provision the government’s Maori allies. The tents were insufficient in number and the troops learnt from the Maori how to build makeshift shelters in the fern. The Maori warriors lived in, and moved across the countryside, with ease, but the British force, encumbered with stores and equipment, artillery guns and shells, struggled. Collinson noted:

Regular troops, which are taught only to move as a body, and depend on the voice of one commander for every slightest move, are not fitted for such a country where every soldier ought to be independent in himself.²³²

²²⁹ Greys Letters, 1845-49, (G36), p.22.

²³⁰ Despard, pp.379-80.

²³¹ Whisker, p.26.

²³² Collinson, p.68.

Reinforcements arrived during the march and when Despard finally encamped in front of the pa he had a force of more than 1100 soldiers and 450 Maori allies.²³³ His artillery comprised four 32-pounders, one 18-pounder, two 6-pounders, four mortars, ‘and a good supply of rockets.’²³⁴

The battle is controversial because it ended without the climactic and decisive clash of arms that had seemed inevitable. Superficially then, there appeared to be no clear victor and this has led to a number of interpretations about which side prevailed and why. Peace was concluded soon after Ruapekapeka, so it is important to understand who won that final battle of the war, and therefore on what basis the peace was made.

Ever since the fall of Kororareka, Heke and Kawiti had fought defensive campaigns and this was a frequent pattern in colonial warfare. They constructed purpose-built pa expecting that the British would come to attack them and they did not attack British bases, ambush the vulnerable columns or conduct offensive operations of any kind. A commander in such a defensive mode always prefers to fight in a location and on a piece of ground which most suits his purposes and capabilities. Selecting the correct ground for the defensive position is crucial and the proper choice maximises his chances of victory. At Ruapekapeka, Kawiti had built in a very inaccessible location. He knew that the British needed to bring artillery and that the heavy guns would prove to be his greatest threat. By locating the pa where he did, he limited the amount of artillery that could be used against him. It might have been possible to attack the British guns en-route to the pa, but they were well protected, so once again he left them alone.²³⁵ Ruapekapeka had the added advantage that it was in his tribal heartland. Kawiti had fallen back to his home base just as Heke had done at Puketutu.

The pa itself was 300 metres above sea level and very strong. It measured approximately 100 metres in length and 60 metres in width and was an irregular shape

²³³ Cowan, p.75. Despard himself seems unsure of the exact total. He says he had between 1000 and 1100 on the march, but additions, eg 100 men from the 58th Regiment who arrived on 27 December would have pushed his total over the 1100 mark; p.380. Cowan gives an accurate breakdown of the force as 1168 officers and men, but some of these were left to guard the depot on the Kawakawa river.

²³⁴ Despard, pp.378-383. Cowan and Belich fail to mention all of the artillery, some of which was brought up only days before the final barrage began on 10 January 1846. Bridge describes the new gun which arrived on 7 January as a 32-pounder whereas Despard notes it as a 30-pounder, which may have been a typographical error.

²³⁵ Kawiti was still observing the agreement with Nene not to ambush the troops. In addition, the column en-route to Ruapekapeka was actively protected by the native contingent which scouted ahead, and Nene’s warriors.

because of flanking angles built into it. There was a dense forest to the rear and steep slopes on either side which converged slightly to create a narrower frontage and a neck of land. The narrow frontage was the only realistic point of assault for the troops, and the ground in front of it was also the best place for Despard to position his guns. The pa had a double line of palisades made of puriri logs. The front palisade was embedded into a mound of soil dug from a trench which ran behind the second palisade. The name Ruapekapeka means 'the bats' nest' a reference to the myriad of subterranean shelters which were linked by tunnels and trenches. The interior of the pa was designed in such a way that the defenders could still have put up an effective resistance even if the troops poured through a breach in the palisade.



Fig.3.11. The British Camp in front of Ruapekapeka Pa. British guns on the left are firing into the pa. Ruapekapeka seemed to be a very strong position with its steep sides and dense forest at the rear. However the pa was sited on a forward slope and this allowed the British gunners to pinpoint their targets. Life inside the pa soon became untenable. Alexander Turnbull Library.

To the British infantry, the four metre high palisades which loomed above them and the extensive works within the pa represented a formidable obstacle. Any opposed assault was sure to claim many lives. However the pa had an Achilles Heel; it sat on a forward slope. From its rear to the front, the pa sloped downhill at an angle of approximately 20 degrees, with the neck of land at the front of the pa being the lowest

point. As a result, the British gunners could see directly into Ruapekapeka and they could choose their targets carefully, because in effect, the pa was a giant open target.

Belich has claimed that, ‘the British bombarded Ruapekapeka day and night for two weeks,’²³⁶ but he gives a false impression of what really happened. Despard’s gunners lobbed shells and occasional rockets intermittently into the pa from 30 December onwards²³⁷ as they moved their gun positions progressively closer. The pa was certainly shelled, but that shelling did not constitute a day and night bombardment. In fact it is difficult to understand why Despard used his artillery in that way. It caused little collateral damage within the pa because the defenders were able to make repairs during the long lulls between shots. Despard’s plan seems to have been to seal Kawiti in the pa by cutting off escape routes and then battering a breach in the palisades and assaulting through it. However, by intermittently lobbing shells into the pa he lessened the chance of that plan’s success. Even though the fire was not heavy, it was accurate. The gunners, with a good view of the interior of the pa, were able to pinpoint targets. The big guns, firing on an almost flat trajectory because of the slope of the pa, made life inside very unpleasant. Several of the defenders were killed and as the days passed, the conditions inside the subterranean pits became intolerable.²³⁸ Kawiti’s men began to do an obvious thing; they began to spend time waiting at the back of the pa, away from the impact of the guns. A small watch tower at the rear and various sentries kept an eye out and the warriors were able to take up their positions at a moment’s notice.

Despard continued to move his guns closer until by 9 January 1846 his forward battery was only 150 metres from the front palisades. Kawiti tried to disrupt this process with occasional sallies out from the pa. Nene’s men formed a screen for the guns and generally patrolled the wooded areas on the flanks. They were quite active and had the better of Kawiti’s men in several skirmishes.²³⁹ It appears that some of the defenders were becoming very despondent about their chances of success as Despard tightened his noose around Ruapekapeka. On 2 January 1846, Bridge and Nene’s men heard warriors inside the pa lamenting their losses, and their chiefs, ‘exhorting them to be firm, strong

²³⁶ Belich, p.59.

²³⁷ Bridge, 30 December 1845. Bridge was moved to comment: ‘This is not the way I hoped to see this pa attacked. There is no use firing a shot till all the guns, ammunition etc are up, and everything prepared to carry on the attack with vigour.’

²³⁸ Bridge, 4 January 1846; Kawiti, p.43.

²³⁹ Despard, pp.382-3; Collinson, p.69. 10 of Kawiti’s men were killed; Bridge, 2 Jan 1846; Cowan, p.80.

and brave.'²⁴⁰ On the 7th, a party of 80 was seen evacuating the pa and on the same day the half-caste wife of a young chief came out of the pa to surrender. The battle was obviously not going the way Kawiti had planned. Bridge reported:

...a chief accompanied her of the name of Hara and appeared very much disgusted and asked what more we wanted. We had been a month here, and said, roasting them with iron and killing their people, and we are not satisfied.²⁴¹

The incidents of that day led Bridge to conclude; 'I fancy they are leaving the pa by parties and will shortly all bolt,'²⁴² adding in apparent frustration:

...but I hope not before our batteries open upon them, as it is better that we should drive them out than that they should go of their own accord, just to show them what we can do and to take the conceit out of the rascals.²⁴³

On 5 January the chief Te Taonui (McQuarrie) arrived. He had been asked by Grey to keep Heke away from the battle by pinning him down in Hikurangi, and attacking him from the rear if he moved. The plan had worked for about two weeks but Heke finally slipped the net. Te Toanui, and surprisingly, the well informed Clendon, had both sent word that Heke was on his way.²⁴⁴ The industrious Clendon's message to Grey included additional information:

Reverend Burrows and myself have calculated the number of rascals as near as our knowledge could, and they certainly do not reach six hundred, probably not more than five hundred. They have not a great quantity of food in the pa but depend upon cultivations immediately outside the pa, at the back.²⁴⁵

Clendon and Burrows' assessment was probably quite accurate. The exact numbers are not known but it seems that with the arrival of Heke's party, there were about 500 defenders within the pa.²⁴⁶ It is a general rule of thumb that the attacking force needs at least a 3:1 advantage in numbers over the defence in order to be reasonably hopeful of victory. This is because the defending force has the advantage of having chosen the ground on which to fight, and has the benefit of prepared defences, camouflage, and protective works. In that respect the two sides were now at some sort of parity, but the narrow frontage meant that Despard's assault would be channelled into a narrow front and Kawiti would be able to concentrate his defenders in force to plug any breach in the palisades.

²⁴⁰ Bridge, 2 January 1846.

²⁴¹ Bridge, 7 January 1846.

²⁴² Bridge, 7 January 1846.

²⁴³ Bridge, 7 January 1846.

²⁴⁴ Clendon to Grey, (APL, C22), 29 December 1845; Bridge, 27 December 1845.

²⁴⁵ Clendon to Grey, (APL, C22), 29 December 1845.

²⁴⁶ Buick, p.25.



Fig.3.12 The final assault on Ruapekapeka, 11 January 1846. Painting by Major Cyprian Bridge. Alexander Turnbull Library.

On the morning of 10 January, Despard felt that he finally had his gun batteries in the correct position and had a large enough supply of ammunition to mount the final attack.²⁴⁷ All guns and mortars opened fire at 10 am and kept up the barrage all day. Some of the guns battered the palisades while others along with the mortars and rockets pin-pointed specific defensive works within the pa. It was an extraordinarily heavy bombardment, probably far heavier and far worse than any of the defenders had imagined possible. The defenders may have been relatively safe from shrapnel, but the concussion and noise from the explosions can cause deafness, bleeding from the ears and nose and outright panic. This may have been experienced by Kawiti's warriors.

The barrage began to have an effect. Bridge observed, 'about 3 pm the natives were seen running out of the pa with loads on their backs, and returning again for more, and also arms (most likely of the killed and wounded) evidently preparing for a start'.²⁴⁸ At about 4 pm, seeing the obvious breaches in the outer palisades, Despard ordered a party of 200 to prepare to assault. Nene and Mohi Tawhau strongly opposed the plan, the latter blocking the road with outstretched arms. It appeared that everyone except

²⁴⁷ Despard, p.383.

²⁴⁸ Bridge, 10 January 1846.

Despard realised that they would have another Ohaeawai if the assault was carried out. The chiefs argued that they were sure the pa would be empty the next morning and that the defenders were evacuating. This time Despard listened to good advice and the storming party was dismissed,²⁴⁹ but the incident showed that he had learnt nothing from his experiences at Ohaeawai.

The following morning, ‘anxious glasses were turned on the pa...to see if the enemy was still in it.’²⁵⁰ The pa was very quiet and upon investigation, a party of Nene’s men and troops found it empty. They moved through it cautiously until, it is commonly held, one of Nene’s men foolishly rang a bell. A small party of defenders which probably included Kawiti, fired a volley at the attackers and then fled through the rear of the pa. The British party followed them and became engaged in fire-fight with some of the defenders who had taken up positions in the forest. It was here that the British lost 12 killed and 30 wounded, most of whom were incautious sailors who may have been more impulsive under fire than their soldier colleagues. Heke and Kawiti’s losses are harder to ascertain but were of a similar magnitude.²⁵¹ The fighting lasted for three or four hours until the Maori broke off and retreated, and the British were finally left in possession of the pa at the cost of far fewer casualties than they might have originally expected.

How did such a thing happen? The most commonly held explanation contends that as it was a Sunday, all of the defenders were out beyond the back of the pa holding a religious service. Belich has discredited this theory by arguing that it is more an invention of the missionary lobby which was keen to discredit the military, than a reality.²⁵² In any case it seems extraordinary that Kawiti would put such time and energy into building and defending Ruapekapeka, simply to leave it open and undefended on a Sunday morning with the stockades battered and gaping. The pa’s palisades were broken and just outside more than 1600 enemies, who had spent a month toiling to get there, were massed, waiting their chance to pour in and slaughter the occupants. To believe that they held the Sabbath in such respect that they would wait

²⁴⁹ Bridge, 10 January 1846; Collinson, p.69; Buick, p.254. Despard later denied that the incident ever took place, but evidence points that it did.

²⁵⁰ Bridge, 11 January 1846; Clarke, p.90.

²⁵¹ Cowan, p.465, says 20 killed and 30 wounded. Belich, pp.63-3, says that the Maori had higher casualties than the British. Many of the Maori dead and wounded were removed by their retreating comrades.

²⁵² Belich, pp.60-62.

until Monday morning to attack, is to put more faith in the godliness of the troops than even their own mothers might have been prepared to do. A commander who did so risked losing his pa; and Kawiti had shown that he was too good a commander to make such a mistake. The notion that he slept, as some reports state, while his virtually empty pa was snatched from beneath his feet is equally hard to conceive.

There is little doubt that the pa was intentionally abandoned. Conditions inside were terrible and several bad omens may have convinced some of the defenders that fate was against them.²⁵³ On at least two occasions, sizeable numbers were seen leaving the pa and on 10 January it was clearly being evacuated. Further proof of this lies in the fact that on the 11th, the pa was found to be virtually empty of food, water, ammunition and other supplies. Belich has argued that on Heke's urging, the battle plan was changed on the night of the 10th and that the two chiefs decided to fight, not in the pa, but at the rear of it. Therefore the skirmish at the back of the pa on the 11th was a deliberate ambush. Belich finds confirmation of this in Despard's claim that large logs had been built into defensive positions in the forest. Because the number of casualties suffered by each side was roughly similar, he is able to argue, by this logic, that the battle was a draw.

When a fighting force is withdrawing it often leaves behind a small fighting element to delay the attackers. This 'stay behind party' engages the enemy for long enough to allow the main group to slip away unmolested. The events on Monday 11th strongly suggest that the troops who emerged through the rear of the pa were ambushed by a stay behind party rather than by most of the pa's garrison. The purpose of this party might have been to allow the majority to make a clean break, to at least kill some of the attackers, or to allow for the safe removal of the dead.²⁵⁴ The defensive positions which they fired from may well have been the remains of the extensive logging operation undertaken during the construction of the pa. Tree stumps, twisted branches and large logs left on the ground would have made excellent improvised firing positions. In any event, the skirmish amounted to little and the warriors eventually withdrew. Only a body-count analysis would see the battle as a draw. The reality, particularly from a strategic perspective, was very different.

²⁵³ Bridge, 1 January 1846; Buick, p.241. Kawiti's battle flag was shot down soon after it was hoisted on 31 Dec. The following day, celestial symbols similar to those on the flag (sun, moon, star) appeared in the noon-day sky. It seems likely that Kawiti interpreted these two events as bad omens.

²⁵⁴ Despard, p.384, alludes to this.

It is a moot point to consider whether the skirmish at the rear of the pa was a deliberate ambush or a planned withdrawal. A deliberate ambush, even if it was only conceived of the night before, allows for the possibility that Kawiti and Heke won the battle, or at least managed a fighting draw. A planned withdrawal though, is an admission of defeat, and the events of the preceding week and the skirmish on the 11th point strongly to a planned withdrawal. But even so, both courses of action, a deliberate ambush or a planned withdrawal are really the ‘Plan Bs’ of a defeated force whose ‘Plan A’ has failed. To suggest that Grey and Despard merely captured an empty and worthless pa, as several commentators have, is to misunderstand the process of warfare. Of course the pa had no inherent value for the British, but armies have fought over worthless ruins, locations, towns, swamps, mountain ranges, deserts and jungle for millennia. The point of such fighting is to seek out, close with and inflict as much damage on the enemy as possible. And this process has psychological as well as physical dimensions; to show greater resolve and determination and to break the enemy’s will to keep on fighting. Grey understood that and he told Bridge that he wished to take possession of the pa, ‘to prove that they cannot resist us.’²⁵⁵ He showed that he would not yield and that nowhere was safe, not even a mountaintop fortress in the very depth of the interior.

Although the pa itself was of no value to Grey, it represented a massive expenditure of time and energy for Kawiti and his people. His tribe had toiled for four months to build in a location and in a style which would have been hard to improve upon. More than 4,000 trees had been felled, trimmed and hauled into position.²⁵⁶ The labour of erecting the palisades, digging the extensive earthworks and provisioning the workers would have been a major undertaking, as it was all done during spring and early summer which was a period of intense agricultural activity. Clearly it was an enterprise that could not be undertaken repeatedly by a part time warrior force that also needed to plant and grow food for the next season. It was not possible for Kawiti and Heke’s men to sustain protracted warfare against a professional army. If they had built yet one more pa the result would probably have been the same; it too would have been destroyed by heavy artillery. As the information from Nene had suggested, Kawiti had assessed that he would not be able to make a stand anywhere else and that he and Heke could not win the war. Five days after the battle, Clendon wrote to Grey:

²⁵⁵ Bridge, 1 January 1846.

²⁵⁶ This figure had been estimated by the author. The two palisades and the inner defences required at least 4,000 trees averaging 10 inches in width.

...the Maori are still sullen and won't speak of the loss of their pa. They say neither Heke or Kawiti will build another – the last was four months in the building and has been destroyed and burnt in a few days.²⁵⁷

The missionary Kemp also observed a few days later:

...we hear that they do not intend to build any more pa's as they find they are no use against the big guns, but if they fight again it will be in the woods.²⁵⁸

This really was the only option remaining; to wage a guerrilla campaign, but for what reason? Grey now had a huge military force in the bay. He had strengthened Nene with supplies and equipment and had consolidated the alliance with other pro-government chiefs. Many of the neutrals, though not all, had been won over. Heke and Kawiti had fielded a slightly smaller force at Ruapekapeka than they had at Kororareka almost a year earlier. The British military power had multiplied several times over, theirs had not, and there was now less likelihood of new warriors joining them. The issues they had both originally fought for had long become obscured and it seems that both chiefs had lost a taste for war. It was time to be pragmatic; it was time for an honourable peace. So the chiefs made overtures through the neutral Pomare. Grey and Nene conferred and decided not to confiscate land. Under FitzRoy's edict, confiscations had to be given to chiefs loyal to the crown, but this would have become an ongoing source of anger and resentment. All who had been involved in the war were absolved of recriminations as Nene had recommended to Grey on 29 November.²⁵⁹ Grey knew that he had won the day at Ruapekapeka. On 12 January he wrote to Captain Patterson R.N. of HMS *Osprey*:

We gave those fellows a dreadful beating yesterday...I do not think the rebels will again be able to assemble in force for some time, if they ever do so.²⁶⁰

The tone of his correspondence over the next few days was that of a victorious commander confidently winding down his force. By 13 January he was planning to send the majority of his troops back to Auckland.²⁶¹ Even so, he had to be careful. Heke and Kawiti had only been subdued, not comprehensively defeated. Heke in particular remained a powerful chief with a great reputation. Grey too was a pragmatist. He did not want to inflame the situation so he worked politically to consolidate the government's authority throughout the north. Pro-government chiefs were bestowed

²⁵⁷ Clendon to Grey, (APL NZMS 476), 18 January 1846.

²⁵⁸ Kemp correspondence (APL, NZMS 59) No 131.

²⁵⁹ Greys letters, (ANZ, G 36), 29 November 1845.

²⁶⁰ Grey to Capt Patterson, (ANZ, G36), Item 2, 12 January 1846.

²⁶¹ Grey's letters, (ANZ, G36) Item 2, 13 January 1846.

with government appointments and other officials flooded the area. Nene became a friend and ally of Grey. The flagpole on Maiki Hill was not re-erected until after the deaths of Heke and Kawiti, and only then by Kawiti's son as an act of healing between the two races in 1858. Although there was still the potential for conflict, the north hereafter remained quiet. The 'Fencibles' were retired British soldiers brought to New Zealand as military settlers in the late 1840s. They were given land to farm in return for being a belt of soldier-farmers ever ready to protect the approaches to the capital city of Auckland. It was no coincidence that all of the Fencibles were settled to the south of the city, facing the Waikato. It was not considered necessary to protect the nation's capital from the Nga Puhi in the north because they had been pacified and no longer constituted a threat.

Summary and discussion

The Maori forces on both sides enjoyed all of the advantages in the intelligence battle that Callwell would have predicted, and they appear to have been ahead of the British force in every respect. Intelligence gathering was second nature in an environment of continuous tribal and hapu rivalry and fighting. The battle against the British simply called upon the same skills that had been honed for generations. Fighting on their home ground, they knew all aspects of the physical environment such as the terrain, tracks, where food and water could be found and where an ambush could be laid. It was the same story with the human environment of the area. They understood the intricacies of local iwi politics and alliances, and Heke and Kawiti seemed to have had a good idea about the British strategic plans, and also their intentions and movements at the operational and tactical levels.

The loss of Kororareka and the defeats at Puketutu and Ohaeawai showed gross failings in the British use of military intelligence. Prior to the fall of Kororareka, enough information was available to indicate that an attack on the town was imminent, but the British command made very poor use of it and made fatally incorrect assessments. The Puketutu and Ohaeawai campaigns failed for slightly different reasons, but they were variations on the same theme, which was that the commanders had very little idea about the physical or human geography of the area within which they were operating. According to FitzRoy, the two greatest difficulties that the government and the British force faced, were a shortage of information and problems

communicating with the Maori.²⁶² Even so, he occupied himself with such a large amount of communication with chiefs from both sides, that the translation and copying of letters for him employed two full-time staff.

Despite the political efforts at a strategic level, which Heke and Kawiti took little notice of; it was the performance of the commanders in the field that really let the government down. The British troops struggled in the physical environment of the Bay of Islands, particularly during the winter months. Their failure to cope meant that they ceased to be an effective combat force on at least two occasions in the field, and their fate in those situations was completely in the hands of their Maori allies. At the operational level, they had very little idea about what they were trying to achieve, or where their enemy was, and the commanders, Hulme and Despard, failed to make good use of the tactical intelligence that was available to them.

The situation changed dramatically when Governor Grey arrived and took personal control of the war. He immediately gathered as much information as possible and analysed it in a prescient and rapid way that showed an extraordinary understanding of the value of intelligence. It was from that analysis that he developed his strategy for ending the war. He understood that the solution to the conflict would be as much political as it would be military. He consolidated the allied chiefs' loyalty and allocated them military tasks, and in doing so he was able to use them as a military component of his force and tap into their intimate local knowledge. He imposed his personality on Heke and Kawiti, eroding their will to continue to fight, and he reined in Despard's impulsiveness. In so doing, he brought the war to a speedy conclusion.

The British failures in battle were not just intelligence failures and we must be careful not to overstate the role of intelligence. There were problems with logistics such as food, equipment and ammunition, and the weather created major difficulties. It would have been hard for Hulme to have won at Puketutu even if he had known about the construction of the pa and the size of Heke and Kawiti's force; he simply didn't have enough men. However failings of military intelligence made everything worse.

In respect to themes outlined in Chapter One, Britain supplied an expeditionary force, and was able to progressively upgrade it to the point where there were enough

²⁶² FitzRoy, p.53.

resources to eventually achieve success. Early assessments of Maori capabilities were wrong and the losses in battle reflected those miscalculations. Maori clearly had an advantage in military intelligence and the British were always struggling for information. Waka Nene and his men were valuable as allies but had been poorly used for most of the war. There was a strong element of arrogance in Despard's relationship with Waka.

The small settler population was not homogeneous or necessarily supportive of the government. No settlers took up arms against the Maori in an organised way apart from protecting their own property. There were very few government officials in place and FitzRoy always struggled to gain information, relying to a large extent on the missionaries. The attitude of the commander towards military intelligence was a crucial factor. The key intelligence and combat resource that had not been used properly until Grey arrived were the Maori allies. When Grey harnessed them properly the war quickly came to a satisfactory end.

Chapter Four

War in the Taranaki 1860-61

Surely that it [the land] is unoccupied now is no reason why it should always remain so. I hope the day will come when our descendants will not have more than they really require. As to a king, why should not every race have a King of his own? Is not the Queen (English), Nicholas (Russian), Bonaparte (French), Pomare (Tahitian), each for his own people? If all countries were united the aloofness of the Maori might be reprehensible, but they are not. Wiremu Tamehana¹

I must either have purchased the land or recognised a right which would have made William King [Kingi] virtual sovereign of this part of New Zealand. Governor Gore Browne.²

Underlying tension 1846-60

The decade and a half after the cessation of hostilities in the North was a period of tension and change. The European population of New Zealand grew rapidly with an almost four-fold increase in the decade between 1851 (26,707) and 1861 (99,021)³ alone, primarily through immigration. This massive influx of land-hungry Europeans meant that relations between the races were strained, and on several occasions the tension erupted into armed confrontation.

The first instance occurred in the Wellington province where local Maori and British troops fought a sporadic campaign between March and August 1846. By the end of 1845, five warships and nearly 1000 British troops garrisoned the Wellington region⁴ in an effort to control the mounting tension between some Maori and the European settlers. The Ngati-Toa chief Te Rangihaeata led a faction opposed to the white settlement of the Hutt Valley. He played a role which bore many similarities to Heke's role in the North. The attack on the Boulcott's Farm stockade on the morning of 16 May 1846 was almost a re-run of Heke's capture of Maiki Hill the previous year. Minor

¹ James Cowan, *The New Zealand Wars and the Pioneering Period*, vol.1. Wellington: Government Printer, 1922, p.154.

² James Belich, *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1986, p.79.

³ Jeanine Graham, 'Settler Society in New Zealand', p.117, in Geoffrey W. Rice (ed.) *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1992.

⁴ Cowan, p.91.

incidents had occurred in the preceding weeks and the settlers and pro-government Maori knew that a bigger strike was imminent. Cowan claimed that the authorities were duly warned, but that no extra precautions were taken by either the civil or military authorities, and that the offer of assistance from the pro-government Maori was refused.⁵ The attack, which employed similar tactics to those used in Heke's capture of Maiki Hill, was eventually driven off with a total loss of 18 lives.

The role of the pro-government Maori was re-visited through necessity, and a Native Contingent was hurriedly raised by simply arming the pro-government hapu of Ngati Awa under the chief Te Puni. The British military relied heavily upon this 250-strong contingent who acted as advance guards and scouts, carrying out reconnaissance tasks in the steep, wooded, difficult countryside. Again, there were echoes of the Northern War as the Native Contingent played a similar role to Nene's warriors by providing the authorities with information about terrain, routes and the local political situation that they were unable to obtain by any other means.

Important information about Te Rauparaha's alleged attempts to inspire a general uprising of tribes was supplied to Grey in June 1846 by Richard Deighton, a Wanganui settler. Deighton chanced to see a letter signed by that chief and had the presence of mind to get the information to Grey in Wellington. The valuable information led to the capture and detention of Te Rauparaha by the Royal Navy. Te Rauparaha's political and military emasculation had an operational effect and it was also a salutary lesson to other chiefs about the risk of challenging the new governor. The following year, several small battles were fought in Wanganui between British regulars and factions of anti-European Maori who opposed land sales to settlers in that region. The animosity in the Wellington and Wanganui regions lingered on but stopped short of open warfare again.

The 1850s was a tumultuous period for the Maori race. One of the major problems was about the proper stance to adopt on the crucial issue of the sale of land. The chance to sell land offered some Maori the prospect of wealth, especially as produce from settler farms was beginning to cut into Maori farmers' profits. For others

⁵ Cowan, p.105.

Provinces of the North Island of New Zealand

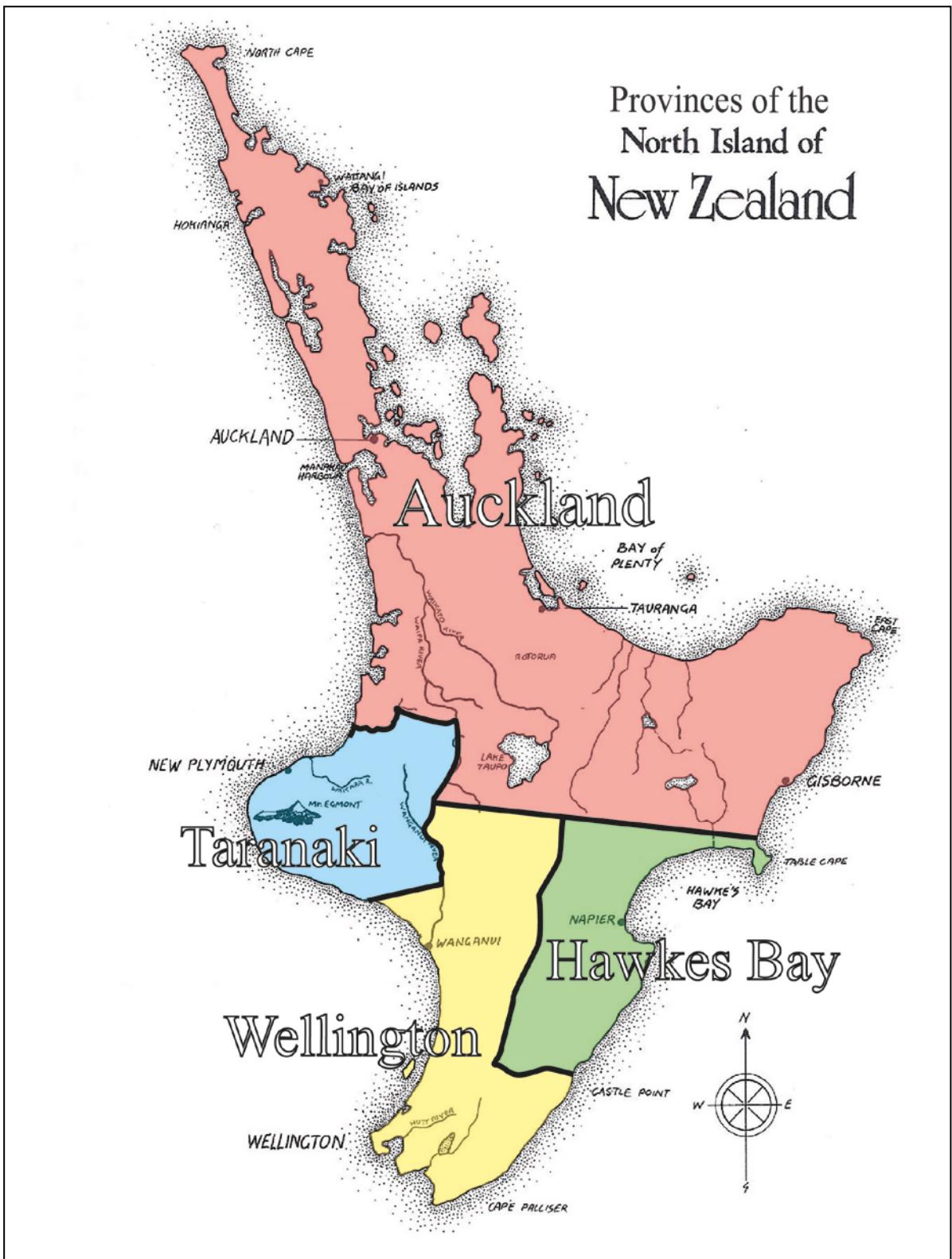


Fig.4.1. Map showing the Provinces in the North Island. Outline adapted by the author from Ryan and Parham, *The Colonial New Zealand Wars*, p.220.

it was the opportunity to pay off old scores by selling jointly owned land, or land where ownership was disputed by numerous owners. Conflict between and within tribes over

the issue was common. By the end of the 1850s, the pressure on land sales had continued to increase because of the very rapid increase in settler immigration. Maori response to this, in the middle parts of the North Island at least, was to employ a virtual pan-tribal veto on land sales. The election of the Ngati Mahuta chief Potatau Te Wherowhero as Maori King in 1858 solidified the stance, as tribes who paid him allegiance put their land under his mana and submitted to his veto over its sale.⁶

The war that eventually consumed the Taranaki in 1860 arose from a number of sources as most wars do, but, central to the difficulties between the races were two closely related themes. The first was the issue of the sale of land and the frustration of the Europeans who were unable to acquire it in sufficient quantity. The second was the issue of sovereignty and the role of the Maori King, who by 1860, had been established as virtually the ruler of a nation within a nation. The rule of the Queen's law, both outside and within the British settlements, concerned Governor Gore Browne and many settlers. The Taranaki became a test case to assert British substantive sovereignty and rule of law.⁷

The New Zealand Company which established the settlement of Taranaki had failed to acquire good title to sufficient land for its Taranaki settlers. As a consequence, the pressure on the authorities to purchase land was greater in Taranaki than in any other part of the colony. Indeed the situation in Taranaki from 1848 onwards was so volatile that war could have broken out between the Maori and the settlers on a dozen occasions.⁸ Government policy was to encourage Maori who were in favour of selling, particularly as they were vastly outnumbered by the anti-sellers. Eventually, in March 1859, Teira a minor chief, offered to sell 600 acres of the prime fertile river flats known as 'The Waitara'. Settlers had long coveted that valuable piece of land. The town of New Plymouth was fully exposed to the wild west-coast seas because it had no natural harbour, and as a result the settlement suffered from major communication difficulties. The opportunity to develop the Waitara River as a port added further appeal to the desperate need for more agricultural land.

⁶ M. Sorrenson, 'The Maori King Movement 1858-1885', pp.33-55. in R. Chapman, and K. Sinclair, (eds.), *Studies in a Small Democracy: Essays in Honour of Willis Airey*, Auckland: 1963.

⁷ See Belich. pp.76-80 for a thorough discussion of the sovereignty issue, nominal and substantive. Belich convincingly argues that the desire to assert substantive British authority over Kingi, and by extension the King Movement itself, was at least as important a factor as the need to acquire land.

⁸ Keith Sinclair, *The Origins of the Maori Wars*, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1957, p.123.

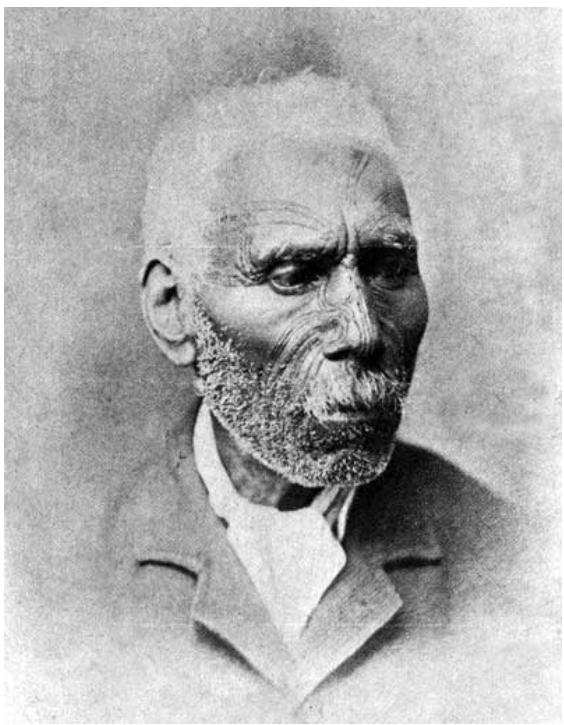


Fig.4.2. Wiremu Kingi Te Rangitake circa 1880. Photographer unknown. Alexander Turnbull Library.

of the land, partly in order to assert the Queen's sovereignty. He brushed aside Kingi's chiefly veto and numerous protests, arguing later that, 'I must either have purchased the land or recognised a right which would have made William King [Kingi] virtual sovereign of this part of New Zealand'.⁹

Gore Browne expected a hostile reaction to his decision, and put legislation in place to enable him to declare martial law. He could then call the Auckland Militia, the Taranaki Militia and Volunteers to a war footing if it proved necessary. In Taranaki, Lieutenant Colonel Murray, who was the acting

Much of Teira's motivation appears to have had its genesis in a feud that he had with the Te Atiawa paramount chief Te Rangitake (more commonly known as Wiremu Kingi, Fig. 4.2). Kingi had originally supported the government against Te Rangihaeata in Wellington and was no hater of the English. However, he had come to realise the problems caused to Maori society by the sale of land, and had become committed to the King Movement and was a strong opponent to land selling. Even so, he was not the type of man to take up arms hastily. Governor Gore Browne accepted his officials' dubious advice and went ahead with the purchase

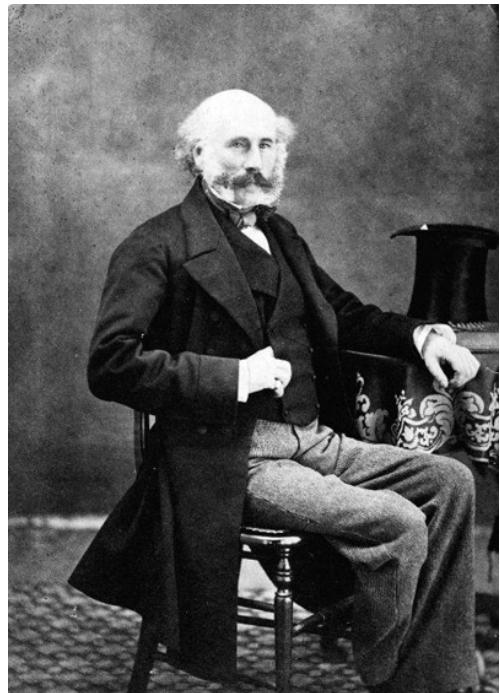


Fig.4.3. Thomas Gore Browne, circa, 1860-67. Photograph by Freeman Brothers. Alexander Turnbull Library.

⁹ Belich, p.79.

commander of the British forces, began preparing to enforce the governor's decision. On 20 February 1860, a survey party moved on to the disputed land and was obstructed by Kingi's supporters. Murray issued an ultimatum giving Kingi 24 hours to apologise and withdraw. Kingi refused to give up his land and on 22 February 1860, Murray declared martial law. The volatile combination of elements that comprised the Taranaki had finally been set alight.

The geography of the Taranaki area of operations

In 1860, New Plymouth was a small rudimentary town of about 900 inhabitants and the entire province had a European population of less than 3000. The settlement was a vulnerable European enclave perched precariously between the dangerous coast of the Tasman Sea and the dense and seemingly impenetrable forest that stretched endlessly inland. European farming activities were restricted to the narrow coastal strip between the forest and the sea that averaged about three miles in width.

The Taranaki had many similarities to the Bay of Islands, but there were a number of subtle differences. The most obvious of these was that the European settlers had lived in Taranaki in larger numbers for a longer time. In the north there had been an opportunist element to the European presence, but in Taranaki there was more of a sense of community and common purpose. This may have had a lot to do with the fact that it was a planned settlement with a homogeneous population which shared a similar vision. This sense of purpose, identity and community manifested itself during the war, as a greater intransigence and determination than was evident among the Bay of Islands' settlers. It is hard to imagine the citizens of New Plymouth giving up their town as readily as their equivalents had abandoned Kororareka.

The Taranaki settlers formed themselves into two volunteer fighting units which were aggressive and prepared to take the fight to the Maori. There was no meek and yielding civil guard, as there had been in Kororareka, for New Plymouth. Men such as Richmond, Atkinson, Messenger and Mace had come to the area as children or young adults. They had grown up on farms and knew the countryside well. They had come to Taranaki to make it their home and a new life, and they had carved farms out of the bush that they were prepared to fight to keep. As well as a commitment to stay and

fight, they had good knowledge of the area and the confidence to move throughout the environment that made them effective guides, scouts and soldiers.

Taranaki had a liberal sprinkling of missionaries just as the Bay of Islands had. Many had been in the region for a long time and they knew their Maori parishioners well. They faced the same angst as their northern brethren and were in the same dilemma as their congregations and countrymen who took up arms against each other. Inevitably loyalties were divided. Most missionaries tried hard to promote the path of peace, and often tried to intercede either on their own initiative or at the request of one of the warring parties. In general however, they tended, as a group, to lean towards the government side, and one or two were so pro-government that they actively provided useful intelligence to the authorities.

By 1860, the machinery of government in New Zealand had burgeoned and there were numerous government agencies operating in Taranaki. Land Purchasing Officers, Resident Magistrates, Native Assessors and other officials, some Maori and some European, constantly moved among the Maori people throughout the countryside. There was even an overland mail service which linked the major settlements in the North Island. Consequently, the government had a far greater knowledge of the Maori people and the physical environment than it had in the Northern War. Most government agencies, and key individuals, remained in place throughout the war (although few ventured outside of New Plymouth), and the overland mail even continued the majority of the time. The net result was that the government and the military had a number of European sources of information that proved extremely valuable throughout the war.

Maori too had experienced a significant level of contact with their future adversaries. The lives of those dwelling near New Plymouth had become slowly entwined with the Europeans as the settlement grew. They had visited the town, had come to know something of European lifestyles, had worked on settler's farms, and entered into the cash economy themselves though their own agricultural and commercial activities. They moved freely in and out of New Plymouth; a situation which continued throughout the war despite government efforts to stop it. As such, they were able to observe troop movements and learn of the government and military plans relatively easily. The two peoples of Taranaki, Maori and European, were not unknown

to each other, and because there was a high level of local knowledge there was the potential to use effective military intelligence.

The area of operations that the war was fought in was almost as small and compact as that of the Northern War. Grayling, an officer in the Taranaki Rifle Volunteers observed:

...no country could have been better chosen for a guerrilla system of warfare... In every direction wooded gullies and ravines intersect and I am certain that in no one spot, could a level piece of ground of one hundred acres in extent be met with.¹⁰

Lieutenant Colonel Carey also commented on the physical geography of the area and noted that, 'the battle field was in country most difficult for Europeans [troops] and most favourable to the Maori'.¹¹ As a farming community, the European settlers were scattered throughout the region, and there was no effective way for individuals or groups of neighbours to defend themselves from attack. Carey noted that the communication routes that the British troops would need were poor:

The country itself was a network of gullies, ravines, marshes and impenetrable forest, and except in the neighbourhood of the towns, destitute of roads, and even those near towns were hardly better than cart tracks impassable in winter.¹²

Fortunately for the British, the decisive battles were fought on the narrow coastal strip which, despite the descriptions above, was at least accessible. Forays by the troops into the dense bush to attack major pa presented difficulties on the same scale as those encountered in the Northern War. Yet despite these problems, a different mind-set led to 'bush scouring' operations that had not been used in the north. Military operations were also hampered by the climate. Being further south, Taranaki is cooler than the Bay of Islands, and because it is on the West Coast of the country and at the foot of Mount Taranaki, it experiences very heavy rainfall, especially in winter. The wet winters were challenging enough for the soldiers, but they also complained of heavy dust clouds

¹⁰ W. Grayling, Maj. *The War in New Plymouth*, 1862, p.39.

¹¹ R. Carey, Lt Col. *The Late War in New Zealand*, London: Richard Bentley, 1863, p15. Lt Col Carey arrived with Major General Pratt and served as his deputy Adjutant General during the later half of the war.

¹² Carey, p.4.

during the dry months of summer that were so bad at times as to confine the men to their tents.¹³

Wrong assessments and the slide into war

On 1 March 1860, Gore Browne arrived from Auckland in the company of Colonel Gold who took command of the military forces. Reinforcements for the 65th Regiment and the naval and artillery contingents brought the strength of the whole garrison up to approximately 1300 men under arms, including the militia and the volunteers. Gore Browne wanted to impose his authority as governor, and the general European populace welcomed the prospect of war, believing that it would solve many problems in one short sharp and decisive act. It would reassert the Queen's authority and it would bring to heel those arrogant Maori who persisted in their own customary systems rather than conforming to the new. War would assert the authority of the British judicial system and do away with the chaotic arrangement where chiefly jurisdiction ran parallel to the government's. But most importantly, it would open up land for what they considered to be proper economic use.¹⁴

New Plymouth took on a festive atmosphere and began to develop the symptoms of war fever. It was widely believed that war with the Maori would be a quick strike and a bloodless victory.¹⁵ The general assessment was that, 'few Maoris supported Kingi',¹⁶ and that they were so divided and politically dislocated as a people that they would be unable to resist.¹⁷ The day before troops marched from New Plymouth to Waitara to occupy the disputed land, Gore Browne assured Captain Cracroft R.N. the commander of HMS *Niger*, that no shots would be fired, because when Kingi, 'sees we are in earnest, he must come to terms'.¹⁸

In such an atmosphere, it was not surprising that Colonel Gold, the senior military commander, was equally over-optimistic. He believed that one volley would

¹³ A. Battiscombe, Lt. 'Journal kept during the Maori War 1860 –61', (WTU), p.76. Lt Battiscombe was second in command of HMS *Pelorus* under Capt Seymour R.N. He took over command of the Naval Brigade when Seymour was wounded.

¹⁴ Sinclair, p.187; Alan Ward, *A Show of Justice*, Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1974, p.114.

¹⁵ Sinclair, p.187.

¹⁶ Sinclair, p.187.

¹⁷ Ward, p.115.

¹⁸ Sinclair, p.191.

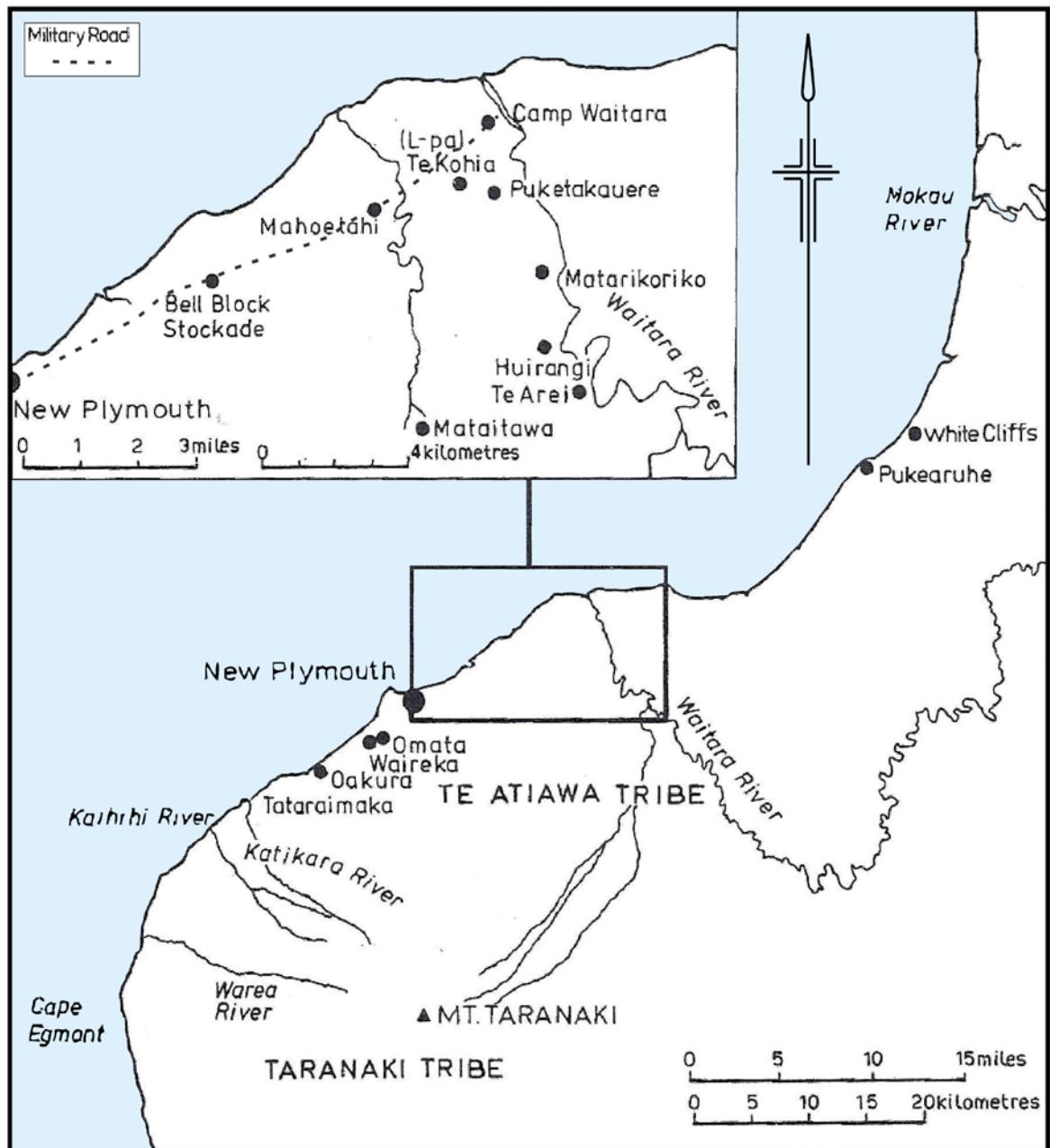


Fig.4.4 The theatre of operations in the First Taranaki War. Adapted by the author from Belich, *The New Zealand Wars*, p.75.

settle the whole affair,¹⁹ and Gore Browne himself thought that 20 men in a blockhouse would be enough to command the whole of the disputed block at Waitara.²⁰ It was a scenario disturbingly similar to the one at Kororareka 15 years earlier. The government authorities, both civil and military, completely underestimated Maori martial ability and their resolve. Few, if any Europeans seem to have realised the depth of Kingi's determination. They preferred instead to believe that he could be overawed by a show of

¹⁹ Sinclair, p.191.

²⁰ Sinclair, p.191.

British military power. They concluded that he had very little support, but worse still, they clung to their belief in the almost mystical invincibility of the British soldier and assumed that small numbers of troops would be an overmatch for larger forces of Maori warriors. In fact it was to be 12 years before Kingi finally submitted to the authority of the crown.

New Plymouth embarked upon the war in a carnival like atmosphere. Young men rushed to join the Taranaki Militia and the Taranaki Rifle Volunteers, eager to grab some action and glory before the war was over. Once again, the European population had overestimated their own ability and underestimated the Maori at their peril.

A brief overview of the war

British troops occupied the disputed Waitara Block on 5 March 1860 and built a camp on high ground overlooking both the fertile river flats and the river mouth. Camp Waitara, as it became known, was the firm base from which operations to enforce government ownership of the block were to be conducted. The first battle took place on 17 March 1860 when troops marched out of Camp Waitara and attacked Kingi's warriors in Te Kohia (or L pa, as it was known because of its shape [see inset Fig. 4.4]). The pa had been built on the boundary of the block as a direct challenge to the government. The next conflict which was at Waireka, south of New Plymouth, arose from a joint British and militia rescue operation to escort a number of settlers back to the relative safety of the town.

British troops and militia suffered heavy casualties at the battle of Puketakauere on 27 June 1860, which was again on the border of the disputed block. The military situation was turning against the government and Major General Thomas Pratt, Commander-in-Chief Australasia arrived from Sydney to take personal command. He conducted forays north and south of New Plymouth in order to break the Maori cordon around the town. His first major success came on 6 November 1860 when he defeated a Waikato war party at Mahoetahi. A combined force of Taranaki and Waikato warriors then built three pa at Mata-rikoriko, Huirangi, and finally Te Arei. All were invested and captured by Pratt who successfully used the slow but effective technique of sapping. The defenders of Te Arei finally surrendered on 19 March 1861, and peace terms were signed. An uneasy peace prevailed until conflict broke out again in 1863.

The early battles: Te Kohia and Waireka

The first two battles, Te Kohia and Waireka, occurred at a time when both sides had not yet settled upon a strategy. This was particularly the case for the government because in both battles it had to react to Maori initiatives or pressure. The two battles revealed failings on the part of the regulars, the militia and volunteers, with the latter acting with a recklessness borne of overconfidence and a lack of understanding of the realities of war.

In the days before the troops occupied the Waitara block, Sergeant William Marjouram, a seasoned Royal Artilleryman with experience in signalling, was given an interesting task. Under Gold's direction, and reporting back directly to him, Marjouram and Mr Parris, the District Land Purchase Commissioner, went in disguise and great secrecy to reconnoitre the disputed block. Their task was to make final observations of the land and its Maori occupants before the troops moved to occupy it.²¹ Parris had a detailed knowledge of the local Maori and countryside, and Gold made good use of him. His knowledge and daring made Parris a key figure in the acquisition of information throughout the war, and his role illustrates that there was a degree of co-operation between the military and civil authorities.

Marjouram also had the longer-term task of developing a signalling system that would link all government redoubts. A line-of-sight system was built so that Camp Waitara, for example, could signal the Bell Block Stockade via intermediary posts which could relay messages to New Plymouth. The signal equipment consisted of wicker balls covered in painted canvas that were hoisted up yard-arms above the redoubts. The configuration of the balls indicated a pre-arranged message. Telegraph was introduced late in the war. Maori also had signalling methods. Puffs of white smoke were produced from fires by day, a certain number signalled a sentence, and fires were commonly used at night.²² In Taranaki in 1863, Lieutenant Colonel Gamble saw water being poured over heated stones to create steam that could be seen for miles.²³ These

²¹ Laurie Barber, Garry Clayton, John Tonkin-Covell, *Sergeant, Sinner, Saint and Spy, The Taranaki War Diary of Sergeant William Marjouram, R.A.* Auckland: Random Century, 1990, p.191. Colonel Murray loaned Marjouram his own horse for the spy mission. Marjouram noted that to keep absolute secrecy he didn't tell his wife where he was going, p.35.

²² Barber et al, p.48; Battiscombe, p.34.

²³ 'Journal of the Deputy Quartermaster General, from 24 December 1861 to 7 September 1864', (hereafter JDQMG), Lt Col G.J. Gamble, (VUW), p.34.

ancient methods were updated during the war with the use of flags. Lieutenant Battiscombe of the Naval Brigade also observed Maori using signal halyards on occasion.²⁴

Rumours came into New Plymouth suggesting that the tribes to the south of the town were mobilising to support Kingi. It was clear that the number of Maori moving about the district would make identifying friend from foe difficult. Pro-government Maori were particularly worried that they may be mistaken for the enemy, so a system of passes and a distinguishing badge was instituted to identify ‘friendlies,’ and anyone moving beyond the Omata or Bell Block stockades was required to show them. Authorities were keenly aware of the possibility of infiltration into the town and of potential traitors. A declaration was drawn up and all who signed were required to swear allegiance to the Queen, to take up arms if required, and to deny assistance or information to the Queen’s enemies.²⁵



Fig.4.5. Camp Waitara. Painting by Justin McCarthy. Alexander Turnbull Library

Colonel Gold marched a force of 400 men of the 65th Regiment, plus artillery, on 5 March 1860 and established Camp Waitara. The troops had been aware that some kind of operation was imminent and it appears that any plans for keeping it secret were

²⁴ Battiscombe, p.15.

²⁵ Grayling, p18; John Whitely, Rev. ‘Journal’, (AMIL, MS 331), p.152; Maori Affairs Department Files Register 1858-1862, (ANZ. 2-4), Reports by the Assistant Native Secretary, 16th and 22nd February 1860. ‘The friendly natives ask for a distinguishing mark or badge.’

futile. On 4 March the day before the march to Waitara, Reverend John Whitely, a CMS missionary, was conducting Sunday services in an outlying district. He learned from his Maori parishioners that carts had been requisitioned by the military and that plans were being made by the British for ‘the morrow’s expedition’.²⁶ The fact that the news of this major military expedition had emanated from New Plymouth and was freely talked about in a remote rural area suggests that security of information was a major issue, and that there was a very rapid flow of information from the town to the Maori communities.

Kingi had made his position perfectly clear. He would peacefully oppose any attempt to occupy or survey the Waitara Block. It was politically important for him to be seen as the aggrieved party, not the aggressor. Whitely observed that if Kingi fired the first shots he would be abandoned by the tribes who were his potential allies. If he did not, those tribes would rally to his support.²⁷ On 6 March 1860, a party led by Hapurona, Kingi’s fighting chief, tried to provoke soldiers to fire on them without success. Gore Browne, who understood Kingi’s plan, despatched Parris to investigate reports of 600 warriors moving up from the south on 7 March. He found no evidence of the movement of warriors at the time, but noted there was a general tension and expectancy across the region that may have had deeper causes than the government’s claim to the Waitara Block. The reasons for tribes to join the conflict were varied, and this was a pattern common throughout all of the wars. Captain Charles Heaphy later argued that the southern tribes’ subsequent actions were ‘entirely unconnected with Kingi’s land dispute and they had no land grievance of their own but for many years had openly discussed a plan for driving the white people into the sea and possessing their cultivations.’²⁸

Eventually Kingi built a fighting pa on the southern edge of the disputed block. Te Kohia provocatively defied the British of Camp Waitara and on 17 March 1860 Gold took up the challenge and attacked it.²⁹ A mounted reconnaissance found the pa to be very strong. Gold shelled it with artillery in the afternoon and the Maori abandoned it during the night, leaving the troops to take possession of their hollow prize the

²⁶ Whitely, p.150.

²⁷ Whitely, p.151.

²⁸ AJHR 1860, E No.1C, Further Papers Relative to the Native Insurrection, p.3.

²⁹ Grayling, p.18.

following morning. Although the battle was militarily insignificant, it was politically pivotal because it foreshadowed an escalation of hostilities. All of the posturing and talk had ended. The government had shown its determination to hold the block by military force, and the European citizens of the province had seen their own men-folk in uniform (20 of the volunteer cavalry) attack Maori. For Kingi, the battle provided a focus and rallying point for the involvement of more tribes.

The next conflict was the battle of Waireka which was fought on 28 March 1860. It was a more complicated affair which saw Kingi's meagre numbers reinforced by 500 warriors from southern Taranaki tribes. As the Maori forces moved closer to New Plymouth the remaining out-settlers were driven into the town. During that process five settlers were murdered out beyond the southern boundary of the town in the farming district of Waireka. When news of the deaths reached New Plymouth, Gold resolved to escort the remaining settlers to the relative safety of the town by sending out a force of approximately 200 regulars and 100 volunteers and militia to rescue them.

Gold split his force. The 65th and the Naval Contingent travelled by an inland road and the militia and volunteers marched along the beach. The Maori strength had been seriously underestimated.³⁰ Warriors swept down through the coastal gullies, and using the elevated ground to good effect, they pinned the militia and volunteers down on the beach. The citizen soldiers were in a serious predicament; they were unable to extract themselves and were taking casualties. Lieutenant Colonel Murray, in command of the 65th only a few hundred metres away, was fully aware of their situation but chose not to come to their aid. His decision to leave the column pinned down on the beach and march his force back to the town has earned him a reputation for callous indifference of criminal proportions. Murray was under orders to be back by night fall in order to protect the town,³¹ but even so, his decision to leave the militia and volunteers to their fate was extraordinary. Charles Pasley, a Royal Engineer wrote to his father, 'Murray's behaviour at Waireka was unaccountable. The townsfolk cannot forgive him'.³²

³⁰ The actual number of Maori warriors is unknown. It is traditionally accepted that the force was large, perhaps as high as 500. Belich disputes this for being too high (especially in respect to the defenders of Kaipopo Pa) but does not provide a figure of his own, see Belich, pp.87-88.

³¹ B.R. Bullet, Brig. 'Some Interesting Episodes and Personalities of the Taranaki Wars.' The Captain Isaac Bayley Memorial Lecture, Auckland Officers Club, 15 July 1969, p.8.

³² Charles Pasley, Maj. 'Letters of Charles Pasley to his Father', 1853-61, (AMIL, MS 238), p.81.

When the plight of their men was discovered by the townspeople, a naval party under Captain Cracraft R.N. hurried out to attack the almost empty Kaipopo Pa at the rear of the Maori force. The sixty-strong party was guided by local men Frank Mace (later Captain), and two Messenger brothers, both privates.³³ The pressure on the militia and volunteers was relieved and they were able to disengage and eventually make their way back to New Plymouth after dark.³⁴ Corporal George Jupp, a volunteer, was one of a party sent to destroy the pa after the battle. He found it to be very strong with underground chambers which allowed the defenders to fire out without being seen. He also discovered considerable plunder from settlers' houses including his own cooking utensils.³⁵

In this early phase of the war the events were militarily straight-forward. Kingi achieved his goal of provoking the government into attacking him, and after several weeks his forces had virtually laid siege to the town, and had begun to loot and burn the farms and farm houses of the settlers. From the sanctuary of New Plymouth, the settlers' families could look out and see plumes of smoke as their homes were burnt. Of the 212 homes in the country owned by settlers, 175 were completely destroyed during 1860.³⁶

On the government side, the picture of the Maori as an enemy was changing. Early assessments of Kingi's resolve, the Maori willingness and ability to fight, and the amount of support other tribes would provide to Kingi, were beginning to be shown as false. The number of warriors who opposed the troops at Waireka had been a surprise, and, apart from rumour, there was no real indication of the size of Kingi's force. Waireka had been a shock for the militia and volunteers. This was a real war. Men were already dead and the Europeans were definitely on the back foot. The performance of the troops so far had not been reassuring. Te Kohia had been a low-key affair but Waireka had been a shambles. The regulars had achieved almost nothing apart from engendering the deep suspicion of the townsfolk and the development of a rift between

³³ Bullot, p.8.

³⁴ The Battle of Waireka was a confused affair and it is hard to discern exactly what occurred. This is especially so with Captain Cracraft's attack on Kaipopo Pa for which Leading Seaman Ogiers received the Victoria Cross, (one of only two awarded to members of the Royal Navy in New Zealand; the other being Mitchell at Gate Pa). Belich has tried to tease apart what he calls the myth of Waireka without much success, see Belich, pp.84-88.

³⁵ G. Jupp, 'Diary 1851-1860', (CCL), 30 March 1860.

³⁶ Bullot, p.2.

themselves and the volunteers. For their part, the volunteers and militia had been shown to be over-enthusiastic greenhorns with a timidity which was to remain an issue throughout the war.³⁷ However the volunteers were now fully immersed in the war. The citizens had become soldiers, and at all levels they were to have a useful role. Their senior officers, such as Captain Harry Atkinson, were active in local and national politics and had the potential to influence policy. At the tactical level, they had already operated as guides and message-bearers, where their intimate local knowledge had already had an effect.

Sources of intelligence

After the initial flurry of the first two indecisive battles, the war settled down into a more protracted struggle. Where would the two sides now get information about each other's strength, location and intentions? Kingi's forces enjoyed many advantages in the intelligence battle. The British troops were based at fixed points, and their activities at those locations and their movements on the cart roads between them were easy for Maori to observe. It was also easy for Maori to communicate that information back to their communities. The problem of knowing who were allies and who were enemies was a major issue. Marjouram observed that the 'so-called friendly natives were always suspected of conveying tidings of our doings to the rebels',³⁸ and Lieutenant Colonel Carey noted that there was a flow of information from the town to the bush:

The natives who remained friendly to us were the husbands, fathers, and relatives of many of those in the camp of the enemy, and intercourse between the friendly and rebel natives could not be prevented.³⁹

On several documented occasions Maori seemed to know about the plans of the troops in advance, and troops who marched inland to attack bush pa frequently found them abandoned. Marjouram was particularly indignant on one occasion when the occupants of a targeted pa had decamped before the troops arrived:

³⁷ There were of course many experienced soldiers in the Volunteer units, but many were entirely untrained. At Waireka, Captain Brown the Officer Commanding had no previous military experience and he handed over command to his Adjutant Captain Stapp, (a veteran Regular soldier) when the shooting started, see Cowan p174. Pasley, p.81, commented on the timidity of the volunteers. The reputation of the brave young colonial boys can be overstated and may be one more of the myths of the Taranaki Wars.

³⁸ Barber, et al, p.65.

³⁹ Carey, p.62.

...having no doubt received information of our intended movements. A question naturally arises, who is the traitor?..our mortification is increased by the terrible certainty that there must be foul play amongst us or the enemy could never obtain such accurate information respecting our intended movements.⁴⁰

Marjouram's suspicion may well have fallen upon Maori employed by the government in both the Native Contingent and the Native Department. A fifty strong Native Contingent, which was attached to the military, was raised in April 1860 to assist the troops in escort duties and to scout for them during the forays into the bush. Opinions about their usefulness were remarkably contrasting, and it is not always possible to know whether the term 'friendly natives' was used just for the contingent or also for other Maori who provided information to the military or lent a hand in some way. On 30 August 1860, Major General Pratt was unsure about simultaneous movements of some of Kingi's warriors that had been observed moving close to New Plymouth. He sought the advice of some chiefs and noted, 'our friendly natives believe them to refer to an attack on the town but this is all conjecture'.⁴¹ On another occasion, some chiefs advised on enemy tactics pointing out that the apparent desertion of a pa was a ruse.⁴²

It is likely that the pro-government Maori were also used to collect information and carry out reconnaissance or spying missions; 'R. Brown Esq., lately appointed Captain over the native Irregulars [Native Contingent], had been shot by the rebels lying in ambush. He was out as a spy'.⁴³ So while there is evidence that the pro-government or 'friendly Maori' provided information and advice, and acted as scouts, their real value remains unclear. J.C. Richmond fumed; 'The greatest source of dissatisfaction now is the state of the friendly natives. They are absolutely useless in the field and not infrequently refuse to do any other work of a peaceful kind'.⁴⁴ Major Grayling was equally vitriolic in his condemnation of the Native Contingent:

At this and in most of the expeditions that followed, the friendly natives who had been organised and armed for the occasion were present, but as their deeds were never of sufficient brilliancy to attract attention, I need not again allude to this useless part of our force.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Barber, et al, p.67. Whitely records that a Maori known as Manahi was suspected of being a traitor. He was hunted but not caught, see Whitely, p.161.

⁴¹ AJHR 1860, E. 3C, Pratt to Gore Browne, 30 August 1860.

⁴² Battiscombe, p.15.

⁴³ Barber et al, pp.51 and p.71.

⁴⁴ J.C. Richmond, to C.W. Richmond, 12 November 1860, Richmond Atkinson Papers, vol.1, p.657.

⁴⁵ Grayling, p.36.

Gore Browne had a practical appreciation for the role played by the ‘friendly natives’ as a group which included a wider group of allies than just the Native Contingent. He asked Pratt to protect them, particularly the chiefs Mahau, ‘Apeharua’, Ihaiia and Teira and their men:

...they have proved faithful allies and their lives would be instantly sacrificed if they were deprived of our protection ...it is however quite true that all Maoris will communicate intelligence to the enemy: so far from considering such conduct shameful they look upon it as right and chivalrous. It is possible that Ihaiia and a few others might not communicate with the enemy under any circumstances but their women and their followers would do so. This inconvenience however being known, may easily be guarded against, and should not induce us to look with suspicion upon men so thoroughly attached to us as these chiefs have proven themselves to be.⁴⁶

Gore Browne was wrong in one respect at least. Security breaches could not be easily guarded against and communication between the ‘friendly Maori’ and the enemy appears to have continued throughout the war.⁴⁷ The troops were investing the pa at Huirangi in early January 1861, when:

A letter from a friendly native, who resides in town, was found in one of the whares. It was addressed to a Waikato chief, and gave a full account of the number and movements of the troops employed on the present expedition. A messenger was at once despatched by General Pratt to the authorities at new Plymouth, who took the traitor, and quietly lodged him in jail, where he now remains, awaiting inevitable death.⁴⁸

The ‘friendly Maori’ were a loose group of pro-government chiefs who provided advice and assistance on a semi-formal basis. The Native Contingent was a small structured force that actually took the field with the British troops, but played a far less important role in the Taranaki War than Nene’s warriors did in the Northern War. It acted as scouts, guides and navvies. It also garrisoned the New Plymouth Mission School, which was a defensive strongpoint to the south of the town,⁴⁹ and probably advised on enemy tactics when asked. In the north, Nene had been an ally and almost an equal partner with the British in a strategic sense, although the British troops did most of the fighting. In Taranaki the Native Contingent was an auxiliary to the main force,

⁴⁶ AJHR 1860, E. 3C., Gore Browne to Pratt , 30 August 1860

⁴⁷ Carey, pp. 61-2.

⁴⁸ Barber et al, p.87.

⁴⁹ Richard Taylor, ‘British Logistics in the New Zealand Wars 1845-66’, PhD Thesis, Massey University, 2004, p.118.

and it appears to have had almost no influence in decision making. The Taranaki War has not thrown up to history the names of any chiefs who supported the government to the extent that Nene did.

The Native Department however, did play a pivotal role in information gathering, and Carey considered that it was the most important agency in that role throughout the war:

The Native Department which was not organised as an intelligence department, was the principal and best source from which to obtain information: and its officers ventured during the war into the interior of the country, and even into the very camps of the enemy, gaining all of the information possible.⁵⁰

The appointment of Native Secretary was held by Donald McLean, who combined that role with his other responsibility as the Principal Native Land Purchase Officer until 1861. In general, native affairs were under the control of the Colonial Treasurer, and in 1858 a cabinet post was created for a Native Minister.⁵¹ In practice there was a good deal of overlap between government functions at the district level in Taranaki. Robert Parris emerged as a key figure throughout the war. A long-time settler, he had been appointed District Land Purchase Commissioner in 1857.⁵² He had of course been the principal negotiator of the Waitara Purchase, and he had knowledge of the region and the Maori people which was invaluable to the government throughout the war. He worked closely with the military command in Taranaki and provided considerable assistance. On at least one operation, on 9 October, he was in command of 150 Te Atiawa ‘friendly natives’ as part of a large composite force under Pratt’s command.⁵³ A zealous man, Parris also reported to Auckland in writing at least fortnightly, and frequently more often than that. His letters were a mix of mundane routine matters, updates on the military situation and valuable pieces of information.

⁵⁰ Carey, p.63.

⁵¹ Maori Affairs Department Files, Explanatory Notes in MA Series List, (ANZ).

⁵² Sinclair, p.160.

⁵³ Cowan, p.192.

His correspondence with McLean in particular, dated back to 1856 and was also written on a regular basis.⁵⁴

McLean visited Taranaki during the war and occasionally accompanied the troops on operations. Mr Drummond Hay (later Major), a Native Department officer also frequently accompanied the troops and carried out intelligence gathering. Pratt, acknowledging the help of both men in an operation in September 1860, wrote to Gore Browne:

Mr McLean, who accompanied me, has been of the greatest assistance, as also Mr Drummond Hay, who a night or two before our move, reconnoitred the pahs at considerable risk and ascertained their position and occupants.⁵⁵

The extant records of the Native Department do not reveal enough detail to illuminate the complete role played by its officers throughout the war. However one of its roles was to make payments to ‘friendly chiefs’. Payments made in 1861 for ‘services during the war’ and subsequent salaries to those chiefs, indicate that the government’s allies were financially rewarded both during and after the war. The evidence indicates that some allies were paid for services during the war, some were appointed to government funded positions, some were employed as interpreters and some were given presents. Carey also refers to the use of native spies in the pay of the

⁵⁴ For example, in September 1860, Parris wrote on the following days: (date received in Auckland).
September 17 £1400 spent on the purchase of the Taurungutangi Block.
September 19 Enclosed copies of communication sent to Pratt.
September 19 Advised that 600 troops had gone on an expedition to the South.
September 22 Gave the location of a rebel chief now residing at Poutoka Pa.
September 26 Further updates on the negotiation and purchase of the Waitara.
September 28 Enclosed a copy of a report by Pratt relative to the occupation of pa’s at Kaihihi by the insurgents.
September 29 Routine documents for the employment of personnel - forwarded for approval.
September 29 Forwarded Mr W. Atkinson’s report on the involvement of the Nelson Natives.

See: (WTU McLean papers, Parris Robert, Taranaki 1856-1860)

⁵⁵ AJHR 1860, No.32, Pratt to Gore Brown, 12 September 1860, p.16. Carey also commented on the value of McLean’s experience and also the information he provided from his contacts, see Carey, p.86.

Native Department⁵⁶ and it seems likely that some Maori were paid as spies or for information they provided. After the fall of Ruapekepeka, Grey appointed chiefs from both sides of the war to government jobs. In this way he enmeshed them into the machinery of government and gave them a role and a stake in the new order. The same tactic was used in Taranaki and Hapurona, the Te Atiawa principal fighting chief, for example, was paid to be in charge of Matarikoriko Pa after the war.

It has already been observed that the machinery of government had progressed by 1860, and there were various channels by which the authorities in Auckland could receive and disseminate information. The Native Department in Auckland received a constant flow of information from around the country which helped it keep in touch with developments in each district. Letters were received from such diverse avenues as Resident Magistrates, missionaries, military officers, medical officers, Maori chiefs and members of the public. Much of the correspondence was routine, such as returns about services provided by District Medical Officers, reports from missionaries on the schools they ran for the Maori, and complaints and requests about poor roading and issues over land.

However, mixed in amongst all of the mundane was a quantity of specific information about the Maori political situation in each district. Resident Magistrates filed returns approximately monthly, and they nearly always commented on ‘the state of

⁵⁶ Example of payments to chiefs in the Taranaki:

July 1861	G.W.D Hay expenses for Native Allies	£15.19s.11d
<u>Salaries</u>		
2 September 1861	Poharama, Raniera, Mahau,Ti Waka, Kipa	£45.7s.6d
October 1861	Hapurona (in charge of Matarikoriko- the government's former enemy now paid off)	£37.10s.0d
	Ihaia (in charge of Puketakauere)	£37.6s.8d
	Teira & Henri (in charge of Pukekohe)	£33.6s.8d
<u>For Services during the war</u>		
October 1861	Teira	£20.0s.0d
	Tamati Tiraurau	£20.0s.0d
	E Taki	£50.0s.0c
November 1861	Rawiri Raupongo	£10.0s.0d
	Tameti Raru	£10.0s.0d

Extra temporary interpreters were also attached to the Native Affairs Department during the war. Total numbers and cost are unknown.

AJHR 1862, E No.12. Return of all sums paid and presents made to the Natives, pp.5 -13; AJHR 1861, E No.5. Native Secretary's Department, 15 June 1861; Carey, p.119.

the natives'. Registers for 1860 reveal that the authorities in Auckland sometimes received three or four letters a day from government officials around the country, many of which gave an opinion on the 'state of the natives' in their region.⁵⁷ These reports commented on such things as quarrels and disturbances, what had been said at hui and observations about political developments in the area. Resident Magistrates were located in key settlements and they were directed to keep themselves fully aware of the political situation among the Maori in their district, to speak frequently with the chiefs and to report their observations to Auckland.⁵⁸

The missionaries were another group of individuals with a substantial knowledge of the region and the Maori people. They were in a very difficult position that was similar to the one that Burrows and Williams found themselves in during the Northern War. The Taranaki War, and more particularly the later war in Waikato, destroyed much of their life's work, and by the end of the Waikato War, the majority of Maori had turned their back on the missionaries and moved away from Christianity to embrace Pai Marire, Hau-Hauism or some other adjustment cult. The conflict between their countrymen and their parishioners was a traumatic experience for these men of God. In general they all pressed for the path of peace, but naturally they all tended to have different views about how that might be achieved. As the wars progressed through the early 1860s, a deep rift developed between groups of missionaries, some accusing

⁵⁷ AJHR 1860-61.

1. Medical officers appear to have filed 6 monthly returns of cases treated, e.g. Dr Hooper, Rangiaohia, 10 April 1860; Dr Topp, Waiuku, 19 July 1861; Dr Ford, Russell 28 October 1861.
2. A snapshot of typical correspondence from Resident Magistrates (R.M.), District Commissioners (D.C.) and others directly relating to 'the state of the natives' in 1860, (date received in Auckland):

February 2	D.C. Searancke Wellington – reports on the state of the natives in Wellington.
March 8	R.M. Bay of Plenty – reports on quarrels between natives in Tauranga.
March 12	D.C. Cooper, Napier reports - on the state of the natives in his district.
April 9	Rev Schnackenberg – reports on the state of the natives in Kawhia.
April 14	Mr Parris – reports on the state of native affairs since McLean left Taranaki.
April 23	Colonel Wyatt reports on the state of mind of the natives in his district of Wanganui, re the Taranaki situation.
April 24	R.M. Tauranga reports on the state of the natives in Tauranga.
April 25	D.C. Searancke reports on the state of the natives in Rangitikei.
April 25	Mr Parris reports on the state of the natives in Taranaki.
April 25	Rev Buddle reports on a meeting held with Maori chiefs in Ngaruawahia.
April 29	D.C. Searancke reports on the state of the natives in Masterton.

⁵⁸ AJHR 1861, E No.3c. Copy of introductions issued by the Assistant Native Secretary to Mr Halse, Resident Magistrate (Waikato), pp.8-9. An example of instructions to Resident Magistrates can be found in the document, including the requirement for regular reports.

Morgan and Wilson in particular, of being too pro-government in their stance and activities.

As a group, the missionaries generally spoke the language of the Maori well, and understood their society, customs, lifestyle and beliefs. They lived and moved among their flock and inhabited the two worlds of Maori and European more completely than most Europeans. Men of strong convictions, they were often forward in offering their opinions to the authorities, and they frequently wrote to Auckland and to regional officials. Their fluency in the Maori language, their apparent impartiality and the respect with which they were held by most Maori, meant that the government often used them as intermediaries, interpreters and message bearers. But throughout the wars their role became ‘disastrously ambiguous’⁵⁹ as they increasingly became caught in a vortex of conflicting loyalty to their Maori flock and to the government’s political goals.

Missionaries played an interesting role during the Taranaki War and although they tried to walk the fine line between loyalty to their flock and loyalty to the crown, their actions indicate that their loyalty to the latter was often greater. One or two were overtly pro-government and they used their positions to support the authorities. This group tended to view the Maori as rebels who were misguided in their actions. They tried to restore the status quo in which they had such a stake by assisting the government to put down the ‘rebellion’ and restore law and order. To these men, assimilation of the Maori into European civilisation and religion was the most desirable and logical outcome. It is easy to understand their attitudes. They had a very poor view of the Maori society they had encountered when they first arrived in the country. The cannibalism, slavery, endemic warfare, tattooing, bigamy and sorcery were to them the signs of a god-forsaken fallen people, but by 1860 the Maori appeared to have made much progress. Many had converted to Christianity, and some now ran farms and mills, sold their goods locally and even internationally, and their children attended schools. It appeared that the process of assimilation and westernisation was working and the

⁵⁹ Bryan Gilling, ‘Caught between the Mere and the Musket,’ in Robert Glen, *Mission and Moko, Aspects of the work of the Church Missionary Society in New Zealand 1814-1882*. Christchurch: Latimer Fellowship of New Zealand, 1992, pp.179-192.

labours of the missionaries were finally bearing fruit.⁶⁰ Why risk such progress by allowing rebellious groups to destroy what had been achieved?



Fig.4.6. Cartoons from Taranaki Punch, 1860-61. The cartoons illustrate the racial tension at the time. In the first image, 21 November 1860, the missionaries are accused of siding with Maori against the British Army. The second image, 13 February 1861, refers to Archdeacon Govett's decision to bury Maori (Wetini and five other chiefs killed at Mahoetahi) in the garden of St Mary's Vicarage, New Plymouth. Streams flowed from the high land around Marsland Hill through the town to the coast, and towns-folk were worried about the purity of their water. Two weeks later in the next issue, it was noted that: *...we have heard that several people have positively tasted, perhaps it might be called an essence of Maori, existing in their wells, and it is not at all an uncommon thing to see people making wry faces after drinking, no doubt resulting from the peculiar sensation imparted to the roof of the mouth. Ugh! Horrible idea! Drinking infusion of Maori! ugh! decoction of nigger! If grubs turn the colour of what they eat, why should not children turn the colour of what they drink? Puke Ariki New Plymouth.*

Four missionaries played a significant pro-government role during the war. Reverend (later Archdeacon) Henry Govett was the priest at St Mary's, the main Anglican church in the town which happened to be at the foot of Marsland Hill. The hill was fortified as the military headquarters during the war and the church served as a temporary hospital and storage facility as well as continuing with its spiritual function. Govett actually became a chaplain to the troops, the first clergyman to hold such an appointment in New Zealand. He had been in New Plymouth since 1848 and was well

⁶⁰ Gilling, p.181. It must be noted that some Maori, in the Waikato at least, had started to move away from Christianity by 1860. Reverend Ashwell considered that there were three reasons for this; the attraction of mammon (wealth regarded as a god or evil influence), shady land selling by chiefs and shady purchases by government agents, and a decline in the link between religion and culture.

connected with the Maori community as well as the European population.⁶¹ Reverend John Whitely, a Wesleyan, and the Lutheran Reverend Johann Riemenschneider were even longer-serving missionaries who had lived in the district from 1835 and 1846 respectively. The fourth and most controversial churchman was Reverend John Morgan, a CMS missionary from Otawhao (Te Awamutu) in the Upper Waikato.

Govett continued to move among his parish throughout the war, often in the company of Whitely. These trips appear to have been to conduct services, burials, and other pastoral duties, but they were also used to pass on information from the governor, ascertain the political state in certain communities and to influence Maori opinion away from continuing the hostilities. Information collected during their visits was clearly passed on to the authorities and reported in the *Taranaki Herald*, as well.⁶² In this way, the local populace was kept well informed, and well ‘rumoured’. Govett was clearly in a compromised situation as he tried to have allegiance to both sides and this is illustrated

⁶¹ Glen, p.200; Alan Davidson, *Christianity in Aotearoa, A History of Church and Society in New Zealand*, 3rd edition, Wellington: The New Zealand, Education for Ministry, 2004, pp.43-9.

⁶² *The Taranaki Herald*, 1860-1. The newspaper was full of news and rumour about the latest developments during the war. The following snippets are typical content with an intelligence flavour:

February 6 1860	Friendly natives say Southern Taranaki tribes are carting flour and potatoes.
March 17	The natives erected a stockade the previous night.
March 24	Govett is acting as a go-between twixt Maori and the government. Govett, Riemenschneider and Whitely visit Hapurona. Maori intercept the mail near Wanganui. Friendly Maori want to wear distinguishing dress. Kingi is in Hapurona's pa. Friendly natives are already allying with the government and will defend the town. General attitude is one of, 'teach these rebels a lesson.'
November 10	Kingites are flying one red and one white flag. General fear in the province of Northern Tribes, including Nga Puhi, rising up. Govett goes to see Taranaki Maori after Mahoetahi. Pratt had sent him to discuss peace. Govett buries three chiefs and three natives in St Mary's church yard. He reads the service in Maori.
January 26 1861	Drummond-Hay identifies Maori dead- had known them for years. Friendly Maori give detailed information and numbers about Kingite dead and injured. Letter from Mr Wilson at Otawhao. 1200 natives are coming from Taupo after the harvest.
February 9	Criticism of the British military making slow progress. Missionaries are too pro-Maori. Govett and Whitely are out meeting with the Waikato's, being acceptable intermediaries to both sides. Rumours that the Waikato's will sue for peace.

no more clearly than the cartoons that appeared in the *Taranaki Punch* which criticised him as a protector of Maori (see Fig. 4.6). Feelings ran particularly high over the issue of the burial of Maori in St Mary's churchyard. It was important for the missionaries to bury Christian Maori in consecrated ground, but this was opposed by some townsfolk who were, 'too embittered to show respect for the dead'⁶³ and who feared Maori bodies would taint their drinking water. It was clearly a distressing time for these men of God as they struggled to find an appropriate way to discharge their conflicting duties.

In as early as September 1855, Riemenschneider had written to the Native Secretary giving his full analysis of the Taranaki situation. He described Maori reaction to the arrival of the British troops, gave an assessment of their feeling and speculated on their probable action in the event of war.⁶⁴ He frequently wrote to Resident Magistrates giving his opinion on the mood of the Maori in his district, Warea. In May 1860, Riemenschneider wrote an extraordinary letter to Colonel Gold, the commander of the British forces in Taranaki. In it, he gave a very detailed description of a pa that he called the Warea Forest Pa, which was one of three major strongholds of the Taranaki tribe after the Battle of Waireka. Riemenschneider visited the pa in the course of his parish duties and made a particular effort to gain as much information about it as possible. As well as detailing the general layout and defence of the place, he described a strong bomb-proof shelter at the centre, noting, 'I would have been glad to have gone down into it, but this and also making more particular enquiries would have only raised suspicion, more than I am suspected already'.⁶⁵ He gave Gold additional information by describing the route to the pa in detail and outlining the difficulties that the British would experience if they tried moving artillery along the tracks. He also described how the Maori were able to quickly reinforce any pa under attack by moving warriors from nearby fortifications.

Whately too was of considerable use to the government forces. He strenuously tried to halt the slide into war, but once it began he continued with pastoral duties, always pushing the government point of view. He was a friend of Riemenschneider and they sometimes travelled together in their forays through the district. Both men had a

⁶³ Chris Pugsley, 'Walking the Taranaki Wars: Mahoetahi,' *New Zealand Defence Quarterly*, 11, Summer 1995, p.36.

⁶⁴ AJHR 1861, E No.3c, 24 Sept 1855.

⁶⁵ Carey, pp.51-66. Carey reprints the long letter in full.

network of Christian Maori and catechists and it may have been through them that they gained useful information. Whitely was on good terms with Gore Browne and enjoyed his confidence. His understanding of the Maori language was an asset, and on at least one occasion he interpreted a major speech as the governor spoke to Maori.⁶⁶ He was also frequently in touch with Parris, assisted him in some of his duties, and no doubt passed on whatever information or observations he had. Whitely was not a particularly overt spy, but he did interview Maori prisoners, possibly for pastoral reasons, and he did pass on useful information. Marjouram recorded:

The Rev. Mr Whitely paid me a visit this afternoon...He told me he had been conversing with one of the Waikato prisoners, who informed him that the party of Waikato's engaged with our troops the other day had only arrived from the north the previous evening.⁶⁷



Fig.4.7. Reverend John Whitely and his wife Mary Ann circa 1865. Photographer unknown. Alexander Turnbull Library.

Reverend John Morgan had moved to Otawhao in 1834 and had a profound effect on the district. He developed schools, churches, orchards, farms and mills. Otawhao was in the centre of the crucible of the King Movement, and Morgan himself knew and was in contact with many of the great Maori leaders including Wiremu Tamehana, Rewi Maniapoto and Wiremu Kingi. He was in the perfect position to observe what was happening in this district. From his own observation and through his network of contacts, he was able to gauge the political sentiment of the people, learn the outcome of meetings, follow the movements and location of the Maori leaders, and also gain such specific information as the size of Waikato war parties marching off to Taranaki, and even the dates they were expected to arrive. All of the information was

⁶⁶ Whitely, 8 Mar 1860. Interestingly Gore-Browne used the same tactic in his speech that Governor Grey used in the Northern War; he threatened the Maori with Britain's military might by telling them that, 'the Queen's power is great having more than a hundred regiments of soldiers.'

⁶⁷ W. White, Sgt R.A. (ed.). *Memorials of Sergeant William Marjouram R.A.* London: 1861, p.292; Barber et al, p.12.

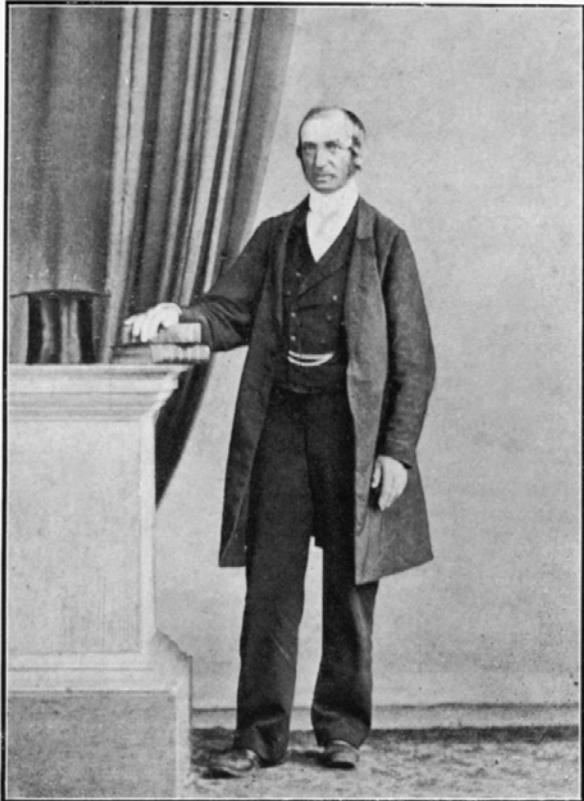


Fig.4.8. Reverend John Morgan circa 1864.
Photographer unknown. NZETC

faithfully relayed to Gore Browne on a regular basis as Morgan himself explained (on 23 January 1861):

As your Excellency requested me some months ago to write to you every week, I have done so, and shall continue to do so until Your Excellency intimates to me that our position is so improved that weekly information is no longer necessary.⁶⁸

Morgan had been encouraged by Archdeacon Kissling on behalf of Gore Browne, and so too was Ashwell who was more reluctant to be involved. Morgan was obliged to correspond with the government on some matters because he ran a successful school at his mission station, but his personality heavily lent

itself to the task of information gathering. Indeed he proved to be a very conscientious correspondent and he wrote weekly, starting either in February 1860,⁶⁹ or on Good Friday the same year, when he learnt about the outbreak of hostilities in Taranaki.⁷⁰

The flood of correspondence and the similarity of their views led to a deep friendship between the two men, and they continued to write even after the wars had forced both of their careers to turn for the worse.⁷¹ Morgan's value to Gore Browne lay

⁶⁸ Morgan to Gore Browne, 'Letters From John Morgan to Governor Gore Browne 1861-65'. Gore Browne Papers, (ANZ GB1/2d) 23 January 1861.

⁶⁹ Morgan to Gore Browne, (ANZ GB 1/2d). As an example of the frequency of his writing, Morgan wrote to Gore Browne on the following dates in early 1861:
January 1st, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 29th.
February 8th, 13th, 20th, 23rd, 28th.

This pattern continued through March to August. In a letter to Gore Browne on 6 Aug 1861, Morgan mentioned that he had been writing to the governor for 18 months, which would place the start of his correspondence in February 1860.

⁷⁰ John Morgan, Rev. 'Letter & Journals', vols 1&2. (APL NZ 266.3, M84).

⁷¹ Gore Browne was replaced as Governor by George Grey in August 1861, and he was transferred to a less demanding post as Governor of Tasmania. Morgan continued to keep him apprised of the situation in New Zealand and the men exchanged photographs. Morgan's own situation deteriorated and he was eventually forced to evacuate Otawhao just before war broke out in mid 1863. He became a chaplain to the British troops in South Auckland and seems to have experienced severe financial difficulties.

in his geographical location, his range of contacts, and most importantly in his willingness to pass on information. Morgan too, realised how fortunate it was that he had been the right man in the right place:

If the information I have been able to communicate to Your Excellency during the last 18 months has been of any value or service, I feel thankful that I have been placed by Providence in a position to render such service to my Queen and to my country.⁷²

Morgan was equally conscientious and voluminous in his correspondence with Mclean. In October 1858, at McLean's request, he gave information about the formation of the King Movement and his opinion about the attitude of the Waikatos.⁷³ He continued to give information and opinion about the volatile Waikato political situation, the number of Waikatos (and other tribes such as those in Tauranga), moving to Taranaki and the location of Kingi and other chiefs. He also wrote to Parris, relaying much the same information as he had to Gore Browne and McLean.⁷⁴

Morgan's intense commitment to the government cause and his indefatigable energy led to another aspect of his intelligence gathering activities. Not only did he provide his own information to Auckland, he passed on information that he had gleaned from other missionaries and government officials. In this way he acted as a clearing house for information and might be described as a self appointed, unofficial collator and analyst of intelligence.⁷⁵ Again, he was significantly abetted by his unique geographical location. Otawhao was the point at which overland mail coming down the Waikato River from Auckland were re-routed to more peripheral destinations. It was a hub with spokes leading off to Taranaki, Napier, Gisborne, Taupo and a number of smaller settlements.

Morgan, who was also the postmaster at Otawhao, appears to have had an almost obsessive interest in the mail, and ways by which to make it more efficient. The mail was carried by Maori mail-men and it was a reasonably fast service, given the

⁷² Morgan to Gore-Browne, 6 August 1861, (ANZ, GB 1/2d),

⁷³ Morgan to McLean, 12 and 26 October 1858, (WTU, McLean Papers, folder 459).

⁷⁴ Morgan to McLean, 22 August 1860, (WTU, McLean Papers, folder 459).

⁷⁵ Morgan to Gore Browne 23 January 1861, (WTU, McLean Papers). For example, Morgan passed on the observations of Reverend C Baker, Tauranga, Reverend Chapman, Matamata, Reverend Reid and Miss Spencer from Rotorua. On 7 November 1860 he passed on information from Mr Reid (Kihikihi) and Mr Grace (Taupo area).

conditions. For example, it took two days for mail from Auckland to reach Otawhao, two days from Otawhao to Taupo and three days from Otawhao to Napier.⁷⁶ Therefore information from most parts of the North Island could be in the hands of the governor within a week. As the war progressed, Morgan fretted that the mail service would be cut by the Kingites, which it was on several occasions. The cutting of the mail routes and the closure of tracks were obvious measures which frustrated European attempts to pass information between settlements. Mail-men were stopped and searched, putting Morgan in particular in danger of having his activities discovered. On occasion, he and Whitely conducted trial mails of unimportant documents between Waikato and Taranaki to see if they were being intercepted by the Waikato tribes.⁷⁷

Morgan saw great strategic value in keeping the flow of information open, especially for the Europeans in small isolated settlements such as Raglan who would be very vulnerable to attack from hostile tribes:

If the mails can be kept going during the war it will be a very great accommodation to the settlers living beyond the bounds of the war, and the Government would also receive from the carriers much information which they could not otherwise obtain.⁷⁸

The Maori leadership was aware that Morgan was passing information. Stoppages and delays of the mail became more frequent and Morgan became more agitated. On 13 March 1861 he told Gore Browne that he had delayed sending a letter in the hope that the overland mail from Taranaki, which was 4-5 days late, would arrive, suspecting that Maori had delayed it. He wrote again the next day saying that the mail had finally arrived, and passed on information about the movements and location of prominent chiefs gleaned by the mail-men. More importantly he noted:

When at Arowena on Sunday last some of the natives said to me, ‘why do you not cease writing to give information about the natives – the natives are very angry with you. They have opened one of your letters at Mokau on its way from

⁷⁶ Morgan to Catchpool. (WTU, Catchpool Papers, MS 77 folder 6), 23 October 1859. Morgan frequently corresponded with Catchpool who was Postmaster at Napier. Morgan believed it was possible for mail to reach Napier from Auckland in six days if the service was sped up.

⁷⁷ Whitely, 22 March 1860, ‘overland mail from Port Nicholson reported to have been stopped by the southern natives. On 23 March 1860, ‘a trial mail was sent overland North, but few letters were entrusted as it is feared the Waikato’s may stop it’. The problem of mail stoppages was not new. In June 1859 Whitely had complained to Parris that the Maori at Mokau had cut the mail route,

⁷⁸ apparently in protest over payments for the mailmen. (WTU, McLean Papers, Parris Robert, Taranaki) Morgan to Gore Browne, (APL, NZ 266.3, M84), 3 July 1861. This comment was made after the Taranaki War had ended.

Taranaki and found that you had written to say that Thompson and Taraia were on the road.’⁷⁹

Several other missionaries played useful but lesser roles throughout the war. Reverend Schnackenberg of Kawhia was a relatively frequent writer who reported on ‘the state of the natives’ to the Native Department. Reverend Wilson spent some time with Morgan at Otawhao acquainting himself with the political situation in the Waikato. In November 1860 he moved, with Gore Browne’s permission, to Taranaki. His journey took him back through Auckland and Morgan advised Gore Browne, ‘Mr Wilson will be in Auckland this week and will acquaint the governor with the state of Waikato feeling.’⁸⁰ Wilson was particularly concerned about the potential for savagery on both sides. In Taranaki he brought information back from the Maori that they would keep to their custom of tomahawking every soldier who fell into their hands. On another occasion he reported that they had resolved to ‘fight to the death.’⁸¹

Reverend Thomas Buddle, a Wesleyan, was also particularly active. He opposed the King Movement but argued against military action believing that the movement would not last. Before the outbreak of the Waikato War he was sent along with James Wallis and Alexander Reid, by the Wesleyan Church, ‘on a mission to detach the Waikato Tribes from the King movement.’⁸² He reported at length on the situation in the Upper Waikato area and provided information to Grey. His actions added to the government’s overall knowledge of the situation and helped create a reasonably clear understanding of developments within the King Movement at the political level. It was not uncommon for missionaries and government officials to attend Kingite hui and runanga and report back about the proceedings.⁸³

⁷⁹ Morgan to Gore Browne, (WTU, McLean Papers), 13 March 1861.

⁸⁰ Morgan to Gore Browne, (WTU. McLean Papers. Folder 459), 7 November 1860.

⁸¹ J. Wilson, ‘Letters 1833-1865’, (AMIL, MS 339); Grayling, pp.47 and 50; Battiscombe, p.63. Wilson had spent some time with Morgan at Otawhao and believed that the Waikato contained the most dangerous Kingite tribes. He was in contact with Gore Browne and was a go-between for peace initiatives in the advance on Te Arei, see Carey, p.157.

⁸² Frank. Glen, ‘Thomas Buddle’, in *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, vol. 1, Wellington: Allen and Unwin and Department of Internal Affairs, 1990, p.52.

⁸³ Thomas Buddle, Rev. *The Maori King Movement-New Zealand, with a full report of the Native meetings held at Waikato, April –May 1860*.Auckland, 1860. The government had a fairly clear idea about the thinking within the King Movement. The meeting reported on by Buddle was attended by; Donald McLean- Native Secretary, J. Williamson- Superintendent of Auckland, Mr Rogan-Native Land Purchase Department, Mr Smallfield ‘The New Zealander’ newspaper, Bishop Selwyn, Reverends; Morgan, Buddle, Wallis, Reid, and Garavel, and Mr Armitage and several other Europeans.

It was probably at the political level that the missionaries were most effective. They understood the Maori people and were sensitive to changes and developments in their districts. One of the most pressing concerns for Gore Browne throughout the war was to know whether the Waikato tribes would join in the hostilities. The missionaries and government officers were able to give him some of that strategic information.⁸⁴ However when it came to intelligence which was more specifically military, the missionaries may have been of less help. Carey observed that their information was, ‘old, contradictory or too vague to be of any use.’⁸⁵ They were, he claimed, too inexperienced in military matters and they over-estimated the effectiveness of the Maori as a fighter. A sense of frustration and irritation about the lack of concrete and reliable information from local sources and from Auckland was a recurrent theme.

The elements of a government military intelligence system were beginning to develop, but with little structure. Strategic information came from the observations and reports from men such as Morgan and the government officials spread across the North Island. However, the *ad hoc*, almost impromptu military decision making of the tribes, the lack of a coherent Kingite command structure, the time taken for information to get to Auckland and then be passed down to Taranaki by sea or overland mail, and the diverse range of sources (each with their own agenda), all conspired to create an inaccurate picture for the British commanders who were the final recipients of the information in New Plymouth. At the operational level, local government officers, settler-soldiers, missionaries and pro-government Maori contributed to some kind of intelligence picture, but the region was awash with rumour and nothing seemed certain. At least the British commanders should have had control over intelligence at the tactical level, but that too, was problematic.

The later battles: Puketakauere and Te Arei

After the Battle of Waireka there was a brief cessation in hostilities as the government, settler groups and the Kingites separately and collectively debated, lobbied and argued the future course of the war. Kingi appealed to the Kingite chiefs in the Waikato for help, and Gore Browne employed several strategies to influence wider Maori opinion away from supporting the Taranaki tribes. Kingi eventually forced the

⁸⁴ Carey, p.30.

⁸⁵ Carey, p.64.

issue by constructing a new fighting pa at Puketakauere in full view of the British camp at Waitara 1600 yards away. The battle fought there on 27 June 1860 was one of the most significant of the Taranaki War. Not only was it a complete victory for Kingi, but the defenders of the pa included a taua (war party) from Ngati Maniapoto, a staunchly Kingite tribe. The presence of Kingite warriors from the Upper Waikato signalled a major expansion of the Maori war effort. At Puketakauere a die was cast that took the war beyond the isolated boundaries of the Taranaki settlement, and led inexorably to the invasion of the Waikato two years later.

The Maori position itself was a relatively complex construction sited on two fortified knolls, Puketakauere (after which the battle is named) and Onukukaitara. They sat side by side on a spur with stream valleys running across the front and rear which flowed sluggishly into the swampy banks of the Waitara River. Swamp and woodland protected the right flank and rear of the Puketakauere knoll. The valley of the stream that wound across the front of the twin pa created a natural killing ground that channelled the attackers, allowing them to be shot from both the front and the flanks. Major Nelson who was in command of Camp Waitara, was ordered by Gold to, ‘teach the troublesome natives a lesson they will never forget’.⁸⁶

Nelson’s plan called for a complex and ambitious assault on the position and its 400 defenders.⁸⁷ He marched his 350 regulars out of Camp Waitara on June 27 1860, but their attack failed to even reach the palisades. Instead, the soldiers were cut down from concealed firing positions in the stream valley in front of the position. The plan dictated that one contingent should work its way around to the rear of Puketakauere, but it was decimated as it became trapped in the swamps flanking the position. As the remaining British troops withdrew from the battle-field, the hard pressed gunners had the rare task of firing grape-shot canisters at point blank range to prevent the capture of their guns by the pursuing Maori.

⁸⁶ Nigel Prickett, *Historic Taranaki: An Archaeological Guide*, Wellington: G.P. Books, 1990, p.50.

⁸⁷ The actual figure is unknown. Belich, pp.87-8, disputes the larger figures of earlier writers but offers no figure of his own. Prickett briefly discusses the figures and concludes that 400, of which 140 were Ngati Maniapoto, is likely to be reasonably accurate, see Nigel Prickett, ‘Puketakauere 27 June 1860’, in *Historic Places*, March 1984, p 12.

Explanations for such a complete British defeat have usually rested upon a combination of poor reconnaissance, poor co-ordination, inept command and the brilliance of the Maori engineering and skirmishing tactics.⁸⁸ Recent interpretations have emphasised the skill of the Maori victory rather than the woeful contribution of the British to their own defeat. They have argued that the British command was competent but that the Maori one was brilliant.⁸⁹ A fair analysis lies somewhere between both points of view. There is no clearer example of Maori military vision and skill and British over-confidence and ineptitude than at Puketakauere. Hapurona and Kingi got everything right, and Nelson and Gold got everything wrong. The British Army's failure in military intelligence was a key factor in its defeat.

The Maori position was superb, but probably not as impregnable as Cowan suggests.⁹⁰ Hapurona, Kingi's fighting chief, made the very best use of the terrain and designed an excellent defence which relied upon sound principles. He concealed a large part of his force forward of the pa so that they would surprise the British attackers and break up the assault even before it reached the stockades. His two mutually supporting main positions could reinforce each other and react to the direction and intensity of the British assault. He seems to have understood how the British would attack, and he controlled the battle by directing them to his killing ground in front of the twin pa. By contrast, the British command performed appallingly. Although it has been commonly believed that Gold was supposed to have marched his troops out from New Plymouth to join the attack, this was probably not the case.⁹¹ The battle was Nelson's show and he took the opportunity eagerly. In truth, he attacked with a numerically inferior force, across ground that he had not seen close up, towards two pa about which he was almost entirely ignorant. The slaughter was pre-ordained, and it is cruel but true to observe that the soldiers were fortunate to be back in their barracks before noon with only the loss of 30 dead and 34 wounded. Incredibly, Nelson even argued after the event that the casualties were not too bad, considering the number of Maori encountered.

⁸⁸ Cowan, p.187-9.

⁸⁹ Belich, pp.95-8, develops this point at length because it is one of the major themes in his argument.

⁹⁰ Cowan, p.183.

⁹¹ Belich, p.97, discusses this well and makes the point strongly that the battle was all Nelson's. Chris Pugsley, 'Walking the Taranaki Wars: Puketakauere', *NZDQ*, Spring 1995, cites Military-surgeon Morgan Grace: 'Nelson...meant to score off his own bat, secure a C.B. and a brevet Lieutenant-Colonelcy, terminate the war to the glory of his own regiment, and return in triumph to his own headquarters in Melbourne.' p.40.

The British had known about Hapurona's development of Puketakauere since early June. Between 40 and 50 warriors were seen initially entrenching the site and by 19 June that number had risen to 200.⁹² To its credit, the British command made some attempt, albeit a lame one, to find out what was happening. Nelson reported to Gold that he had seen fires and had sent an officer with an escort to reconnoitre. The party was fired at from the pa.⁹³ Gold ordered Captain Richards of the 40th Regiment to, 'learn from Reverend Mr Whitely's own mouth the state of affairs in the pa'.⁹⁴ There is no indication that Whitely actually got into the pa, and it seems unlikely in light of the Maori refusal to let him see their fortification after the battle. Nevertheless, he would have been able to describe the countryside around it if asked to do so. Hapurona sent a message to Whitely on 24 June asking him to please tell the Officer Commanding the troops that he was not yet ready to fight but would be in two or three days.⁹⁵ Incredibly, Nelson appears to have given him that time and when he eventually attacked on 27 June it was against a position that had taken three weeks to develop, and with which Hapurona himself was satisfied. Pugsley suggests that Nelson and Captain Beauchamp-Seymour R.N. had come to believe that a show of force by the British was all that was required for Maori to abandon their pa.⁹⁶

Belich's contention that Nelson's plan was 'perfectly good' is seriously weakened by his admission that, 'the Maoris had interposed a stronghold unknown to the British'.⁹⁷ In fact most of the defences at Puketakauere were unknown to the British; Hapurona had concealed them well and Nelson had not made a concerted effort to discover them. Military-surgeon Morgan Grace noted that, 'Major Nelson had no real knowledge of the country or the character of his antagonist'.⁹⁸ The twin pa which so fixed Nelson's attention as they stood so provocatively before Camp Waitara, did not appear, from that viewpoint, to be particularly strong. Major Pasley, a Royal Engineer, walked the battlefield later with Nelson. His opinion was unequivocal but his comments reveal Nelson's lack of knowledge about his enemy and the fortification. The defeat, in

⁹² Prickett, 'Puketakauere,' p.10.

⁹³ AJHR 1860, No.3c, 24 June 1860.

⁹⁴ AJHR 1860, No.3c, 9 July 1860; Barber et al, p.54.

⁹⁵ AJHR 1860, No.3c, 24 June 1860; Barber et al, p.54.

⁹⁶ Pugsley, 'Puketakauere,' p.37.

⁹⁷ Belich, p.98.

⁹⁸ Pugsley, 'Puketakauere', p.37-40. Nelson also wrongly assessed the number and the composition of the force inside the pa, believing that there were 700 when there were only about 520. He also thought there were more Waikatos than was the case.

Pasley's opinion, was not Nelson's fault because, 'he acted on the best information he was able to obtain and the pa certainly looked innocent enough as seen from the camp'.⁹⁹ Pasley unintentionally damned Nelson further by noting:

...he could not have succeeded in the attack as the pa (which I have carefully examined) was much too strong either to be breached by 24 pounder howitzers or to be taken by assault by the force he had with him.¹⁰⁰

Nelson's post-battle report, even though it was carefully crafted to absolve himself of blame, clearly shows that he had no idea of the battlefield's terrain or the disposition of Hapurona's force. The report reveals an officer who was off-hand about the fact that he had, in ignorance, ordered many of his men to their death in, 'a deep ravine with an entrenchment behind it which they found impossible to pass, it being entrenched by two, if not even three bodies of Maori who were almost entirely concealed behind it'.¹⁰¹

Of course, scapegoats had to be found, and the opinion of the populace was divided between Gold and Nelson. Gold had been almost universally reviled even before Puketakauere and he received far more of the blame for the debacle than the dynamic and popular Nelson. At least two military officers though, saw the gist of the problem. Lieutenant Battiscombe R.N. second-in-command of the Naval Brigade, observed that Nelson knew neither the Maori numbers nor the lie of the land.¹⁰² Carey was not far off the mark when he concluded:

...a small body of 300 men was divided into three parties and sent off with bad guides into an unknown swampy and impracticable country broken with ravines, the nature of which totally precluded the possibility of mutual support or communication. Heavy rains and the clayey soils added to the difficulties: and our troops from the start had no chance. The Maori had baited the usual trap and we walked into it.¹⁰³

Parris, being an old Taranaki hand, was not impressed with the excuses either, and he complained to Gore Browne that the defeat was humiliating for the European populace. Major Nelson and Captain Seymour, he explained to McLean, were too sanguine of success; 'it is a failure of all new arrivals not to see the New Zealander as a

⁹⁹ Pasley, p.94.

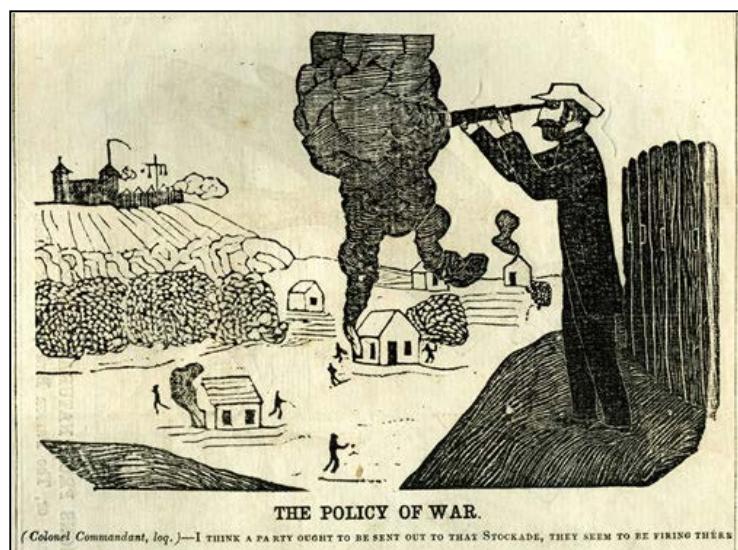
¹⁰⁰ Pasley, p.94.

¹⁰¹ AJHR 1860, E No.3, 27 June 1860.

¹⁰² Battiscombe, p.2.

¹⁰³ Carey, p.40. Apparently Ihaia usually guided Messenger's party but was ill at the time.

warrior until they have paid dear for their experience'.¹⁰⁴ Hapurona won the battle because he conceptualised it better. His tactics, field defences and the performance of his men were excellent. Nelson lost the battle because he prepared poorly. The most significant component of his failure was his lack of knowledge about his enemy and the ground upon which he was to fight. The British tactics and attitude at Puketakauere were an unsettling echo of the debacles of Kororareka, Puketutu and Ohaeawai.



(Colonel Commandant, log.)—I THINK A PARTY OUGHT TO BE SENT OUT TO THAT STOCKADE, THEY SEEM TO BE FIRING THERE.'

Fig.4.9. A cartoon from *The Taranaki Punch* early 1861. Settlers were frustrated with the military's inability or unwillingness to protect their farms and houses from constant Maori attacks. Puke Ariki New Plymouth.

The defeat had a major psychological effect on the European population and caused anger and frustration

as portrayed in the cartoon (Fig 4.9). Gore Browne worried about a general Maori uprising and pleaded for extra troops from Australia and Great Britain. His strategy centred on the need for a decisive victory to bring the Taranaki uprising to a conclusive end. New Plymouth was now under siege with all of the associated problems of disease and despair. The central part of the town was entrenched, Marsland Hill was further developed as a central and final bastion, and the troops were kept on constant alert for the expected attack. Gold issued a proclamation ordering the removal of all women and children from the town for their safety, and many, but by no means all, were evacuated to other settlements, principally Nelson. Across the island there was a general fear of a wide spread Maori uprising and possibly even an attack on Auckland.

The strength of the garrison in Taranaki was brought up to approximately 2000 with the arrival of 250 men of the 40th Regiment in late July, and on 3 August, Major General Pratt, the commander of troops in the Australasian colonies arrived from

¹⁰⁴ Parris to McLean, (WTU, McLean Papers, folder 49), 21 July 1860.



Fig.4.10. New Plymouth under siege 1860. Painting by Edwin Harris. The military headquarters on Marsland Hill is in the foreground. The town extended past St Mary's church down to the coast where ships can be seen. Out-settlers were driven into the town, disease became rife and many women and children were evacuated, principally to Nelson. A protective entrenchment surrounded the town. Alexander Turnbull Library

Melbourne to take command of the deteriorating situation, thus relieving Gold of his command. The struggle to dominate now intensified. The victory at Puketakauere had enhanced Maori confidence and galvanised support. Kingi tightened the noose around the town. Skirmishing took place around the boundaries and several strong-points and military encampments were attacked. Outlying settlers' vacant homes were looted and burnt and it became too dangerous for Europeans to venture outside the town in small groups. Over 200 houses in total were burnt and large numbers of sheep, cattle and horses were killed or stolen.

Pratt responded by re-organising and strengthening the town's defences and then striking out to break the Kingite cordon. Columns of troops which included volunteers, militia and pro-government Maori, marched out from New Plymouth and Camp Waitara to carry out a scorched-earth policy, and to survey the countryside and collect information. Between twenty and thirty pa were destroyed as well as fortified villages and cultivations.¹⁰⁵ Virtually all were abandoned before the arrival of the troops, thanks to the excellent flow of communication between the Maori communities and the scouting activities of the warriors. This new style of warfare began to have an effect on

¹⁰⁵ AJHR 1860, E No.3c, Pratt to Gore Browne, Pratt-Gore-Browne, 29 September 1860.

the economies of both sides. Settler agriculture had already ceased to exist and New Plymouth was forced to rely on the port as its only avenue for provisions. By early September the Maori were already having difficulty maintaining the pressure of the cordon around the town. It was planting time and the noose loosened appreciably as warriors went off to plant crops and secure their loot.

Pratt's forays to the north and south continued through September and early October. On one occasion he deployed the largest government force yet in New Zealand; 1400 soldiers guided by pro-government Maori scouts. On 11 October he began investing the Orongomaihangi Pa on the Kaihihi River in southern Taranaki by sapping. This was the first time the tactic had been used in New Zealand, and it proved to be a technique of war for which the Maori had no satisfactory answer, either at Orongomaihangi Pa or throughout the remainder of the Taranaki conflict.

The lack of warriors available to cordon New Plymouth was largely offset by the steady supplementation of Kingites from the Waikato. The victory at Puketakauere, and the fact that Waikatos had been part of that success, had a galvanising effect on the young men of the Waikato tribes, and throughout July and August there were up to 500 of them in Taranaki. They too went home to plant in early September, but by early November there were more than 600 back in Taranaki, and by January 1861 an estimated peak of 800 had been reached.¹⁰⁶ King Potatau I had originally prohibited Waikato Kingites from fighting in Taranaki but his policy had been difficult to enforce.¹⁰⁷ After his death in June 1860, the fiercely anti-European element within the movement was unleashed, and the journey to Taranaki to fight the red-coats became a virtual right of passage for young warriors from villages all over Waikato.

Desperate to break the impasse, Gore Browne urged Pratt to harass the Maori by, 'secret, sudden and constant attacks by bodies of troops without baggage'.¹⁰⁸ This

¹⁰⁶ These figures are from Belich, p.102. Belich based his calculations primarily on the missionary John Morgan's observations. This author's study of Morgan's papers supports the general figures calculated by Belich. Sinclair has argued that only 200 warriors went south, but his sources appear less reliable.

¹⁰⁷ Sinclair, p.233; Pei Te Hurinui, *King Potatau*, Carterton: The Polynesian Society, 1960, p.228. Potatau set a boundary for the Waikato people to the south, and this line was the Puniu River. Some of the Waikato chiefs, including Wetini, took no heed of the King.

¹⁰⁸ AJHR 1860, E –No.3c. Pratt to Gore Browne, 29 September 1860.

concept of ‘bush scouring’ had been promoted by certain volunteer and militia officers, but the British regulars were untrained in such tactics, and Pratt disagreed with the governor, arguing that such a tactic was impractical:

It is impossible to surprise them, as scouts who are usually on watch around their pahs will always give them sufficient notice to enable them to effect their escape should they be desirous of doing so, or to prepare for defence if they intend to remain.¹⁰⁹

Pratt realised that the Maori had a natural advantage in a guerrilla style of war. The psychological effects of Puketakauere had been significant for European and Maori, and Pratt was determined not to put his troops in a situation where they could suffer another heavy defeat. On the contrary, he planned to undermine the Maori will to continue fighting by showing them that the European troops were their superiors in warfare. To do this he needed a set-piece battle where he could methodically destroy his enemy. He was aware that, at present, he had a numerical advantage, but that if the flow of Waikatos increased, the situation could change drastically within a few months.¹¹⁰ The Waikato’s too had their strategic concerns, and there was some unease about the possibility that if too many Waikato warriors went south to Taranaki, their traditional enemies, the Nga Puhi under Nene’s leadership, or even British control, could take the opportunity to invade their lands.¹¹¹

The government authorities were, of course, very conscious that the involvement of the Waikatos raised the potential for the escalation of the war. Information, most probably from Morgan, who was still writing regularly, reached Taranaki via Auckland in mid-October, stating that 600-800 warriors in different groups were on their way south to attack New Plymouth. Operations to the south of the town were immediately halted and efforts were made to bolster the northern approaches. Camp Waitara with a garrison of only 250 was isolated and vulnerable. Consequently it was strengthened and a stockade capable of holding 50 men was established on the vacant knoll where the Battle of Puketakauere had been fought. The third leg of the northern defences was to be the fortification of a small knoll known as ‘Mahoetahi.’ The site of an ancient pa, it sat on a direct line between New Plymouth and Camp Waitara, which were respectively 13

¹⁰⁹ AJHR 1860, E- No.3c. Pratt to Gore Browne, 29 September 1860.

¹¹⁰ AJHR 1860, E- No.3c. Pratt to Gore Browne, 29 September 1860.

¹¹¹ Morgan to McClean, (WTU, McLean Papers), 5 September 1860.

kilometres to the south and 6 kilometres to the north of it. A stockade and signal mast on Mahoetahi would allow Camp Waitara and Puketakauere to communicate more easily with New Plymouth, and it would also provide protection for the only road between Camp Waitara and New Plymouth which skirted the base of Mahoetahi.¹¹²

Intelligence from Auckland had always been unreliable, but this time the information from informants working for the Native Department was so detailed that Carey was moved to comment, ‘we really began to believe that the news from Auckland was for once correct’.¹¹³ The details were so specific that they had to be presumed true. The informants had counted the warriors as they passed and had even predicted an arrival date. But the warriors did not arrive, and reports from Europeans in the out-lying regions through which they had to pass were contradictory. In fact the composition and movement of the war parties was very uncertain. An exasperated Carey wrote afterwards that, ‘consequently there was no arriving at the truth’.¹¹⁴

Travellers moving down from Waikato to Taranaki usually used a track that emerged onto the coast at Whitecliffs, a rugged stretch of coastline about 40 kilometres north of New Plymouth. The country inland was so difficult that it was easier to walk along the beach, but to do so, they had to descend in single file down dangerous cliffs. The steam corvette *Cordelia* was stationed off this point in the hope of observing the war parties. This rather clumsy attempt to gather intelligence proved fruitless, as the Waikatos obviously saw it and moved inland. There were numerous Waikato taua on the move down to Taranaki, but one led by the Ngati Haua chief, Wetini Taipourutu, was particularly keen to engage the Europeans in battle. On 1 November he wrote the following note to Parris:

Friend, I heard your work; come to fight with me, that is very good. Come inland and let us meet each other. Fish fight at sea! Come inland, and let us stand on our feet. Make haste, don’t prolong it. That is all I have to say to you, make haste!¹¹⁵

Wetini’s mention of fish is believed to refer to the *Cordelia*. His party decided to

¹¹² Grayling, p.48.

¹¹³ Carey, p.120. Carey discusses the lead-up to the Battle of Mahoetahi in some detail. His is the only comprehensive contemporary account and is used as the main source here.

¹¹⁴ Carey, p.121.

¹¹⁵ Wetini to Parris, 1 November 1860, cited in Carey, p.123

make a stand at Mahoetahi, the same knoll that Pratt had planned to fortify. On the night of 5 November a work party repairing a bridge on the road between Camp Waitara and Mahoetahi was engaged by Waikatos and a skirmish developed. Drummond Hay undertook the dangerous ride to New Plymouth to tell Pratt that the Waikatos had arrived, and that incredibly, they were in the process of occupying the old fortifications on the top of Mahoetahi. It has traditionally been believed that Pratt acted very quickly to assemble the force that attacked the position the next morning, and this was an example of his military skill.¹¹⁶ In fact, Carey clearly noted that, ‘it had been our intention to fortify (Mahoetahi) next day’.¹¹⁷

It was fortunate for Pratt that his men in New Plymouth and Camp Waitara were ready to move. Their construction and protection task now became a combat one. Mahoetahi was, ‘one of the few comparatively open places in the district,’¹¹⁸ and Pratt saw an opportunity for the decisive battle he longed for. Extra troops were detailed and before dawn 620 troops from New Plymouth and 282 from Camp Waitara began to converge on Wetini’s unsuspecting force at Mahoetahi. The warriors had not had time to strengthen the decayed remnants of an old pa on the site and were caught by surprise with the early morning arrival of the troops.

Unlike Hapurona’s tactics at Puketakauere, Wetini did not put men forward to create depth in his position. He could have sent warriors into a wooded area at the front to disrupt the British troops as they prepared for the attack, but rather, his men stayed together as a homogeneous target at the top of the hill. Time, of course, was against him, but the impression is that he reverted to the default setting of simply trying to defend the top of the hill. Pratt had brought two 24-pounder howitzers and they briefly bombarded the position before the infantry charged with fixed bayonets. The Waikatos were swept off the position and pushed down into an area of swamp behind, where they were blocked by the arrival of the troops from Camp Waitara. The fighting then became a desperate hand-to-hand mêlée until the Waikatos broke off and were pursued as far as Puketakauere. Of the 150 warriors who stood at Mahoetahi, 50 including Wetini lay

¹¹⁶ Cowan, p.194.

¹¹⁷ Carey, p.122 and 126. Belich also observes this point, p.101.

¹¹⁸ Carey, p.123.

dead, and as many as 60 were injured. British losses were comparatively light with 4 killed and 17 wounded.¹¹⁹

Maori tended to focus on body-count to determine victory in battle. The side which sustained the most deaths, especially if those slain were chiefs, was the loser. At Mahoetahi, the Kingites clearly took a heavy beating. It was the first time that Taranaki or Waikato warriors had been killed in any numbers by British troops or citizen-soldiers in Taranaki, and it was the largest number of casualties, on either side, in any battle including Puketakauere.¹²⁰ Pratt was fortunate that his force was ready to move so quickly, but in a way he had earned that good fortune. The government's intelligence was far from effective, but it had worked to some degree. Pratt had enough information to know that the Waikatos were coming, and he was able to modify his strategy accordingly. The prompt arrival of the news that Wetini had occupied Mahoetahi allowed Pratt to move quickly in response, and to catch the Maori in the open. He did not allow his enemy the time to develop his fortifications and a defensive plan as Nelson had done at Puketakauere. Pratt's victory at Mahoetahi was a good example of the use of military intelligence to achieve a decisive victory.

Pratt was also fortunate to have Wetini as his adversary. Wetini's conduct was impulsive and he was so keen to lock horns with the British that he made wrong decisions and took foolish risks. He announced his arrival and compromised his security by firing on an unimportant bridge-building party, and reportedly ignored Taranaki advice by choosing to stand at Mahoetahi. The small isolated knoll may have been a suitable place to defend in pre-musket warfare, but faced with a well-drilled British force with artillery support, it was simply a death trap. Wetini's decisions and choice of ground displayed over-confidence and a lack of understanding about how his enemy would fight, and in this respect he was naïve and inexperienced in comparison to the Taranaki chiefs.¹²¹ Sadly, he and his followers paid dearly for their tilt at glory. The

¹¹⁹ Cowan's figures are used here. They are fairly accurate estimates, but as always, the Maori carried away as many of their dead as they could. Wetini and two other chiefs were buried in the front lawn of the vicarage of St Mary's church on Marsland Hill in New Plymouth. Their burials may well have been those objected to by Europeans in the town, see cartoons Fig.4.6 on p.169.

¹²⁰ If we accept Belich's contention that the 50-70 Maori deaths claimed to have occurred at Waireka were mainly illusory, which seems reasonable, then Mahoetahi was the first major loss of life for the Maori in the Taranaki War. In any case, Waikatos had never been killed by British troops in any significant numbers before.

¹²¹ Cowan, pp.193-200; Carey, pp.124-132.

Battle of Mahoetahi did not give Pratt or Gore Browne the complete victory they craved, but it threw off the last elements of siege. From that point onwards, the military initiative began to steadily incline towards the government.

Although Mahoetahi had been a setback, the Kingite resolve was not easily crushed. The flow of warriors through to Taranaki continued with many now keen to avenge the death of their kin. The British commanders had always had difficulty knowing exactly who they were fighting. The Taranaki and Ngati Ruanui tribes to the south who had opened their hostilities at Waireka were problematic. They had no particular land dispute, but had a general opposition to European settlement and were also bound by kinship ties to the Te Atiawa. Their numerical strength or the depth of their support for Kingi was never very clear. Information about the activities of the various Waikato tribes remained equally hard to obtain, however reports and rumour in mid-November indicated that another sizeable number of warriors were on the move. On 21 November Lt Battiscombe R.N. noted reports from Auckland (possibly originating from Morgan) that 800 warriors were travelling south.¹²² A Maori mail-man more or less confirmed those figures reporting on 28 November that 500 warriors were on the move south.¹²³

In December, Kingi built a series of fortifications in Waitara close to the location of the battle at Puketakauere. The three main positions were pa at Matarikoriko, Huirangi and Te Arei; the combination of these three pa creating a powerful defensive system. Te Arei (the barrier), the most inland and elevated site, had great historical and strategic significance. Te Atiawa had previously used it as a final Masada-like bastion of survival. In one climactic episode thirty years earlier in 1831, Waikatos had laid siege to the Puke Rangiora Pa just behind Te Arei for three months before eventually killing approximately 1200 men, women and children.¹²⁴

¹²² Battiscombe, p42.

¹²³ White, p.300.

¹²⁴ Prickett, *Historic Taranaki*, pp. 51-3; H. Barr, 'An Ancient Stronghold', in *Historic Places*, September 1993, pp.8-9. Both are useful references that give a deeper understanding of the emotional and strategic importance of Te Arei.

Te Arei ranks alongside Kawiti's Northern War fortress Ruapekapeka and Te Kooti's defensive citadel Ngatapa in Poverty Bay for the majesty and grandeur of the site and its elevated command of the surrounding countryside. To its front, the defenders could survey the complete extent of the disputed Waitara Block and adjoining land right down to the Tasman Sea. More ominously, they could also watch as the troops toiled relentlessly towards them; capturing pa and methodically and irresistibly digging two long saps (see Fig. 4.11). Te Arei's northern flank was unapproachable, and to the rear the countryside dissolved into an impenetrable, deeply dissected wilderness.



Fig. 4.11. The second British sap with Te Arei in the background. Gabions (wicker baskets filled with soil) line the extensive works which zig-zag towards the pa. Traverses extending at right angles are designed to prevent flank attacks or enfilading fire onto the sap. Painting by Francis Hamar Arden, 19 March 1861. Puke Ariki New Plymouth.

The two traditional enemies, Te Atiawa and Waikatos stood together ready to repel the inevitable attack on their series of powerful fortresses (see Fig. 4.12) Why had they chosen to fight in that location? Belich has argued that the Kingites employed a three-element strategy in Taranaki: a war on two fronts - north and south of Taranaki; a policy of raiding and destroying settler property; and thirdly, the development of a flexible cordon of pa around the town itself.¹²⁵ Whilst some evidence for the first and

¹²⁵ Belich, pp.104-7.

third elements may be discernible, the second so-called element merely dignified the ancient soldiers' art of pillage. Nevertheless, by December 1860, none of those elements were still in place.

The tide of war had changed. Puketakauere had been the high point of Kingite military dominance. Since then, several factors had changed the equation. Pratt had arrived and he had begun to project military power both north and south of New Plymouth, destroying villages, pa and cultivations. The size of his force had grown to about 2000, and he personally displayed tenacity, resolve, and a much more intelligent approach in his conduct of the war. He had also brought with him a talented group of staff officers, and in particular Lieutenant Colonel Robert Carey was to be of great assistance to Lieutenant General Cameron in the Waikato. His staff also included Colonel Thomas Mould R.E. who was responsible for the sapping operations. It appears that Gore Browne had dominated Gold, but Pratt had insisted on *carte blanche* in his

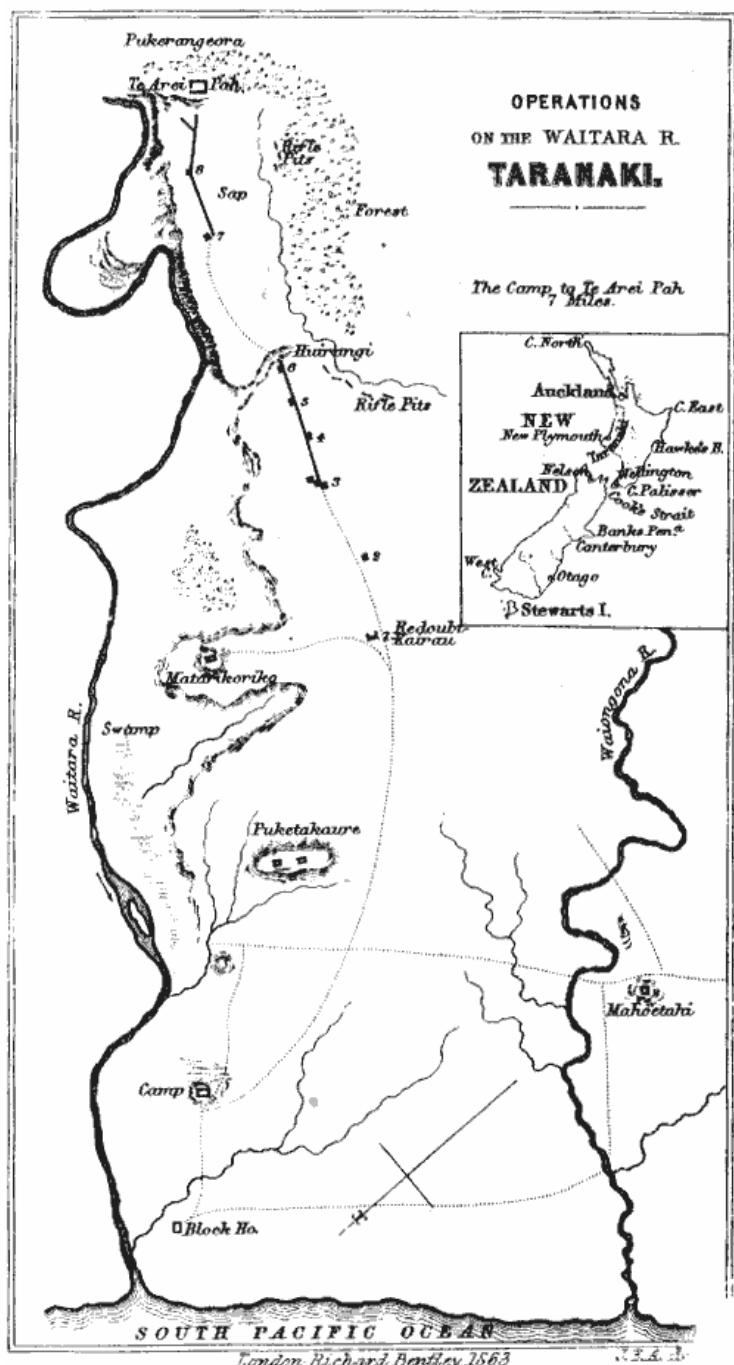


Fig. 4.12. Operations on the Waitara River, drawn by Sir J.E. Alexander in 1863. This map shows the location of the major engagements north of New Plymouth and the numbered redoubts leading to Te Arei at the top. The two saps are shown as heavy lines on the axis of advance. Newzealandwars.co.nz.

conduct of the war.¹²⁶ His predecessors, Gold and Nelson, had blundered from crisis to crisis, but Pratt and his staff had devised a strategy that was now starting to work. As Heke and Kawiti had discovered in the north, a Maori victory did not put an end to things, it merely saw the Europeans come back stronger with more men and equipment. The build-up was relentless and irresistible; the British would not go away after a setback. The new tactic of sapping had been used with some success. The stranglehold on New Plymouth had been further broken by the economic necessity of the Maori warriors departing for home to prepare for planting. Finally, Mahoetahi had been a salutary confirmation that the red-coats were now capable of defeating the Maori in open battle.

These factors appear to explain the sudden change in strategy, for it is remarkable how quickly the Kingites moved from an offensive to a defensive posture. Te Kohia had been built provocatively on the boundary of the disputed land and on the main route between New Plymouth and Waitara. Puketakauere had stood as a defiant challenge in front of Camp Waitara. Raiding parties had sallied out from the cordon of the pa and threatened the security of New Plymouth itself, and all areas beyond the town and Camp Waitara had been in Kingite control.¹²⁷ Wetini's taua had come to Taranaki in a confident and cocky mood (but had perished only hours after arriving). New Plymouth had been in a state of siege until early-to-mid-October and conditions within the town were desperate. Yet barely two months later, the Kingite army stood prepared to make what turned out to be its last stand at the very rear of the area of operations in a traditional final sanctuary; (once again the parallels with Kawiti's final stand at Ruapekepeka in the north are striking), a very drastic turn of events indeed.

After Mahoetahi, Gore Browne had worried that the Waikato would rise up and attack Auckland the capital and largest town. His fears were not entirely groundless and several hundred troops were despatched from Taranaki to help protect the capital. By the end of November they had been replaced by the 14th Regiment newly arrived from the United Kingdom. Back to full strength with experienced troops, Pratt was ready to take the field again in December. He had received information from the Native Department about the new chain of pa. His plan to deal with them was to, 'retain them

¹²⁶ Murray Moorhead, *First in Arms*, New Plymouth: Zenith Publishing, 2004, p.183.

¹²⁷ Cowan, pp.189-191.

[the Kingites], if possible in their pah and attack them',¹²⁸ in the hope of securing a decisive result. He marched a force of 1000 troops out from Camp Waitara on 29 December 1860 and began erecting a fortification in front of Mata-rikoriko under heavy Kingite musket fire. By 31 December the fort which included two 8-pounder guns had been established, and the Maori had abandoned Mata-rikoriko. Pratt continued to advance towards Te Arei by beginning a major sapping operation. Over the next few months his troops dug forward a total of 1626 yards and constructed eight redoubts which were used as firm bases throughout the advance.¹²⁹

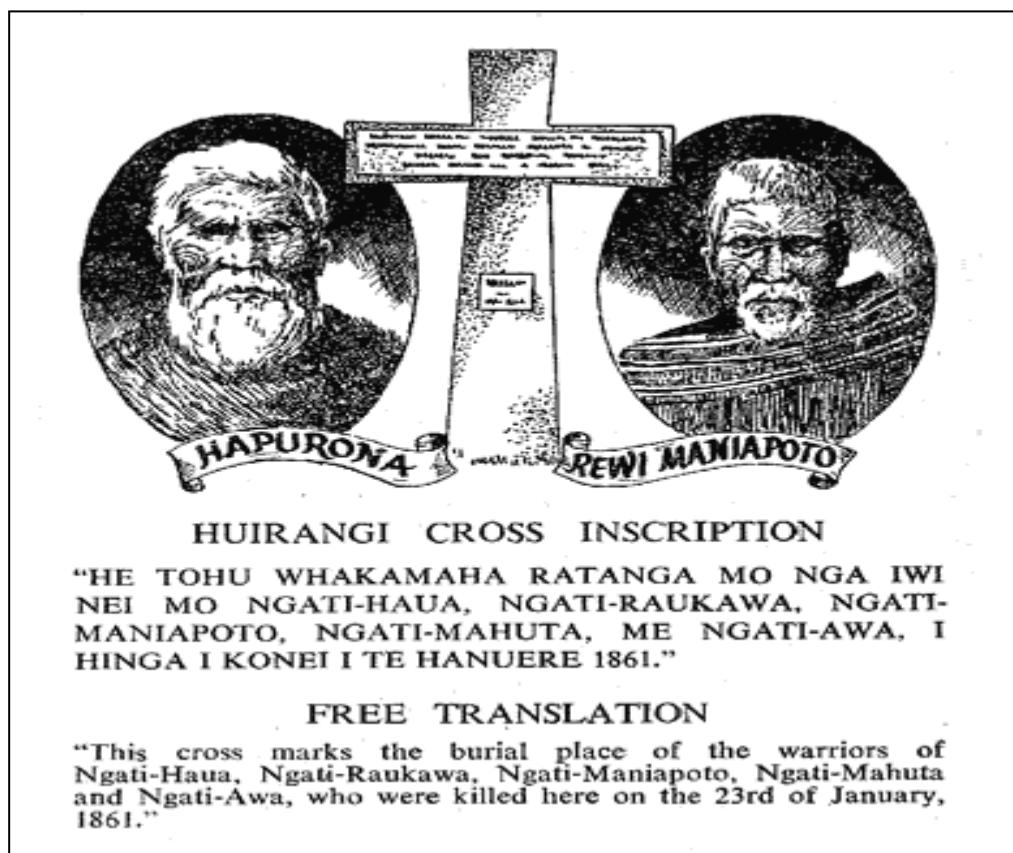


Fig.4.13. The later stages of the First Taranaki War saw the movement of Waikato tribes south into Taranaki to fight the British. This image of the Huirangi Cross, erected on the site of the battle at No.3 Redoubt implies a close relationship between the former bitter enemies from Taranaki and Waikato. Although warriors from both regions were killed in these battles, the two groups did not have a close coalition. The presence of Waikatos in Taranaki led to the spread of the war into the Waikato in 1863. Image from a pamphlet issued by the Taranaki Regional Council. Newzealandwars.co.nz.

The Maori made every effort to halt the sap's inexorable progress and many skirmishes and minor battles took place. The largest of these was the Kingite attack on

¹²⁸ AJHR 1861, 3c, Pratt to Gore Browne, 12 December 1860.

¹²⁹ Cowan, p.218. This figure includes some double saps, so the actual length of the sap actually dug was longer than 1626 yards.

Number 3 Redoubt on 23 January 1861. The warriors had secretly taken up positions in the ditch at the foot of the redoubt's walls during the night. They attacked as dawn broke but were unable to breach the defences and were driven off with very heavy casualties.¹³⁰

Reverend Wilson had travelled to Taranaki to try to mediate and he was used by Pratt on several occasions as an emissary between himself and Kingi. As he moved back and forth between the various pa and the British lines, he gleaned useful information and developed impressions that he relayed back to the authorities; one being the intention to tomahawk any soldiers that were captured.¹³¹ During the battle at Matarikoriko he went into the pa to read prayers to the Maori, and then, 'rode up and told us [British soldiers] that the natives had deserted the pa and begged us to make haste and take possession of it, as the natives meant to re-occupy it'.¹³² In mid-January he accompanied a wounded Maori back to his pa and returned with the information that the Kingites had no wish for peace and would, 'fight to the bitter end'.¹³³

The well-founded belief that the Maori may mutilate their bodies horrified the troops and they may well have been less inclined to put themselves in danger because of it. Wilson was particularly concerned about the treatment of prisoners. In his efforts to promote a peaceful conclusion to the advance on Te Arei, he visited several pa. During those visits he tried to get the Kingites to agree not to mutilate, torture, or kill wounded soldiers,¹³⁴ and he continued with those efforts throughout the Waikato War. Indeed, the rules that he suggested to the Maori at Matarikoriko were very similar to those proposed by Rawiri Puhirake and Henare Taratoa at Gate Pa in early 1864, and which have

¹³⁰ Cowan, p.465. Cowan estimated the Maori casualties as 50 killed and 40 wounded. The British casualties were 5 killed and 11 wounded.

¹³¹ Battiscombe, p.63.

¹³² Chris Pugsley, 'Walking the Taranaki Wars: Te Arei', *New Zealand Defence Quarterly*, 12, Autumn 1996, p.32.

¹³³ Grayling, p.50.

¹³⁴ Carey, p.157. Wilson had spent several months with Morgan at Otawhao in late 1860. He strongly believed that the Waikato Kingites were at the heart of the 'rebellion'. He was in contact with Gore Browne and was asked by him to travel to Taranaki to try to mediate. He continued his efforts to promote the better treatment of prisoners in agreements with Wiremu Tamehana during the Waikato War.

become part of that battle's legend.¹³⁵ Wilson suggested the following terms for the good of both sides:

1st. That all the wounded shall be treated with humanity. 2nd. That prisoners shall be uninjured and exchanged. 3rd. That the dead shall be unmolested and buried by their respective people. 4th. That persons approaching under a flag of truce shall be respected.¹³⁶

There is no doubt that Wilson was a humane man with a very strong Christian conviction who tried to use his special status as a missionary to help end the war and lessen the suffering on both sides. However there is equally no doubt that he used his access to Maori communities to carry out an intelligence function, and through him, the authorities were able to learn much about Te Atiawa in the closing stages of the war.¹³⁷

The Kingites were forced to abandon their position at Huirangi on 1 February and its defenders fell back on Te Arei. Conditions in that pa were probably getting desperate, and on one occasion a woman came out saying that the defenders were short of food.¹³⁸ The steady advance continued with the Maori continually trying to stop the sapping operations. The pro-government Maori and the officers of the Native Department were on hand to gain what information they could, and Drummond Hay, in particular, conducted a perilous reconnaissance of two pa. The arrival of more equipment allowed Pratt to deploy 14 artillery pieces against Te Arei's earthen fortifications. The bombardment and digging ceased for a three day truce (12-14 March)

¹³⁵ Henry Dunant the founder of the International Red Cross Movement witnessed the aftermath of the Battle of Solferino in northern Italy in 1859. 40,000 men were killed or wounded in one day and there was almost no medical care for the thousands of maimed and injured. Dunant was appalled by the suffering of the soldiers and began lobbying governments about the need for medical care in war and the humane treatment of prisoners. He wrote and published *Memory of Solferino* in 1862. He started a movement to establish rules for the treatment of prisoners and casualties and developed the idea of laws of war. An international conference in 1863 adopted a number of proposals and the first Geneva Convention was adopted in 1864. It seems more than a coincidence that Wilson was promoting similar ideas in Taranaki in 1861. Rawiri Puhirake proposed a set of laws for warfare in Tauranga in 1862 and in early 1864 his fellow chief Henare Taratoa sent a similar set of rules for the treatment of soldiers, civilians, wounded and prisoners of war to the commander of the British forces there. There is clearly a strong missionary and Christian influence in these separate occurrences, but the process of the transmission of those ideas is still unknown. It is possible that missionaries learned about the developments from colleagues overseas or that newspapers carried stories about Dunant and his ideas, which may have been adopted by some missionaries and possibly some Maori.

¹³⁶ James Alexander,Sir, *Incidents of the Maori War in New Zealand 1860-61*, London: Richard Bentley, 1863, p.334.

¹³⁷ Alexander, pp.330-362. Alexander observed and recorded examples of Wilson's interaction with Maori in great detail.

¹³⁸ Grayling, p.50.

while the Waikato chief, Wiremu Tamehana, tried to broker a peace deal. The truce expired without resolution and on 15 March the bombardment resumed.

Pratt's artillery included a battery of 12-pounder Armstrong Guns which represented the very latest in technological innovation. These revolutionary weapons had arrived in Taranaki on 4 March, and when they were deployed against Te Arei's earthworks they had an immediate effect. The smooth-bore artillery that the British had used up until then had relatively little impact on the Maori defensive works, and in the Northern War it was found that 32-pounders were needed to destroy stockades. The breech-loaded, rifled-barrelled Armstrongs had greater punch and their high explosive shells, with delayed fuses, penetrated into the underground ruas where they detonated with lethal effect.¹³⁹ Captain Mercer R.A. who was in charge of the guns, had information that the underground ruas were shoe-shaped and that they extended forwards underground. He was able to set the fuses of the shells to explode in that space. Te Arei became untenable and within three days of the introduction of the Armstrongs the Maori defenders raised a flag of truce and the war came to an end. Pratt's offensive strategy, his patient and methodical use of the sap, the continual military build-up and the overwhelming firepower of the British artillery (particularly the new Armstrong 12-pounders) had ground the Kingites into a reluctant submission.¹⁴⁰ The use of the Armstrong guns at Te Arei was, in effect, an operational field trial.¹⁴¹

In the end, diplomacy prevented the bloodbath that would surely have happened if the troops had stormed the pa. Hapurona signed peace terms and agreed to return plunder from the settlers' homes and submit Te Atiawa to the Queen's authority. Kingi did not sign and went into self exile near Kihikihi in the heart of the Kingite movement in the Waikato. The Waikatos themselves agreed to return to their homeland and were

¹³⁹ Tim Ryan, and Bill Parham, *The Colonial New Zealand Wars*, Wellington: Grantham House, 1986, p.70. The Armstrong gun was a revolutionary piece of equipment in 1861. In particular, it featured breech-loading and a rifled bore. Captain Mercer R.A., in command of the battery at Te Arei was keen to compare the effectiveness of the new weapons to the usual smooth-bore artillery. After the battle he was convinced of their superiority.

¹⁴⁰ Wally Ruffell, 'The Armstrong Gun', parts 1-4. <http://www.riv.co.nz/rnza/hist/arm/arm3.htm>, accessed 24 February 2012, p.2.

¹⁴¹ Alexander, pp.415-425.

able to maintain the illusion that, as Te Arei had not been lost, they were undefeated.¹⁴² The government promised to investigate the legality of its title to the Waitara Block and Pratt returned to Australia and was knighted for his efforts. The peace was an illusory one. Tensions remained because the Maori grievances were unresolved. On 11 May 1863, Governor Grey renounced the government's claim on the Waitara Block. The announcement came one week after the outbreak of conflict in the Taranaki for a second time.

Summary and discussion

Many factors other than military intelligence played a role in the outcome of the Taranaki War, but a common theme is that good intelligence led to success in battle and poor intelligence often led to defeat. Lieutenant General Sir Harry Smith, a British veteran of warfare in South America, Europe (Napoleonic Wars), India and South Africa, reflecting upon colonial warfare in general, observed that, 'strategy is unknown to a native army, which usually posts itself in a well-chosen position and awaits an attack'.¹⁴³ Heke and Kawiti's strategy in the Northern War followed that general pattern, and the military situation at the end of both the Northern War and the Taranaki War was strikingly similar. British tenacity and firepower had pushed the Maori into a corner from which they had few options. There are remarkable geographic and strategic similarities between Kawiti's Ruapekapeka and Kingi's Te Arei. The ability of the British to come back in ever greater numbers after each battle, especially after their defeats, meant that the relatively small number of warriors available could not beat them in the long run. There was simply too large a disparity between the technology and resources available to the opposing sides, and the Maori predilection for set-piece battles, rather than irregular tactics, failed to take that into account. Unconventional warfare requires co-ordination, and the Kingites in Taranaki had been able to achieve that at times, but under constant pressure they eventually fell back upon the default setting of building a pa and defending it.

¹⁴² Whitely, p.192. Writing in 1863, Whitely contended that the Waikatos saw the tide of war going against them and decided upon a two tiered strategy. Firstly, to try diplomacy to end the war before they were defeated, thereby avoiding the shame that defeat entailed. Secondly, if they did have to defend Te Arei, to sell their lives as dearly as possible in glorious sacrifice. The Kingites had been forced to successively abandon Puketakauere, Mata-rikoriko and Huirangi. It was clear that Te Arei would be attacked, probably with huge loss of life. Fortunately diplomacy worked.

Coalition warfare was a problem for the Maori because various groups acted with almost complete autonomy and there were always many reasons why they may, or may not, turn up to fight on any given day. This was true for groups within a tribe, and even more so for members outside of the tribe or region. Wetini's foray south to Taranaki illustrates this perfectly, because it was about his own goals and glory rather than a combined effort to defeat the British troops. When his taua arrived it specifically went against the advice of the local tribes and stood at Mahoetahi. The Waikatos were not interested in coalition warfare, and nor were the southern Taranaki tribes. This inability to co-ordinate resources and command meant that, among other things, a proper intelligence function could not exist, and so while the Kingites may have had all of the advantages of fighting in their own environment, they were unable to make best use of them. They had good knowledge of the British plans and movements and it appears that they were able to infiltrate the towns and camps and enjoy a steady exchange of information with the pro-government Maori. However the value of all of that raw information was severely reduced, because there was no real way of processing it and using it to develop a clear and co-ordinated strategy.

The physical geography of the Taranaki region had many similarities to that of the Northern War. The European settlements in the Taranaki were just as isolated and vulnerable as their compatriots in the north had been but the populations were quite different. The Northern War had been fought in an area totally dominated by Maori, with only two inland mission stations as nominally neutral British enclaves. The Taranaki European settlement had existed for twenty years and the settlers had a commitment to their new lives and their farms and businesses, and a resolve that manifested itself into the establishment of militia and volunteer units. Those units fought alongside the British troops, and although there was animosity between the two, the citizen-soldiers brought with them a local knowledge that was extremely useful to the whole force. Problems with logistics, commitments to their civilian trades, and a lack of military training affected the combat effectiveness of the volunteers, but their greatest value may have been in the local knowledge that they brought to the war effort. Although they suffered the privations of campaigning, it is clear that the British regulars never felt as out of place in the physical environment of Taranaki as they had in the

¹⁴³ Hew Strachan, *From Waterloo to Balaclava, Tactics, Technology, and the British Army, 1815-1854*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, p.13.

north, and were never as dependant on the pro-government Maori as the troops had been in the Northern War.

There were also long-standing missionaries and well-established government officers who were very familiar with the countryside and the political and social aspects of the Maori community. Missionaries were able to continue moving through the region to interact with their flocks during the war and it is clear that they also passed information to government and military authorities. The Native Department officers were much more overt in their activities and they actively sought information and acted as guides and interpreters. There were also significant pro-government Maori who acted as scouts, guides and advisors. There was no shortage of information or rumour, and it appears from the daily updates in the *Taranaki Herald* that any news from the missionaries or government agents, or in fact any source, was widely and immediately reported through that organ.

The governor and military command therefore had at their disposal a considerable range of sources of information from the local area, and of course Morgan and others were also able to offer a wider strategic view. Despite its isolation, the colony had continuous sea communication with Auckland and other parts of the country and also had a reasonable overland mail service. So how well was that information used to win battles? The early battles suggest that the answer to that question is, very poorly. L Pa, Waireka and Puketakauere all showed that the British commanders made poor assessments of the situation, and their military shortcomings included their inability to use the information that was available. Despite initial optimism the British were quickly on the back foot.

It was Morgan's information that turned the tables at Mahoetahi and it was fortuitous that the British force was in a state that allowed it to move quickly and exploit the information. Pratt and his staff clearly brought a new energy and a higher level of military professionalism to the conflict. Pratt's more aggressive strategy relied upon meticulous planning. It appears that he did a good job of developing an understanding of the theatre and was able to bring the information available together to develop a clear picture. Gold's battles had been characterised by bumbling and a failure of

understanding. Pratt had a clear idea of what he wanted to achieve, and military intelligence was one of the factors that enabled him to do it.

In respect to the themes outlined in Chapter One, Britain was able to supply an expeditionary force but it had little intelligence gathering capability, and of course, the War Office supplied no strategic information. The size and capability of the force was continually upgraded until it was sufficient to win. The early battles showed an underestimation of Maori capabilities and the British were quickly on the back foot.

Maori enjoyed all of the advantages of fighting in their home location with regard to information gathering; however this did not necessarily translate into a coherent strategic approach to the war. The disparate tribal groups involved in the fighting and the transient nature of taua coming and going from the region meant that it was difficult to co-ordinate activities. The most significant difference between the Taranaki War and Northern War was the way that the settler community was mobilised. Government officers, missionaries, Maori allies, militia and volunteers all played a role in supplementing the regular troops and the acquisition of information was an important by-product of that process.

Chapter Five

The Waikato War 1863-64

The British are like a strong rapid current of water; they are persevering, energetic and irresistible in their courage. If they really want to obtain something they will use violence to get it.

A Javanese Prince c1780¹

The Maori were more divided than the Europeans, but a substantial number of those south of Auckland were equally resolved on going on the warpath. This could only be a gesture, a despairing gesture against the irrevocable, and wise men knew it. The Maoris could not find the meaning of their changed world by fighting those who changed it, but very few of them saw, as did Tamati Waka Nene, the Northern chief, that cooperation was the only hope, even though for many years it must be a dim one.

Keith Sinclair²

The inter-war period 1861-63

The period between the end of the Taranaki War and the outbreak of hostilities in Waikato was one of increasing frustration and anger on both sides. This was in part because of Governor Grey's conduct during that period which was 'as confusing to historians [today] as it was to the Foreign Office [then].'³ His strategy, which has come to be known as his 'peace policy and war policy,' was set against a number of factors that combined to create probably the most tumultuous and dangerous period in New Zealand's post-treaty history. During that period several major issues festered and grew, feeding emotions that finally led to the outbreak of a new war, this time in the Waikato.

¹ The prince had returned from several years in exile in Ceylon, cited in Vlekke, Nusantara, pp. 225-6 and quoted in D. Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations*, New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1998, p.150.

² Keith Sinclair, *The Origins of the Maori Wars*, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1957, p.257.

³ James Belich, *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1986, p.119; D. McCan, 'Dispute over Resources, Discourse on Rights, Legal Pluralism in New Zealand.' PhD Thesis, Brandeis University, USA, 1993, p.85.

One of the underlying factors was the continuing discontent in the Taranaki province. It is important to appreciate just how closely linked the Taranaki and Waikato Wars were. In fact they are most easily understood as separate phases of the same conflict fought in separate locations. In 1861 Wiremu Kingi had moved to the Upper Waikato to live amongst the Ngati Maniapoto which was arguably the most anti-European tribe of all. Ngati Maniapoto was geographically the closest Waikato iwi to Taranaki and it had a long history of intervention in the Taranaki, and it had of course fought there in 1860-1.

Even by 1863 the Europeans in Taranaki were still more-or-less under siege. Maori had occupied the government-owned Tataramaika Block south of New Plymouth in an effort to force the return of the disputed Waitara Block. Throughout the North Island, Europeans slept uneasily because of rumours and fear that tribes would rise up and slay all settlers at the first shots fired by the government at Tataramaika. The fallout from Taranaki was simmering hatred, recriminations and fear on both sides.



Fig.5.1. Principal Maori leaders during the Waikato War. Left to right Rewi Maniapoto, Wiremu Tamehana, and King Tawhiao.

Sharp divisions had also developed among tribes that gave their allegiance to the King, and these were widening. The new king, Potatau's son Tawhiao,⁴ was moderate in his attitude and he had key influential supporters including his sister Te Puea and the Ngati Haua chief Wiremu Tamehana. The Ngati Maniapoto chief, Rewi

⁴ The new King's name was Tawhiao, but he was baptised Matutaera (Methuselah).

Maniapoto, was more vehemently anti-European and he continually refused to be reined in by the inexperienced king whose leadership was widely considered weak and indecisive.

European society too, was divided in its opinions about race relations and war. The governor could not rule as autocratically as FitzRoy and Grey had during the Northern War. New Zealand now had Responsible Government with a premier, cabinet ministers and elected representatives, many of whom had a settler mentality and a land acquisition agenda.⁵ Hard liners were supported by an aggressive press and a general public who called for a police or military solution to the problems facing the country.⁶ Fear of the Maori and greed for their land were strong underlying themes in government's policy and public sentiment. The development of the rich agricultural land of the Upper Waikato was seen as essential for the economic growth and development of the capital, Auckland. Anxiety and avarice led to an aggressive, uncompromising policy which demanded that the Maori fall into line as citizens of New Zealand.⁷

Politicians from the rest of the country often saw the issues differently and there was even a lobby (amongst which Fitzgerald from Canterbury was prominent), that supported Maori and was opposed to settler aggression.⁸ In fact there was a strong separatist movement among the southern provinces that increasingly saw the developing problem in the Auckland province as one of their own making. Otago, the most populous and wealthy province in the country, and Canterbury, were reluctant to see the country become involved in prolonged warfare. However the majority settler opinion, particularly in the Auckland province, was that Maori needed to be put in their place.

⁵ New Zealand's form of government had evolved from a Crown Colony (1840-1852), to a Representative Government (1852-1856) with a House of Representatives, Legislative Assembly, and six Provincial Councils, to Responsible Government (1856-1863), with an elected Premier, cabinet ministers and elected members. The Governor still held responsibility for Native Affairs, Trade and the declaration of war and peace.

⁶ Alan Ward, *A Show of Justice*, Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1974, pp.147-150.

⁷ Sinclair, p.257.

⁸ Edmund Bohan, *Climates of War: New Zealand in Conflict 1859-69*, Christchurch: Hayward Books, 2005, p.143.

As the Taranaki War had limped towards a conclusion, it had become increasingly clear to the European population that the real power in the King Movement lay, not in the Taranaki, but in the Waikato. The issue for them was whether the Kingites, who were acting more and more independently (particularly the Ngati Maniapoto), could be allowed to exist in defiance of the Queen's authority. Gore Browne demanded the submission of the Kingite leadership to the Queen, the return of plunder taken in Taranaki, and compensation for the damage done to settlers' property there,⁹ and threatened that if those conditions were not met, he would invade the Waikato. The governor's demands were ignored and throughout the country there was a growing sense that war in the Waikato was increasingly inevitable.

Gore Browne continued with his plans and scheduled an invasion of the Waikato for September 1861. The more perceptive of his ministers realised that there were insufficient troops available for the task and by July, even Gore-Browne himself had begun to waver.¹⁰ Throughout this period, Reverend John Morgan had been reporting to him that the Kingites were discussing a general uprising combined with an attack on Auckland in which many Europeans would most probably be slaughtered. In imagery reminiscent of the Biblical Passover, the attackers would only spare the occupants of those houses marked with a white cross.¹¹ The amount of support for this supposed plan is unknown, but Morgan had some information that the Taupo chiefs, for example, had agreed that if the King sent them down to the Taranaki they would go, and if they were told to attack Auckland they would do it.¹² Morgan kept Gore Browne well informed and supplied the names of chiefs who advocated an attack on Auckland, and those who wished to meet the governor to discuss peace.¹³ The governor in turn had Morgan warn all Europeans of his planned invasion and advised them to leave the Waikato.¹⁴

⁹ Bohan, p.234.

¹⁰ Bohan, p.235.

¹¹ AJHR 1863, E No5B, Memorandum by Mr Fulloon, 20 June 1863.

¹² Morgan to Gore Browne, (WTU McLean Papers folder 459), 13 March 1861.

¹³ Morgan to Gore Browne, 13 March 1861. Ngapora was one chief who asked to meet with the governor to discuss peace. Chiefs were usually reluctant to go to Auckland to meet with the governor, especially Grey, because he had earlier detained Pomare and Te Rauparaha. Wiremu Tamehana would not visit Auckland for this reason.

¹⁴ Morgan to Gore Browne, Letters and Journals of John Morgan, (APL NZ 266.3 M84), 2 and 3 July 1861. p.714.

In late March 1861 Morgan was so alarmed about the unfolding situation that he wrote to Gore Browne introducing James Stevens, a retired soldier who was living with his Maori wife near Taupiri:

I have requested Stevens to be on the alert and if he noticed any suspicious gathering of the Waikato's, or any movement down the river, or received any information from his wife or any plan of the natives endangering the out-settlements or Auckland, immediately to proceed to the town to present himself to Your Excellency (as he cannot write) and make his communication and that he should be well rewarded for his trouble. He is in an excellent position to obtain information of any secret hostile movement and may be fully trusted.¹⁵

The immediate possibility of widespread warfare was averted in September 1861 when Gore Browne was suddenly replaced as Governor by George Grey. Grey returned to New Zealand for a second term in similar circumstances to those that prevailed when he replaced FitzRoy in 1845; the country was in a race relations crisis. For the next two years, he embarked on a policy in which he tried to promote a peaceful resolution, but also prepared for the possibility of war. Gore Browne had initially ignored the King Movement, but Grey hoped that his personal authority and charisma would help emasculate it. Central to his efforts were the 'new institutions' (actually an extension of existing policy), which he developed in tandem with his ministers. The country was to be divided into districts, twenty of which were to be in the North Island. Each district was to have a Civil Commissioner, doctor, school teachers, clergy, and a judicial and law-enforcement arm consisting of a Resident Magistrate, Native Assessors and a number of constables. Maori would be able to vote for local and district representatives who would sit on Maori Councils (which took the Maori word for meeting - *rununga*). District rununga would have the authority to enact by-laws under the direction of the District Magistrates.

By introducing these European institutions, Grey hoped to seduce the Maori away from their growing nationalism and desire for separation. By slowly enmeshing them into the European world through education, Christianity, commerce and the complexity of the legal system, he would achieve an amalgamation of the two races where the future of Maori lay within the European sphere. The power and authority of the chiefs would diminish and European institutions would govern their lives. The

¹⁵ Morgan to Gore-Browne, Letters from John Morgan to Governor Gore-Browne, 1861-65 (ANZ, GB 1/2d), 27 March 1861.

whole process, from Grey's perspective at least, was enlightened. It was not conceived in malice, but in the genuine belief that the best future for the Maori people and all New Zealanders lay in their peaceful assimilation into a uniquely New Zealand version of the European world.

This policy is well encapsulated in Grey's oft quoted remark that he made to Wiremu Tamehana on 8 January 1861 at Taupiri 'I shall not fight against him [the Maori King] with the sword, but will dig around him until he falls of his own accord'.¹⁶ It also addressed the pressing need to solve the practical and immediate problems that arose as the two cultures interacted more frequently. The fencing of Maori-owned land by European lessees and the continual problems of wandering stock, usually Maori-owned, and the problem of illicit grog selling and consequent drunkenness¹⁷ were some of the small points of friction that could theoretically be solved at the district level by enacting by-laws.

For Maori, the encroachment of Europeans was a complex matter that promised great benefits but threatened great danger. European technology and 'know how' and Maori hard work transformed the Upper Waikato into a richly productive agricultural region in the late 1840s and 1850s. Unfortunately, an economic depression in the end of the 1850s caused a fall in prices for agricultural produce, and tribes which had become used to a certain level of affluence saw a drastic change in their fortunes. Many had borrowed money and soon faced insurmountable debts, and some worried that the new Resident Magistrates would force them to honour those debts. Some chiefs had illegally sold land to European squatters; what would the magistrates do about that? Many feared that the illegal land sales would be discovered and the land would be seized by the government. Would squatters now be forced to pay for leased or purchased land or would their titles be rescinded? As well as land ownership, there were major issues

¹⁶ This famous remark of Grey's is quoted in many writings on the topic. It was originally cited in John Gorst, *The Maori King*, London: MacMillan, 1864, p324. Grey made the comment whilst speaking to an assembly of chiefs at Taupiri on 8 January 1863; Maurice Lennard, *The Road to War: The Great South Road 1862-64*, Whakatane: Whakatane District Historical Society, 1986, p.3, argues that Grey has been mis-quoted and that he actually said, 'I have come to conquer you and kill you too with good.' See note 4 to Chapter 1, p.25 of Lennard; Ward, p.157 notes that Grey casually 'dropped the remark'. The Maori present mistrusted Grey's intentions and picked up on the remark with great anxiety. When Gorst was expelled from the Waikato several months later in late April, he left with several clergy and settlers. Ngati Maniapoto exulted in driving out the 'governor's spades'.

¹⁷ Bohan, p.124.

relating to the jurisdiction of law. How, and under what circumstances, could a Maori be punished by European law, or indeed by his own chief? Were Europeans living in certain areas under the authority of the local chief and if so, could he punish them? And what was to be done about the imprisonment of Maori and their subsequent loss of mana?¹⁸

Maori had good reason to fear the *new institutions*, and the encroachment and meddling of Europeans, especially men such as the Waikato Resident Magistrate, Fenton. One of the Resident Magistrate's duties was to influence Maori opinion away from the King Movement and to promote the concept of one government and one law for all, and in this respect Fenton carried out his work diligently. The security of traditional lore and custom within an independent Maori society that could adopt elements of what the European world offered, on its own terms, held great appeal for many Maori. Increasingly, European society became seen as the bringer of debt, alcohol, disruption and disappointment. With the collapse of many of their enterprises, Maori lost confidence in the Pakeha world and the government and settlers who increasingly coveted their land.¹⁹

Despite his hopes for assimilation, Grey was also realistic. He understood that the likelihood of warfare in the Waikato was high and he began to prepare for that probability as well. As early as October 1861, he told Gore Browne that he doubted that war could be avoided. He was not optimistic about the success of his native policy, and saw it as a way of trying to win friends during the intermission in the fighting.²⁰ Eventually his policies of promoting peace but preparing for the probability of war were mutually destructive. The peace policy was supposed to allay Maori fears about further European encroachment on their lands, but Maori remained deeply suspicious, and the continued military build-up and challenges to King Movement stiffened the resolve of Rewi's faction. The roll-out of the new institutions began in the Tai Tokerau (Bay of Islands) and the Lower Waikato. The government paid wages to the Native Assessors and these became a source of disharmony and jealousy within the Maori communities. In the Upper Waikato the Kingite resolve was already gelling and Rewi

¹⁸ Bohan, p.124.

¹⁹ Harold Miller, *The Invasion of the Waikato*, Dunedin: John McIndee, 1964, p.13; McCAN, pp.72-6.

²⁰ Sinclair, p.240.

Maniapoto and his followers continued to provoke hostility towards the government's activities. The ongoing tension and acrimony in the Taranaki provided a vehicle for continuing misunderstanding and hatred between the races. Elsewhere in the country the government's policy had some limited success, and there was just enough selective Maori acceptance of the *new institutions* for the hope that with patience, there could be peace in a colony reconciled to native self-government at a local level, and British supremacy.²¹

The problem of Auckland's security

Aucklanders had realised for years that their town, the seat and symbol of Pakeha power, was extremely vulnerable to attack from the Waikato tribes to the south. The Waikato River, that great arterial route from the centre of the island, could deliver warriors to within 30 miles of the town. The thickly wooded hills of the Hunua Ranges and the kahikatea swamps and tidal estuaries that lay between the river and Auckland all offered countless routes for potential attackers. The Defencibles, the military settlers who first began to move on to their farms in 1849, were arrayed across the southern approaches to the town; a clear indication that even though Auckland had potentially been threatened during the Northern War of 1845-6, the current threat lay not to the north, but the south. Throughout the First Taranaki War Aucklanders had feared an attack from the Waikato. After the British success at Mahoetahi on 6 November 1860, the feared backlash from Waikato was enough to prompt Gore Browne to send 400 troops back from Taranaki to defend Auckland. By mid-1861, the fear of a general uprising of tribes and an attack on the town raised the anxieties of the towns-folk further.

In the same way that Aucklanders were concerned about their powerful southern neighbours, the Waikato tribes too, feared any military expansion out of Auckland in their direction. Gore Browne had attempted to placate those fears in October 1861, assuring a Waikato chief, Tamati Ngapora, that, 'he had no intention of advancing troops south of Otahuhu',²² but as tensions rose and each side pondered plans for attack, that promise became increasingly hollow. Maori watched every development and expansion of the Pakeha domain very carefully.

²¹ Ward, pp.144-5.

²² Lennard, p.2.

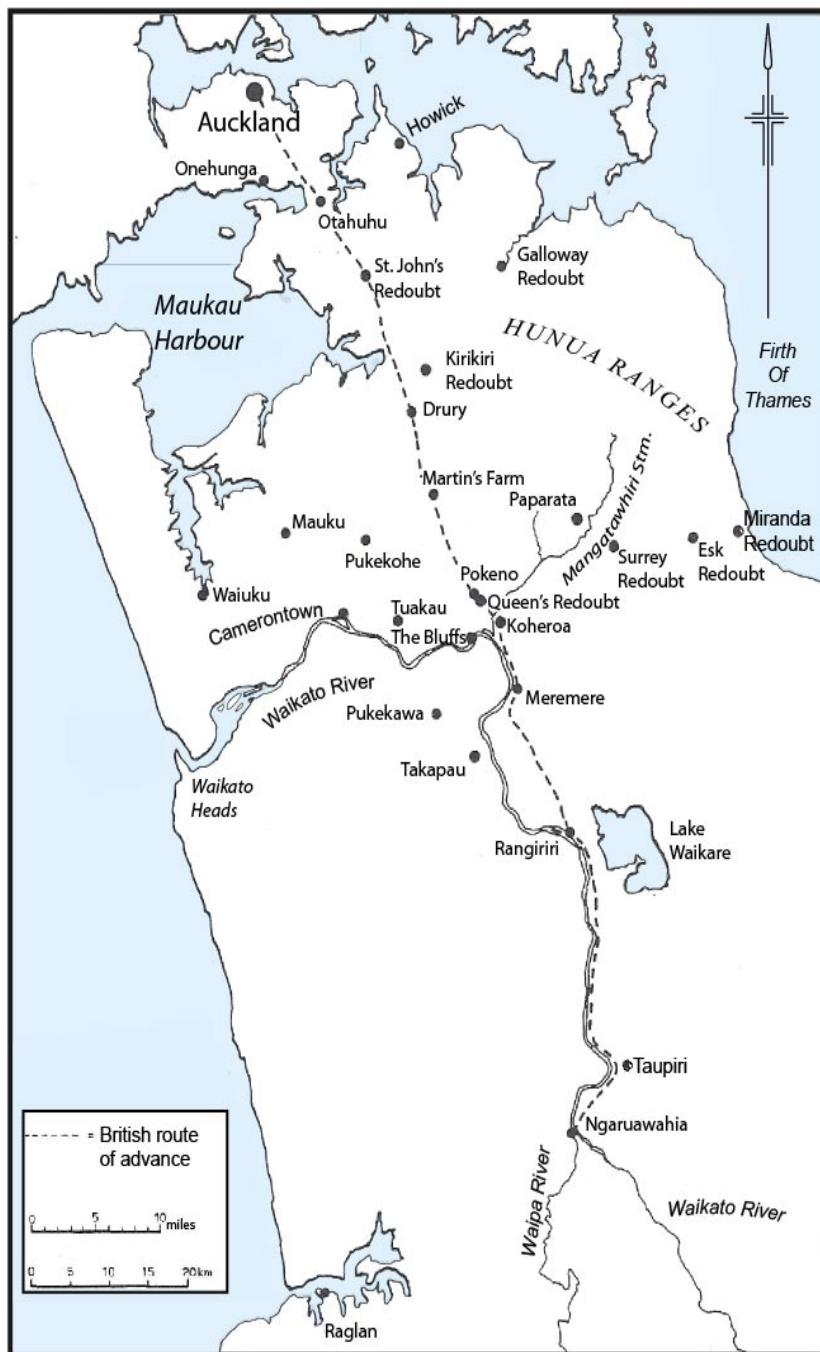


Fig.5.2. Map showing the principal European settlements in the South Auckland region, the Lower Waikato between the Mangatawhiri Stream and Ngaruawahia, and the main axis of the British advance. Adapted by the author from Belich. *The New Zealand Wars*, p121.

By mid 1861, a metalled road ran out from Auckland as far as Otahu. Beyond that point the Great South Road, as it was grandly known, deteriorated into clay cart tracks and rudimentary paths through the bush. Large stretches were virtually

impassable in the wet, and travellers were required to wade knee-deep through swamps and mud when the rain turned the route into a quagmire. Wheeled transport was almost useless in such conditions and even bullock carts had great difficulty negotiating the hills and rivers that made travel such an ordeal. The Maori, of course, knew this and were very keen for the road to remain in that state so that artillery ‘the cart of terror’²³ could not travel along it. Wiremu Tamehana astutely observed that an improved road ‘can have no other purpose than to bring soldiers and great guns upon the Waikato River’.²⁴

Grey realised that the success of his new institutions rested, in part, on improving the communication routes between the capital and the interior. In particular, he needed to improve the Great South Road to make the government’s interaction with the Kingite tribes far more effective. He also needed the road for military purposes. Auckland’s vulnerability stemmed from its open and undefended southern approaches. The lack of adequate roads made it almost impossible to deploy troops to defend those approaches. Although Maori warriors could have slipped undetected through the bush, British troops required established lines of communication, depots and staging posts. Speed of movement would be essential to repel any attack and that could only be achieved with good roads.

An all-weather road would also allow the government to project its military power beyond the confines of a narrow radius around Auckland. The lack of a road meant that troops could not be pushed into the interior to quell disturbances, impose the Queen’s law and order, or if absolutely necessary, to crush the King Movement. The road was therefore vital for Grey from either perspective; preparing for peace or preparing for war. In late 1861, the decision was made to build it through to the point where the Mangatawhiri Stream flows into the Waikato River (see Fig 5.2). That narrow stream, only metres wide, had great significance because it delineated the accepted border between European and Waikato territory.²⁵ By opting to build right up

²³ AJHR 1862 E8, p.8.

²⁴ Gorst, ‘General Report on Upper Waikato’ 5th June 1862, p.205, reproduced in Miller, p.195-217. This view was also expressed to Grey by chiefs who met him at Taupiri in 1862, AJHR 1862, E8.

²⁵ Pei Te Hurinui, *King Potatau*, Auckland: The Polynesian Society, 1959, p.228. ‘King Potatau laid down a boundary between himself and the Governor, Sir George Grey, saying, “You be on that side, and I will be on this side. Let Mangatawhiri be our boundary. Do not encroach on this side. Likewise, I am not to set foot on that side”’; McCAN, p.87. King Tawhiao decided that soldiers progressing south of Mangatawhiri would be attacked because it was Maori land. Europeans generally understood the importance of this border.

to the Waikatos' doorstep, Grey had 'rendered the restoration of confidence in the British government and the peaceful resolution of the native difficulty, a sheer impossibility'.²⁶

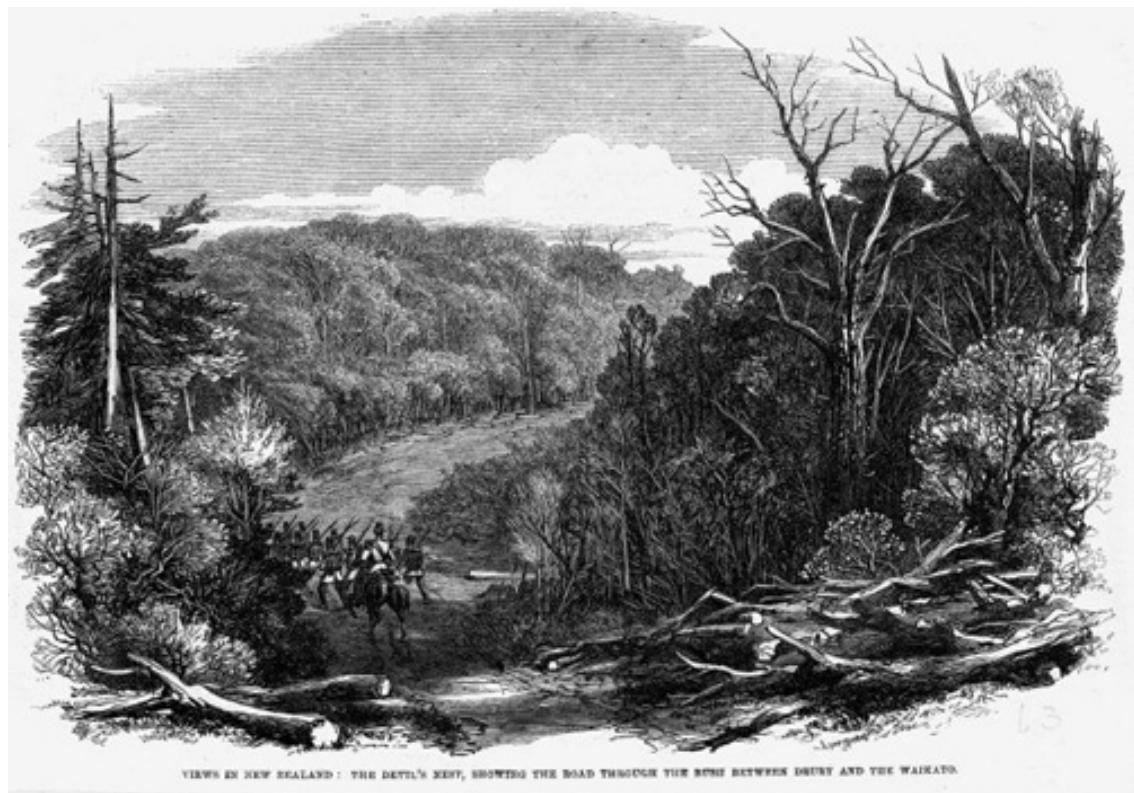


Fig. 5.3. British Troops travelling on the Great South Road through an area known as The Devil's Nest circa 1863. The road was an ideal location for Maori to ambush the British columns. Alexander Turnbull Library.

The Waikato River was an immensely important artery. It held great spiritual significance for the Waikato tribes as the route taken by the spirits of the dead and also the home of numerous taniwha (water spirits) that protected the friendly and opposed any invaders.²⁷ The river and its tributaries allowed access to the vast interior and fertile soils of the Waikato basin and were traditional routes for trade and war. As New Zealand's longest river, the Waikato rises out of the sacred peaks of the Central Plateau, drains Lake Taupo, and flows with a unique character and significance right through the centre of the Waikato region. Despite its size, it is a relatively placid river that can be navigated for a good portion of its length,²⁸ and this was more the case in the 1860s before farming and hydro-electric dams had made it narrower and shallower.

²⁶ Gorst, *The Maori King*, pp.18-19; Sinclair, p.247.

²⁷ Richard Taylor, 'Matelots in Maoriland', *Military Studies Institute Woking Paper Series*, No 1/2000, p.6.

²⁸ General Cameron's flotilla gave him a huge logistic advantage because he could navigate as far as Hamilton on the Waikato River and Te Rore on the Waipa River.

As it flowed more or less directly north it was like a spear pointed at the heart of Auckland; a vast aquatic highway down which tribes could quickly and silently move towards the town. At Mangatawhiri the river swings abruptly to the west, and at the time it offered countless landing places along its heavily forested banks. In doing so, it out-flanked the capital and gave potential attackers the strategic advantage of such a broad front from which to choose a place to prepare an attack.²⁹ Like all west coast New Zealand rivers it has a dangerous bar that is an obstacle to shipping and has claimed many vessels and lives.

Although tracks along its banks were the main travel routes, the river itself had not been commonly used by Europeans and the Waikato tribes were keen to keep it that way. They were adamant that no government steamer should ply its waters and when the first government craft to do so, the gunboat *Avon*, crossed the bar on 25 July 1863, its voyage symbolically, ‘put out the eye of the Waikato’.³⁰ Although the sea route through the dangerous mouth of the river was used during the war, it always proved tenuous. A road from Auckland with fortifications *en-route* and a firm base at its terminus by the river was the obvious solution. Geographically, Mangatawhiri was the best location for that terminus because it was a direct route; it avoided the large swamps to the west and led directly to the settlements on the eastern bank further up the river. The final advantage of locating the terminus at Mangatawhiri was that, to some extent, it cut off the section of river that flowed from that point to the mouth; the very section that outflanked the town of Auckland. The Waikato River formed a physical and psychological barrier between the European population and the tribes of the Waikato. It had tremendous political, economic and military significance and control of it was to be a key factor in the outcome of the war.

Lieutenant General Duncan Cameron (Fig 5.4) and his staff reconnoitred the river by canoe and whaleboat, walked the tracks and scrutinised the countryside to determine the best route and terminus.³¹ The development and metalling of the new

²⁹ Lennard, p.3.

³⁰ E.I., Frost. *Maori Trails and Pakeha Tracks, tales of the Bush and River*, Wellington: A.H and A.W. Reed, 1942, p.26.

³¹ Journal of the Deputy Quarter Master General (hereafter JDQMG), entries between 8 March-7 June 1862.

road was begun in November 1861 and completed in stages throughout 1862. Over 2,500 soldiers as well as contractors were employed in the back breaking toil of its construction, and the difficult terrain and soil conditions, as well as frequent heavy rains that washed away sections of new road, made it a major engineering achievement. The sight of the multitude of uniforms inching nearer and nearer confirmed in the Kingites' mind the true purpose of the road. The tribes in the Lower Waikato nearest to Mangatawhiri were caught between the hammer of the government and the anvil of the fiercely intransigent tribes further up the river. The King was closely related to the Lower Waikato chiefs and had resided there from time to time. The tribes themselves were divided about what stance they should take; some were pro-government, some were staunchly with Rewi, and some vacillated. The construction of the Queen's Redoubt, the large fortified base at the terminus of the road, was closely scrutinised by the local tribes. Several meetings were held to decide whether to attack it or not, but since it was on the Pakeha side of the accepted border, it was left alone. However Maori anxiety was high, and some isolated Europeans living further up the river decided that it was now prudent to evacuate with their women and children.³²

By late 1862 the country was tense and uneasy and Mangatawhiri had become an armed frontier.³³ Grey and Lieutenant General Cameron now had a secure forward

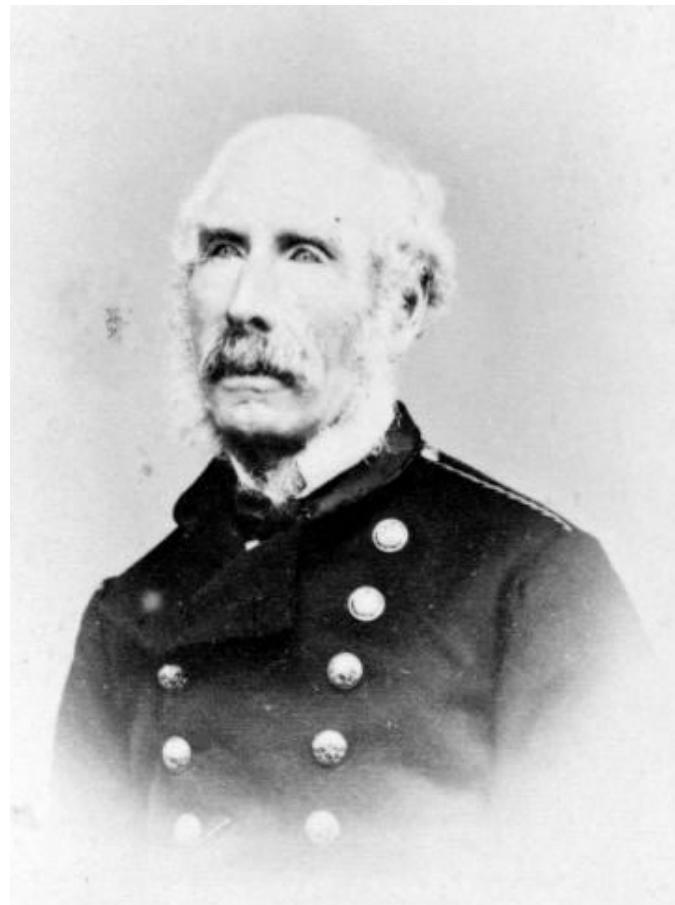


Fig. 5.4. Lieutenant General Duncan Cameron, Commander of the British Forces. Photographed by Hartley Webster. Alexander Turnbull Library.

³² Lennard, p.22. Some European men had Maori wives and their children were 'half-castes'. Those women and children were often prevailed upon by the local tribes to remain behind while the men left.

³³ Sinclair, p.248.

base at Queens Redoubt that was linked to the capital by a good road, and by mid-1863, by telegraph.³⁴ Grey continued to use his political guile to assemble a significant force, developing an Imperial Army that would eventually number 10,000 regular troops. In the Waikato the hard-line views of Rewi Maniapoto were beginning to gain sway over those of the moderate chief Wiremu Tamehana and the supporters of the king. The scene was now set for the final descent into war.

Sources of intelligence

Both Gore Browne and Grey had a reasonably good understanding about what was happening in the Waikato. This was because the majority of informers who had operated during the Taranaki War were still in place in 1861-2. No one had a sense of complacency when the hostilities ended in the Taranaki, and Morgan, Parris and the network of government officers and missionaries continued to file reports and write to Auckland with their observations and impressions. Morgan continued to be a leading source and the information that he relayed to Auckland undoubtedly helped seal Grey's decision to go ahead with building the Great South Road. Morgan was a tremendously valuable asset to have at Otawhao and to ease his burdens, the Colonial Secretary, Fox, made 100 pounds available which was a year's wages for a servant. Morgan noted in a letter to Gore-Browne that, 'he [Fox] said that the government were under such obligations to me for the mails etc etc, that it was their duty to assist me as much as possible'.³⁵

Morgan seems to have had almost immediate information about what the leading chiefs were saying at meetings and the movement of groups of warriors. He apparently had a good network of informants who discussed with him what they had seen and heard. Some of his former pupils who had become Christian converts, and Maori catechists felt a great loyalty to him and may have fulfilled that role. Morgan used the classic method of ensuring the operational security of his sources by keeping the identity of his informants within Maori communities secret. Individual names are seldom mentioned in his letters, but he did refer to two anonymous sources as 'a half-

³⁴ The telegraph was a massive undertaking. All of the equipment was ordered from England and it took a long time to arrive. Civilian contractors were engaged to supply the poles and install the line which was an arduous process. The telegraph followed closely on the heels of the British Army as the invasion up the Waikato Basin progressed. It is an indication of the care and detail that went into the planning of the war. See JDQMG, entries for the period 3 January- 5 May 1863.

³⁵ Morgan to Gore Browne, (ANZ 1/2/d), December 1861.

caste' and a 'farm servant'.³⁶ His fellow missionaries were another source of information and Morgan continued to act as a clearing house, passing on opinions and observations from people such as Schnackenberg at Kawhia and Raglan, Reid at Kopua on the Waipa River and Walker at Matamata.³⁷

Morgan's information was of great strategic value and he was even able to shed light on how the Kingites were acquiring weapons and ammunition. On 7 March 1861 he reported that a small party of up to 20 warriors had started for Tauranga to get powder from a vessel in the harbour.³⁸ Three months later, in early June, he further advised the governor that a French vessel had landed near Whakatane and was selling powder and guns.³⁹ Other reports and rumours noted an increase in Maori purchases of muskets and lead nails and marbles for ammunition; a clear indication that some at least, were preparing for war.⁴⁰

Two specific examples give an insight into the ways that Morgan acquired his information. In late July 1861 he reported that Maori were building fortifications in the Pokeno-Mangatawhiri area. He described the location and even explained the methods of construction. The information had come from one of his Pakeha-Maori former pupils.⁴¹ Further evidence of Kingite activities was gained from a farm servant 'late of the 58th [Regiment]'. The keen eye of the ex-soldier had observed events that indicated to him that food was being stockpiled. Canoes laden with potatoes were seen coming down the river in the evening, but by next morning the food was gone. The ex-soldier didn't know where, but he suspected that stockpiling was taking place in the mountains at the rear of Pepepe. Morgan concluded quite logically that 'preparations are being made to meet the troops in the Mangatawhiri region' and duly reported to the governor.⁴² It seems highly likely that information such as this helped dissuade Gore Browne away from his plans to invade the Waikato in 1861 (it was reported at the time

³⁶ Morgan to Gore Browne, (ANZ GB 1/2/d), July 1861.

³⁷ Morgan to Gore Browne, (ANZ GB 1/2/d), 25 July 1861.

³⁸ Morgan to Gore Browne, (ANZ GB1/2/d), 7 March 1861.

³⁹ Morgan to Gore Browne, (ANZ GB 1/2/d), 5 June 1861. It was widely believed in Auckland that some merchants in the town were making a good profit by gun-running to the Kingites. Also see James Cowan, *The New Zealand Wars and the Pioneering Period*, vol. 1, Wellington: Government Printer, 1922, p.241, for a discussion about gun-running and local manufacture of gunpowder.

⁴⁰ Ward, p.158. The lead nails were melted down and re-cast as musket balls.

⁴¹ Morgan to Gore Browne, (ANZ GB 1/2/d). 31 July 1861. The locations of the fortifications were; Ramarama, Pukewao, and an un-named site 'near this end of the bush'.

⁴² Morgan to Gore Browne, (ANZ GB 1/2/d), 31 July 1861.

when he was wavering about his plans to invade) and later convinced Grey of the need to construct the military road to Mangatawhiri and establish Queens Redoubt there.

The tone of Morgan's letters changed noticeably between March and July 1861. He picked up on the increasing militancy within the Kingite tribes as they moved towards a possible general uprising in response to Gore Browne's threats. He was in the habit of corresponding with Catchpool, the postmaster at Napier, partly to ensure an alternate outlet for his information if the Kingites stopped the mail between Otawhao and Auckland. Catchpool advised Morgan that bands of Maori had begun to intimidate out-settlers in the vicinity of Napier. In late June 1861, Morgan replied with a desperate note warning that the settlement was in great danger and should raise a militia immediately:

You are at liberty to give my information to your Superintendent. The Maori policy is as soon as the first blow is struck by the government in Waikato, a general rise on all the Southern towns. Do not sleep at the present time. My object is to warn you. Kindly excuse this scrawl. Do not allow this to get abroad as from me on account of my position.⁴³

Soon after sending this warning, Morgan learned that Grey had replaced Gore Browne as governor. He offered to supply the new governor with all of the information he needed because he knew how crucial it was. Morgan's overt spying had divided his fellow clergy, and he was acutely aware that he and Reverend Wilson, who had assisted him at Otawhao for some time and had been active in Taranaki, would be criticised by churchmen who might catch the new governor's ear. To counter them he urged Gore Browne to make sure that Grey understood his role and value.⁴⁴

As tensions grew through 1862 and into 1863, Morgan's little community at Otawhao (shown as Te Awamutu in Fig 5.9) in the heart of Kingite territory became a crucible of political tension. John Gorst, a keen, educated and adventurous young Englishman had been appointed Resident Magistrate, and later became the Civil Commissioner for the Upper Waikato. He was based at Otawhao and he pushed the government line relentlessly. The Kingite chiefs boycotted his two courts at Otawhao

⁴³ Morgan to Catchpool, Catchpool Papers, (WTU MS Papers 77, folder 6). 28 June 1861.

⁴⁴ Morgan to Gore Browne, (ANZ GB 1/2/d), 25 July 1861. Also see J.A. Wilson Reverend 'Letters and Journals 1833-65', (AIML MS339 entry for 31 May 1861). Wilson was as aware of the criticism as Morgan. He also saw no conflict between his roles as a missionary and that of a government envoy.

and Te Kohokohe and obstructed him at every turn. The message was clear; the government's law was not welcome in the Waikato.⁴⁵

Other Native Department Resident Magistrates in key areas were Stewart in the Lower Waikato, Mainwaring in the Upper Waikato and W.G. Mair in Taupo. Resident Magistrates were directed to establish a government presence in their region, to support those hapu not inclined to fight, and to closely monitor the Kingite political and military situation and report back to Auckland;⁴⁶ a role that combined the functions of a political officer and an intelligence gatherer:⁴⁷

Exempted from militia service, the Native Department officers were ordered to be active in their districts until driven out by hostilities. They were to present the Government's case on the need for war, to refute the teaching of Kingite or *Pai Marire* emissaries, make gifts and offer pay, plunder and promises of support in traditional rivalries in an effort to prevent *hapu* from joining the "rebellion" and, if possible, to attach them to the Government side. They were to inform the Maori of government victories, explain proclamations, take submissions or oaths of allegiance and send back detailed information on the fluctuating attitudes of chiefs and the movements of war parties.⁴⁸

Frustrated by a lack of progress in applying the law, and determined to counteract the recruitment of Maori youth as Kingite soldiers, Gorst proposed the establishment of two industrial schools designed to teach trades and inculcate European lifestyle and values. He also frequently corresponded with Bell, the Native Minister, and the two exchanged information and opinion about the political situation. He was clearly a valuable man to have in the heart of Kingite territory. Not surprisingly, the Kingites quickly understood the real nature of Gorst's activities and opposition to him grew until he was eventually expelled from the Waikato. His departure was the result of several minor crises which compounded to increase the tension and complete the country's slide into war.

The Kingites had a printing press, which had been an earlier gift from the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph, on which they printed the news-sheet *Te Hokoi Rere Atu Na* (The War Bird); an outlet for proclamations and propaganda. In early 1863, Gorst established a rival press, with a printer sent by Grey, which he mockingly called

⁴⁵ Morgan to Gore Browne, (ANZ GB 1/2/d), 2 April 1862.

⁴⁶ Ward, pp.170-1.

⁴⁷ Bohan, p.100.

⁴⁸ Ward, p.170.

Pihoihoi Moke Moke I Te Tuanui (The Lonely Lark on the Housetop). And so there developed a short propaganda war for the hearts and minds of the Waikato people.⁴⁹ One of Gorst's issues carried a stinging attack on the King Movement by Grey himself. Already incensed, Rewi and the militant chiefs ordered Gorst's immediate expulsion, one of them declaring, 'the work was like the work of Satan who tempted men to their ruin, the establishment here [at Otawhao] being only a prelude to the arrival of the soldiers'.⁵⁰

The debate over Gorst's expulsion occurred at the same time as two other inflammatory incidents. The first was the construction of a new courthouse. Animosity between pro-government chiefs who had taken appointments and wages as Native Assessors, and some Kingites erupted over the issue of the courthouse at Te Kohekohe near Mangatawhiri. Grey's plans to surreptitiously extend British law into the Lower Waikato was abruptly curtailed when Rewi asserted his power and ordered the removal of the timbers stockpiled for the remarkably fort-like building that could also have been used as a barracks for armed police.⁵¹

Secondly, the Taranaki was in turmoil again. Soldiers still occupied the Waitara Block, and Maori still occupied the European owned Tataramaika and Omata Blocks south of New Plymouth in reprisal. Grey had expressed his intention to re-occupy the Tataramaika Block when he spoke to chiefs at Taupiri on 8 January 1863. Acting on Parris' advice that he could accomplish this safely, he moved soldiers onto that land on 4 April 1863. The move was contrary to the intelligence that he had been receiving from Morgan and others, and the clear messages from the militants among the Kingites that such a move would be considered a just action for war.⁵² The southern Taranaki

⁴⁹ The issues of *Pihoihoi Moke Moke I Te Tuanui*, (The Lonely Lark on the Housetop), were:

Issue 1. 4 pages 2/2/1863

Issue 2. 4 pages 10/2/1863

Issue 3. 2 pages 23/2/1863

Issue 4. 8 pages 9/3/1863

Issue 5. 4 pages 23/3/1863 -carried a copy of the letter written by Grey from Taranaki.

The press was seized by the Kingites on 24 March 1863. Both the government and the Kingite presses are on display side by side in the Te Awamutu Museum.

⁵⁰ Gorst to Bell, (TDM ARC 3146/1), 25 February 1863. Also AJHR E No.1 1863. Gorst suggested demanding a payment for being compared to Satan.

⁵¹ William T. Parham, *James Francis Fulloon: A Man of Two Cultures*, Whakatane: Whakatane and District Historical Society, November 1995, p.39; Gorst, *The Maori King*, p.352.

⁵² Sinclair, p.258.

tribes called upon Kingi and Rewi for advice, saying that they expected war. Rewi sent the expected reply: ‘Attack!’⁵³

News of the intended attack began to reach the government, but the reports were disregarded by Grey who was over-confident because the re-occupation had not been immediately opposed. The *Taranaki Herald* even published a report about the intended ambush on 2 May 1863.⁵⁴ Two days later, a party of troops was ambushed, just as the report had predicted, at Oakura on the road between Omata and Tataramaika and nine soldiers were killed in the brief battle. The second Taranaki War had begun.⁵⁵ Grey’s declaration at Taupiri that he would dig around the King until he fell had had a considerable impact and had been well reported throughout the Waikato. Rewi was convinced that there was a pattern to Grey’s activities. The construction of the Great South Road, the development of Queens Redoubt, the continual military build-up, the attempt to erect a barrack/courthouse on the banks of the Mangatawhiri at Te Kohekohe, Gorst’s activities at Otawhao, and Grey’s attack on the King Movement in *Pihoihoi Moke Moke* had been too much, but now the governor had gone even further with the armed re-occupation of Tataramaika.

The Waikatos had access to information from Auckland and they were reasonably well informed about events there. The Auckland newspapers reached them within a day or two of publication, and there is evidence that those who could read English, read and translated for others. Heni Te Kirikaramu, later to be the heroine of the Battle of Gate Pa, was a mission-educated school teacher of Te Arawa and Irish blood who lived in Matamata for a time. She read and translated newspapers and documents and wrote letters for Wiremu Tamehana and other chiefs.⁵⁶ The newspapers were lively publications and would have given the Maori a good understanding of government policy and intentions, the political debate and attitudes of the general populace, as well as detailed information about military matters such as the arrival and deployment of new troops. Many Maori could read English and it is likely that the practice of communal reading aloud to others was common in most Maori

⁵³ Gorst, *The Maori King*, pp.330-1; Sinclair, pp.259-60.

⁵⁴ Gorst, *The Maori King*, p.357; Sinclair, p.264.

⁵⁵ The second Taranaki War was short-lived and was brought to an abrupt end with a significant government victory at Katikara on 4 June 1863 which left 40 Maori dead.

⁵⁶ Alfred D. Foley, *Jane’s Story: The Story of Heeni Te Kirikaramu/Pore (Jane Foley)*, Whangaparoa, published by the author, 2003, p.96.

communities. There were also several Maori-language newspapers (*niupepa*) that found their way into the villages and communities throughout the North Island. Some of these were government funded and some were individual or religious initiatives. They discussed many of the political, social, economic issues that affected Maori, but all had the general aim of propagandising them, ‘in that each sought to influence the political or social thoughts and behaviour of its Maori readers’.⁵⁷ The most significant Maori language newspaper was the government produced *Te Karere Maori* (*The Maori Messenger*) which was edited by officers of the Native Department.

Maori also had access to Auckland for trade and a steady flow of them made the journey to and from the town. They could hardly fail to notice the military activity on the Great South Road with the increased numbers of imperial soldiers and the increasingly strident tone of comments in the newspapers. They were aware, for example, of the imminent arrival of the armed steamer *Pioneer* which was being constructed in Sydney. The Waikatos had consistently refused to allow Pakeha craft on the river and invoked the Treaty of Waitangi which promised chieftainship over taonga (treasures) which they understood to include their sacred rivers. The purpose of a specially constructed armed steamer was not hard to fathom.⁵⁸ There was also, for a time, the paranoid belief in some quarters that soldiers disguised as civilian workers were using places like the school at Otawhao to stockpile guns and ammunition. Consequently, a law was passed by the King that provided for every canoe passing up or down the river to be searched.⁵⁹

Rewi wrote to Grey on 25 March 1863 demanding that Gorst be removed within three weeks, or else he would be killed, and in the letter he alluded to Grey’s plan to dig around the King until he fell.⁶⁰ Wiremu Tamehana saw the immense strategic value of the education that the school in Otawhao was providing and he was prepared to turn a

⁵⁷ Lachy Paterson, *Colonial Discourses, Niuepepa Maori 1855-1863*, Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2006, p.12.

⁵⁸ The *Avon* was a coaster purchased from Lyttelton by the government in 1862. It was armour plated and armed with a 12-pound Armstrong gun. It arrived at the Waikato River on 25 July 1863. A second ship, *Pioneer*, was a purpose-built river gun-boat. Originally named Waikato, it was built in Sydney and it sailed, steamed, and was also towed across the Tasman Sea by *HMS Eclipse*. It arrived at the Manukau Harbour on 3 October 1863 and was renamed *Pioneer*. It was a paddle steamer that also had three masts for sails. At 300 tons and 140 feet in length it drew only three feet of water when fully laden. It was armed with two 12-pound Armstrong guns, each in a turret.

⁵⁹ Gorst, *The Maori King*, p.333.

⁶⁰ Gorst, *The Maori King*, p.346.

blind eye to Gorst's other activities in order to keep it. So too did Princess Te Puea, the influential sister of the King. The issue polarised the rival groups even more. The King and his supporters were still hoping for some accommodation with the government, and the fiercely intransigent Rewi and his faction were intent on confrontation. Rewi soon forced the issue by raiding Gorst's printing office and carrying off the press.⁶¹ Tamehana, ever the peacemaker, persuaded Grey to recall Gorst in order to avoid bloodshed, and he departed on 18 April 1863. In a conversation with Gorst, Tamehana too referred to Grey's unfortunate remark as the reason for the young Englishman's removal; 'the governor had said at Taupiri that he would dig around the king until he fell, and they could not help thinking that the school at Te Awamutu [Otawhao], was one of his spades'.⁶²

Throughout Gorst's tenure at Otawhao, Morgan had felt increasingly side-lined. He had been keen to get onto good terms with Grey and had instigated the governor's visit to Otawhao in December 1861. Morgan continued to send Grey information but by 2 April 1862 he had written to Parris, 'I do not often write to Sir George and he still less seldom writes to me. It is very probable that he will not even acknowledge my note of today'.⁶³ As diligent as ever though, he added, 'I sent Sir George a sketch today of the road [Raglan-Waikato] as no other government officer has seen it'.⁶⁴ Apparently Gorst had replaced Morgan as the governor's preferred source of information. Gore Browne had had no option but to rely on Morgan, but Grey had a better personal feel for the situation than Gore Browne, and he also had a more developed network of government officials in place to provide him with information. By June 1862 Morgan was despondent. Gorst had moved into his house and more or less taken over his school.⁶⁵ The missionary asked to resign, but his request was refused.

Other missionaries continued to provide information and opinion. Their activities did not constitute deliberate spying, but nevertheless, they were carrying out an intelligence function. Their actions arose from a deep concern for the safety and security of their district, and the belief that the best future for Maori lay within a

⁶¹ (TDM ARC 3146/1), 25 March 1863. Seizure of the Press.

⁶² Gorst, *The Maori King*, p.349.

⁶³ Morgan to Parris, (ANZ GB 1/2/d), 2 April 1862.

⁶⁴ Morgan to Parris, (ANZ GB 1/2/d), 2 April 1862.

⁶⁵ Morgan to Gore-Browne, (ANZ 1/2/d), 27 June 1862.

westernised New Zealand that compelled them to write about the events that they witnessed. They had laboured for many years as catalysts for dramatic change in Maori society and they had a stake in the new status quo that they had helped to create. They often hoped to influence policy and wrote to the government on a wide range of subjects. All of the missionaries had their own opinions and they did not act as a lobby group. They filled a spectrum of perspectives with some being more accepting of Kingitanga than others, but their correspondence, either critical of the government or not, produced a clear picture of the social and political atmosphere in their regions. Schnackenberg at Raglan, Maunsell at Maraetai and Kohanga, Purchas at Onehunga, Whitely at Taranaki and Brown at Tauranga were just some who continued to correspond with Grey, his ministers and government officials throughout this period.

Benjamin Ashwell, the CMS missionary at Taupiri, which was very near to the King's seat at Ngaruawahia was well located to observe developments. He wrote giving his opinion of the state of affairs in January, May and June 1863, and his letters contained an increasingly worried tone.⁶⁶ He had also corresponded with Gore Browne in July 1861 advising him that the Lower and Middle Waikato were peaceful at that time.⁶⁷ Whitely continued to correspond and his advice was sometimes specifically related to military activities. In May 1863 he wrote to Grey about the tactics that Maori used during battle, explaining that they tried to avoid being shot by constantly keeping an eye on the enemy's weapon, 'when the enemy fires they drop to the ground and then are immediately upon him before he can reload'.⁶⁸ Government officers also continued to file reports and send in their observations and opinion. Parris in Taranaki kept up his voluminous correspondence, and officials in locations such as Whangarei, Wellington and Napier also reported regularly. Chiefs such as Tamati Ngapora, who was an influential Kingite chief, but who was on good terms with the government, were also in the habit of writing to Grey or Fox to express their views.

The Kingites attended several large rununga between 1860 and 1863 where they debated how to respond to the continual encroachments of the government. Major rununga were at Kohimarama in July-August 1860, Ngaruawahia/Taupiri in June 1861

⁶⁶ ANZ MA 3-2, Head Office Registry papers 1863-66, Ashwell letters; January, 13 May, 23 June 1863.

⁶⁷ TDM ARC 2948, Reverend Ashwell's Letters and Journals at Taupiri.

⁶⁸ Grey Collection, (APL W34) 15, 16, 20 May 1863.

and Peria in 1862. These were usually attended by missionaries (Bishop Selwyn addressed the Peria rununga), and government officials, and reports of the proceedings were sent back to Auckland. Grey himself had met many Kingite chiefs at Otawhao in December 1861, and during a surprise visit that he made to Taupiri and Kohanga in January 1863. The Kohimarama runanga was a major event convened by the government to gain Maori approval of its policies in the Taranaki. The month-long debate would have left none of the chiefs who attended in any doubt about the government's intentions, and it also gave the Europeans attending a very clear idea of Maori sentiments.

All of the information that made its way back to Auckland should have added up to make a reasonably clear picture about what was happening in the Waikato, and in general, that was probably the case. Some of the information was in the form of official reports, but most was random and *ad hoc* in nature and apart from the information from the Native Department, there was little pattern to how it was gathered. Further clouding of the picture was created by factions, both within and outside government, which were at odds about how to deal with the 'Maori problem.' The country was very factionalised and this was reflected in a succession of unstable and short-lived governments, battles between centralist and separatist politicians and those who saw the 'Maori problem' as one of Auckland avarice, tussles between the governor and the ministers about the scope of their authority, wildly parochial politicians who pressed their own provincial or business interests, and a prejudiced and inflammatory press. This was a time in New Zealand politics before the creation of political parties with coherent and relatively stable policies, and the government frequently lurched from one policy to another as new governing cliques held sway.

In such an environment, a crucially important and comprehensive report by Gorst in June 1862 was received with flawed analysis. He outlined what he thought were the four principal causes for Maori grievance; fear of losing their land and therefore their power, ill feeling over the Taranaki situation, government preparations for war (primarily the Great South Road), and payments made to Maori government officers which were construed as buying their loyalty. His report painted a dismal picture of the deteriorating political situation in the Upper Waikato. As one of the best placed Europeans to have an understanding of the King Movement, Gorst's opinion

should have carried weight, but because his report contradicted the optimistic view the government held of the success of the *new institutions* in other parts of the country, it was rejected by many ministers.⁶⁹ Maori and Government formed strategic views about each other during this period, and there was considerable intelligence gained by both sides, but as with most descents into violence, it was not a climate conducive to dispassionate analysis of the situation.

Auckland under threat of attack?

Historians have never felt particularly comfortable about gauging how close Auckland came to being attacked by the Kingites in July 1863. This is partly because, although there is material available about the subject, much of it was collected and released by Grey to justify his actions after he invaded the Waikato.⁷⁰ It was known that Rewi had been demanding an attack for months. The ideal time to do so would have been when a large contingent of imperial troops was away in the Taranaki re-occupying the Tataramaika Block. On 4 June the British troops won the decisive battle at the Katikara River which brought the fighting in the Taranaki to a close, and they were soon back and able to defend Auckland. Ngati Maniapoto had been in the Taranaki too, and because they would presumably have played a leading role in any attack on Auckland, their absence from any combined force may have been a good enough reason not to have attacked Auckland at that time.

⁶⁹ Morgan to Gore-Browne, (ANZ 1/2/d), 20 May 1862.

⁷⁰ There is now a general agreement that Grey indulged in a degree of manipulation of information before the invasion of the Waikato. Cowan took Fulloon's information about a Kingite plan to attack Auckland at face value, 'The Kingite plan of operations was detailed by Mr James Fulloon, native interpreter, in reports to the Government in June, 1863,' p.237, also see footnote 78; Sinclair, was less convinced, 'The important question remains whether the Waikato would in fact, have attacked if Grey had not done so. It is impossible to answer this conclusively: Grey continued to gather evidence in favour of the affirmative for several years, but was unconvincing. What is certain is that the "Naughties," or extremists wanted to draw the sword, and advocated doing so at many meetings,' pp.268-9; Belich, claims that Grey made up the threat: 'Allegations of hostile Maori intent were the major element of Grey's misinformation campaign. They functioned both to justify an invasion and help retain or acquire the resources for it'. p.124; and Philippa Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005, reaffirms Belich's argument and claims, '...Grey brought war...Misadvising the British government that his preparations were defensive against an alleged Kingite plot against Auckland'. p.71; M. Sorrenson, 'Maori and Pakeha', in Rice (ed.) *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, noted: 'It remained for Grey to provide the pretext. He discovered a plot- in fact no more than vague rumours- that the Waikato Kingites were to attack Auckland', p.155; Bohan, p.132 argues, '... Grey also had eighteen letters, ostensibly from Tamihana, as evidence of the great Maori plot against Auckland and of Tamihana's determination to kill unarmed Europeans. In fact, only three of those letters were written before 24 June and the translations of all were flawed, but by the time those facts were established the damage had long since been done'.

The pros and cons of a general uprising were frequently and openly discussed throughout the Waikato. Despite their growing concerns about the Government's military build-up, the moderates still continued to frustrate Rewi's plans. Grey sent the government officer John Rogan to seek assurances from Tawhaio that he did not condone the Oakura killings, a task considered so dangerous that no pro-government guides or interpreters would accompany him.⁷¹ The message that Rogan received from senior moderate chiefs was that Tawhaio had commanded 'Waikato lie still'.⁷² Although both sides anticipated war, it was still not inevitable. Europeans sensed the imminence of a possible attack later in June when Maori living in the Onehunga area south of Auckland began to exhume their dead, moving the bones to supposedly safer resting places further south into the Waikato.⁷³

As some Kingite elements became increasingly strident, several missionaries who had been opposed to Morgan began to change their stance. Maunsell who had been openly critical of Morgan advised Grey where to site a military road through the Waikato, and Selwyn and Burrows became frustrated with the Kingite extremists and began to support Grey's policies. So too did Brown and Baker at Tauranga, Hadfield at Otaki, Kissling and Ronaldson in the Wairarapa, Spencer at Rotorua, Henry Williams in the Bay of Islands and William Williams of Waiapu.⁷⁴ Most also agreed that some Maori land should be confiscated to punish tribes taking up arms against the crown. In June, Ashwell reported that Wiremu Tamehana had uncovered a plan to attack out-settlers near Auckland. Tamehana had apparently undertaken to upset the plan, and Tamati Ngapora at Manukau advised that, 'if there were no murders by 12 July all would be well as it would mean Tamehana and the advocates of peace would have prevailed'.⁷⁵

Two weeks earlier on 20 June, James Fulloon, a 'half-caste' government officer, had filed a crucially important memorandum. A young man still in his early twenties, Fulloon was attached to General Cameron's headquarters at Queen's Redoubt as an

⁷¹ Ward, p.158. A party of ten soldiers had been ambushed and nine were killed near the Oakura River in Taranaki on 4 May 1863, thus igniting a brief second Taranaki Campaign.

⁷² Ward, p.158. Also see AJHR 1863 Patara to Tamati Ngapora, 27 April 1863, Enclosure 38 Native Affairs.

⁷³ Gorst, *The Maori King*, p.373; Ward, p.158.

⁷⁴ AJHR 1863 E3, see note 1, p.61; Ward, p.159; Howe, p.227-232.

⁷⁵ Steven Oliver, 'Ngapora, Tamati', in *The New Zealand Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 1, Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs and Allen and Unwin, 1990, pp.307-8.

interpreter. The Native Department supplied interpreters for the troops but relations between the two were not always good.⁷⁶ Fulloon's capabilities and access meant that he was employed in a wider role than just interpreting, and the government used him to collect information and to communicate with pro-government chiefs. In effect, he was a liaison or political officer.⁷⁷

Fulloon's memorandum detailed the plans the Kingites had developed for simultaneously attacking Auckland and European settlements all over the North Island. It explained the routes they would take and how some people and houses would be spared. The routes by-passed Queens Redoubt and led straight to Auckland. Fulloon warned, 'by what I have been able to ascertain, the plan that Waikato intends to follow out now is the one I have first described'.⁷⁸ Hurst, a Royal Engineer officer with the 12th Regiment walked the routes identified by Fulloon and did a rough survey. Parham has suggested that Fulloon was pressed in to preparing the memorandum to support Grey's manoeuvring.⁷⁹ In any case, Grey gave the memorandum great exposure and used it to validate his case as he prepared for war.

Grey had been playing a game of brinksmanship with the more radical Kingites. He had provoked them with his comments in *Pihoihoi* and the attempt to build the courthouse at Te Kohekohe. His big gamble had been the re-occupation of the Tataramaika Block because he was well aware that the Kingites had threatened to do two things. Firstly, if the block was re-occupied they would re-start the fighting, and secondly, if shots were fired by troops in Taranaki, the tribes would rise up and attack European settlements. It was a calculated risk but he had been prepared to take it. His bluff had been called over *Pihoihoi* and Te Kohekohe. The fighting had indeed restarted in the Taranaki with the ambush at Oakura. It now remained to be seen if the last part of the threat would be carried out. Would the European settlements be attacked? There was growing evidence to suggest that this might be the case, and Grey produced a kind of intelligence summary to prove it.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Ward, p.171.

⁷⁷ Parham, p.44.

⁷⁸ AJHR 1863 E No 5 B No 2 Memorandum by Mr Fulloon, 20 June 1863; Parham, pp.44-46.

⁷⁹ Parham, p.44.

⁸⁰ (APL MS 200) Grey Collection. Grey prepared a twenty-four page document which served as a kind of intelligence summary. It referred to a large variety of information that had flowed through to Auckland from April to July 1863. The document is undated and may have (continued on next page)

The governor believed that there was a significant level of co-ordination between Waikato and Taranaki and he concluded that, ‘some general understanding must have been arrived at between the natives of Waikato and Taranaki to the recent murders [Oakura]’.⁸¹ He speculated that the Kingites were preparing to use the killings as a pretext to attack European settlements. He was aware of how achingly vulnerable the settlements and out-settlers were to attack, and he had been warned as early as May by several chiefs that European settlements were being watched by Kingite warriors.⁸² It was clear that the Kingites were building new fortifications. Colonel Thomas Mould R.E., the senior engineer officer in the country, reported in May 1863 that a major fortification was being constructed very carefully at Rangiriri. Strategically sited on a narrow neck of land between Lake Waikare and the Waikato River, Rangiriri was a brilliant defensive location. Mould reported:

From all that I can gather I believe that if war breaks out at Taranaki they will immediately make a diversion by an attack on the troops at the Ia [Queens Redoubt area] or advance towards Auckland. I feel assured this is their present plan, and that their earthworks at Rangiriri to cause a safe retreat in case of discomforture.⁸³

The existence of the works at Rangiriri was confirmed by Waata Kukutai of Taupiri who concluded, ‘I am persuaded that trouble is close at hand’.⁸⁴ Rogan also commented on the earthworks and warned about possible attacks along the military road between Pokeno and Papakura.⁸⁵ Thomas Skinner of Aotea reported that the Ngati Maniapoto were waiting for a blow to be struck in the Taranaki before attacking Mangatawhiri, and then pushing on to Auckland. Small parties, he warned, would be sent to sack and destroy Raglan and kill the out-settlers.⁸⁶ Barker, the Resident Magistrate at Rangitukia reported a rapidly changing attitude in his district with great hostility from some Maori, ‘everything is being done except for personal violence to

even been compiled after the invasion had begun. It is written in his own hand and shows how he came to the conclusion that Auckland was about to be attacked. Letters referred to with particular relevance were from: Gorst; 16 April, 23 April, and 8 May. Reverend Purchas, 7 May. Te Hapuku, 15 April. Also see Morgan to Gore-Browne, (ANZ 1/2/d), 20 July 1863.

⁸¹ (APL MS 200) p.6. Grey referred to comments made by the chiefs Patara and Hori Papita which supported the idea that there was a close link between the Taranaki and Waikato and the strong probability of a general uprising.

⁸² Letters from Purchas 25 April, 2 May. Te Wheora (Kihikihi) 4 May, Hepata (Taupiri) 8 May 1863 Wirritona (*Grey's spelling*) Ngapu (Te Keretu), (APL MS 200), 13 May 1863.

⁸³ Letter from Colonel Thomas Mould, (APL MS 200), 8 May 1863.

⁸⁴ Letter from Waata Kukutai, (APL MS 200), 11 May 1863.

⁸⁵ Letter from John Rogan, (APL MS 200), 18 May 1863.

⁸⁶ Letter from Thomas Skinner, (APL MS 200), 8 May 1863.

render our position untenable'.⁸⁷ Maori friendly to the government were said to be protecting the Europeans, but the Kingites had forbidden the mail schooner to land.

Rumours of imminent attack inflamed Auckland's population and war fever intensified. There was animosity and belligerence towards Maori walking the streets of the town, and the newspapers whipped up public fears and called for forceful and immediate government action; *The Southern Cross* extolling itself as the 'war at any cost organ'.⁸⁸ The Kingites were cast as blood-thirsty murderers, who must be punished by the confiscation of their land:

...there is but one way of meeting this and that is by confiscation and the sword...The Natives have forced it upon us...At the very least large tracts of their lands must be the penalty.⁸⁹

Finally, on 24 June, Grey announced his plan to advance the military to Ngaruawahia and to permanently seize all of the intervening land. Some of it would be sold to cover the cost of the war and some would be used for military settlements to protect against unrest to the south of the town. The governor had decided to make a pre-emptive strike. He had been convinced by the constant flow of information that the Kingites were preparing to attack, and decided to move before they did. The consequences of a large scale attack on the town were too horrible to imagine, and the case can be made that Grey acted responsibly, as a governor should, to protect the capital and its citizens. However, the decision to invade certainly suited his political purposes and solved a number of his problems. Government ministers, farmers, potential settlers of the new land, and towns-folk were almost universally in favour of the invasion. The problems of insufficient land for settlement, the Kingite desire for independence, and the security of Auckland could all now be solved in one grand stroke. Grey had built up a large military force and its preparations were now virtually complete. He now had a justification to use it. Gustavus von Tempsky, who was later to find fame with the Forest Rangers and the Armed Constabulary, summed up the nature of the perceived military threat to Auckland, and reflected the generally held view:

⁸⁷ Report from Resident Magistrate Barker, (APL MS 200), 4 April 1863.

⁸⁸ Sinclair, p.270; Gorst, *The Maori King*, p.375. Miller, pp.14-5. Miller discusses the role of Auckland's newspapers and demonstrates how they so stirred up public sentiment that many citizens howled for revenge.

⁸⁹ *The Southern Cross*, 20 July 1863.

Even after our being warned and armed, if a determined rush upon Auckland had been made, with the least successful result of suffering to us, the whole race of the North Island, even the still loyal Ngapuhi (the hereditary foes of all natives south of Auckland) of the extreme north would have risen to a man, electrified by the grandeur of the exploit. The Eastern Ranges, the Hunua and Wairoa forest hills would have sheltered an advance within twelve hours tramp of Auckland. An overwhelming force would have broken through our eastern wing of defence, and entered Auckland with the fugitives, a canoe fleet from the Thames district could have joined the main force at Howick, and if they had done nothing else but fired the suburbs and killed there the unarmed as well as the armed, that feat would have lifted the cause of Maoridom above all doubt in the excitable Maoris' imagination. A retreat to the Hunua could be easily effected by a strong body, and once there they could have defied the whole army of General Cameron and rejoined leisurely their centres at Paparata and Meremere. But Maori tactics were not 'daring'; they would not leave General Cameron in their rear and so the original plan dwindled away from its original proportions.⁹⁰

It was in that emotional environment that Grey made his decision, but a strange incident soon accelerated the invasion schedule. Bonfires were lit all around Auckland and the surrounding area on 1 July 1863 to belatedly celebrate the marriage of the Prince of Wales. Gorst recorded that the anxious Maori living in the Hunua Ranges mistook the fires as a sign that the Europeans were gathering to attack.⁹¹ Other reports claimed that Maori were actually preparing to attack the small village of Mauku when the bonfires scared them off.⁹² Hurried consultations were held in the Waikato and word filtered through to Auckland that a number of rununga had been held to discuss an attack on Auckland. The panic in the town reached a crescendo.

Grey had originally intended that the troops would cross the Mangatawhiri on 16 July but he now shortened the timeframe. A proclamation was issued on 11 July calling on all Maori living between Auckland and Mangatawhiri to swear an oath of allegiance to the Queen, and to surrender their arms or vacate their land and move south into the Waikato. Grey and Cameron may have been hoping for a certain degree of surprise, because Cameron had actually moved his troops up to the Mangatawhiri River on 9 July. The proclamation didn't actually reach the Waikato until after the troops had

⁹⁰ Lennard, p.60.

⁹¹ Gorst, *The Maori King*, p.374.

⁹² Sinclair, p.270.

crossed the river and fought the first battle of the war at Koheroa on 15 July.⁹³ At about the same time that the proclamation crossed the border, the majority of South Auckland Maori, having refused to swear allegiance, were in the process of vacating their homes (some of which had been burnt by the troops, which created a cause for later retribution) and crossing the boundary to war.

Unlike the theatres for the Northern War and First Taranaki War, there were no longer any Europeans living in the Waikato and the government had little ability to get up-to-date information about what was happening there. By this time Morgan was a chaplain to the troops and he became involved in a series of discussions with the governor during which his intimate knowledge of the Upper Waikato was extremely useful. On 18 July he forwarded to Grey a letter from Hohaia Ngakiwi of Otawhao, a teacher and candidate for ordination. The letter told of plans to attack Auckland and advised that the Waikato River had been blockaded. It ended, ‘do not reveal my name lest all the Maoris should revenge themselves on me’.⁹⁴ Grey needed more information and asked Morgan to call at the Native Department office, Morgan noting that, ‘it was to assist in the presentation of a map for Sir G. Grey of the Upper and Lower Waikato in which every dray road and Maori path was to be laid down’.⁹⁵

The possibility of Kingite infiltration through the Hunua and Wairoa Ranges, by old warpaths known to only a few Europeans, worried Morgan, and he obtained a large map from the Survey Office and pointed out the tracks to Mr Seed, one of Grey’s assistants. The following day Morgan was called in to see Grey:

Sir George enquired about the Wairoa roads, the number of natives amongst the Wairoa settlers, the probable effect of an expedition to the Upper Waikato, the number likely to oppose the troops etc. He thanked me for the information and said that immediate measures should be taken to secure the Wairoa district.⁹⁶

Grey appears to have acted on Morgan’s information immediately, because within a few weeks seven military posts along a twelve-mile line across the Hunua

⁹³ Gorst met a messenger carrying the first copies (written in Maori) at dusk on 14 July on the road between Auckland and Otahuhu, (Gorst, *The Maori King*, p.380). Also see Sinclair, p.270, and Cowan, p.305-6 for Lieutenant Lusk’s description of the incident.

⁹⁴ Morgan to Gore Browne, (ANZ 1/2/d), 18 July 1863.

⁹⁵ Morgan to Gore Browne, (ANZ 1/2/d), 20 July 1863.

⁹⁶ Morgan to Gore Browne, (ANZ 1/2/d), 20 July 1863; Morgan to Maunsell, (APL NZ 266-3 M84), 25 December 1863.

Ranges were established to secure the area. Morgan, who later had to defend his actions from hostile criticism by other missionaries claimed, ‘these and other military posts, under God’s blessing, saved Auckland from attack’.⁹⁷ He received two more letters in late July from ‘one of my most trustworthy natives’ which apparently confirmed that there had been plans to attack Auckland.⁹⁸ Morgan lunched with Grey on 18 July when the letters were discussed. They met again the next day and Morgan presented new information that he had obtained via Kawhia. Grey confided that he hoped to seize Ngaruawahia as soon as possible and have 10,000 settlers in the Waikato in six months time. Pressed to give an opinion about how long it would take to make the Kingites submit, Morgan noted, ‘I told him that one half of those now in arms would perish before submission. He was surprised but it is true I fear’.⁹⁹ He also warned that supposed pro-government Maori may turn a blind eye to any attacks, and even lend war-parties canoes. It is clear that Grey needed Morgan’s advice as he was formulating plans to shore-up defences along the approaches to Auckland, and to finalise preparations for the invasion. His maps and advice about the geography of the area, the exact location of places and how to get to them were invaluable.

Once the troops crossed the Mangatawhiri, the operational requirements changed and Morgan had little more direct contact with Grey. He personally reported further information in late October but spent most of his time in his new appointment as a military chaplain at Drury. He travelled to all of the camps; Burton’s Farm, Papakura, Wairoa, Mauku and Waiuku, but complained on 27 November that he still had not met General Cameron.¹⁰⁰

Grey and Cameron were, of course, very interested to know what sort of military force would oppose the invasion. Maori society was tribal and still highly factionalised. The King Movement had sought to create a type of pan-Maoridom, but it was still a very new concept for deeply divided tribes, and the extent to which the Waikato tribes would work together, and other tribes would support them, was

⁹⁷ Morgan to Maunsell, (APL NZ 266-3 M84), 25 December 1863.

⁹⁸ Morgan to Gore Browne, (ANZ 1/2/d), 27 July 1863.

⁹⁹ Morgan to Gore Browne, (ANZ 1/2/d), 27 August 1863. Also see Morgan to Grey 6 August 1863, Grey Letters (APL M44[25]), where Morgan warns of possible attack on Auckland, sets out possible routes, and warns that pro-government Maori may turn a blind eye to the Kingite attackers, and even lend them canoes.

¹⁰⁰ Morgan to Gore Browne, (ANZ 1/2/d), 27 November 1863.

unknown. Belich has argued that 15 of the 26 major North Island tribal groups sent contingents of various sizes to the Waikato.¹⁰¹ Various European estimates were made of the potential Kingite fighting strength. *The Press* calculated it at 2,670 Waikatos, a figure that did not include reinforcements from other tribes.¹⁰² *The Southern Cross*, observed that the Nga Puhi of Tai Tokerau (Bay of Islands) had pledged loyalty to the government and estimated that, ‘8,000-10,000 male aborigines are able to bear arms, fully half of whom are now congregated’.¹⁰³ Neither figure took account of the fact that, unlike the full-time British troops, the Maori warriors could not stay in the field more or less indefinitely. Accurate calculations are as difficult now as they were then, and it appears that the eventual total Kingite mobilisation was somewhere in the range of 2,000-4,000, not all of whom were in the field at any one time.¹⁰⁴ It is not clear whether Grey and Cameron had more specific information than the newspapers about the numbers they would face, but it seems unlikely.

There was a clear disparity in numbers between the Kingite force and the army which Grey continued to assemble. When Cameron crossed the Mangatawhiri River in July 1863, he had only 4,000 imperial troops available. The rapid enlistment of militia and the arrival of more imperial troops meant that by May 1864 he commanded more than 9,000 imperial regulars, over 4,000 hastily recruited militia and volunteers and a small naval brigade; close to 16,000 men in total.¹⁰⁵ It is easy and tempting to conclude that the Kingites were vastly outnumbered, but simple division does not reveal the full story. It is difficult even for a modern-day army to counter small bands of effectively trained irregular fighters. The Kingites relied upon non-combatants to supply the food and their other fairly basic logistic requirements and these people are not included in the total number of warriors. By contrast, Cameron’s force had a huge logistic tail and there were enormous problems trans-shipping equipment and stores over a supply line that extended as far as England 12,000 miles away, (and the last leg from Auckland to the front was probably the worst). The net result was that much of the force was

¹⁰¹ Belich, pp.128-133. Belich gives a detailed analysis of the tribal make-up of the Kingite force and the problems Maori had putting a coherent force into the field for a sustained period of time.

¹⁰² *The Press*, 6 October 1863. The newspaper quoted figures from *The New Zealander* which calculated that the number of males above 14 years of age in the Waikato/ Thames area was 4,000. The figure of 2,670 was derived by subtracting one third to allow for those who would be sick or aged.

¹⁰³ *The Southern Cross*, 10 August 1863.

¹⁰⁴ Belich, p.130.

¹⁰⁵ Belich, p.126. Belich calculates that 18,000 men served in the government’s force at some time during the war.

employed in guarding outposts and communication routes or transporting supplies, and there was the danger of it falling into the trap of simply guarding its own food.

The actual number of fighting men in the front line was often more or less equal. For example, at the Battle of Rangiriri fought on November 20th 1863, arguably the most significant of the whole war, the Kingite force numbered approximately 500, and another 400 either arrived too late or stood by without joining in. The British force assembled to assault the pa numbered 850-900 while another 320 were landed behind the position to capture outposts.¹⁰⁶ The men under arms in the battle were therefore about 900 Kingites and about 1200 British soldiers. The British had the advantage of artillery (albeit too light), while the Kingites had enormously strong earthworks that had taken months to prepare. The two forces were roughly equivalent in numbers at that particular point, especially when the generally accepted rule-of-thumb that a 3:1 superiority is preferred when attacking troops in entrenched positions is taken into account.

Belich's assertion that 'the real weakness of Rangiriri was not inadequate fortifications, but a woefully inadequate garrison',¹⁰⁷ misses the point. The position was immensely strong, and the number of warriors available should, in theory at least, have been enough to hold it. The real difference between the two sides arose, not simply from the number of men who faced each other across the rifle pits, but from a combination of factors that included vast disparities in technology and wealth of resources, the effective use of tactics, political cohesiveness, and as in previous campaigns in New Zealand, the ability to sustain operations indefinitely. Taylor has shown that the application of excellent logistics as part of an overall and coherent plan was a decisive factor in the British success during the Waikato War.¹⁰⁸

The pattern of using pro-government Maori had continued since 1845-6. In the Northern War, Nene had been more or less an equal partner with the crown, although the British troops and his warriors didn't really fight as a combined force. Nene was

¹⁰⁶ Belich, pp.142-3; Cowan, pp 326-7. Cowan gives the total of men assembled before the pa as 850 men. Belich gives the figure of 900. Another 320 were transported 500 metres behind the position.

¹⁰⁷ Belich, p.145. Belich does however point out that Cameron had a strike force of 2000 by late October 1863, pp.138-9.

¹⁰⁸ Richard Taylor, 'British Logistics in the New Zealand Wars 1845-66', PhD Thesis, Massey University, 2004, p.193.

certainly a player in the shaping of the strategy of the war and advising the British commanders on the tactical situation throughout, but it was possibly as guides and suppliers of intelligence that he and his allied chiefs had their greatest impact. In Wellington, the Native Contingent had been useful to the British Army and had supplied information and taken the field with the troops. In the First Taranaki War the Maori allies had supplied information, advised the British commanders, guided bush scouring operations and manned strong-points. Although they may have become involved in the odd skirmish, the Maori allies had all stopped short of becoming full combatants in any of the wars, and this pattern was to continue.

Another attempt was made in mid 1863 to mobilise the pro-government tribes which were now colloquially known as ‘Queenites’. In June, the Queenite Maori of the Lower Waikato were paid to build fortifications on the government side of the Waikato River. Queen’s Redoubt was vulnerable to attack and the Kingites had made it clear that they wanted it removed. Cameron improved its security by having a pro-government pa built near-by. Te Wheoro and Waata Kukutai, who were already in the pay of the government as a native assessor and as the head magistrate of the Taupiri rununga respectively, were the principal chiefs involved. They had both spoken against the idea of a Maori King since its inception and were firm supporters of the governor.¹⁰⁹ Both built and garrisoned pa in the vicinity of Queen’s Redoubt and helped ferry stores up the river. In return, they had their salaries tripled to 150 pounds per annum and their subordinates received presents and pensions. Hona of Kahumatuku, another Queenite chief, was directed to settle his village on government land near Camerontown (originally called Cameron)¹¹⁰ to help protect that vital stores depot. Through these actions, the government had theoretically shored up its two important installations at the front.

At their own request, the Queenite warriors were issued yellow caps that they wore in and around Queen’s Redoubt so that the British troops could distinguish them from possible Kingite infiltrators. The cost of tools and food for the parties constructing

¹⁰⁹ Gary Scott, ‘Kukutai, Waata Pihikete’, (p.232) and ‘Te Wheoro, Wiremu Te Morehu Maipapa’, (p.524), in *The New Zealand Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 1, Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs and Allen and Unwin, 1990.

¹¹⁰ JDQMG, p.57.

the pa was also paid for by the government.¹¹¹ Despite all of the effort made to develop the Queenites as allies, Gorst claimed that this attempt to raise a loyal Maori force was futile:

Te Wheoro and Kukutai were, no doubt, perfectly faithful and trustworthy, but neither they nor anyone else had the least control over their followers. All were in constant communication with their friends and kinsmen of the King-party, and any person who felt affronted, deserted with the greatest readiness.¹¹²

Indeed many Queenites of the Lower Waikato changed allegiance very quickly once the fighting began, and this seems to be particularly so once the Camerontown supply depot was destroyed. Te Wheoro and Kukutai remained loyal to the government and acted as scouts, informants and possibly advisors, right through to Te Awamutu, but for the most part the government fought the war without significant Maori allies, and certainly without Maori troops.

The invasion begins

On 12 July Cameron's troops crossed the Mangatawhiri River at points that had been reconnoitred the year before. They immediately took up positions on high ground, on the Koheroa Ridges, and braced for a counter-attack that never came. It was mid-winter and heavy rain made the ground sodden. Even though the elements were not conducive to operations, the political situation made them imperative. Cameron's preparations were now virtually complete and he felt confident that he could carry out his mission. The invasion of the Waikato had begun.

The Kingites monitored and prepared to counter the British activities as the troops consolidated their position on the Koheroa Ridges. On 17 July, a Kingite force was seen entrenching on a hill two miles south of the British position and the decision was made to dislodge them before they became too strong. Troops from the 14th Regiment supported by detachments of the 12th and 70th, all under Lieutenant Colonel Austin, immediately set off and successfully drove the Kingites off and killed a significant number.¹¹³ This otherwise unremarkable minor battle was significant for two reasons; the hesitancy of the British troops and the gallantry of Cameron. As the

¹¹¹ Gorst, *The Maori King*, p.368.

¹¹² Gorst, *The Maori King*, p.369.

¹¹³ Cowan's figures have traditionally been accepted; British 1 killed, 12 wounded, Maori 30 killed. Belich disputes these figures and estimates that only 14-15 Maori were killed. Cowan, p.466; Belich, p.134.

14th had advanced and come under fire they ‘hesitated momentarily’.¹¹⁴ General Cameron who had come along to watch saw the assault falter, and realising the danger, famously dashed forward waving either his cap, sword or whip (depending upon which version of the story is used)¹¹⁵ and called upon his men to charge. The sight of their general out in front emboldened the men and they rose up and took the Kingite position with their bayonets, making this the first British victory in open ground without the aid of artillery in New Zealand.¹¹⁶

The problem with the 14th was that they were ‘green’ troops who were experiencing their first taste of battle. As a rule they are keener to take cover when fired upon than experienced soldiers, and harder to get up and moving again. As a veteran of the Crimean, Cameron undoubtedly knew this. Throughout his campaigns in New Zealand he had shown himself to be a methodical, dour and cautious commander, and it seems out of character for him to rush ahead of his troops and almost get killed, which would have been a disastrous start to the campaign if he had been. In fact a Kingite warrior was about to tomahawk him and was bayoneted in the process of striking the blow. We may never really understand why he put himself in such danger, but part of the reason must lie in the need to stiffen the morale of his men. He was recommended for the Victoria Cross for his actions that day.¹¹⁷ This was the first battle of the Waikato War and the psychology of the occasion was crucial. Lennard observed:

This regiment being a newly formed 2nd battalion was composed in great part of young soldiers. Many of them growing lads, new to war who had never been under fire. From the veterans of the 65th, 12th and 40th they had heard of the savage character of the foe they now confronted, and the destruction of the grenadier company of the 40th in the Taranaki swamps was still fresh in their memory.¹¹⁸

Fear probably played a large part in the hesitation of the 14th, but how much was the normal fear of battle heightened by the Maori fearsome reputation? How much did the fear of death, and possible mutilation at the hands of ‘cannibal savages,’ contribute to the initial reluctance of those young men of the 14th to charge into battle, especially as there were rumours that Maori had recently tortured people with hot kauri gum in the

¹¹⁴ Cowan, p.255.

¹¹⁵ Lennard, p.85, note 5. Lennard discusses the various options; cap, sword or whip. One account even had him mounted on horseback.

¹¹⁶ Lennard, p.68.

¹¹⁷ Bohan, p.135.

¹¹⁸ Lennard, p.66.

South Auckland region? The answers are unclear, but it seems likely that by galvanising his young soldiers back into action that day, Cameron had won more than a small skirmish; he had won the first psychological victory of the war. He gained momentum and gave the Kingites a foretaste of the power, determination and single-mindedness that his force would display throughout the whole campaign.

On the same day as the battle at Koheroa on 17 July, a Kingite war party ambushed a supply convoy that was travelling between Drury and Queen's Redoubt. Sixteen soldiers were killed in the sharp little battle that signalled the Kingite response to Cameron's invasion. For the next fourteen weeks there was a guerrilla campaign throughout South Auckland.¹¹⁹ Kingite war parties infiltrated through the Hunua Ranges on the east and Pukekohe on the west, to descend upon isolated farmhouses, settlers working in the fields and military supply columns. Atrocities were committed as civilian men, women and children were murdered, farmhouses were burnt and possessions and livestock were stolen. The degree to which the raids were co-ordinated by the Kingite leadership and sanctioned by the king himself is unclear, but there was repugnance by some Kingites about the murder of women and children. Assistant Surgeon Carberry noted, 'I am told that many Maoris, and the King himself are opposed to the murdering system adopted by some of the natives and that the King expressed his displeasure at the murder of Mrs Tuber'.¹²⁰ Fulloon reported from Taupiri that:

...it is now stated that the Ngati Maniapoto chief Ti Kaokao has been elected general and has ordered that the natives must not go to Patamahoe or Waiuku, or even maraud, as he expects that the troops will soon make an advance movement, and it was desirable that they should have the whole of their force together. It is further reported that the Waikato people are very much vexed by Mrs Fahey being shot. They have applied to the king for permission to shoot the man that committed the deed.¹²¹

Fulloon's report was written for the Military Secretary at Queen's Redoubt, which indicates that the military was now receiving information from well behind the

¹¹⁹ See Belich, p.134 for a good discussion of this period.

¹²⁰ A.D. Carberry, Assistant Surgeon 18th Royal Irish Regiment, 'Journal', 1863, (WTU MS 53), 18 November 1863.

¹²¹ James Fulloon, (APL MSS 246), 22 October 1863. Also see J. Featon, *The Waikato War 1863-4*, Christchurch, republished by Capper Press, 1971, pp.54-5, and Nona Morris, (ed.) *The Journal of William Morgan, Pioneer Settler Maori War Correspondent*, Auckland: 1963. The entries for this period provide interesting insights and a flavour of the situation.

Kingite lines. Until then, most of the information gathered from any means seems to have been directed to Grey and his staff, and it appears that Grey and his staff analysed that information, and used it in the formulation of strategy. The extant records do not indicate whether the military was involved in gathering much information before the invasion, and it seems likely that if it did so, it was a passive rather than an active collection. Strategic intelligence seems to have been passed from Grey to Cameron. Now that operations had started, Cameron's forward headquarters at Queen's Redoubt seems to have become more involved in the intelligence process, although information gained was from reconnaissance rather than deep intelligence.

The government response to the Kingite raids was outlined by Russell, the Minister of Colonial Defence:

Warned by the destruction and devastation of the Province of Taranaki, the Government at the commencement of hostilities in the Auckland district determined that no part of the settled districts of the Province should fall into the hands of the Natives.¹²²

Imperial regiments were organised to react to incursions as quickly as possible. Militia and volunteer units were formed to protect Auckland and the rural districts, the men serving either close to their homes or further afield in the province according to their classification.¹²³ These hastily armed and drilled townsfolk were hardly elite troops and they endured the privations of novice soldiers hastily thrown into an improvised military organisation in an unusually cold and wet winter. Russell claimed that the government had a policy of not enrolling, arming or drilling militias for the defence of the towns so that Maori, 'might not misconstrue such preparations into hostile demonstrations against themselves'.¹²⁴ Nevertheless, by late October all of the province's male population between the ages of 16 and 55 (a total of 3,176 men) was hurriedly bearing arms and engaged in some form of military duty. In South Auckland the settlers were organised into local corps, and in many cases they abandoned their properties. Stockades where the settlers could take refuge were built at seven locations across the battle-front; Waiuku, Mauku, Papatoetoe, Pukekohe, Wairoa, Papakura and

¹²² AJHR, No 6, 20 October 1863. Memorandum, Thomas Russell, Minister of Defence.

¹²³ Cowan, pp.243-4, discusses the militias. Also see AJHR, No 6, 20 October 1863.

¹²⁴ AJHR No 6, 20 October 1863.



Fig.5.5. Camp of the 40th Regiment at Baird's farm at Ramarama South Auckland, circa 1863-4. Note the thick bush and the newly developed road. Photograph by William Temple. Alexander Turnbull Library.

Howick. At the same time, Maori were rallying to the Kingite cause and moving to Meremere, including many who had previously been uncommitted or neutral.¹²⁵

Throughout the region there were many raids, skirmishes and rescue missions. The battle at Pukekohe East Church on 14 September 1863 was the longest, but in many ways it was a typical example of the conflict. A Kingite war party of approximately 200 warriors besieged male settlers who hurriedly took refuge in the church which had been stockaded and loop-holed. The defenders held out for four hours and were almost out of ammunition when help arrived in the form of a detachment of the 70th Regiment, the 1st Waikato Militia, and eventually, men of the 18th and 65th Regiments. In this case the settlers were unscathed although 40 warriors and 3 militia-men were killed.¹²⁶ It is significant that such a large number of warriors were unable to capture the church because it was part of an established pattern. No post defended by Europeans, in any of the wars, was captured, apart from in the very first battle on Maiki Hill above Kororareka. Maori offensive tactics were successful in small scale raids against isolated settlers, but little else.

¹²⁵ Parham, p.28. Fulloon noted that many Maori were defecting and moving to Meremere.

¹²⁶ Cowan, p.282. Tim Ryan and Bill Parham, *The Colonial New Zealand Wars*, Wellington: Grantham House, 1986, pp.55-6.

The Kingite war party had been able to move to its target through the bush undetected, and the settlers never knew when and where such groups might emerge. Most communities were in a high state of readiness and had already prepared defensive positions, which in this case was at East Pukekohe, a fortified church building. In this particular battle the settlers were able to get to the church and then hold out long enough for help to arrive, but that was not always the case. The sound of firing had raised the alarm and various units hurried to break the siege. All European communities and units were constantly on guard to counter brush-fire attacks and this put a huge strain on the settler economy and military resources of the area.

In another significant battle, Ngati Maniapoto warriors had a major success in a well planned surprise attack on Camerontown, the important stores depot for materiel shipped through the Waikato Heads. Goods off-loaded at Camerontown were transported by canoe to the British redoubts at Tuakau and Havelock Bluff, where the Mangatawhiri flows into the Waikato; an area known to Maori as Te Ia-roa (Ia). The attack on 7 September 1863 may have been achieved with the help of the supposedly pro-government Ngati Whauroa hapu who were guarding the installation, but who subsequently defected to the Kingite cause.¹²⁷ The destruction of Camerontown was a significant blow to the government war effort and it necessitated the movement of stores overland from Auckland to Ia for much of the rest of the war.

Throughout South Auckland troops patrolled, convoys were strengthened, and settlers banded together and watched their properties around the clock; but still the raids against isolated farmhouses and supply operations continued. The government knew that the raiders had three main bases (Fig.5.2.). The first was Pukekawa, a primarily Ngati Maniapoto camp which controlled movement across the main south bend of the Waikato River, and from which the Camerontown attackers had come. The other two were Meremere, the large entrenched position on the banks of the Waikato, and Paparata, deep in the forests of the Hunua Ranges. Paparata, in particular, was well-sited to offer refuge for raiding parties who could plan their attacks and then move with

¹²⁷ Cowan, p.262. Mr Armitage who had been the Resident Magistrate in the area was killed in the attack. So too was Mr Strand who had helped pilot *Avon* on the Waikato River. Both men may have earned the ire of the Kingites by participating in military activities, in particular by organising the movement of military stores.

relative ease through the heavily wooded hills and descend upon their targets throughout South Auckland.

Cameron realised the importance of Paparata early on and decided to attack it. On 1 August he led a combined force of 700 soldiers, sailors and marines in a night operation against the camp. The strictest security was used and the officers were given their orders by word of mouth only, to avoid details of the operation leaking out. The troops marched as quietly as possible through the night with no smoking or talking. Even so, when they got to Paparata it had been freshly vacated. Cameron later reported to Grey, ‘there is no little doubt that the natives had received notice of our proposed expedition’.¹²⁸ Two conclusions can be drawn from the experience. Firstly, the Kingites probably had a very good idea of the plans and intentions of Cameron’s troops and had received warnings from Maori living around Queens Redoubt. Secondly, large relatively conventional operations into the forests using regular troops, and artillery, were unlikely to be successful. A different approach was required.

Cameron was probably already planning to use more unconventional troops, because a few days after the Paparata expedition, two new units, the Corps of Forest Rangers and the Moveable Column, were formed. The government had been pressured by a public clamour, led by the press, ‘to form a small corps of picked men, used to the bush and rough travelling and camp life, to scout the forests and hunt out parties of marauders’.¹²⁹ The bush scouring of the Taranaki War provided the model for these new units. The Moveable Column, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Nixon, was composed of 200 volunteers from the Imperial Regiments. A larger and more ponderous formation than the Forest Rangers, it was to be less successful. William Morgan, a settler and war correspondent, observed the frustration of the troops in the column who complained that they often saw the ‘natives’ or their fires and laid ambushes but could not engage them.¹³⁰ Lieutenant Thomas McDonnell complained that they spent weeks marching through the ranges and never engaged the Kingites, always arriving too late for action. He also bemoaned the long periods of inactivity that

¹²⁸ Cameron to Grey, (APL GNZ MSS 249), 3 August 1863; *AJHR*, 1863 No E 195, 3 August 1863.

¹²⁹ Cowan, p.265.

¹³⁰ Morris, entry for 8 October 1863.

the column had to endure, a fate common in war but an irritation to an adventurous young officer.¹³¹

The Forest Rangers was an even more unconventional unit than the Moveable Column. It was commanded by innovative, determined and aggressive young officers who were outside the mould of their conventional colleagues. The first company of the Forest Rangers was raised by Lieutenant William Jackson, a young Papakura farmer, and the second soon after, by Lieutenant Gustavus von Tempsky, a flamboyant, charismatic and experienced fighter who trained as a Prussian officer and later fought in guerrilla wars against the Spanish in Central America. The individual rangers were hand-picked, tough, uncompromising men used to hard living as gold miners, farmers, bush-men, sailors and adventurers. Some had local knowledge of the area, and they were also accompanied by guides ‘of inestimable importance’.¹³² Paid eight shillings a day, triple the rate of the militia,¹³³ they were soon moulded into an elite unit with a role akin to modern Special Forces. Russell noted:

Jackson’s Corps of Forest Rangers, in number sixty, was formed specially for the purpose of clearing the Hunua and adjacent forest ranges of the marauding parties of Natives who infested those districts, and who harassed and annoyed the outposts, and rendered it unsafe to travel on the Great South Road.¹³⁴

And Featon observed of the physical geography:

No pomp or splendour of war could attend the ‘fight’ that was about to ensue. The struggle would be carried on in an almost wild uncultivated country in the deep tangled forest, amidst swamps or barren fern hills.¹³⁵

Armed with short, quick-firing carbines, long fighting knives and revolvers, all ideal for close-quarter bush fighting, and precious little in the way of stores and equipment, they were able to move through the bush and fight on much the same terms as their foe. The imperial regiments had not trained to fight a guerrilla campaign in the type of conditions presented by the New Zealand bush. The Forest Rangers’ small numbers, unconventional tactics and aggressive philosophy meant that they were able

¹³¹ Thomas McDonnell Papers, ‘Incidents of the War,’ (APL NZ MSS, 406 folder 2 of 7), reminiscence.

¹³² Richard Stowers, *Forest Rangers*, Hamilton: Published by the author, 1996, p.12.

¹³³ Ryan and Parham, pp.58-9.

¹³⁴ AJHR, 1863, No 6, 20 October 1863.T. Russell, Minister of Defence. ‘Memorandum of Measures of Defence in the Northern Island’. The unit later comprised two companies of 50 men each, under Jackson and von Tempsky.

¹³⁵ Featon, p.24.

to take the battle to the Kingites in the latter's own domain. Their constant deep patrolling and scouting of Kingite territory and still-contested areas was much more aggressive than its first tentative use in the Taranaki. Therefore the Forest Rangers were the first unit in the New Zealand Wars to go clandestinely forward to seek information and to try and engage their enemy. In this respect, much of their activities constituted intelligence gathering and they spent a lot of time going through the countryside looking for Maori and asking other Europeans for information. A typical operation consisted of patrolling through the bush for three or four days:

We had so much wet, hard work, swimming and fording rivers and creeks, and camping out without fires. When we camped in the bush on the enemy's trail it was often unsafe to light a fire for cooking or warmth, because we never knew when we might have a volley poured into us. So we just lay down as we were, wet and cold, and we'd have been dead but for the rum.¹³⁶

Indeed the rum was often the only way to keep warm and they were allowed two tots per day.¹³⁷ Of course the Kingite war parties lived and fought under the same conditions, but were much more at home in the forests and swamps and more inured to living and surviving in those difficult conditions. The New Zealand bush is difficult to move through, and the Forest Rangers often sacrificed security for ease of movement by using established Maori walking tracks. They became familiar enough with their enemy to recognise at least two Kingites by their tracks; 'six toed Jack' and another who walked with the aid of a crutch.¹³⁸

The best documented case of intelligence gathering deep inside Kingite territory was von Tempsky and McDonnell's spying mission to Paparata. McDonnell was a young officer in the Moveable Column and spoke Maori well enough to be employed as an interpreter. Both men chaffed at the inactivity they often endured and wanted more action. Paparata could be seen with field glasses from the Koheroa Ridge twelve miles away, and McDonnell wanted to obtain information about the place. He enthused von Tempsky with the plan and together they persuaded Nixon, and then Cameron, that it was possible. Cameron told them the information that he required, and the two men set off.

¹³⁶ Cowan, p.268, quoting Corporal William Jones.

¹³⁷ Lennard, p.112.

¹³⁸ Lennard, p.98; Featon, pp.46-50; Gustavus F. von Tempsky, Maj 'Memoranda of the New Zealand Campaign in 1863-1864' (WTU), comments on the difficulties of moving through the New Zealand bush, p.29.

As they moved through the bush by night they were nearly discovered by two parties of Kingites, and then a pig-dog that had caught their scent. They blundered along, eventually going to ground in a patch of flax just before dawn. As the sun rose they realised that they were in the middle of a Kingite position entrenched with fighting pits and capable of holding up to 1000 men. The weather was bad and gale force winds and rain set in. The atrocious weather was probably their salvation because it restricted the movement of the Kingites who would otherwise have surely discovered them. The two men huddled in the flax all day, expecting to be discovered and ‘hacked to death’ at any moment, and were enormously relieved to make their escape the next nightfall. McDonnell’s ability to understand Maori had been an asset and he noted that from enemy speeches he gained a tolerable understanding of their strength and intentions.¹³⁹ Von Tempsky also claimed that, ‘we gained some idea of the number of Maoris and some of the ground’.¹⁴⁰

The daring but amateurish escapade was never likely to provide a significant amount of intelligence, but it did have an unexpected postscript. The two men had snacked throughout the day and had left food wrappers and an empty kippered herring tin behind. These were discovered by the Kingites who realised that the security of their position had been compromised and they soon abandoned it.¹⁴¹ Cameron appears to have been delighted with the whole operation; both men were promoted to Captain and von Tempsky was instructed to form a second Forest Ranger company, which he recruited and commanded.

The Kingite apprehension about the security of Paparata is understandable because the whole region was highly unstable through the months of August, September and October and neither side had the upper hand. The Forest Rangers and the Moveable Column patrolled out from their bases at ‘The Travellers Rest’ inn and Burts’ farmhouse and the Kingite war parties continued to make incursions. The British regulars and the volunteers and militia continued on maximum alert and were involved in numerous actions. The whole front from Waiuku in the west to Paparata in

¹³⁹ McDonnell reminiscence.

¹⁴⁰ von Tempsky, p.61.

¹⁴¹ McDonnell reminiscence ; Cowan, p.271; Ryan and Parham, pp.62-5.

the east was a kind of no-man's land, a fluid zone which the Europeans nominally occupied but could not control.

Throughout the area a small intelligence battle took place. Amid the rumour, and at times panic, the settlers and the military patrolled in the hope of discovering Kingite numbers and intentions.¹⁴² The Kingites, for their part, were also intent on discovering as much as possible about their enemy. McDonnell observed that every movement in his camp was watched 'like a hawk' by the Kingites who were always on the lookout for stragglers.¹⁴³ Von Tempsky was also aware of Kingite information gathering, noting that scouts were always about, 'hanging constantly on our movements and communicating with the large forces across the river as to our position at the time'.¹⁴⁴ Even on patrol, the Forest Rangers appear to have been closely shadowed and von Tempsky often found the imprints of scouts' feet right over the top of his own men's 'and nearly as fresh'.¹⁴⁵

Guides who had a detailed knowledge of a particular area were often used by the government troops. Some were local European bush-men or farmers such as John Runciman, or Mr Hawke, whom von Tempsky admired as an excellent guide.¹⁴⁶ Men from that background were considered trustworthy, as were a number of so called half-castes such as Sergeant Southey and von Tempsky's 'splendid guide' James Edwards.¹⁴⁷ The reliability of friendly or loyal Queenite guides was less certain and the Europeans often had nagging doubts about how honestly they were being led. Von Tempsky didn't trust many of his guides and wrote that he had experienced the same problem in other countries.¹⁴⁸ There was a general perception amongst the European populace that the Queenites were happily communicating with the Kingite warriors. The truth of this can never really be known, but it is reasonable to assume that the bonds of kinship and the steady flow of Queenite defectors provided a regular supply of information about Cameron's army that was valuable to the Kingite leadership.

¹⁴² Morris. The entries in William Morgan's journal from August to October indicate a level of panic and frustration with the raids and the government attempts to track down the marauding war parties.

¹⁴³ McDonnell reminiscence.

¹⁴⁴ von Tempsky, p.30.

¹⁴⁵ von Tempsky, p.30.

¹⁴⁶ Morris, entry for 6 August 1863; von Tempsky, p.25; Stowers, p.9. Some of the farmers had joined the Forest Rangers in response to the Maori murder of settlers in the South Auckland district.

¹⁴⁷ von Tempsky, p.52; Stowers, p.49.

¹⁴⁸ von Tempsky, p.15.

By contrast, the government was largely ignorant of the Kingite preparations at Meremere and Rangiriri. The strength and extent of the fortifications and the size of the force that would oppose the invasion was still a mystery. Cameron's own military preparations were subjected to close scrutiny and it seems likely that the Kingite leaders had a very clear idea of the size and nature of the force being assembled to attack them. The newspapers were full of reports about the arrival of new contingents of troops and numerous other matters relating to the campaign. By its very nature, size and operational methods, Cameron's army could not conceal either itself or its intentions. There is no evidence that Cameron tried either to disguise his intentions or conduct any kind of counter-intelligence. As McDonnell and von Tempsky had been sneaking through the dark forests towards Paparata, they had heard the bugler at Queen's Redoubt which was miles away, sounding the last post. This shows that the Kingites were in ear-shot of the British camp and were aware of their movements. As the strains of each note drifted over the silent forest they were a warning to every Maori who heard them: here is the British Army, massive and irrepressible and with no need and no intention to hide.

Grey and Cameron's policies gradually began to give them the ascendancy and the ability to resume the advance. The constant patrolling made life increasingly difficult for Kingite war parties and they were bested in several skirmishes. Ambushing was thwarted by clearing the sides of the Great South Road of trees and bush. For ten miles of the most dangerous stretch the forest was felled out to 220 yards on either side of the road.¹⁴⁹ Dispatch riders rode at full gallop at night¹⁵⁰ and convoys often moved during the dark as well in the belief that the Maori fear of the supernatural made war parties inactive at night. The first contingent of military settlers (Waikato Regiment) arrived from Otago and New South Wales on 20 October 1863. They were immediately drafted into the fighting sharp-end of Cameron's force, relieving other militia-men who returned to help secure Auckland. Cameron also established a line of forts through to Miranda in the east to secure the flank of his advance and reduce the chances of infiltration to the rear. The forts were linked by telegraph and codes were used to ensure the security of the information transmitted.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ McDonnell reminiscence; JDQMG, p.54.

¹⁵⁰ Featon, p.58; James E. Alexander, *Bush Fighting*, London: Richard Bentley, 1873, p.67.

¹⁵¹ Military Secretary's Outwards Letters and Memo's 1863-65, (ANZ AD 72), 21 August 1863.

Cameron had delayed the advance for 14 weeks after crossing the Mangatawhiri while the battle behind the lines in South Auckland had been won. Supply routes were secured, Maori infiltration behind the lines had been nullified by patrolling, his flanks were secure and additional troops had arrived. His flotilla was ready and the first of his river boats was operational, which gave him the ability to reconnoitre the large fortifications that he knew blocked his path. The campaign was not going to be remarkable for its daring, but for its excellent and methodical planning and steady, relentless progress. Cameron was now ready to advance on the pa at Meremere and Rangiriri.

The government changed in October and Frederick Whitaker became the Premier. The Whitaker-Fox government, as it became known, took such a hard line on war with ‘rebel’ Maori and land confiscation, that Grey took the opportunity to oust it in late 1864. But by then the Waikato War was over and the enormous confiscations that echo through to the present day had taken place. Whitaker’s Minister of Colonial Defence, Thomas Russell, was his partner in their highly successful legal firm and a fellow land speculator. The real power in the government and much of the urge to vehemently prosecute the war lay with those two men:

These two represented the viewpoint of the ‘war party’ in Auckland: that in the name of civilisation and progress, settlers must have easier access to Maori lands; that war against Maori ‘rebels’ must be ruthlessly prosecuted; and that, after unconditional surrender, there must be large confiscations of land, and military settlements to enforce the peace of the Pakeha.¹⁵²

Each side knew that the Waikato River was the key to any invasion, so the arrival of the 300-foot armoured steamer *Pioneer* was a significant milestone in Cameron’s preparations. The purpose-built shallow-draft ship was the first warship to be built by the New Zealand government. Its armour plate, twin 12-pounder Armstrong guns and concealed firing positions for infantry made it a powerful, mobile fire platform. The armour made it impervious to Kingite musket fire, and the ability to tow up to four armoured barges gave it the capability to transport a large number of troops and supplies up the river. The Kingites had known for months that the ship was being constructed and it was not difficult for them to deduce that Cameron intended to use the

¹⁵² R.J.C. Stone, ‘Whitaker, Frederick’, in *The New Zealand Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 1, Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs and Allen and Unwin, 1990, p.586.

Waikato River as his main axis of advance, and the Kingite fortifications at Meremere and Rangiriri had been built to counter that threat.

Cameron's armoured river steamers, (the *Avon*, then the larger *Pioneer* and then other craft), gave him remarkable mobility. With these armoured platforms he could break through the Kingite 'front-lines' and plunge deep into their territory to see for the first time, the large pa at Meremere and Rangiriri that blocked his way. He initially did this on the *Avon* on 7 August and it is no surprise that, within hours of the arrival of *Pioneer* on 29 October, he was on board again making a reconnaissance of the Kingite positions at Meremere. The river was the key to the campaign, and in the end, by failing to keep control of the river, Maori lost control of their land.¹⁵³

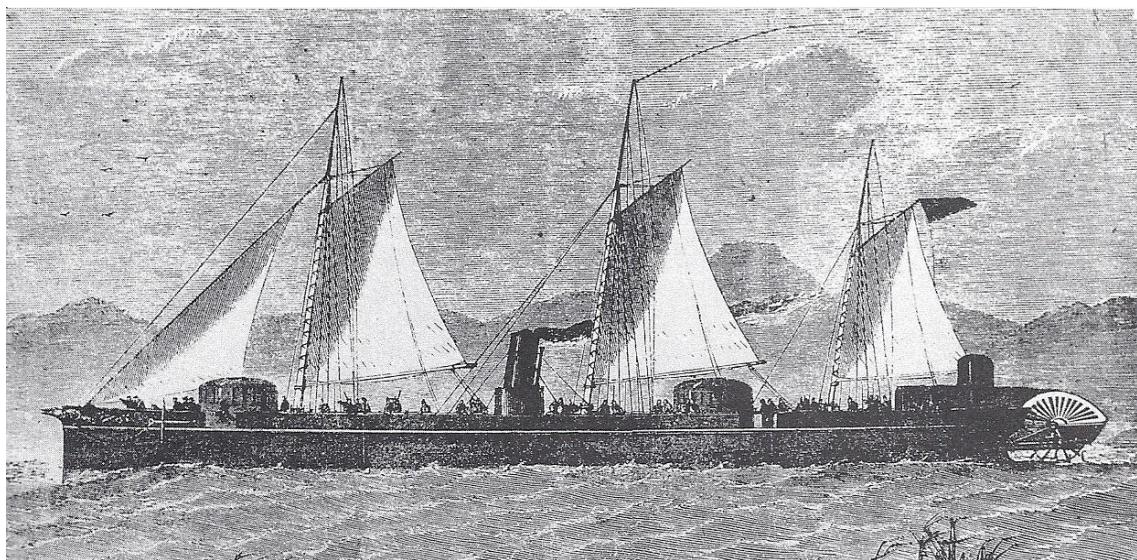


Fig 5.6. The River Gunboat *Pioneer* in sea-going rig. It was iron clad and steam powered with a stern paddle wheel. *Pioneer* was 300 tons, and 140 feet long and had a twelve pounder Armstrong gun in each of her two iron turrets. From Ryan and Parham *The Colonial New Zealand Wars*, p. 57.

The Waikato River was difficult to navigate and local knowledge and a very good standard of boat handling were required to negotiate the sunken snags, tricky channels and fluctuating water levels. Cameron was fortunate to be able to draw upon a few experienced people to help navigate its waters. The *Avon* was commanded by Captain Sullivan R.N. and piloted by Mr Strand who both had very good local knowledge.¹⁵⁴ There was also a Maori chief as navigator on *Pioneer* and a Pakeha Maori interpreter. The chief may very well have been Te Wheoro who assisted in

¹⁵³ Taylor, 'Matelots in Maoriland', p.28.

¹⁵⁴ Lennard p 114.

numerous ways including carrying messages from Stewart a clerk of the Regional Magistracy.¹⁵⁵ John Chandler, who also had an intimate knowledge of the river from years of trading on it, became the pilot of *Pioneer*, a role that incensed Maori to the extent that the government, ‘deemed it wise for him not to be seen in Auckland and gave him an island off Matakana where he resided until his death about the year 1884’.¹⁵⁶

The main position at Meremere was a strongly fortified hill that sat on the eastern bank of the river. Various earthworks ran from the hill to the river bank and two old artillery pieces operated by a former East Indian Army gunner who had been captured and pressed into service, were also sited there to fire on Cameron’s boats (he later escaped and gave Cameron considerable information).¹⁵⁷ Vast swamps protected the pa from the north and east and would have made an assault from those directions almost impossible. Cameron reconnoitred the pa several times. On 7 August the *Avon* was fired at with muskets as it hugged the shore because of the currents and sat off the pa, and Capt Sullivan replied with the 12-pounder Armstrong gun. On 29 October Cameron was on board the *Pioneer* and he sat alongside the pa as two 40-pounder Armstrong guns located at Whangamarino, fired shells with the fuses set for air burst over the pa as he watched their effect. He made sketches of the position from the river and officers were also able to scrutinise the pa through telescopes from the gun position at Whangamarino, from which they were able to see the Maori digging the trenches. It was reported in the *Weekly Review* that thousands of Maori were defending the pa.¹⁵⁸ The following day Cameron returned, and this time the Maori artillery, which was short of cannon balls, fired a seven-pound weight which went through the side of the boat and lodged in a cask of beef. He assessed that the pa was very formidable and could only be attacked under heavy artillery fire.¹⁵⁹ The Maori musket fire at the *Pioneer* was well co-ordinated and the defence of the place seemed organised into three tiers of trenches.

¹⁵⁵ R. O. Stewart Letters to the Native Minister (APL GNZ MSS 244), 22 October.

¹⁵⁶ Frost, p.25.

¹⁵⁷ Featon, p.58; Alexander, p.64. Cowan gives a different version of these events (p.317-8) and says that the old gunner trained the Maori gunners who fired the guns at this time. He also says that there were 3 guns.

¹⁵⁸ Morris entry for August 1863.

¹⁵⁹ JDQMG, p.66.

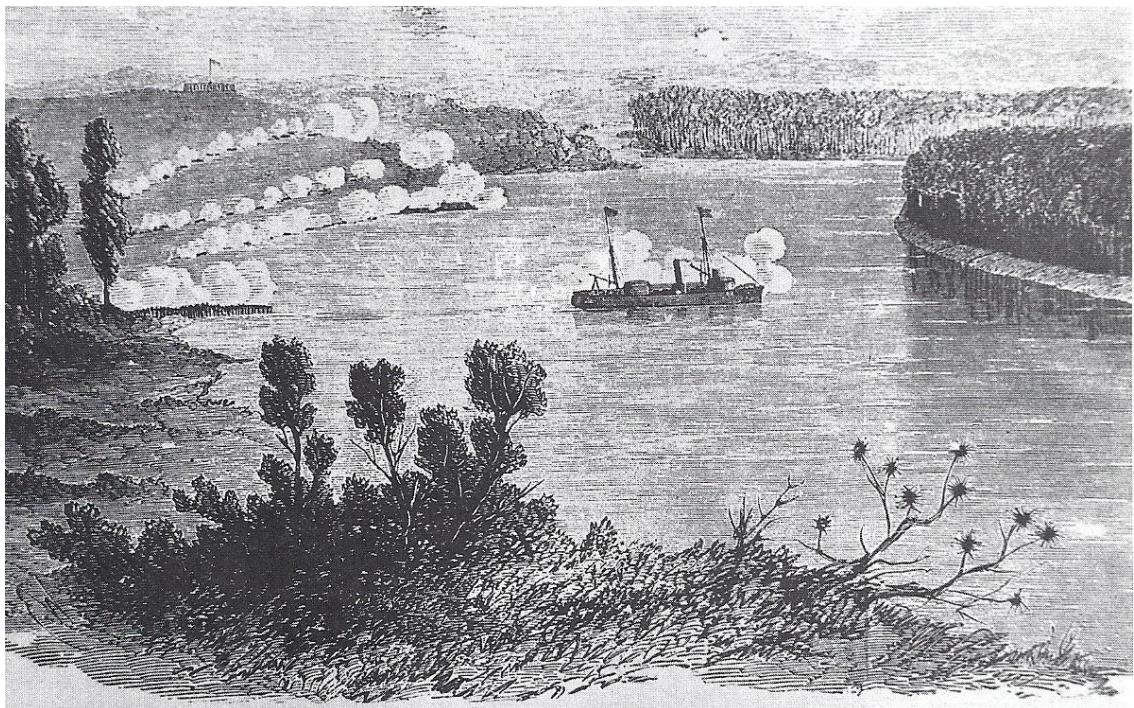


Fig.5.7 The Pioneer bombarding Meremere Pa. Note that the central mast had been removed for river operations. The three lines of rifle pits on the river side of the pa can be clearly seen. Alexander Turnbull Library.

The reconnaissance of the pa did not reveal all of its secrets and the British did not realise the extent of the position until they occupied it. Even so, Cameron was able to go well up river behind the pa and settled on a landing place for troops at Takapau 14 miles beyond it. Lieutenant Colonel Gamble, who was on board, noted that from their reaction and lack of fire that this tactic took the defenders by surprise.¹⁶⁰ The reconnaissance there was crucial because, when Cameron attacked the pa on 31 October, he landed troops at that point (as well as shelling it from the gun position at Whangamarino), and the defenders realised that they were surrounded and abandoned the pa. A plantation of corn that had been planted at the rear indicated that they had intended to hold Meremere until February when the corn would be ripe.¹⁶¹

Knowledge of the land behind the pa had enabled Cameron to make a decisive move that checkmated the position. There may have also been other factors that made the pa untenable. The war correspondent, William Morgan, claimed that the Maori inside the pa were on the point of starvation and could not see the point of being caught

¹⁶⁰ JDQMG, p.66.

¹⁶¹ JDQMG, p.66.

between two fires, that being the worst time of year for food.¹⁶² It certainly would have been a monumental task to feed such a garrison, and Morgan suggested that the raid that had earlier sacked Camerontown had been timed for the arrival of new stores. Further evidence of food stockpiling was a report in *The Southern Cross* that Maori were buying half a ton of biscuits at a time from Auckland merchants.¹⁶³

The pa at Rangiriri occupied a superb defensive position straddling a narrow neck of slightly raised ground with the Waikato River on its west flank and the impassable vastness of Lake Waikare and endless swamps on its eastern side. Maori had dug a trench across this neck of land two years earlier and this had caused much conjecture in Auckland. The Kingite explanation was that it was to prevent stock from wandering, but it seems that they were already making preparations to defend against any British advance there. As mentioned above, Colonel Mould was aware of it and Europeans who had lived in the Waikato would no doubt have been familiar with that particular piece of land. By November 1863 the site had been developed into a very strong fortification with trenches stretching a kilometre from the river right across to Lake Waikare. There were also outworks to the rear including an entrenchment at right angles to the river, which may have been added as a result of Cameron's use of the river to land troops behind Meremere.

Cameron reconnoitred Rangiriri from *Pioneer* even before he attacked Meremere. Gamble noted that, 'it had for some time been reported as a very strong entrenched position',¹⁶⁴ and it is clear that the British command were keen to actually get a look at it. Viewed from the water, the pa sat low and did not appear as formidable as Meremere, and it may be that Cameron thought that it was less of an obstacle. His plan of attack was similar to that which had produced such good results at Meremere; to land troops behind the position to seal it off and to fire enfilade onto the retreating defenders. But with better ground this time he was able to plan for a concurrent assault on a narrow front from the north as well. Te Wheoro and Mr Edwards were again present as guides.¹⁶⁵ Cameron reconnoitred the pa from on board *Pioneer* on 18 November, but as it sat low to the ground and had no palisade, he failed to notice its

¹⁶² Morris, entry for 20 November 1863.

¹⁶³ Morris, entries for 12 August and 9 September 1863.

¹⁶⁴ JDQMG, p.66.

¹⁶⁵ AJHR 1864, No 5D, 22 November, W.J. Gundry.

most important feature, the immensely strong central citadel that would prove to be key to the battle.¹⁶⁶ It was extraordinarily well constructed and British inspecting it later were astonished at its ‘cleverness and strength of engineering.’¹⁶⁷

The attack launched on 20 November did not go well. The river level was very high, the wind was strong and the co-ordination of timings went awry. The net result was that the troops could not be landed as planned and in the end the plan fell apart and the battle degenerated into a desperate struggle. Cameron even hurled his gunners into the assault, and in doing so he lost Captain Mercer R.A. and a number of other artillery specialists, for which he was roundly criticised. There was a stalemate overnight and many Maori were able to escape. In the morning a white flag was flying, but the garrison may not have in fact been surrendering, intending instead for the white flag to indicate peace and a time for negotiation. However Cameron seized the initiative, disarmed the remaining garrison, and claimed the victory.

Although Cameron’s reconnaissance had been limited, it was probably the best he could have done from the water, but as with Meremere, it did not reveal the true strength of the pa. The easy victory at Meremere, which was a much larger position and one which the British had assessed as more formidable, may have led him to believe that Rangiriri would be similar. The real problem lay with the adverse weather and river conditions; the high river level and strong currents coupled with strong winds were nearly his undoing. The pa was certainly strong, and the Maori who stayed to fight put up tremendous resistance, but it is relevant to question whether the Maori resistance would have been as tenacious if the troops had been able to gain a good foothold to the rear of the pa on time as planned. Cameron relied on the local knowledge of the Maori allies and his Native Department. Mr Gundry, an interpreter on the spot, reported that Te Wheoro and Mr Edwards were crucial as guides, and it appears that Te Wheoro, who travelled with Cameron, was a key figure during the surrender negotiations and the taking of the prisoners.¹⁶⁸ Although he was in the employ of the government, there was an element of acting as an intermediary both at Rangiriri and soon after at Ngaruawahia

¹⁶⁶ Taylor, ‘Matelots in Maoriland’, p.12; Featon pp. 60-4; Alexander, pp. 95-8.

¹⁶⁷ AJHR 1864 E No 5D, 25 November 1863, R.C. Mainwaring.

¹⁶⁸ AJHR 1864, E No. 5D, 22 November 1863. W.J. Gundry.

where he was used by Grey to negotiate peace with Wiremu Tamehana and representatives of Ngati Maniapoto.¹⁶⁹

In the discussions that took place immediately after the battle, Cameron learnt a considerable amount about the state of the Maori resistance, including which key figures had been killed and those who wished to make peace. The indications were that the Waikatos were desirous of peace and that the coalition with Ngati Maniapoto was very unstable. The war correspondent, William Morgan, had suggested that while the Waikatos garrisoned Meremere their homes were looted by their supposed Ngati Maniapoto allies. Gamble recorded a similar story at Ngaruawahia, which, if true, suggests that tribal rivalry was still a more powerful influence than any embryonic coalition:

Te Wheoro also reports that since Rangiriri the Waikatos have given vent to their feelings of disgust with the Maniapoto, who, while the former were fighting at Rangiriri, were plundering their houses behind their backs at Paetai and farther up.¹⁷⁰

The general was knighted for his efforts at Rangiriri, but in truth, it came close to being a disaster for him. But warfare is often about seizing opportunities, and the win at Rangiriri effectively broke the Kingite resistance, laid open the King's capital at Ngaruawahia, and provided the opportunity to extend the war into the agriculturally productive lands of the Upper Waikato. After such a long and meticulous build-up of men and equipment, and then the protracted process of securing the flanks and neutralising the infiltrations into the South Auckland district, the invasion itself had progressed quite quickly. The two major defensive positions at Meremere and Rangiriri had fallen, and almost incredibly, Cameron was able to telegraph Auckland on 8 December 1863 to say that the Queen's flag flew over the Maori King's former capital.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ Scott, p.524.

¹⁷⁰ JDQMG, p.77.

¹⁷¹ AJHR 1864, No. 6 E 22, 8 December 1863.



Fig.5.8.King Tawhiao's whare at Ngaruawahia in the possession of British troops, December 1863.
Alexander Turnbull Library.

The taking of 175 prisoners after the battle, particularly if the defenders had only intended to parley rather than surrender, may also have had a devastating psychological effect.¹⁷² Capture in war had traditionally meant loss of mana, slavery, and cruel death to Maori, and the idea developed that those captured by the new enemy might be taken to a deserted island, to London, or be hanged.¹⁷³ That fear was possibly the reason why Maori at the subsequent battles of Orakau and Te Ranga were reluctant to surrender, and may have encouraged them to continue fighting.¹⁷⁴ The prisoners

¹⁷² Bohan, p150-1. Maori later claimed that the white flag had been flown as an invitation for discussion rather than surrender. This issue is unresolved. Belich, p.154-5, accuses the British Army of duplicity and a failure to observe the finer points of the conventions of warfare. Chris Pugsley, 'Walking the Waikato Wars: Controversy at Rangiriri', *NZDQ*, 15, Summer 1996, pp. 35-6, claims that Cameron was well placed to complete the victory the next day because his troops and guns were still in place. This was the same situation as the Battle of Gate Pa in April the following year. The Maori had driven the British out of the pa but the skirmishers and cordon (over 1,000) were still in place during the night when the Maori vacated the pa and would have been able to press home the attack the next morning. He further claims that at Rangiriri Wiremu Te Kumete had seen a white flag flying on one of the ships and waved one in response thinking it was a request to talk.

¹⁷³ AJHR, 1864 15E No.1 100.

¹⁷⁴ AJHR, 1864 15E No.1, and numerous entries 24 November–13 December 1863.

Anderson Papers, (WTU MS Papers 148, item 86). Mair was attached to Cameron's staff as an interpreter. Cameron asked him to talk to the Maori at Orakau from the head of the sap, asking them to surrender. Mair wrote later: 'When it was suggested a white flag, I said that it had been misunderstood at Rangiriri, where over 200 Waikato's surrendered, and because the emblem of peace was displayed, they thought that after giving up their arms they would be permitted to go free. So it was decided to get on speaking terms if possible without using the flag'.

were actually taken to the hulk *Marion* in Auckland Harbour and then to Kawau Island where they were allegedly permitted to escape. Morgan knew virtually all of the prisoners from his long time in the Waikato, and he interviewed them in captivity. It is likely that he, as their former priest, used the visit as an opportunity for information gathering, although there is no specific record of such. The prisoners were also visited by government officials and several times by the Commissioner of Police who was looking for men who had murdered European settlers.

The fall of the two great pa, the influx of masses of armed troops, and the arrival of the river steamers may also have added to the psychological impact of the capture of so many. The huge, relentless machines must have seemed an apocalyptic vision as they ferried troops and supplies up the Waikato. Wiremu Kingi saw them coming up the river when he was at Rangiriri and apparently immediately retreated back to the Taranaki,¹⁷⁵ and G. Oliphant, who was travelling on board *Pioneer* from Rangiriri past Taupiri just days after the battle, observed, ‘on the western side of the river were some inhabited Maori villages, whose people came out and appeared to look in wonder at the steamer loaded with troops’.¹⁷⁶ Gamble, who took part in the discussions at Ngaruawahia, also speculated on the psychological impact of the rapid fall of the two pa and the King’s capital; a view that he probably shared with Cameron:

The moral, political and strategical importance of the occupation of this place can scarcely be over estimated. From closely on the enemy’s defeat at Rangiriri, associated as this place has been, with all the hopes of Maori sovereignty, and standing at the confluence of the great arteries of the upper country, its possession becomes identical in meaning with an important success.¹⁷⁷

John Morgan had remained a source of information for the government and Grey and Fox consulted him regularly, the missionary noting in a personal letter to Gore Browne that, ‘the government are frequently obliged to apply to me for information’.¹⁷⁸ After Rangiriri, Cameron felt that he needed another supply line, so a route from Raglan to Tuhikaramea on the Waipa River was opened up. This continued his pattern of establishing secure lines of supply and protecting the flanks of his

¹⁷⁵ Cowan, p.334.

¹⁷⁶ Oliphant papers, un-numbered pages (TDM ARC 1247); Chris Pugsley, ‘Walking the Waikato Wars: Meremere’, *NZDQ*, 14, Spring 1996, p.29.

¹⁷⁷ JDQMG, p.77.

¹⁷⁸ Morgan to Gore Browne, (ANZ 1/2/d), 29 February 1864.

advance. His careful planning and cautious approach paid off and the new supply line proved its worth when the *Avon* sank after hitting a snag in the Waipa River on

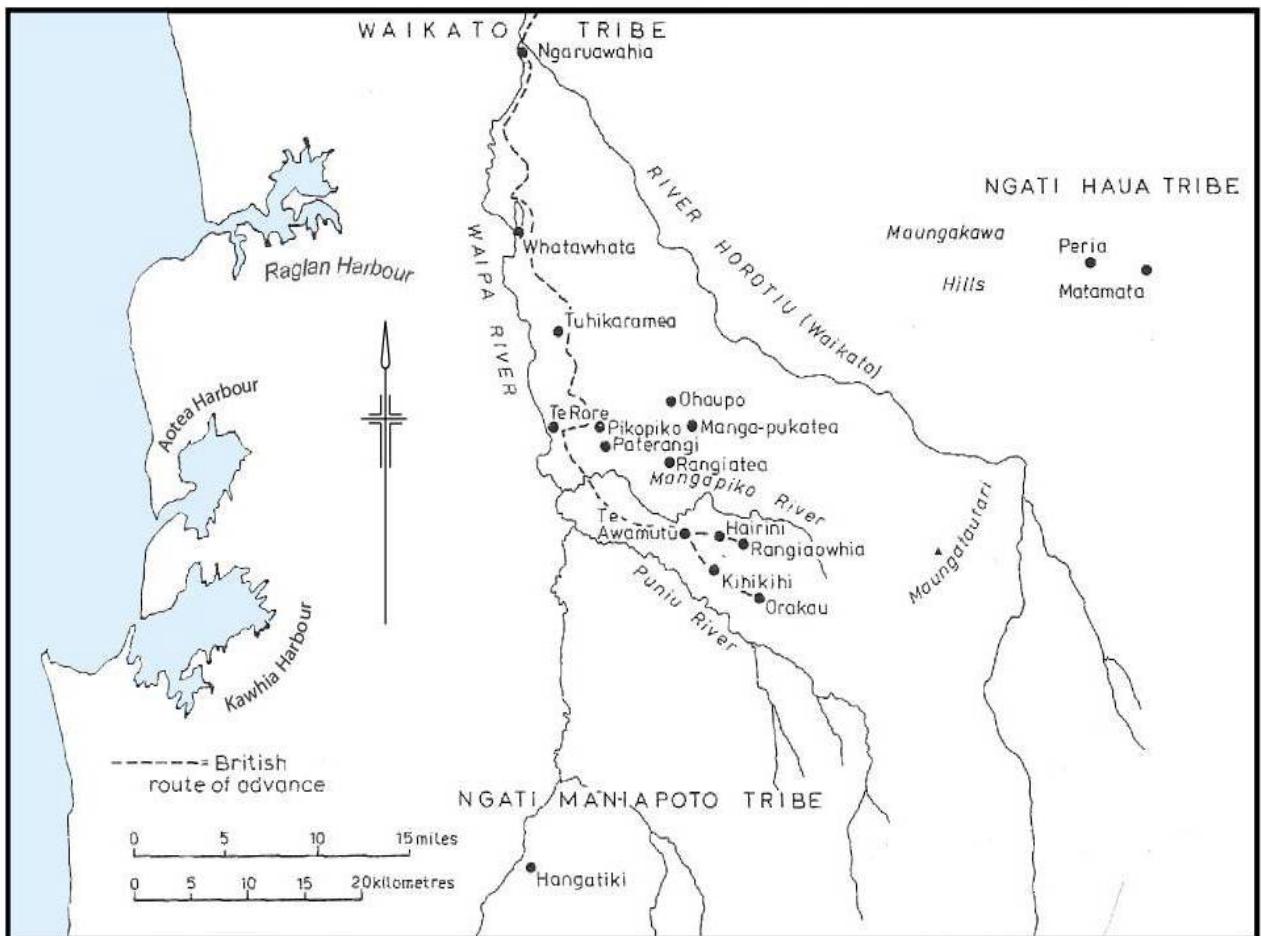


Fig. 5.9. Map showing the Upper Waikato, the significant Maori pa and settlements and the main axis of the British advance. Adapted by the author from Belich, *The New Zealand Wars*, p.159

February 8th and there was a drastic shortage of supplies. Morgan was asked to provide details about tracks, which he did, as well as details of good landing places for the steamers. Wiremu Nera (William Naylor) a pro-government chief at Raglan also assisted the British Army in establishing redoubts there and helping with communication routes between Raglan and the Whatawhata on the Waipa River. He provided guides and tried to persuade the Waikato and Ngati Maniapoto tribes to give up fighting the government.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁹ JDQMG, p.77. Gamble records the name as Nero. His original name was Te Awa-i-taia of the Ngati Mahanga tribe and he was baptised William Naylor (Wiremu Hera) when he converted to Christianity in 1836. He was a long standing supporter of the government and swore allegiance to Queen Victoria from which he never wavered, see Gary Scott, 'Te Awa-i-taia, Wiremu Nera', in *The New Zealand Dictionary of Biography*, Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs and Allen and Unwin 1990. pp.441-2.

The Kingites had assessed that the government would not be satisfied with the capture of Ngaruawahia, and that the food basket around Te Awamutu and Rangiaohia (also spelt Rangiaowhia) was the real prize. It was land that the government coveted, and was also where much of the food that sustained the Maori army was grown. Seizing that area would deliver a near fatal blow to the Kingite logistic system and also free up valuable agricultural land for subsequent settlement. A network of strong pa blocking the likely invasion routes, and sitting astride existing cart tracks, had been constructed to defend the region; Rangiatea, Manga-pukatea, Pikopiko and most importantly, the very extensive pa complex of Paterangi (see Fig 5.9).

Paterangi consisted of several central palisaded pa and interconnecting covered trenches and smaller outworks that collectively fortified a whole ridgeline and two hillsides. The Maori engineers had cleverly used the high ground and the flanking swamps to create an extremely imposing and powerful defensive position that required a garrison of 2-3,000 warriors. British officers, inspecting the position after the battles, were amazed at the complexity of its design. Even Cowan saw this as proof of their failure to understand that Maori had advanced military skills, and it was certainly a commonly made observation by British officers inspecting Maori fortifications from Ohaeawai onwards. In this case, however, there is the tantalising suggestion that a Maori engineer had been to Austria where he studied fortifications. Certainly the scale and complexity of the Paterangi earthworks was far greater in conception than anything seen before or after it throughout the whole New Zealand Wars.¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ Mellon Reminiscence, (TDM ARC 2056) Te Awamutu Historical Society, p.6: 'I think it was on 26th February that a native named Wm. Toi Toi under a flag of truce, came into Te Awamutu by way of Rangiaohia to interview the general, for what purpose I do not know. It is said that the same native went to Europe with the Austrian expedition that visited New Zealand in 1858-9 and there learned engineering work. He returned and was the man who designed and superintended the erection of all earthworks including Rangiriri and others'. Interestingly a Wiremu Toe Toe is noted in other documents as a chief at Rangiaohia and a mail contractor (ANZ GB 1/2/d). Mellon's comments might be seen as a typical Euro-centric view where Maori are not credited with the ability to construct major earthworks- similar comments were made in the Northern War. However, the claim is possible. The earthworks at Meremere and Rangiriri and certainly those around Paterangi were very extensive and complex with numerous linked outworks. Paterangi for example, extended the usual concept of fortifying a single point into fortifying a whole ridgeline and hillsides. It might be the case that if Toi Toi had visited Europe he saw the possibilities of engineering on a far larger scale than had been his experience in New Zealand; engineering a complex of fortifications to act as a defensive barrier rather than just fortifying one defendable point: For comments on fortifications and Euro-centrism at Paterangi see Bohan, p.159; Belich, p.162, and Cowan, p.341, 'and an Imperial officer who had fought in the Crimea declared when he inspected the fortifications later in the year, that the Paterangi works were stronger and more skilfully designed than even the Redan'. On 7 April 1864, Cameron and his staff, including Lt Col Gamble, made a reconnaissance of pa at the (continued on next page)

The Kingites had also assessed that Cameron would advance up the Waipa River. It was a smaller river than the Horotiu (as the upper reaches of the Waikato River were known at the time), but the firm banks of the Waipa were much more suited to an army on the march than the Horotiu which lay among several impenetrable swamps. It was also an ancient trade route. From the outset of the planning of the campaign it was known that the vast swamps throughout much of the Waikato region would make it tough going for troops on foot, and the river boats were a brilliant solution. Even so, they couldn't carry everything and many of the troops and horses made their way along the existing trails. The major problem with the Waipa River was that it had many sunken logs which created dangerous snags as the sinking of the *Avon* confirmed. In late February 1864 Morgan observed in a letter to Gore Browne:

About three weeks ago I saw Mr Russell and had a long conversation with him. He remarked on the difficulties of transport to the upper Waipa. I told him that the general had advanced by the wrong river, that he ought to have advanced by the Waikato to a little above Kirikiriroa and thence to Otawhao 12 miles. That the Waikato was nearly free from snags while the Waipa is full of them. He said the general now sees that and will open his communications that way.¹⁸¹

Throughout this period Cameron and his staff had a fairly clear understanding about where the Maori dispositions were and the routes they would need to take to get there. Morgan had made maps several months earlier, and there were a number of other people present who knew the area including Te Wheoro and Kukutai and their men, plus the Native Department guides. The Forest Rangers who usually moved ahead of the main body also had guides and von Tempsky himself was in the habit of scouting out well in advance of his men and camping out at night alone. In this way he was able to gain valuable information and a great deal of kudos.¹⁸²

foot of Maungatautari which were to be the next line of defence for Ngati Maniapoto but which were never attacked. Gamble observed of the lower pa, ‘the features of reciprocal defence in its outline resembled, more than others of the enemy’s works, the first system of Vauban.’ The Marquis Sébastien le Prestre de Vauban (1633-1707), was Louis 14th’s engineering genius and the father of modern European siege and fortification warfare. His ideas and techniques dominated that aspect of warfare until the early twentieth-century, and it seems clear that Gamble was familiar with them. It is too easy just to write off the British comments about Maori engineering as simple arrogance. Gamble’s comments are not so, and while the similarities may just be chance, it is possible that, in the Upper Waikato at least, a Maori engineer had studied European methods of fortification and adapted them to the New Zealand environment.

¹⁸¹ Gore Browne (ANZ 1/2/d) Letters from John Morgan, 29 February 1864.

¹⁸² Stowers, p.49.

Cameron established his new headquarters at Te Rore on the banks of the Waipa in late January and took his time to discover the strength and nature of the massive fortifications that lay before him.¹⁸³ He was in no hurry to attack and waited until ten days of supplies were collected at Whatawhata for about 3,500 men, 130 cavalry, 200 packhorses and 150 bullocks. There was continual scouting and minor skirmishing from both sides and the Maori ambush of a British bathing party at Waiari on 11 February resulted in 40 Maori deaths. On another occasion there was an attempt to kill

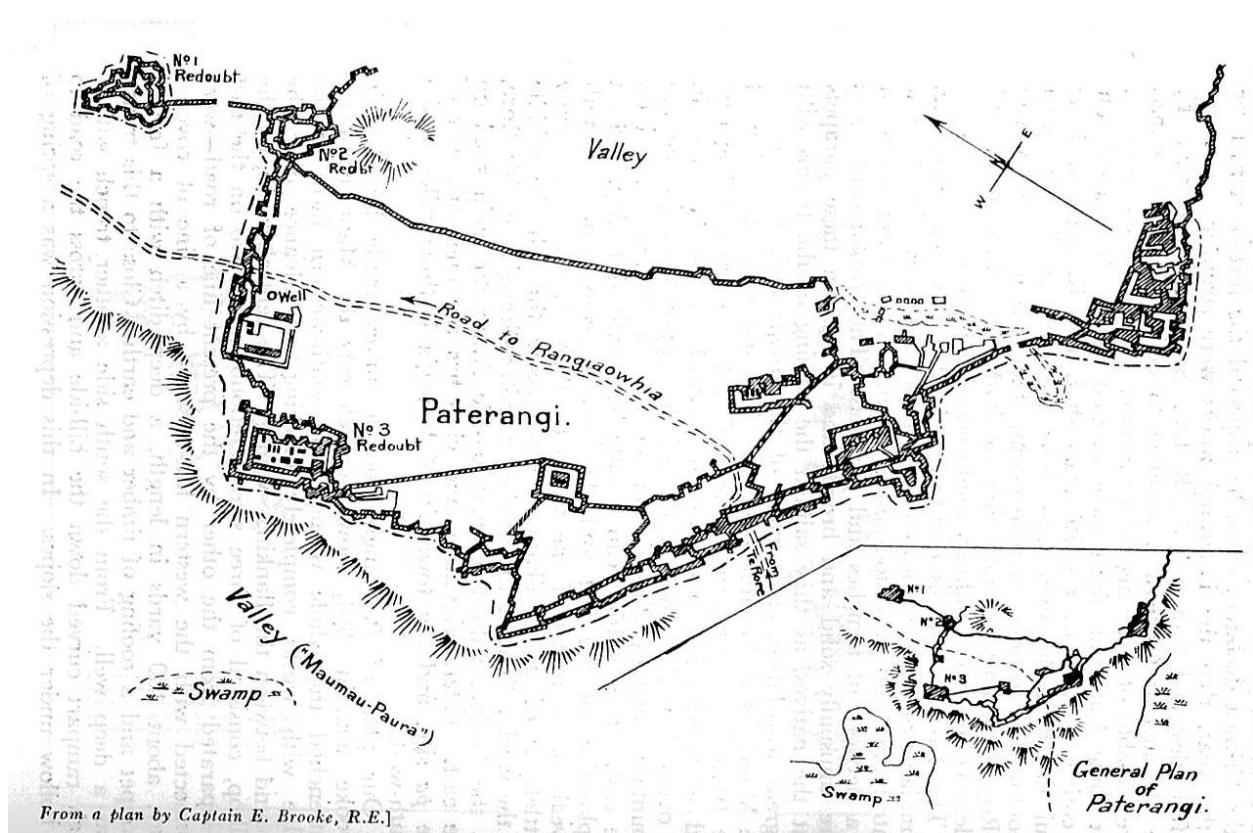


Fig. 5.10. Paterangi Pa, from a plan drawn by Capt. E. Brooke R.E. Note the interlinked nature of the position and the fact that it sits astride the main track between Te Rore and Rangiaohia.
Source:<http://www.nzetc.org/tm/scholarly/tei-Cow01NewZ-c36-0.html>, and originally Cowan p.342.

Cameron. A warrior crept close to the camp fired a shot that hit Cameron's tent and it seems likely that he knew who the occupant was.¹⁸⁴

Major William Mair of the Colonial Defence Force was involved in reconnoitring Paterangi with Cameron's staff on 6 February but he learned very little. The party studied the fortifications from a distance for two hours during which time

¹⁸³ JDQMG, p.87.

¹⁸⁴ Mellon, p.2.

they were constantly under fire. He tried again two days later and noted that the Maori were using many Enfield rifles which had a distinguishable ping, but that they weren't using the sights properly and they had the wrong cartridges. He got closer over the next few days and made sketches and observed that the defenders were hoisting flags up and down signalling each other. He also noted that the Maori had a very good view of the

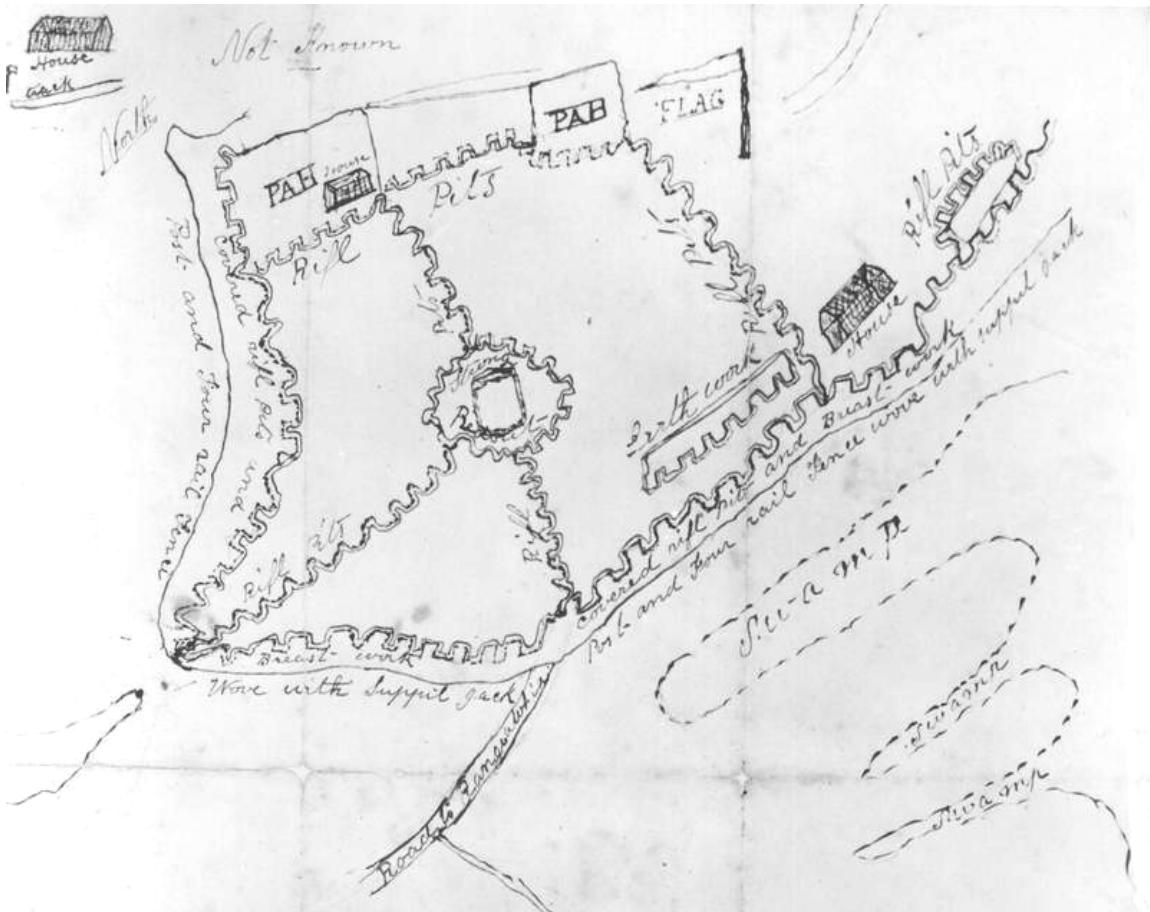


Fig. 5.11. An example of intelligence gathered from reconnaissance. A plan of Paterangi Pa sketched by Richard Qualtrough who served with General Cameron. Te Awamutu Museum

British camp from a piquet of 10-30 men on Pikopiko.¹⁸⁵ Von Tempsky, and no doubt others as well, also made sketches for Cameron and his staff to study.

Cameron's tactics at Meremere and Rangiriri showed that he was unlikely to mount a simple frontal attack, and that he preferred to put a blocking force in behind his enemy and 'turn' the position. After considerable reconnaissance and consideration he eventually decided that he would by-pass, or turn, Paterangi altogether (the technique was also referred to as a flank march). It was clear that an assault on the position would

¹⁸⁵ Anderson Papers W.G. Mair 'Diary', pp.7-13. (WTU MS Papers 148).

be a major undertaking and von Tempsky independently estimated that an attack on the whole pa complex could cost 200-300 British lives.¹⁸⁶ A by-pass absolutely depended upon competent guides who had a very clear understanding of the intended route, particularly as the move was to be conducted at night. The British had carried out a successful secret night march at Katikara in Taranaki in June 1863, so it was a tactic that they were familiar with.¹⁸⁷

Cameron had spent considerable time reconnoitring, but he appears not to have travelled the whole route. He asked many questions about what lay ahead and was particularly interested in any rivers that had to be crossed.¹⁸⁸ For security reasons, the troops had no prior warning about the move, but the horses were kept saddled and close by on the night of 19 February. Saturday the 20th was spent muffling gear, receiving ammunition and equipment and sharpening swords. It was clear to the soldiers that they were preparing for something without knowing exactly what.¹⁸⁹ Cameron maintained security by ordering that no tents were to be struck before dark so that the Kingites would not realise a move was imminent.¹⁹⁰

He divided his force approximately in half and, at about 10:30 pm, over 1200 men plus horses quietly set out on into the night. He believed that a fear of the supernatural meant that the Maori vacated their firing pits at night and slept in the pa, but on this occasion they were still in their pits.¹⁹¹ As the troops moved around the side of the pa one recorded that he heard the defenders admonishing their dogs who had started barking.¹⁹² It is clear that the Maori had not assessed that Cameron would use that tactic because they were caught completely unaware. Their intelligence had also not picked up from the activities of the troops that they were preparing to move, and because their sentries were ineffective at night, the troops were able to slip past. Cameron used the same tactic at Gate Pa two months later, and again the Maori defenders were completely fooled and he was able to insert a full infantry regiment behind the position without them knowing it was there.

¹⁸⁶ von Tempsky, p.10.

¹⁸⁷ JDQMG, p.36.

¹⁸⁸ JDQMG, p.77.

¹⁸⁹ Oliphant Papers

¹⁹⁰ JDQMG, p.95.

¹⁹¹ Stowers, p. 67.

¹⁹² Oliphant Papers; JDQMG, p.96.

Both instances were critical failures of intelligence. At Paterangi the Kingites failed to assess what Cameron was likely to do, and failed to observe on 20 February that the troops were preparing for some type of operation. From the British perspective, the by-pass was a tactical masterstroke, and it allowed Cameron to turn, not just Paterangi, but the whole defensive line of major fortifications.¹⁹³ It relied upon good planning, and that planning was based upon the information gained from careful and thorough reconnaissance. The tactical move itself required a high level of skill and individual soldier discipline, and of course, competent guides who knew the route well, even at night. The by-pass completely wrong-footed the Kingites and brought the war to a much quicker and less brutal end than might otherwise have been the case. It owed as much to a Kingite intelligence failure as it did to Cameron's tactical finesse and use of military intelligence. Lieutenant Colonel Gamble, the Assistant Quartermaster General observed:

It seemed strange that the enemy should never have contemplated the possibility of our getting to their rear in this way, but it may be accounted for either by their supposing we were ignorant of its existence, or their belief that, with our impedimenta, we would not, or could not, venture on leaving the high road, and, moreover, on allowing their entrenched garrisons to remain in our rear.¹⁹⁴

One of the guides on the night was James Edwards, '*Himi Manua*', whose work had drawn praise from the authorities on numerous occasions. In his official report to Grey from Te Awamutu, Cameron noted:

I beg to bring under your favourable notice the invaluable services rendered to the force under my command by Mr Edwards [guide] of the Native Department, whose information regarding the roads and tracks of this part of the country I have always found most correct. Without his assistance to guide the column, the night march of the 20th could not have been undertaken.¹⁹⁵

Edwards had lived in Rangiaohia and knew the area intimately. So too did John Gage who was another 'half-caste' guide with the Forest Rangers who were part of the advance-guard. Gage had grown up in Orakau, and he proved to be very valuable in and around Paterangi, and he and another guide, W. Astle, later led von Tempsky and the Forest Rangers to Orakau. Not everyone appreciated the guides' efforts and at

¹⁹³ JDQMG, p.89.

¹⁹⁴ JDQMG, p.95. The night march did not go completely smoothly, and Lt Col Gamble noted that one company of the 65th Regiment and one company of the 70th Regiment and the cavalry who were at the rear became separated and lost the track for two hours.

¹⁹⁵ AJHR 1864, Enclosure in No 26 Cameron to Grey, 25 February 1864.

Rangiaohia some Maori women at the church abused a half-caste guide who travelled with the Forest Rangers for what he had done, no doubt seeing him as a traitor.¹⁹⁶ That guide was probably Edwards or Gage.

Pugsley has argued that by siting the ring of defences around Rangiaohia, Rewi and the other Kingite chiefs committed themselves to a defensive task that was too large for the manpower that they had available.¹⁹⁷ When news arrived the next morning that the troops had entered the village of Rangiaohia, (where they killed 12 Maori ‘civilians’, took another 12 prisoner and detained 33 women and children), Rewi and 400 of the Paterangi garrison quickly moved to the Hairini Ridge and began to entrench. Caught in the open, they were no match for the firepower and discipline of the British Army, and with the help of two 6-pounder Armstrong guns, they were decisively swept off the position in a manner reminiscent of the Battle of Mahoetahi, with 30-50 killed. A more strategic response to the by-pass of Paterangi would have been to attack Cameron’s headquarters at Te Rore to split his force and leave him isolated at Rangiaohia. This would have required a level of command and co-ordination of the total force that Rewi appears not to have had. Simply rushing to Rangiaohia with 400 warriors was an instinctive but ultimately futile move.

Cameron now established his headquarters at Te Awamutu and actually lived in Morgan’s old house. In the meeting between Morgan and Russell mentioned above, they had worked together to update Morgan’s earlier maps. A few days later Grey asked Morgan to call on him to discuss the Mokau area on the Taranaki and Waikato border.¹⁹⁸ The missionary also wrote a report to be forwarded to the general that gave information about the swamps and mountain ranges in the area, and the routes that could be taken through them and out to other settlements such as Matamata and Peria, and attached a detailed map that he had drawn. The report began:

In conversation with one of the prisoners from Rangiaohia, he informed me that the natives have abandoned their old position at Maungatautari and taken up a new one on the adjoining range at Pukekura. Thinking that you would

¹⁹⁶ McDonnell Reminiscence. McDonnell mentions the church was at Te Awamutu but Rangiaohia seems more likely as it was just after Lt Col Nixon’s death.

¹⁹⁷ Chris Pugsley, ‘Walking the Waikato Wars: Paterangi’ *NZDO*, 16, Autumn 1997, p.36.

¹⁹⁸ Gore Browne (ANZ 1/2/d). Letters from John Morgan, 29 February 1864.

like a rough plan of that part of the country, I have drawn one and enclosed it to you. Pukekura may be approached from these points...¹⁹⁹

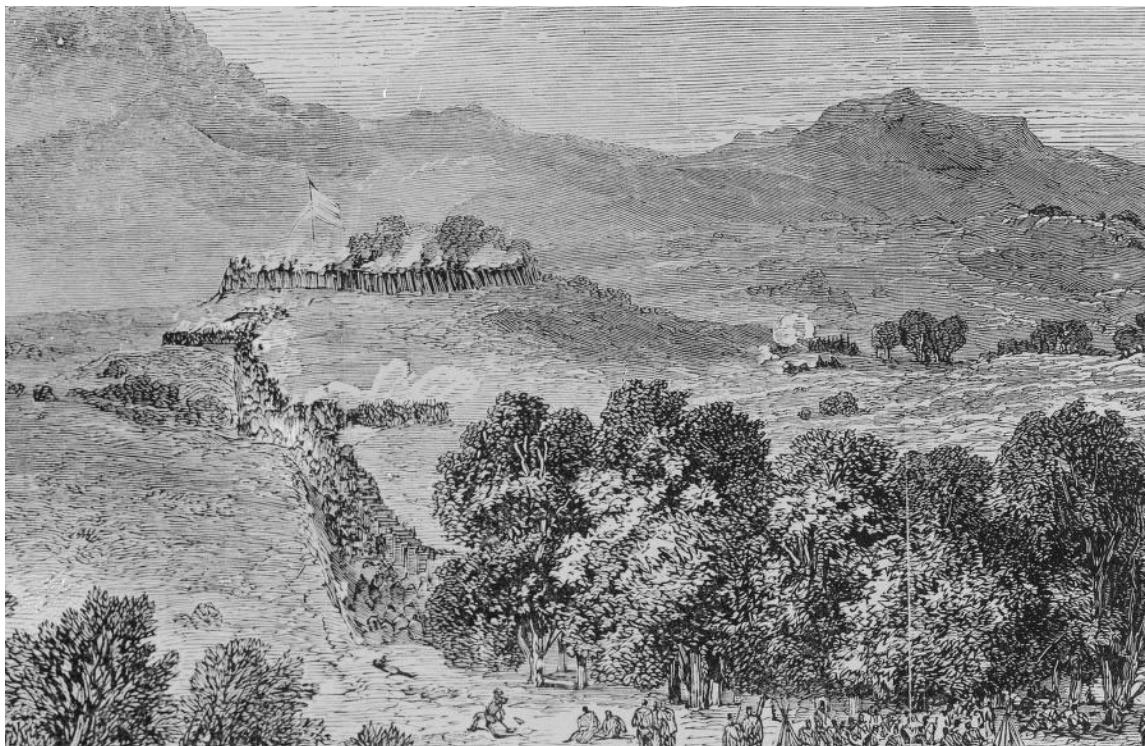


Fig. 5.12. The siege of Orakau Pa, sketched by Brigadier-General Robert Carey, originally published in the *Illustrated London News*, 1864. Note the sap working towards the pa. Alexander Turnbull Library.

The final chapter of the war was the tragedy that unfolded at Orakau over the three days 31 March–2 April, which resulted in 160 Maori deaths. The battle was remarkable for impulsive decision-making on both sides and poor intelligence assessments. The British troops had flooded the Te Awamutu area, built several redoubts, burned and plundered, scattered the populace and even set fire to Rewi's meeting house at Kihikihi. The Kingite leadership was unsure about what to do next, but a group of mainly East Coast tribes began to build a poorly sited pa at Orakau, and Rewi and 50 of his tribe were obliged to join them. Separate reports from a surveying party and a British patrol stated that Maori were digging the new pa on 30 March, and later that day Brigadier Carey and his staff conducted a reconnaissance of the position. The initial British assaults were repulsed and the legendary story began to unfold: the three day siege, the British sap (see Fig 5.12), the desperate Maori break-out and the subsequent pursuit and the slaughter of men and women. The Kingite stand at Orakau

¹⁹⁹ ‘Morgan report with covering plan of Pukekura and surrounding country.’ (TDM ARC 133), 15 March 1864.

was more the emotional response of an overwhelmed and defeated people than a considered and well planned military operation.

After the battle, Kingite recruiters fanned out across the country spreading propaganda and wild exaggerations which grew with the telling. Fox reported that the Bishop of Waiapu on the East Coast had heard that the British losses had been enormous and that Britain was now at war with Russia and America and other parts of the world as well. Auckland had been virtually depopulated and Maori from the East Coast only needed go there to take it over. The British had been driven out of Meremere and Rangiriri and had lost 1400 dead at Orakau.²⁰⁰ Other stories heard as far away as Cook Strait and the East Coast stated that Bishop Selwyn was the second-in-command of the army and rode with a sword at his side, that the British had lost 6,000 men at Paterangi and 100 when the *Avon* sank. There were also numerous different accounts of Cameron's death.²⁰¹ A party of Nga Puhi arrived from the north having been told by Waikato emissaries that the British had not yet advanced beyond Rangiriri and that British bodies and weapons lay strewn across all battlefields. They were surprised to see that the British were then at Maungatautari.²⁰² And so the war in the Waikato came to an end. The government had seized the land and had made the king an impotent potentate; but a lingering resentment remained and endured.

Summary and discussion

The Waikato War was the centrepiece of the whole New Zealand Wars period and was by far the most complex and comprehensive conflict. On the government and British military side it was well-organised and very successful; indeed it has been considered one of the British military's most successful operations.²⁰³ Cameron's experience in the Crimean War had honed his skills in logistics, and in many ways the invasion of the Waikato became an operation in that branch of military science.²⁰⁴ The war was a major enterprise which involved over two years of planning, the mobilisation of nearly 18,000 men and the development of many new capabilities. These included a

²⁰⁰ AJHR 1864, E No. 1, 6 May 1864,

²⁰¹ AJHR 1864, E No. 1, 7 May 1864; Ward, p.172.

²⁰² von Tempsky, p.158.

²⁰³ Stanley Jones to War Office, 29 October 1864, (WO 33/17A.) cited in Richard Taylor, p.129; Belich, p.127.

²⁰⁴ Ian Beckett, Comments made in paper delivered to New Zealand Wars Conference Te Peuhu Massey University at Wellington, 11-13 February 2010.

massive logistics organisation, with associated roads and infrastructure that delivered huge quantities of stores, food, men, animals, feed, ammunition and equipment by road and by water, with supply lines that stretched back to Britain and the colonies of Australia. Other major capabilities were: a river flotilla including boats, trained personnel and shore facilities; a communication system using the very latest technology, the telegraph; dozens of redoubts, barracks and protective works; the assembling and training of an army which included numerous British regiments and specialist elements, and also locally and regionally recruited citizen soldiers including militias and the Waikato Regiment; and the establishment of bespoke units such as special forces for bush skirmishing and intelligence collection and cavalry for reconnaissance.

This massive organisation needed to know where it was going, what the country was like and where its enemy was located. Although there was no formal intelligence system, one developed over the course of the war that proved to be relatively effective. The Waikato War was of a large enough scale that it is possible to discern different levels of intelligence activity. At the strategic level, information about the physical and human geography was in relatively few hands. Grey and some of his ministers and officials had a limited knowledge of locations and had met some of the leading chiefs, but the government had to acquire information from its officials in location, as well as other Europeans with specific knowledge such as traders, farmers and missionaries. The latter group had a special role and status in both Maori and European society and their understanding of Maori communities and their leaders, and their access to them was particularly valuable. The missionaries gave varying degrees of support to the war effort depending upon their own perspective, but the government was fortunate to have in John Morgan, a man who was uniquely placed and singularly committed to supplying information. From the initial planning phase right through until the final occupation of the Upper Waikato, he provided strategic information about the political situation, and operational and tactical information about the movement of groups and the location of populations, tracks, rivers and landing places.

The information from all of these sources found its way back to Auckland where it was digested by Grey and key ministers. Many of the reports from government officials found their way to the office of the Colonial Secretary and the Native

Department. Grey was also in personal contact with many people and he received a continual flow of information and opinion. In these ways the tentacles of government and European influence were able to spread into the Maori communities and develop an understanding of what was happening in the Waikato and the wider country. There was not a formal process for analysing information but it seems clear that the small number of key players, particularly Grey, were able to bring the information together in a coherent way. The importance of informal networks and individual relationships is clear.

The military did not get involved in strategic intelligence. Cameron and Grey worked together closely in the early stages of the war and it seems clear that the government passed on the information that the military required for its planning. At an operational level, Cameron and his staff had only a very general knowledge about the geography of the region and about the existence of the pa at Meremere and Rangiriri before the invasion. They had few specific details until they were able to do a close reconnaissance. Once the invasion began, the military on the ground worked closely with officials and interpreters from the Native Department, and it also developed its own ability to reconnoitre and collect information. Officers wrote reports and made recommendations, and much of the correspondence was channelled through the office of the Assistant Military Secretary in Auckland. Again, there was no specialist intelligence capability, but the information collected from various sources was processed in a way that helped develop a comprehensive plan. The pro-government Maori were another very useful source of information and understanding, particularly Te Wheoro and his men, although they may have leaked as much information as they gathered.

Because the advance was forward and linear, and because the few Europeans who did live in the Waikato had been expelled from the area, the need to reconnoitre forward was essential. The ability to plunge deep into the Kingite territory and observe the area was one of the key attributes of the river steamers. Cameron was able to study the pa beside the river at close hand and this gave him tactical intelligence that he could not have obtained in any other way. The boats could not be used for that purpose in the Upper Waikato, but by then he had numerous experienced scouts, cavalry, Forest Rangers and other assets that were able to provide a general understanding of the local

area and the fortifications. The ability to reconnoitre and utilise guides with good local knowledge was sufficient for him to be confident enough to undertake the risky by-pass of Paterangi at night.

The Waikato War was a massive undertaking for the Kingite forces as well. The construction of numerous major pa and provisioning and sustaining a large number of warriors in the field for a protracted period of time, put huge pressures on the iwi involved. At the strategic level, the Kingite leadership correctly assessed that the government would invade the Waikato and that the river would be the axis of the advance. They were aware of the plans for a river flotilla and they watched the build up of men and equipment and the development of the Great South Road in 1863. They would also have been aware of the political debates within European society and would have understood the growing clamour for a military solution. Some attempt to disrupt the build-up was made using irregular tactics in South Auckland in July-September 1863, and although they were quite effective for a time, the British Army eventually extinguished that threat. The only remaining option, it appeared, was to make a stand and try to halt the advance up the river, however futile that might be.

The Maori strategy of defence based upon building strong-points and then waiting to defend them was insufficient to counter British mobility and firepower. Meremere was checkmated, Rangiriri was a desperate but ultimately tragic battle, and the enormous Paterangi complex was out-flanked and rendered useless. The Maori coalitions were weak and there was no real sign of a strategic high command with the ability to plan and fight in a co-ordinated, or rational, way. Invariably this also meant that there was no effective and co-ordinated use of intelligence.

At an operational and tactical level, Maori kept the government troops under close scrutiny and were aware of their location most of the time. It seems likely that they infiltrated the towns and military posts, communicated with pro-government Maori and shadowed the troops when they were on the march. There is no indication of how co-ordinated these activities were and it seems likely that they were local level initiatives because there is no real evidence of an effective centralised command. The Kingites would have had a fairly clear idea of the numerical strength and the capabilities of the force moving towards them, but by contrast, the British were usually

unsure about the terrain, the fortifications and the numbers of warriors they were about to face. There were many reasons for success and failure during the Waikato War, but military intelligence was certainly an important factor.

In respect to the themes identified in Chapter One, the Waikato War presents an interesting case study. The British government provided a military force, and Grey had used a certain amount of manipulation to ensure that it was a large one. Even so, the Waikato War had more of the elements of a New Zealand war rather than an imperial expedition. There was a significant input from the New Zealand government and Grey and his ministers called the tune to a larger extent Gore-Browne had done so in Taranaki. The War Office, did not, and could not, provide any strategic intelligence and it was clear from the start that this would be the New Zealand government's role.

The fighting in Taranaki had been around the town and the farming areas, but in the Waikato War it was an advance into an area that was little understood. Cameron was a methodical man and he had nearly two years to plan the invasion. During that time he collected what information he could, but even so, details about the Middle and Upper Waikato were scarce. During the invasion itself, real-time information about what where the Maori forces were and what they were doing was almost non-existent. There was no real settler community in the Waikato and no Europeans still in place once the mission at Otawhao was evacuated. Consequently, there was no sense of a settler community fighting to hold on to what they had, few Waikato settlers with a vested interest in joining volunteer units, and therefore no citizen-soldiers with local knowledge that could help in the intelligence process. Indeed, the government had to 'buy in' volunteers in the form of the Waikato Regiment; a policy that added a mercenary flavour to the whole enterprise.

Chapter Six

The Tauranga Campaign 1864

'If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink.'
Romans 12:20¹

'This repulse, I am at a loss to explain.' Lieutenant General Cameron²

A brief overview of the war

The Tauranga Campaign was a relatively short and sharp operation that erupted as an offshoot of the Waikato War. The campaign is commonly understood as the two battles of Gate Pa and Te Ranga. Gate Pa has become seen as one of the iconic battles of the whole New Zealand Wars period; an irreconcilable British loss despite overwhelming superiority in men and materiel. Te Ranga is less well known, but it actually accounted for far greater casualties and a much more dramatic result, because it ended in the devastation of the Maori resistance and the consequent confiscation of land. However it was an even lesser known third battle at Maketu that had a significant effect on the whole of the campaign, and along with Te Ranga, was of greater strategic significance than the more famous Gate Pa. Military intelligence, both actual and lacking, played an important role in the final outcome of the Tauranga Campaign.

The lead up to war

The Tauranga region is a small slice of fertile land between the eastern slopes of the steep Kaimai Ranges and the Pacific Ocean (Fig 6.1). The Kaimai Ranges form a

¹ Romans 12:20. Henare Taratoa was a CMS trained Maori priest who fought against the British at Gate Pa and Te Ranga. He is attributed as the author of the four laws of conduct written on 28 March 1864 that were sent to Colonel Greer at Te Papa. The laws, which the Kingites outlined before the battle, prescribed humane treatment for wounded or captured combatants and for civilians. Taratoa was killed at Te Ranga and a sheet of paper with the instructions for the day, headed by this bible verse was found on his body. It is thought to relate to the giving of water to the wounded British soldiers, principally Lieutenant Colonel Booth of the 43rd Regiment who died from his wounds the day after the Battle of Gate Pa. Taratoa was originally thought to be the water giver during the night after that battle, but Heni Te Kirikaramu, the only woman in the pa, is now widely credited with that act of kindness. There are many legends and stories surrounding the battle which make it one of the most enigmatic of the whole New Zealand Wars period, but most are outside the scope of this thesis. See Gilbert Mair, *The Story of Gate Pa, April 29 1864*, Tauranga: Bay of Plenty Times, 1926, p 111.

² AJHR 1864, E-3, pp.60-62. Cameron's official report of the Battle of Gate Pa, to Grey, 5 May 1864. The full sentence reads: 'This repulse I am at a loss to explain otherwise by attributing it to the confusion created among the men by the intricate nature of the interior defences, and the sudden fall of so many of their officers'. Also reproduced in Mair, p.33.

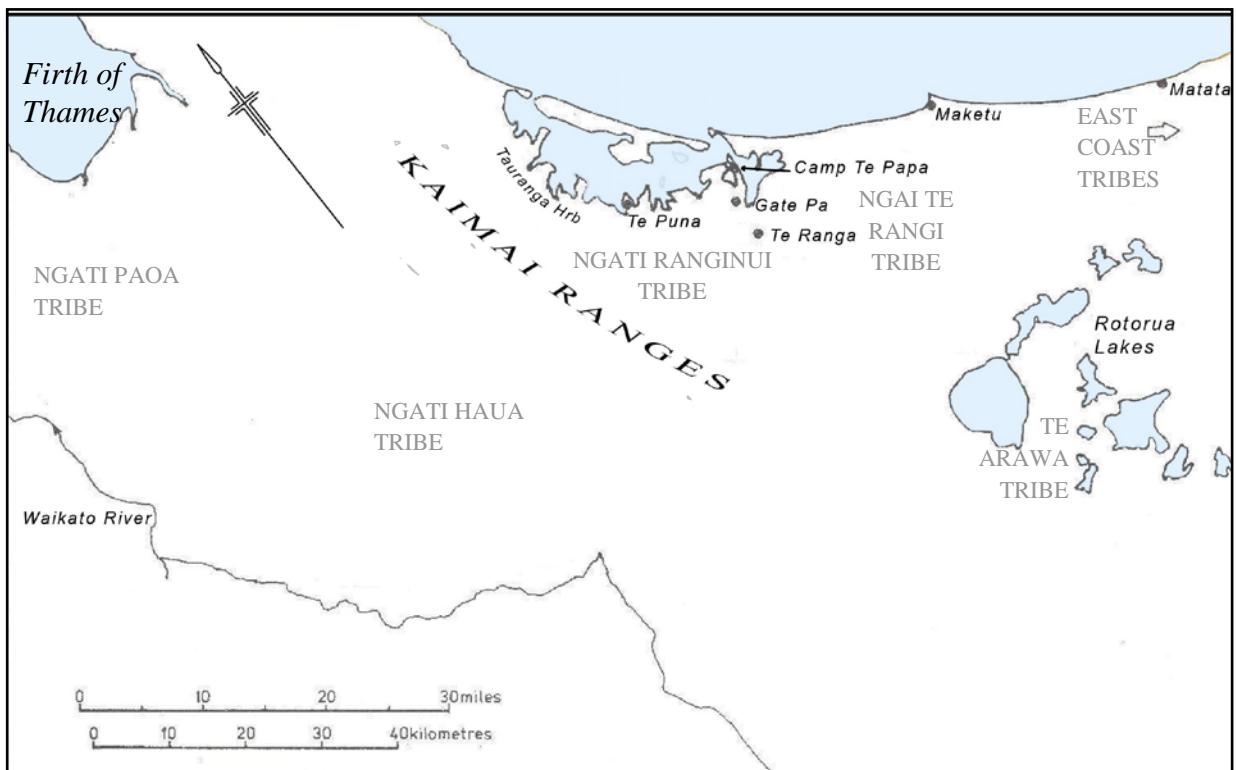


Fig. 6.1. Map showing the Tauranga region and surrounding areas. Adapted by the author from James Belich, *The New Zealand Wars*, p.179.

major physical barrier between Tauranga and the Upper Waikato, and they ensured that most European communication to and from Tauranga was by sea. Maori (and some Europeans) used a number of well established walking tracks across the mountains that linked Tauranga and the Waikato. The shallow harbour is protected by Matakana Island, a sand barrier that extends parallel to the coast for eighteen miles. The rich soil and abundant waters supported a thriving population of Maori from the three main tribes, Ngai Te Rangi, Ngati Ranginui and Ngati Pukenga in a region that Captain James Cook had aptly named the ‘Bay of Plenty’.

Although the fighting had not yet reached Tauranga by late 1863, the region had links to the wider Waikato War. The Tauranga Harbour was by far the best anchorage on that section of coast and the government knew that it had a logistical role in the Kingite war effort. European gun-runners were suspected of delivering ammunition and other supplies in behind Kingite lines there, just as they did on the west coast at Raglan.³ Reverend John Morgan had reported in 1860 that a rudimentary factory or storehouse

³ James Cowan, *The New Zealand Wars and the Pioneering Period*, vol. 1. Wellington: Government Printer, 1922, p.420; Mair, p.9; James Belich, *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1986, p.177.

near Tauranga was making gunpowder for the Kingites. It was known that a significant number of Tauranga Maori had embraced the Kingite cause early on and that there was a steady growth of support in the hapu and villages throughout the region. A contingent of warriors was presently fighting in the Waikato, and some had been in action since Meremere.⁴ The fertile soils and warm, moist climate of the area made it a food bowl and food grown there, particularly in the Te Puna area, was supplied to the Kingite forces fighting in the Waikato. Tauranga also afforded the easiest route between the East Coast and the Waikato, particularly because the pro-government Te Arawa tribe to the south blocked passage through its rohe (domain). East Coast war parties were therefore forced to travel up the coast to Tauranga, and then cross the Kaimai Ranges on their way to fight in the Waikato. All of these factors persuaded General Cameron that it was an area of strategic importance.

Tauranga had not been a planned British settlement and in 1863 it only had a tiny European population consisting of mission staff and a handful of traders and farmers. The Te Papa Mission Station, which was a focus for much of the activity in Tauranga, had been established in 1834-5 on the tip of the Te Papa peninsula by the Church Missionary Society. The long-time principal missionary was Archdeacon Alfred Brown (Fig 6.2), a strong character who had built a good reputation and was widely respected. Like many of the missionaries at the time, he wrote prolifically, corresponding with government officials, fellow missionaries and other key people on a wide range of subjects. Almost no topic was beyond the domain of such men, and letters on ecclesiastical matters, education, the mail, agriculture, the state of the harbour and shipping, and of course ‘the state of the natives’ were just some of the topics that occupied Brown.⁵ Reverend Charles Baker, who was in charge of the training institute at the mission station, was also a missionary of long standing. He had arrived in New Zealand in 1828, the year before Brown, and had served in many parts of the island. In common with Brown, he was well connected and also frequently corresponded with officials in Auckland. So despite its geographical isolation, the situation in Tauranga was

⁴ Belich, p.128. Some may have even fought in Taranaki although the tribe in general was not Kingite at that point.

⁵ A.N. Brown Papers, (TPS MS 11) Brown corresponded with a wide variety of people from the 1830s onwards. A selection of them is as follows: James Busby, George Grey, Reverend Henry Williams, Reverend Robert Burrows, William Colenso, Reverend John Morgan, Bishop Selwyn, George Clarke, James Clendon and James Hamlin. He wrote to countless government officials and also had frequent correspondence with many Maori chiefs.

reasonably well understood by the government. The European population there was part of an information loop that connected Auckland and the other centres of European population and the mission stations.

In December 1863 Brown wrote to Grey giving him a full update on the state of Maori affairs in Tauranga. He reported that 400 attendees at a hui in Katikati had decided to join the Waikato tribes. One hundred had decided to go immediately and the three hundred who remained quiet would probably go once the harvest was in.⁶ He gave a breakdown of the extent of support for the Kingites in enough detail to note, for example, that thirty warriors from Motiti Island, Mayor Island, Flat Island and Tuhere had recently allied with them. He also enclosed a letter from a number of pro-government chiefs confiding that they, ‘convey all of the information which we possess’.⁷

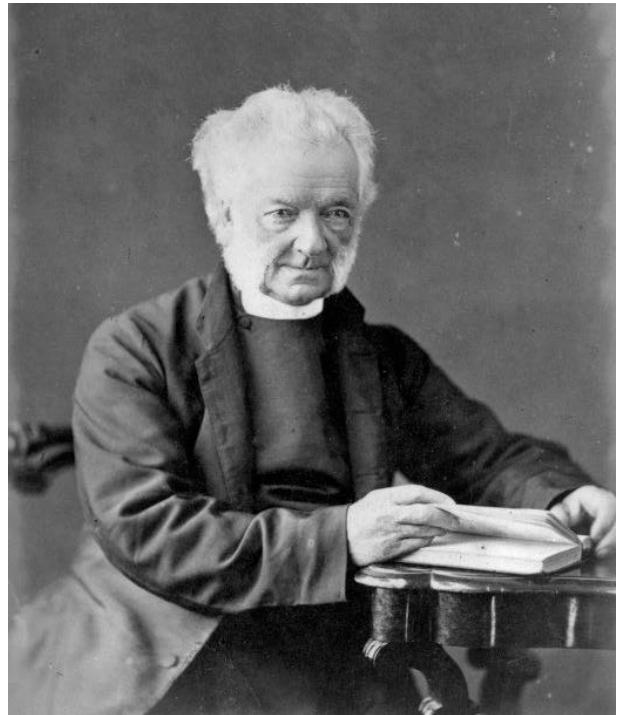


Fig. 6.2. Archdeacon Alfred Nesbit Brown. Photographer Hemus and Hanna, Auckland, circa 1879-1882. Alexander Turnbull Library.

Brown was in the same quandary as many of his brother missionaries. Elements of his flock were at war with the government, and also at odds with his own vision about how Maori society should develop. Like Morgan and others, he had spent most of his working life trying to build a peaceful and orderly Maori community that would be part of the rapidly growing European, Christian version of New Zealand. He had witnessed the carnage of the Musket Wars and then the continual and incessant raids from Te Arawa throughout the 1840s and 50s. He had introduced education, farming, trade training, schooling and rudimentary medical care into the community, and had helped the standard-of-living improve as Maori adopted elements of a cash-economy. But most importantly of all, in his mind, Maori had adopted Christianity, and in doing so had

⁶ Noeline Edwards, ‘Archdeacon Brown, Missionary,’ MA Thesis, (TPL MS 4), p.196.

⁷ Edwards, p.197.

moved away from their old ways that he would have seen as sinful; incessant warfare, cannibalism, polygamy, slavery and endemic violence. Men like Brown had a bottom line, and that was to save souls for eternal life. Despite all of the hardships, isolation, frustration and personal sacrifices (he lost his first wife and only son while serving in Tauranga and was now suffering failing health), he was achieving his goal. He had influenced and shaped the transformation of Maori society in the region and although his flock was Maori, his values were English and Christian. To use a colloquial phrase, ‘he had a dog in the fight.’ His biographer Noeline Edwards observed:

Brown was, let it be clearly understood, acting in no way as a government agent or informer, he remained a friend of the natives doing all he could do for them, but being a good Queen’s man, he felt duty bound to give any information to the Governor which would help prevent war or to bring peace quickly.⁸

More information about the growing militancy of some Maori came from Mr Smith, the Civil Commissioner in Tauranga. On a visit to Auckland in December 1863, he had attended a meeting at the Attorney General’s office which included the Colonial Secretary William Fox and several other ministers. Smith informed them that the Maori in Tauranga could be divided into those on the east of the harbour and those on the west. The east, he said, consisted of friendly tribes who were loyal to the government, while those on the west ‘were almost to a man committed to the rebellion; that a greater part of them had actually been fighting in the Waikato’.⁹

The ministers sought information from a number of men who were familiar with Tauranga, and they all confirmed Smith’s information. John Faulkner, who had a Maori wife and who had, ‘recently come from Tauranga because it is not safe there’, confirmed that those on the west side had gone to war ‘every man except the old men’,¹⁰ whilst those in the east were divided in opinion between going or not, and had not yet gone. David Sellars, who had been trading from Auckland to Tauranga for twelve years, had been there only a week earlier. He stated that, ‘the Natives on the west side of the harbour are all King natives - there is not a village that has not sent a contingent to the war. When I was there a week ago, many were going and many were there already: a few

⁸ Edwards, p.198.

⁹ AJHR 1864, Memoranda and Correspondence on the subject of the Tauranga Expedition, No.7, 25 January 1864.

¹⁰ AJHR 1864, Tauranga Expedition, No.6, 24 January 1864.

were left to cut the crops'.¹¹ Mr Clarke, a Tauranga settler, said that Rawiri, whose faction had not gone to war, now said that he would, and had been seen with some of the leading Kingites.¹²

In fact there may have been a recruitment drive for new warriors because several observers remarked that emissaries from William Thompson (Wiremu Tamehana) were, or had recently been, in the district. Brown thought that they would not get much support except for, 'Mayor's and Flat Islander's who now join for the first time',¹³ but he seems to have underestimated the amount of support that was growing for the Kingite cause. Baker also reported on 28 December 1863 about a hui at Katikati where, 'the voice in favour of the rebellion appears to have been general'.¹⁴ He noted that Rawiri Puhirake had proposed at the hui 'that the wheat harvest should first be gathered in, and then he would join and make common cause with the Waikato'.¹⁵ Writing in hind-sight a week after the British troops had actually landed in Tauranga, Baker told Fox that:

...it is not impossible that had not the troops been sent to occupy a position in Tauranga, many who have been neutral, if not friendly, would have been induced or coerced, to join the rebels.¹⁶

The general tone of the information reaching the government in Auckland was that Tauranga was rapidly becoming more pro-Kingite and a more important link in the Kingite logistic system. The ministers had done almost as thorough an analysis of the situation as they could by talking to many Europeans who were familiar with the area, and their conclusions were clear.

1. The route through Tauranga to the Waikato was being used by reinforcements from the East Coast just as it had been in 1860-1.
2. The Maori on the west side of the harbour were enemies and had been at war, or were about to be.
3. A large quantity of food was about to be harvested and taken to the Waikato.

¹¹ AJHR 1864, Tauranga Expedition, No.6, 24 January 1864.

¹² AJHR 1864, Tauranga Expedition, No.6, 24 January 1864.

¹³ AJHR 1864, Tauranga Expedition, No.6, 24 January 1864. These are William Fox's words that reported Brown's comments and summarised the opinions in 11-13 above.

¹⁴ Mair, p.58. The comment was made on 28 January 1864. Baker had resided in Tauranga for many years but was now living in Auckland. His opinion about the political attitude of the Tauranga tribes was also canvassed by Fox. Baker agreed with the general East-West delineation but felt that most Maori had been 'tainted with the rebellion'.

¹⁵ Mair, p.58.

¹⁶ Mair, p.58.

4. Food gunpowder and munitions had been, and continued to be, smuggled into the Waikato from ships unloading in Tauranga Harbour.
5. In addition to the military value of doing so, there were political advantages in closing the Tauranga route to the Waikato. The Te Arawa tribe, which was allied to the government and was keeping the Kingites in check south of Tauranga, would be encouraged by a more concrete display of government action.

Reports had indicated that East Coast warriors were travelling from that district across to the Waikato to join in the war. Cameron was aware of that and asked for an intervention at Tauranga.¹⁷ The general's advance into the Waikato had been meticulously planned and one of the elements of his strategy had been to guarantee the security of his flanks. The strategy included building the chain of forts to protect Auckland from infiltration through the Hunua Ranges and elaborate measures to protect his supply convoys on the roads and on the river. He had secured Raglan Harbour on the west coast, and now on the east he needed to secure the Tauranga Harbour and deny the Kingites the ability to move men and war supplies into the Waikato. Consequently, it was proposed to send a contingent of 500-600 soldiers to Tauranga.¹⁸ Grey was pressured by Whitaker to make an urgent decision and he reluctantly agreed to the expedition on the condition that it was temporary and that the troops could be released if trouble flared up elsewhere, because Taranaki and Wanganui were also a concern.¹⁹ In reality, the ministers had presented Grey with a *fait accompli*. Preparations for the expedition had been going on for several days and the threat to the mission station buildings, however real, left him with little alternative but to concur.

The Tauranga Maori had been worried about a possible British attack ever since hostilities had broken out in the Taranaki in 1860, and it was rumoured amongst them in June 1861 that 300-400 troops were coming to occupy their district. A few days later Rawiri and others searched the mission station for gunpowder that they believed had

¹⁷ Journals of the Deputy Quarter Master General, from 24 December 1861 to 7 September 1864, (JDQMG), p.87.

¹⁸ AJHR 1864, Papers Relative to Native Affairs, No.1, 19 January 1864.

¹⁹ AJHR 1864, Papers Relative to Native Affairs, No.1- 4, 19 January 1864. Grey agreed on the proviso that the expedition should be withdrawn if trouble flared up elsewhere, especially in the southern North Island settlements of Taranaki and Wanganui.

been sent by Grey. The two barrels in question contained beef and beer.²⁰ In late 1863 Ngai Te Rangi were still aware that the government could move against them and had most likely heard rumours that something was planned. Whitaker admitted that it was a poorly kept secret; ‘it is publicly known that such an expedition was in contemplation.’²¹ In response, they threatened to destroy the mission buildings if troops ever arrived. The destruction of such a significant European symbol and physical asset would have been an insufferable affront to the government and the European populace of the country as a whole, and may well have led to military retaliation on a greater scale than was currently being envisioned. It might also have had the effect of galvanising more support for the Kingite cause and serve as a rallying point for disaffected Maori across the North Island. The government was conscious that the mission buildings could serve as a base for the troops, and the loss of a foothold in the area would have been a major setback. The small European community was secretly evacuated on 19 January 1864, a few days prior to the arrival of the troops. It was their second evacuation in six months.²² A nondescript coastal vessel was used for the evacuation to avoid suspicion. This was because the government realised that if the Kingites saw the evacuations as a prelude to a military occupation, they might carry out their threat to destroy the mission buildings.

The objectives of the expedition as outlined by Whitaker, were: to take possession of the mission buildings (by landing at dawn and securing them quickly); to take possession of the crops, cattle and other property of the Maori on the west side of the harbour and to gather those crops in; to stop communication on the route between Tauranga and the Waikato; and to stop communication across the harbour. The expedition was not designed to seize Maori land or even open up a new front in the war.²³ It was a side-show to the war in the Waikato, an operation on the flank of the main theatre to take the pressure off Cameron’s force that was still camped in front of the

²⁰ Charles Baker, Rev, ‘Journals 1859-67’, (TPL MS 40). Entries for 16 and 27 June and 1 July 1861.

²¹ AJHR 1864, E No.2, p.7.

²² This was not the first time that the European population had evacuated Tauranga. On 20 July 1863 Wiremu Tamehana had written to Brown in response to Cameron’s crossing of the Mangatawhiri River. The letter declared that, ‘the defenceless should fare alike with those who defend themselves’. Brown received the letter on 28 July 1863 and the Europeans immediately packed and were on board the schooner *Tauranga* which was ‘providentially’ in the harbour at the time. They arrived in Auckland on 31 July 1863, see C.W. Baker, Reverend. ‘Letters and Journals to the Church Missionary Society, London, July 1849-January 1869’, (TPL MS 40)

²³ However, the government had just legislated itself the ability to confiscate land with the passing of the New Zealand Settlements Act (Confiscation Act) December 1863 and was clearly thinking about that as a possibility.

massive defences at Paterangi, and seal off and blockade an important Kingite supply route. Gamble described the aims of the force to be sent to Tauranga as not only with a view to securing the place, but also, ‘confining the attention of the disaffected in those districts with the preservation of their own homes and thus preventing their joining the Waikato’s in our front’.²⁴

Although confiscation was not initially on the agenda, the government had just passed The New Zealand Settlements Act (Confiscation Act) on 3 December 1863 which allowed it to confiscate land from tribes in rebellion. The act had been opposed by many New Zealand politicians and was so draconian that Edward Cardwell, the new Colonial Secretary in London was alarmed:

...at a policy of unlimited confiscation that did not distinguish friend from foe and provided only limited compensation for displaced peoples while allowing unlimited punishment. He trusted it would not last longer than two years, and he exhorted Grey to try to prevent abuses.²⁵

The attitude of some men of the Waikato Regiment at Te Ranga six months later showed that, in their minds at least, confiscation was very much on the agenda. They were fighting for a farm and they expected it immediately.

Preparations were already well advanced when Grey gave his assent, and the expedition under the command of Colonel Carey, departed Auckland on the morning of 20 January 1864. Twenty-two hours later in the early morning of the 21st, four warships and some smaller craft entered the Tauranga heads. The troops landed quickly and took possession of the mission station and immediately began to entrench themselves in to fortified positions.²⁶ The security measures used and the quick seizure of the mission station buildings, proved to be completely unnecessary. The imminent arrival of the expedition seems to have been well known, and the pro-government Maori who met them on the beach, said that they had been expecting the troops for several days.²⁷ This was separately corroborated by the Civil Commissioner Smith who had heard reports that the expedition was on its way for several days before it arrived. He seems to have been

²⁴ JDQMG, p.109.

²⁵ Edmund Bohan, *Climates of War: New Zealand in Conflict 1859-69*, Christchurch: Hayward Press, 2005, p.166.

²⁶ H. Fides, ‘Reminiscences of Maj. Gen. H. Robley’, 1921, (TPL MS 93), p.21. Robley was a Lieutenant in the 68th Regiment and travelled aboard HMS *Miranda*; Mair, p.9.

²⁷ Fides, p.25.

less-informed than the local Maori, and because he was unaware that the troops were in fact *en-route*, he contradicted the Maori who made the claims but was chagrined and somewhat embarrassed to eventually learn that the reports were true.²⁸ Just how word leaked out is not known, but it is clear that the troops were expected. Lieutenant Robley of the 68th Regiment noted that on the beach, ‘the kupapa had white flags of peace in every direction.’²⁹

Smith quickly set about assuaging the fears of the pro-government tribes south of Tauranga. He assured them in a circular letter that the aim of the expedition was to put a check on the movement of Waikato sympathisers, that active hostilities were not contemplated, and that if any action was necessary it would only be against open rebels.³⁰ He persuaded Carey not to go ahead with his orders to seize or destroy cattle and crops because that would give the wrong message to the pro-government tribes and push them into the arms of the Kingites.³¹ Brown gave the same advice and fortunately Carey listened to the two sage locals.

The response to Smith’s actions was fascinating. Grey later praised him and thanked him for correcting his error of, ‘issuing such instructions as [I] did for treating all the Natives on the western side of the harbour of Tauranga as enemies, seizing their crops, cattle etc’, adding, ‘I feel very much obliged to you for the fearless and honourable way in which you did your duty on this occasion, thereby preventing me from being the cause of bringing much misery upon many innocent people’.³² On the same day, 25 January 1864, Grey wrote to Carey, praised the discretion that he had displayed, and modified his orders:

you will not adopt any aggressive movement against any natives, and you will not seize the cattle, or destroy the crops of any Natives, whom you are not satisfied are open enemies, but at the same time you should, if possible, intercept all armed parties passing by the Tauranga route to the aid of Natives now in arms against us in the interior districts.³³

²⁸ AJHR 1864, No.13. Smith to Colonial Secretary, 11 February 1864.

²⁹ Fides, p.25.

³⁰ AJHR 1864, No.5. Smith to Colonial Secretary, 22 January 1864. The specific tribes that he sent letters to were Te Arawa and Ngati Awa at Te Matata and Whakatane

³¹ AJHR 1864, Enclosure to No.5. Smith to Colonel Carey, 22 January 1864.

³² AJHR 1864, No.8. Grey to Smith, 25 January 1864.

³³ AJHR 1864, No.10. Grey to Colonel Carey, 25 January 1864.

Carey was lucky, he could have been reprimanded for disobeying his orders, but Grey showed considerable political acumen and humanity. Bohan suggests that Grey suspected that the ministers were forcing the Tauranga Maori into rebellion, ‘in order to confiscate their land and parcel it out to the Auckland business friends’.³⁴ Smith on the other hand, incurred the wrath of the ministers for his interference and received a severe roasting from Edward Shortland the Native Secretary.³⁵ He was reminded that he had originally said that all of the Maori on the west side of the harbour were, to a man, committed to the rebellion, and was ordered to provide accurate information as soon as possible about the political allegiances of the Ngai Te Rangi. It is worth noting that the government seemed to use the term ‘Ngai Te Rangi’ as a generic label for Tauranga Maori when there were, in fact, three quite distinct tribes and significant hapu which had different political stand-points. This shows a failure to understand the political and social intricacies of the community.

In response, Smith produced an extraordinary document which laid out the allegiances in detail. Forty-five Maori settlements, their tribal affiliations, the total number of males and the number who had gone to fight in the Waikato were listed, as well as a location map of all of the settlements (see Appendix 2).³⁶ His cumulative totals for all males who had gone to fight in the Waikato were:

East side	34 out of 238 adult males
West side	169 out of 253 adult males
Islands	30 out of 80 adult males
Total	233 out of 571 adult males

If the details in the report were accurate, they indicate an extraordinary level of knowledge about the Maori population of Tauranga. Smith obviously had a very good understanding of the situation himself, but it seems likely that he would have needed the help of pro-government Maori to furnish such precise information about individual communities.

With its new orders the British Army now settled into a passive occupation. The 43rd and 68th Regiments built the Monmouth and Durham Redoubts, respectively, in front

³⁴ Bohan, pp.158-9.

³⁵ AJHR 1864, No.7. Shortland to Smith, 25 January 1864.

³⁶ AJHR 1864, No.13 and enclosure, Smith to Colonial Secretary, 11 February 1864. Reproduced at Appendix 2.

of the mission buildings, and this created a very strong position at the tip of the peninsular that became known as Camp Te Papa. Another redoubt was built and strongly garrisoned south of Tauranga at Maketu. Its purpose was to prevent East Coast tribes advancing up the coast to Tauranga, and to support the Te Arawa tribe which was an important government ally. The redoubt was manned by detachments of the 43rd Regiment and the 1st Waikato Regiment under the command of Major Colville. The bulk of the defenders, though, were pro-government Te Arawa who wore white scarves to distinguish themselves in the same way as the yellow caps had been worn in the Lower Waikato.³⁷ The Royal Navy blockaded the Tauranga Harbour and the whole force settled into a defensive posture.

The months of February and March were quiet. There is no extant evidence of British patrolling, information gathering, or any kind of overt action against the Maori. Some officers amused themselves by riding and by shooting birds on the estuaries which would have given them some idea about the countryside. They were careful not to venture too far from camp though for fear of being shot at because Rawiri had warned them not to use the Waimapu or Judea swamps.³⁸ The European domain in Tauranga at that stage was very small.

As soon as it was heard that troops had landed in Tauranga, the warriors in the Waikato were summoned to hurry back to defend their lands.³⁹ They would not have known the government's thinking behind the occupation and would have thought the worst; that a new front had been opened up in the war and that their lands were about to be taken. There are conflicting reports about whether Rawiri was in the Waikato or not, but he may well have been at Maungatapu on the east side of the harbour. Maori held a hui and attempted to develop a response to the arrival of the troops. There is some evidence that some chiefs tried to clarify the status of neutrals and pro-government Maori; in other words to determine who was safe and who was not, but were alarmed by

³⁷. Fides, p.37.

³⁸ Shuttleworth, Maj, 'Diary', 11 February 1864, reprinted in *The Bay of Plenty Times*, 13 February 1971; Mair, p.11. Rawiri warned the officers' against shooting in the Waimapu and Judea swamps: 'In future all the hills and plains, valleys and streams may be trodden on by our feet and should harm befall those persons, the Maoris would be blamed unjustly'. He didn't want Maori blamed for any harm that might happen to British Officers out shooting.

³⁹ W.H. Gifford and H.B. Williams, *A Centennial History of Tauranga*, Dunedin: A.H. and A.W. Reed, 1940, p.234.

Carey's answer that he did not know.⁴⁰ What were the troops doing there? Were all Maori to be treated as combatants? The chiefs did not know and they could not get an answer. It is likely that it was at this point that the warriors were summoned to return from the Waikato. In early February it was rumoured at Camp Te Papa that 700 warriors were on their way to attack the camp.⁴¹ These rumours were probably triggered by the influx of warriors returning from the Waikato, but would have been an exaggeration of the actual numbers. The numbers prepared to take the field were relatively low and Rawiri eventually had only 200 men to fight at Gate Pa in the main position, not all of whom were from Tauranga tribes. It appears that a significant number of the local Maori were neutral or pro-government, or were not prepared to play their hand at that point.

Those determined to resist the arrival of the troops immediately set about strengthening a number of old pa sites along the edge of the forest that cloaked the Kaimais. These strong-points stretched for sixteen miles from Te Puna, which was considered a possible place where the British might land because the water was deep enough for the warships, to Waoku on the forest edge south-east of the harbour, which was the strongest position. It is difficult to know how co-ordinated the strategy was at that stage,⁴² but the Kingite plan seems to have been to draw Colonel Greer (Fig 6.3), who had replaced Carey, out of his fortifications at Te Papa to attack a well defended pa. The British position at Te Papa was too strong for Maori to attack it, so Rawiri needed to lure Greer out into a decisive battle in the same way that Nelson had disastrously attacked Puketakauere in Taranaki.⁴³ And so continued the Maori strategy of establishing a strong defensive position and waiting to be attacked, but this time, the British were slower to take the bait.

By late March, the Ngai Te Rangi coalition, which included small numbers from other tribes, had constructed a pa and was ready to fight and Rawiri tried a number of ways to entice Greer to attack. He issued a challenge to the Colonel threatening to 'come to breakfast' (attack) Te Papa, and offered to build a road up to Waoku so that the

⁴⁰ W.R. Turner, 'Conflict at Gate Pa', *Bay of Plenty Times*, 13 December, 1912.

⁴¹ Shuttleworth, 11 February 1864.

⁴² Belich, p.422. It appears likely that many chiefs strengthened their own traditional pa sites in their home locations. How independent or co-ordinated these actions were is not known.

⁴³ Mair, pp.10-11; Cowan, pp.421-3; Belich, p.177; Gifford and Williams, pp.224-7.

Colonel Greer of the 68th Regiment arrived to take command in Tauranga on 16 March 1864.

soldiers wouldn't be too tired to fight.⁴⁴ There was no intention to actually build the road; it was just rhetoric goading designed to annoy Greer into action. A few days later a direct challenge was issued:

Do you hearken. A challenge for a fight between us is declared. The day of fighting: Friday, the first day of April. This is a fixed challenge from all the tribes.⁴⁵

This was a customary way of declaring battle, but it was also another attempt to increase the pressure on Greer, which failed. The inactivity was not serving Rawiri's goal and he was probably having trouble restraining his warriors who had laboured to build the pa, but who now waited in vain without a response and with no sign of an impending attack.



Fig.6.3. Colonel H.H. Greer, 68th Regiment. Photographed in 1864. Tauranga Public Library.

Greer did not fall for the goading or enticements and he was not about to be drawn into a foolhardy attack, especially as his orders expressly forbade offensive action. In any case, he had insufficient men to be able to mount an attack as well as secure Camp Te Papa and the mission buildings. He stayed firmly in camp and increased vigilance and deployed more sentries. On 31 March, rumours of an imminent attack on Te Papa were taken seriously enough that the women and children were rushed to safe places which included Greer's own quarters.⁴⁶ On 2nd and 4th April small bands of warriors fired long range shots at the camp and mission buildings. They were dispersed by fire from muskets and a field gun, but Greer noted that, 'Maori scouts are constantly watching the camp on foot and mounted'.⁴⁷

The British had little understanding of the Kingite intentions or their numerical strength, and they had no idea about what they were really planning. There was considerable interaction between the civilian and military authorities, and Brown, for

⁴⁴ Cowan, p.422; Mair, pp.10-11. Mair mentions that the road was to be eight miles long, while Cowan says ten to eleven.

⁴⁵ Henare Taratoa to Greer, cited in Gifford and Williams, p.227.

⁴⁶ Shuttleworth, 31 March 1864.

⁴⁷ Greer to Grey, (APL MS 82 [25]) Grey Collection, 8 April 1864.

example, frequently visited HMS *Miranda* and often slept on board.⁴⁸ The Archdeacon presumably kept in close contact with the pro-government chiefs and we might assume that he communicated information to the military command, and so too would Smith and the handful of other Europeans as well. There is also no evidence that military officers actively collected information and there is no evidence of patrols or planned reconnaissance activity. It would have been dangerous to stray too far from the camp in small groups, and larger patrols might have been contrary to the orders that Greer had been given. The net result was that Greer and his officers were unsure about Rawiri's plans and the number of warriors he had, where they were and what fortifications they had constructed.

Unlike Greer, Rawiri would have had a reasonably good idea of the strength of his enemy. His men would have counted the number of soldiers, sailors, the guns and ships. What he did not know was whether reinforcements would arrive, and how many there could be, and this might have been one of the factors that encouraged him to engage Greer in battle as soon as possible. In fact small groups of British reinforcements did trickle in to Camp Te Papa, and there was a constant to-and-fro of naval ships which would have kept Auckland aware of the situation at Tauranga.⁴⁹

The military focus soon shifted south as a war party from the East Coast tribes, who were travelling through Te Arawa territory to the Waikato, clashed with the pro-government Te Arawa warriors near Lake Rotoiti. In a three day running battle, the East Coast party was repulsed but not completely defeated. Te Arawa was an extremely valuable ally to the government but the warriors were poorly equipped. After the battle, the interpreter William Mair, who had just been appointed as the Magistrate at Taupo, happened to be at Maketu. He realised Te Arawa's predicament and went to Tauranga to beg the officers to part with their sporting powder and ammunition. He also prevailed upon the local storekeepers to part with the lead from their tea chests. And so in a haphazard but innovative way, Te Arawa was armed with sufficient powder and

⁴⁸ Log of HMS *Miranda* 16 April 1864 (Capt. Jenkins R.N.).

⁴⁹ Shuttleworth, 1 April 1864. For example on 1 April 1864 a detachment of 20 Forest Rangers and Colonial Defence Force under the command of Major Drummond-Hay and Captain T. McDonnell arrived in Tauranga. They were soon sent to Maketu.

ammunition for the next battle, which was soon to come.⁵⁰ Te Arawa was a huge help to the government, and by forbidding the passage of East Coast taua (war parties) through its rohe (territory), it prevented, or at least slowed down, the provision of reinforcements for the Maori forces in the Waikato. A redoubt was constructed at Maketu, 25 miles south of Tauranga and it was garrisoned by a joint British Army and Te Arawa force. This military co-operation between the government and Te Arawa was the most significant and overt since Nene's relationship with the government in the Northern War.

The Battle of Gate Pa

On the morning of 16 April 1864, Rawiri pushed his strategy to the limit and began constructing a new pa on Pukehinahina ridge which was within view of Camp Te Papa only three miles away. The ridge was the furthest extent of the land owned by the CMS mission, and as such, it was a boundary of symbolic importance. A fence and ditch traversed the ridge and in their centre was a gate that allowed ox-carts and other traffic to pass between the mission land and Maori land. The troops peering at the fortification on the horizon soon named it 'the gate pa.'

Warriors had occupied the ridge at around midnight carrying wood and flax with them because timber was scarce in that area.⁵¹ They presumably planned to have dug deep enough by morning to have some protection if the British attempted to drive them off. As the morning dawned, they could be clearly seen from the camp by the surprised officers who watched them through their telescopes.⁵² The curious Major Shuttleworth rode out for a closer look, and noted in his diary, 'the first thing this morning we found the enemy's flag planted on our ground; on riding out found a pah begun and lots of men at work, just at the boundary fence'.⁵³

Greer convened a meeting of his officers and Major Shuttleworth noted, 'after a council of war it was agreed we could not attack without further instructions or reinforcements. Sent steamer off at once'.⁵⁴ The gist of the message from Greer to Grey

⁵⁰ Cowan, p.415. Mair collected, 'three hundred-weight of powder, several hundred-weight of shot and a large quantity of percussion caps'. The lead from tea chests was later moulded into musket balls by the Te Arawa warriors.

⁵¹ Mair, p.23, quoting Hori Ngatai

⁵² Fides, p.38.

⁵³ Shuttleworth, 16 April 1864.

⁵⁴ Shuttleworth, 16 April 1864.

was that he considered the Maori intention was to attack the camp. He had decided not to attack the Maori construction party for two reasons. Firstly, his orders still forbade him from taking offensive action. Secondly, he considered that he had insufficient men to surround and destroy the position (especially as a sizable detachment was at Fort Maketu), and he daren't leave the camp undefended. He estimated the Maori strength to be 600-1000 and asked Grey for reinforcements of mounted cavalry, 500 more infantry and some howitzers.⁵⁵

It would have been very difficult for Greer to have known how many Maori were working on the pa. Captain Jenkins R.N., who was watching from the camp, felt that the progress of the pa and the numbers he could see indicated that there was a 'considerable force' working on the entrenchments.⁵⁶ Greer's estimate of 600-1000 was much higher than the number of warriors who eventually garrisoned the pa, and this may be partly accounted for by the distance that the British viewed it from and the fact that women, and most probably children too, were also involved in its construction.

Because materials were scarce, the warriors made frequent night forays into the mission station area to scavenge fence posts, rails and other timber. On the night of 21 April, Shuttleworth led a 200 strong party out, 'to catch the wood stealing, but after waiting for two hours returned unsuccessful'.⁵⁷ This was such a lame effort to impede the progress of the pa that one wonders how seriously the British took the threat, but at this early point in the lead-up to the battle, Rawiri appears to have had the strategic advantage. He had chosen where to fight, and he was building his defences unimpeded, and he had an accurate idea of the strength of the British in Tauranga. Greer had very little idea about Rawiri's numbers, and he had incorrectly assessed his plans. Rawiri could watch the British camp and the movements of the troops with impunity, but Greer was almost totally ignorant of the Maori preparations and the strength of their position. Things are seldom static in warfare though, and the situation was about to change dramatically.

⁵⁵ Greer to Grey, (APL MS 82 [26]) Grey Collection), 18 April 1864.

⁵⁶ Logbook of HMS *Miranda*, 18 April 1864.

⁵⁷ Shuttleworth, 21 April 1864; Fides, p.39.

Instead of just sending the troops and guns that Greer had asked for, Cameron himself arrived in Tauranga on 21 April. Over the next few days' reinforcements flooded in to bring the total number of soldiers, sailors and marines up to approximately 2,000 by 26 April.⁵⁸ In addition, a large 110-pounder Armstrong gun and two 40-pounders were landed to augment the 14 smaller guns already at Camp Te Papa. The 110-pounder was a naval gun on a naval carriage, but because the gun firing position was only a short distance from the shore, it was able to be hauled into position by a team of oxen. A gun of that size, and certainly on a naval carriage, would have been an impossibility in the Waikato.

Rawiri's men must have watched in despair as the men and materiel were disgorged from the ships. Greer's estimate of the Maori numbers as 600-1000 had influenced Cameron, and so too had the location of the pa. The Waikato War had been a logistical nightmare. The long supply lines traversed difficult terrain and roads, wharves and depots had been purposely constructed before and during the war, and then protected and maintained for its duration. Consequently, much of the British effort had revolved around logistics. Now here at Tauranga there was a large Kingite force (so Cameron had been led to believe) right near the edge of the harbour. There were no strung-out communication routes to manage and he could use as much artillery as he could land from the ships and drag just two miles into position. It was a golden opportunity for a decisive victory, and he didn't intend to let it slip.

In fact Cameron's chances of success were even better than he might have hoped for, because he was not faced with an enemy force of 600-1000, but with a garrison that would eventually number only 230 warriors.⁵⁹ Just as the British numerical strength spectacularly improved, Rawiri's fortunes suffered an equally dramatic reversal. It seems likely that he was expecting reinforcements from the East Coast war parties that had tried to cross Te Arawa territory earlier in April.⁶⁰ On 25 April, more or less the same party numbering well in excess of 400 warriors attacked the joint Te Arawa-British stronghold at Maketu. In a running battle that lasted until the 28th and also included fire support from

⁵⁸ Mair, p.12; Cowan, p.425; Belich, p.178.

⁵⁹ Fides, p.42 gives the figure as 230. Belich, p.178 agrees, but Mair, p.12 puts the figure at 250.

⁶⁰ Fides, p.37; Belich, p.178; Cowan, p.421 notes that the Ngai Te Rangi received some reinforcements in May, but that these had been small in number.

two warships, HMS *Falcon* and the colonial gunboat *Sandfly*,⁶¹ they were soundly beaten and driven off with substantial casualties (estimates range from 50 to 125 killed).⁶² This was a decisive victory for the government because it changed the power balance for the up-coming battle at Gate Pa and it secured the southern approaches to the area.

It also seems likely that Rawiri was expecting reinforcements from Waikato. His men had, of course, been fighting in the Waikato, and it would seem reasonable that they would have expected help from that quarter in their hour of need. The Gate Pa position had a strange layout (Fig 6.4). There was a large earthwork fortification in the centre of the position on the highest part of the ridge, and then a much smaller position about 30 paces to the western side, but still on the line of the original fence and ditch. Captain Gilbert Mair later concluded that, ‘this gap had been left as a point-of-honour in the expectation of six hundred Ngati Haua and Waikato natives- who, however, never came-occupying it’.⁶³

Heni Te Kirikaramu, who fought in the smaller fortification during the battle, offered a completely different explanation for the layout of the pa. She was quite clear that her party of about 30 warriors arrived only the night before the battle, and as it would not have been tikanga (culturally appropriate) for them to fight in the same pa as the Tauranga Maori, they were directed to build their own smaller pa at a distance.⁶⁴ This would explain why the main pa was defended by about 200 warriors from a mix of mainly Ngai Te Rangi and the smaller pa was garrisoned by about 30 Pirirakau, Ngati Ranginui and Koheriki warriors. The real reason for the unusual layout of the pa may never be fully explained and it appears to have been lost from local memory. However, whether by design or good luck, the existence of the small position proved to be a crucial factor in the outcome of the battle. In any case, the Ngai Te Rangi did not receive reinforcements from either the East Coast or Waikato.

⁶¹ Cowan, p.417.

⁶² Cowan, p.417 covers the battle well and estimates that 50 East Coast Maori were killed, while Mair, p.12, says that 125 were killed. Over 400 Te Arawa fought as well as other smaller parties from other tribes and elements of the 43rd Regiment, Forest Rangers and the Colonial Defence Force. HMS *Falcon* and the colonial steamer *Sandfly* provided effective supporting fire from sea. Also see the Logbook from HMS *Miranda*, 27 April 1864.

⁶³ Mair, p 13

⁶⁴ Jane Foley, letters to the *Bay of Plenty Times*, 22 April 1898, 29 June 1900.

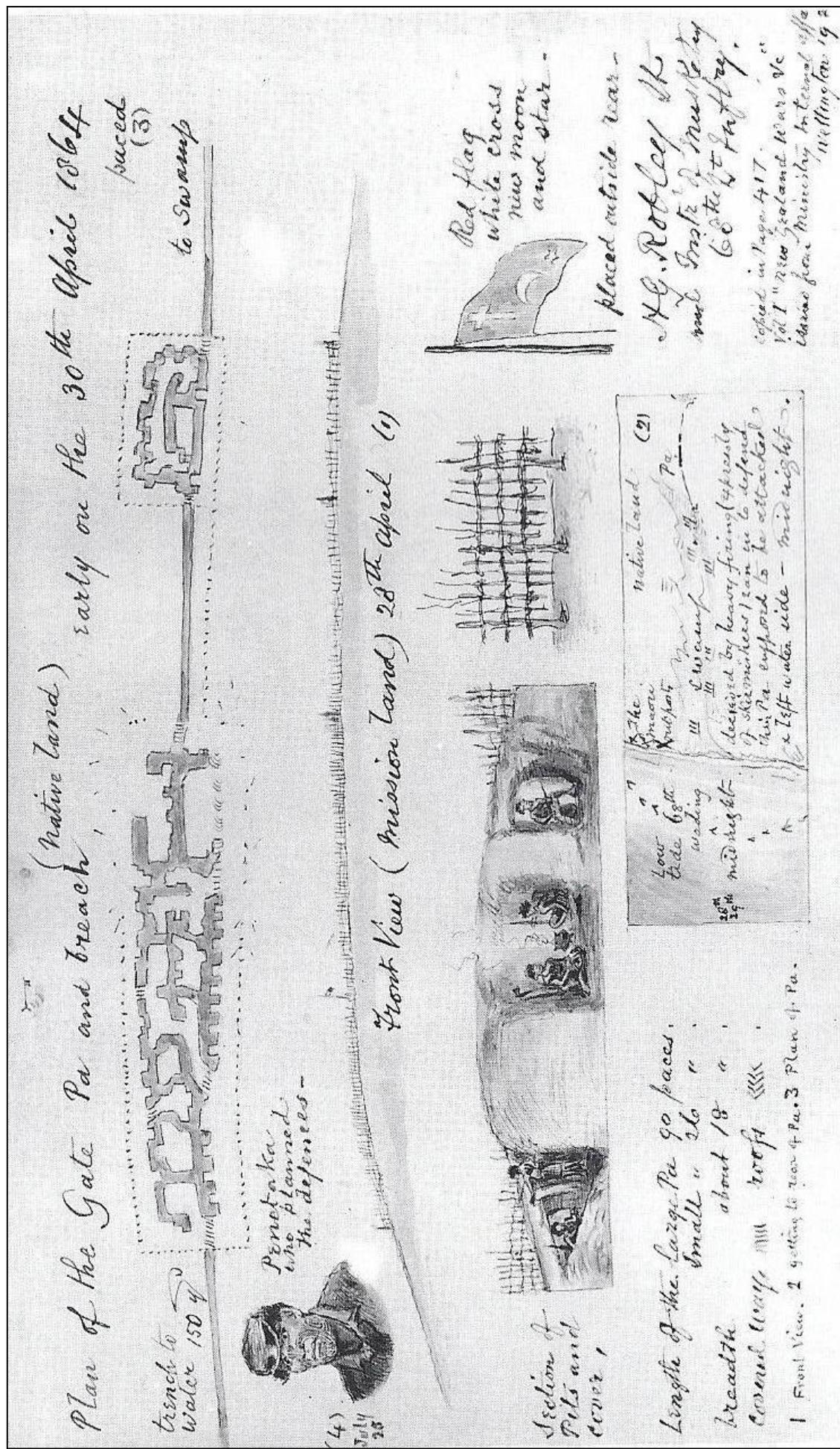


Fig..6.4, Plan of Gate Pa . Original sketch by Lt. Robley 68th Regiment. The plan gives three views of the pa. The top portion is a bird's eye view of the trench that traversed the position and the large and the small pa. The middle image is the view that the British would have had of the front of the pa. Note that it is higher than the viewing point and seems quite frail. The third image gives a cross section of the pa from front to rear showing the rifle pits and the bomb proof shelters. Auckland Institute and Museum.

Rawiri's plan had finally worked; the British were about to attack him. However the odds had changed so dramatically in the last few days preceding the battle that the pa that he had built to lure Greer into battle had become a potential death trap for his own men. His meagre force was about to face an onslaught from 1650 infantry and sailors (while another 350 remained behind to defend the camp), and the largest and most formidable artillery contingent assembled for any battle during the whole of the New Zealand Wars period. As Belich has very correctly observed, 'the Ngai Te Rangi could be forgiven for thinking that they had caught a Tartar'.⁶⁵

On 27 April Cameron made, in his own words, 'a close reconnaissance of the pa',⁶⁶ but this was probably an over estimation of what actually happened. Unlike the situation at Meremere and Rangiriri, he was unable to sail up beside Gate Pa in an armoured gunboat to make a relatively close examination. Because of the openness of the terrain and the presence of Maori sentries, it is unlikely that he got much closer to the pa than 1000 yards away. On the same day, Ensign Nicholl of the 43rd Regiment recorded that he and Greer sat on a rise 1000 yards from the pa and tried to figure out the fortification.⁶⁷ There is only one piece of elevated ground between the pa and Camp Te Papa that could have been that vantage point, a small hill called Pukereia, so it seems almost certain that Cameron viewed the pa from the same place as Nicholl and Greer.

Not only could the British not get a close look at the pa, but the distant view that they did have revealed very little about its true nature. The pa had been cleverly sited on high ground that dropped abruptly into the swampy arms of the Waimapu and Waikareao estuaries on either side. The ground in front sloped steadily up to the fortification forming a glacis, while the land at the rear was relatively flat. Rawiri had chosen a site where the topography was similar to that of Meremere and Rangiriri; water or swamp at either side which the defenders hoped would channel the British into a frontal attack.

Viewed from Cameron's vantage point, which was lower in elevation than the pa, it appeared to be just a flimsy fence across the crest of the ridge. Ensign Nicholl thought

⁶⁵ Belich, p.178. 'To catch a Tartar – to meet with a person who is unexpectedly more than a match for one.' Concise Oxford Dictionary.

⁶⁶ AJHR 1864, E-3 Cameron to Grey. Official Report on the Battle of Gate Pa, 5 May 1864, p.32.

⁶⁷ Nicholl. 'Journal March-April 1864', entry for 27 April 1864.

that it looked, ‘a most insignificant place’.⁶⁸ In fact the pa was virtually all subterranean and nothing showed above the surface, when viewed from the front, but a frail looking fence (pekarangi). The fortification actually consisted of a number of linked, bomb-proof shelters, covered pits, tunnels and firing trenches, and it was far stronger than the British officers assessed it to be. They were ignorant of even the most basic details about the pa and Lieutenant Robley of the 68th Regiment, even with an artist’s eye for detail, thought that it was a single work right up until the assault:

Viewed from the lower levels at front and rear the palisading gave the impression the redoubt consisted of a single work, whereas it has been shown there were two of them, and the mistaken belief prevailed up to the time of the attack.⁶⁹

The British were aware that there was a shortage of wood suitable for the construction of defences, and they also learned early on that there was no water supply in the pa because water carriers were seen creeping down to the swamps on either side to freshwater springs. British marksmen were posted to fire on them. Because of the fresh water problem, a siege was one of Cameron’s options, but a quick and decisive victory was far more politically desirable than a drawn out and inglorious siege, and that is what he hoped to achieve. The siege at Orakau (31 March - 2 April) had just ended and it had been a gruesome, drawn-out affair concluded by a horrible slaughter as the Maori broke through the British cordon and ran. A repeat of that would not have been politically palatable.

Cameron’s tactics throughout the Waikato War had shown a strong preference for outflanking and by-pass moves. He outflanked both Meremere and Rangiriri by inserting troops behind the positions by boat, and his men had performed brilliantly when executing the risky but successful by-pass at Paterangi. He persevered with the tactic that had served him well in the Waikato and placed Greer’s 68th Regiment in behind the Maori position at Gate Pa. It was a potentially dangerous move because as the troops slowly made their way through the tidal swamps around the left flank of the pa, they were vulnerable targets. The whole campaign could have been over if they had been

⁶⁸ Fides, p.38; Cowan, p.427.

⁶⁹ Nicholl, 29 April 1864; Fides, p.39. In fact what could be seen from the camp was not a stockade at all, it was a pekarangi; a fence made from light timber and flax sticks. Its purpose was not to repel cannon balls and artillery shells, but to slow down troops and make them easier to shoot in much the same way that barbed wire is used today.

discovered and slaughtered as Captain Messenger's men had been in the swamps beside Puketakauere, although in this case it was a whole regiment rather than a company.

The General employed three measures to reduce the risk. Firstly, the move was done at night. Night operations are always difficult to co-ordinate and control, especially with such a large force, and it had to be organised precisely. Cameron had just had remarkable success with the night-time by-pass at Paterangi, and even though none of the units at Paterangi were at Gate Pa, he was obviously confident enough to do it again. Secondly, he launched a feint attack with artillery on the opposite side of the pa at the front. The Maori sentries abandoned their posts and rushed across to see the action, and the troops were able to slip past unnoticed.⁷⁰ Thirdly, the force was guided by two pro-government Maori and a local farmer, 'who knew the area well'.⁷¹ Their local knowledge was clearly a crucial factor in the success of the operation.

Cameron must have been pleased with the way that his preparations had gone so far. The out-flanking operation had been carried out in complete secrecy and it had been a total success. As the men of the 68th Regiment lay in the damp fern behind the pa they heard the Maori warriors inside making rallying speeches, completely unaware that they were surrounded and trapped within their own fortification. Rawiri had made a fundamental error by allowing Cameron to encircle him so easily before the battle had even begun, and it was a mistake that should have been enough to have almost ensured a British victory the following day. Rawiri's mistake raises the question about whether the Kingite chiefs had studied their enemy's tactics. Had they learned from previous failures, and did they have the capability to change their own tactics and deploy their force in different ways to counter the successful pattern that the British had developed through the Waikato? Cameron had 'turned' Meremere, Rangiriri, and Paterangi, and now he had done it again at Gate Pa. Rawiri had tried to lure Greer into a battle where the British would be disadvantaged, but that plan had failed and how the tide had turned. Now his relatively small force was virtually encircled by an extremely powerful enemy with an overwhelming superiority in men and artillery. Instead of luring the British into the

⁷⁰ Log of HMS *Miranda*, 28 April 1864; AJHR 1864, E-3, Cameron to Grey, 5 May 1864; Fides, p.44.

⁷¹ Fides, p.44; Nicholl, 27 April 1864; Shuttleworth, 28 April 1864; *Bay of Plenty Times*, 13 June 1889. One guide may have been Paniera Te Hiahia (Daniel) a Christian convert who was a guide for the Field Force. The other was possibly the chief Mere Taka.

interior, he would now have to fight close to the British camp where they were most powerful and he was most vulnerable (Fig. 6.5).

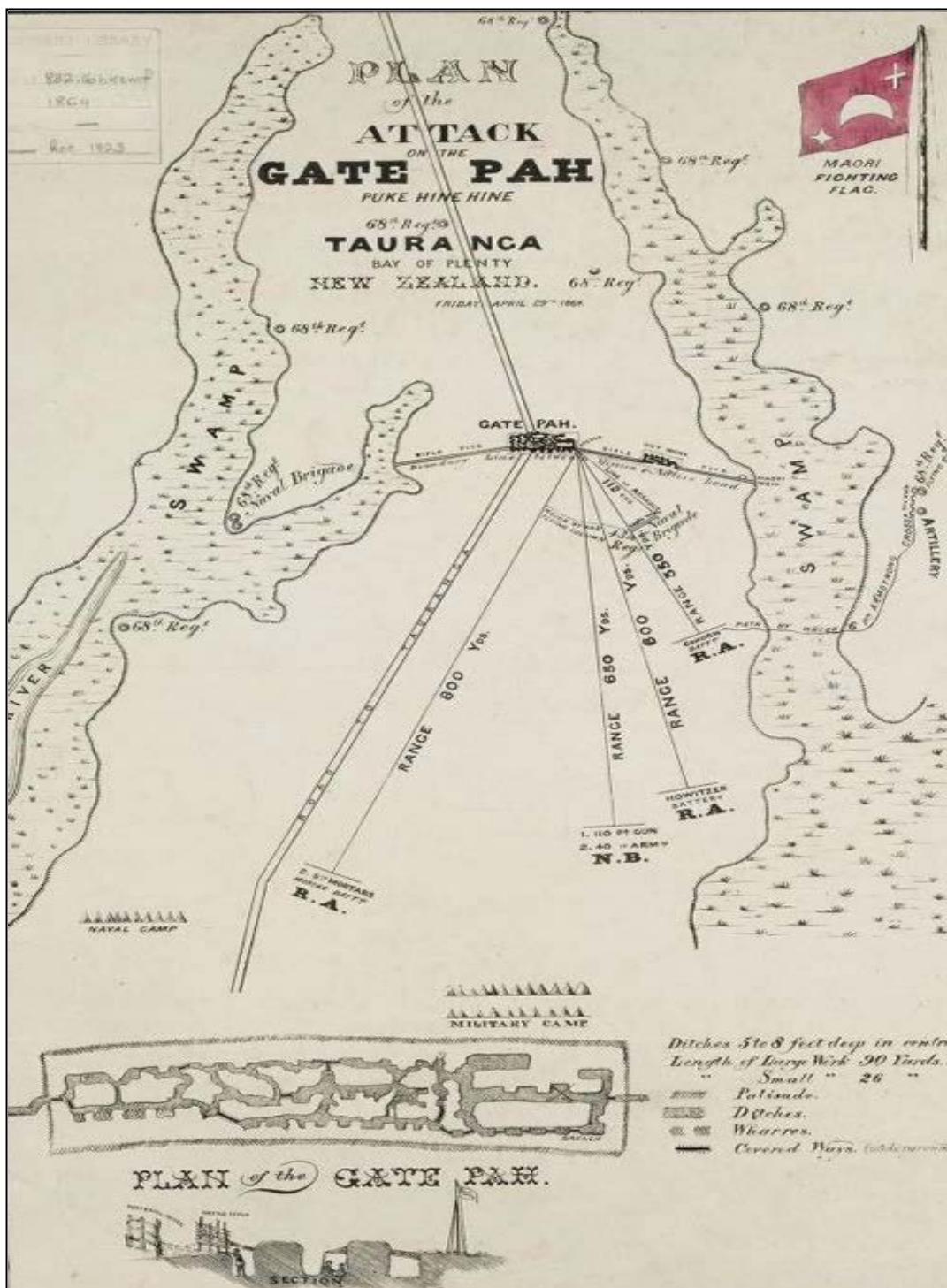


Fig.6.5. Map by G. Pulman showing the disposition of the British forces just before the attack on Pukehinahina (Gate Pa) on 29 April 1864. Note how the position is completely surrounded with the main force and substantial artillery to the front, and the 68th Regiment cordoning the rear. Alexander Turnbull Library.

The predictability and inflexibility of the Maori tactics was offset to a large extent by the ability to create fortifications. The pa had been sited and designed to withstand an artillery bombardment followed by an infantry assault. This reflected an accurate understanding about how the British chose to fight, with an artillery preparation to cause maximum damage and a breach in the wall, and then an infantry assault into the pa to kill the defenders in hand-to-hand combat. The British had fought Maori in this way since the Battle of Puketutu in the Northern War. The engineer who created Gate Pa was Pene Taka who had learned his craft during the Northern War where Kawiti had built the great pa at Ohaeawai and Ruapekapeka.⁷² He correctly assessed that the British would use artillery and he designed the pa with overhead protection and narrow zigzagged trenches (traverses) that would limit the damage of exploding shells.⁷³ Artillery was just what Cameron had in abundance, and he tried to maintain some secrecy about it by moving the remaining guns into position during the night of the 28th.⁷⁴ This included a massive 110-pound naval gun which many of the men, and perhaps Cameron himself, thought was their trump card.

The Maori situation seemed hopeless as the guns opened up at day-break the next morning and continued for most of the day. All seventeen of the guns and mortars fired and at least one report claims that they were supported by the guns of some of the six naval ships in the harbour.⁷⁵ It was raining heavily and the sky was dark and gloomy.⁷⁶ In his official report after the battle, Cameron claimed that the gunnery had been excellent, but other reports were critical of it; Robley describing it as wild and Jenkins as excellent but misdirected.⁷⁷ The 110-pounder was supposed to *blow the pa to the devil* but its first few rounds were a disappointment, and according to Ensign Nicholl, it hardly did any damage the whole day.⁷⁸ Robley, who was behind the pa with the 68th, saw many shells fly as much as 2000 yards to the rear and explode harmlessly in the manuka and scrub. The gun position was at a lower altitude than the pa itself and the shells that were fired on a very flat trajectory simply skipped off the rounded glacis at the front and flew over the top. The lighter mortars were more effective because they were able to lob shells

⁷² *Bay of Plenty Times*, 4 July 1889; Fides, p.39.

⁷³ Logbook of HMS *Miranda*, 29 April 1864; Cowan, p.423; Fides, p.39.

⁷⁴ Logbook of HMS *Miranda*, 28 April, 1864; AJHR 1864, E-3, Cameron to Grey.

⁷⁵ *Bay of Plenty Times*, 26 April 1883.

⁷⁶ Nicholl, 29 April 1864; Fides, p.49.

⁷⁷ Mair, p.33; W. Laird Clowers, ‘Military History of the Royal Navy 1857-1900’, p.184.

⁷⁸ Nicholl, 27-29 April 1864.

into the narrow target that the pa presented. There were other problems with the big guns as well. Some shells went straight through the light pekarangi which didn't offer enough resistance for the fuses to initiate. Others failed to explode upon landing and some reportedly burst in the muzzle of the guns.



Fig. 6.6. A sketch of Gate Pa early on the morning of 30 April 1864, the day after the battle. Stretcher parties are removing dead and wounded. The front fighting trenches can be clearly seen. The area in the centre of the pa provided underground shelter. The pekarangi (fence) is surprisingly still intact after a day of bombardment. Sketch by Lt Robley 68th Regiment. Alexander Turnbull Library.

The Battle of Gate Pa is an enigma. Cameron launched the assault at 4 pm and it initially appeared that the troops had captured the pa when they were inexplicably repulsed. It is not the purpose of this thesis to discuss the tactics of the battle, except to note that the Maori victory can be accounted for by a combination of factors. The initial assault party of 300 was strangely a combination of army and navy, each commanded by their own officers. Many of the officers were killed during the initial assault and they may have been specifically targeted by the defenders. Enfilade fire from the small pa was very effective and it was this fire that may have contributed to so many officer casualties. After a day of shelling and rain, the pa was a greasy labyrinth which added to the confusion of the mêlée. 'Friendly fire' from the 68th Regiment at the back of the pa caused casualties to the assaulting column when it was inside the pa and added to the

panic and confusion. Maori who had been driven out of the rear of the pa were forced back in by the 68th and this also added to the panic and confusion among the leaderless troops and sailors inside. The pa had been built so well that the defenders were able to withstand the day-long barrage and still have the organisation, and most importantly, the tenacity and courage, to seize the initiative when the British troops faltered, and drive them out. Rawiri made the correct decision to vacate the pa during the night and the warriors quietly slipped through the 68th Regiment's cordon. The British troops were still in position, the pa was still surrounded, and according to Lieutenant Colonel Gamble, Cameron, 'intended to resume operations next morning'.⁷⁹ The evacuation of the pa avoided another Rangiriri or Orakau.

The Battle of Te Ranga

The British Army took possession of the Gate Pa site immediately after the battle, levelled it and began the construction of a large redoubt. The government strategy was to develop its foothold in Tauranga and to clear Maori out of the immediate area by aggressive patrolling, the destruction of pa and the establishment of a protective network of redoubts. Cameron patrolled out westwards towards the Wairoa River on 6 May and destroyed an abandoned pa at Poteriwhi on the banks of the river. On 12 May another column headed in the same direction with the intention of building a redoubt and occupying a position near the river and establishing a line of redoubts between it and Camp Te Papa.⁸⁰ Lines of redoubts linked by road, and often by visual forms of communication (and increasingly by telegraph), were becoming a common feature on the country's landscape, and had proven to be a successful method of securing and holding territory. The plans for Tauranga were drastically changed by the news that the town of Wanganui was in danger of imminent attack, and that reinforcements were also required in Napier.⁸¹

Cameron and his staff, and Grey who was visiting the area, departed immediately with a large number of troops, leaving Greer in command once again. The reduction in manpower meant that a much more limited strategy had to be adopted. The troops drew back from the Wairoa River to Te Huria (Judea, also known as the India Redoubt) and

⁷⁹ Lt Col Gamble, Deputy Quarter Master General, cited in Gifford and Williams, p.233.

⁸⁰ Gifford and Williams p.236.

⁸¹ Gifford and Williams, p.237.

established a redoubt there. Greer was instructed to reduce the troop numbers until he had 500 men at Te Papa, 150 at the redoubt built on the Gate Pa site, 150 at Maketu, and 100 at the India Redoubt. Grey also promised the imminent arrival of some government military settlers (Waikato Regiment), to hold one of the posts in Tauranga with a view to their ultimate permanent location at the place. The changes would leave Greer more vulnerable than he had been before the battle of Gate Pa. He would have a similar number of troops but they would be in four different locations. Furthermore, his troops, who had suffered a serious defeat, would now face a Kingite force that had been galvanised by its success and was attracting wider support and reinforcements.

The traditional explanation for the subsequent British victory at the Battle of Te Ranga on 21 June 1864 contends that Greer was out reconnoitring with a large force on the morning of the battle, and just happened to come across the Kingites who had started to build a new pa that very day. Seizing the initiative, he attacked quickly and won a decisive victory.⁸² Even Belich's revisionist history claims that it was just good fortune that the British found the Maori newly entrenching:

The engagement at Te Ranga was in itself a relatively straightforward affair. On the morning of 21 June, Greer marched out of Te Papa on a reconnaissance in strength. Four miles beyond the Gate Pa he unexpectedly came upon Rawiri's forces fortifying a potentially strong position. Rawiri had about 500 men. Greer's force numbered 600- mainly 43rd and 68th Light Infantry, but including a detachment of the 1st Waikato Militia. It was clear that the Maori position was far from complete. In fact, it was nothing more than a line of unfinished rifle-pits and was therefore very vulnerable.⁸³

The 'good fortune' explanation is not credible because it ignores the events leading up to the battle. The so called 'reconnaissance in strength' was not a reconnaissance at all. A body of 600 men, especially 'dragging one Armstrong 6-pounder'⁸⁴ constituted a large force in the New Zealand Wars context, and was a significant part of Greer's total military resources in Tauranga; far too large and cumbersome to be an effective reconnaissance party, or to risk on a foolhardy operation. The security of the mission buildings and Camp Te Papa had been a constant concern throughout the campaign, and Greer had always been careful not to venture inland and

⁸² Cowan, p.435.

⁸³ Belich, p.189.

⁸⁴ Estimates of the number of British troops vary: Bohan, p.175 and Chris Pugsley, 'Walking the Waikato Wars, Te Ranga', *NZDQ*, 20, Autumn 1998, p.33 are both definite with 531. Cowan p.435, Belich, p.189 and Mair, p.29 all say 600.

leave his secure base exposed to attack. Pugsley has mused that it seemed more than coincidental that Greer marched out with such a strong force on the very day that the Rawiri and his allies were beginning to dig their trenches at Te Ranga, concluding that, ‘it was presumably done because of information passed to him that the Ngai Te Rangi had decided to act.’⁸⁵ He is correct; it was not a coincidence. Greer marched such a powerful force into the Maori held hinterland of Tauranga because he was confident about what he would find there, and that confidence arose from very good intelligence.

Reports had started to reach Tauranga in late May, a month before the battle, that Maori intended to launch an attack on the troops somewhere in the area, but the exact location was unknown. Nesbit, the Resident Magistrate at Rotorua, advised Smith, the Civil Commissioner in Tauranga, that a party of Ngati Pikiao had been invited to come to Tauranga to fight, and were on their way. Smith also noted that he had learned from a variety of sources that Maori were gathering in large numbers at Tauranga to attack one of the positions occupied by the troops. The Tauranga Resident Magistrate Mr W.B. Baker⁸⁶ wrote to Greer on 11 June giving information that must have come from his contacts within the Maori community:

The following information has been obtained on good authority and under promise of secrecy. On Monday next, a force consisting of Ngaiterangi 270, Ngatipihias 100, Waikato 600, intend to march upon Tauranga. In all probability they will assault on Wednesday, one party to Waikareo Ford (below Archdeacon Brown’s), another to attack Huria (Judea). In all probability this is to draw off attention from the real point of attack.⁸⁷

Greer sent dispatches which arrived in Auckland on 13 June explaining that as he had received reports that Maori were preparing for another attack, he had detained the 43rd Regiment. One of the lessons the British took from their defeat at Gate Pa was the importance of denying Maori the time to construct another powerful pa. The Deputy Quarter Master General, Lieutenant Colonel Gamble conveyed Cameron’s thoughts to Greer:

⁸⁵ Pugsley, ‘Te Ranga’, p.33.

⁸⁶ By a strange coincidence there were two Bakers involved in the information gathering process; Mr W.B. Baker the Resident Magistrate at Tauranga, and Reverend Charles Baker, a missionary at Tauranga.

⁸⁷ Gifford and Williams p.239.

If you keep a good look out the General thinks they could hardly commence a pah anywhere between Huria and the Wairoa without your knowledge: and your object should be to attack them before they have time to establish themselves.⁸⁸

Greer did just that and he patrolled the area regularly. Elements of the New Zealand Defence Force Cavalry had joined his force in May and were available as a reconnaissance element, having previously been employed in patrolling and reconnaissance in the Waikato. Cavalry have always had a reconnaissance role as the eyes and ears of an army. Greer used that capability well and eventually their efforts paid off:

On the 20th June, 1864, Captain Turner was ordered to reconnoitre the country beyond Gate Pa, with three troopers only, so as not to attract the attention of the enemy. He returned late in the afternoon, reporting a large number of natives near the Waimapu River, transporting supplies. This resulted in an order being given after tattoo for a march out in the morning [21 June], consisting of Artillery, portions of the 68th, 43rd and the 1st Waikato Regiments, and Mounted Colonial Defence Force, the whole under Colonel Greer.⁸⁹

The troopers' suspicions were obviously raised by such activity and they must have acquired specific information about the location of the new pa that the Maori were just starting to dig, because Greer knew exactly where to go the next morning. Archdeacon Brown later told Grey that several officers had ridden across the same piece of land the day before and there had been no sign of any digging at that stage.⁹⁰ There was clearly a British policy to patrol that area, and it seems likely that the Kingites realised this and moved as quickly as possible, and with a large number of workers, to build the pa during the night in the realisation that the troops may possibly come upon them again quite soon. The position (see Fig 6.8) sat on a tapered piece of land four miles south-east of Gate Pa, with features that had become common characteristics of a Maori defensive position; steep drops or impassable ground on both sides and a narrow frontage to channel the attack.

⁸⁸ JDQMG. p.121.

⁸⁹ Thomas Gudgeon, '*The Defenders of New Zealand*', Auckland, 1887, p.320. Also cited in part in Jeff Hopkins-Weise, 'New Zealand's Colonial Defence Force (Cavalry) and its Australian Context, 1863-66', in *Sabretache*, Volume XLII, 2002, p.37. Gudgeon also noted that Captain Turner had captured a Kingite spy in the guise of a postman in the Waikato, p.319.

⁹⁰ Archdeacon Brown to Governor Grey, 27 June 1864, cited in Gifford and Williams, p.242.

Greer's plan was to set out with a strong force of as many men as he could afford and engage in a decisive battle as quickly as possible. He assembled men from a number of units including elements of the 43rd and 68th Regiments, the newly arrived 1st Waikato Regiment and some Colonial Defence Force Cavalry under the command of Captain Pye, and moved quickly to Te Ranga. He did not waste time with flanking movements or placing troops at the rear but immediately pinned the Maori down with musket and artillery fire. When another 6-pounder Armstrong gun and more troops arrived, he launched an assault that swept the Maori from the position quickly. Even though it had



Fig.6.7. A representation of the Defence Force Cavalry in action. An 1886 engraving by Frank Mahony showing the charge at Orakau, 2 April 1864. Alexander Turnbull Library.

been prepared in relative haste, his assault force was a better balanced combination of troops than Cameron had assembled at Gate Pa, and Greer controlled it far more effectively. Many of the men were also fighting to regain the reputation lost at Gate Pa.

The defenders, who were a composite force, and likely to act as individuals or small groups, were no match for disciplined British troops in the open. Although it was a brave stand, they had no real chance and over 150 were killed including Rawiri Puhirake, Henare Taratoa and many other chiefs. The Maori resistance in Tauranga was effectively broken:

The small Ngati-Porou contingent resisted to the death; thirty of the party were killed. The contingent of fifty from Ngati-Pikiao from the Lake Rotoiti settlements fell almost to a man. The Ngati-Rangiwehhi war-party also suffered very severely, and their losses at Te Ranga that day greatly influenced the survivors of that clan towards Pai-Marire when that fanatic faith reached the lakes country and the East Coast.⁹¹

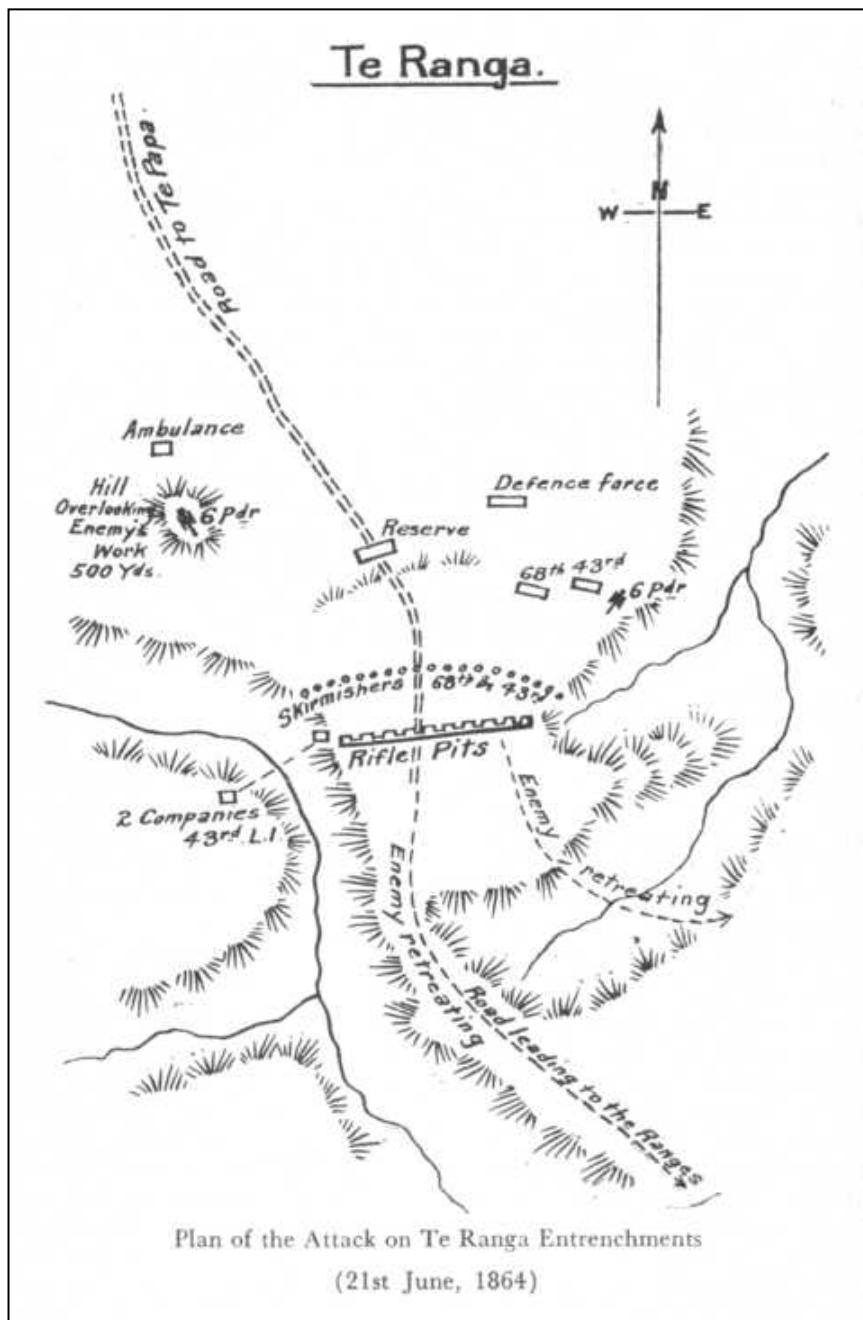


Fig.6.8. Plan of the Battle of Te Ranga. Note the similarity of the terrain to Gate Pa and numerous battles of the Waikato War. The British assault was from the north (top of picture), From James Cowan, *The New Zealand Wars and the Pioneering Period*. p.436.

⁹¹ Cowan, p.439.

There is a suggestion that Rawiri was not happy with the site chosen for the pa, and the chief Hori Ngatai was reported to have said, ‘some of us dug without spirit because Rawiri did not like the position of the pa...Te Ranga was chosen by Reha’.⁹² A second large Maori force was seen approaching just before the battle, and it seems likely that they were coming to bolster Rawiri’s force. However the tide of the battle had already turned before they could commit, and in the end they held back and failed to engage.⁹³ Here again were the problems of a composite force, compromised plans and divided command. As with Orakau, there seems to even have been disagreement about where to site the pa. Maori commanders never knew how many warriors would turn up to fight on any given day, or would stay for the duration of the battle, and there appeared to be no way to co-ordinate the various elements of their force once the battle had begun.

Because the tactics were largely based around defending a fortified strong-point, the warriors who arrived after the battle had begun were unable, or reluctant, to become involved. There was no ability to co-ordinate a diversionary attack on the British rear or flank, to relieve the pressure on the main Maori force, and commit the British to fighting on two fronts. Kawiti and Heke had fought in such a way at Kororareka and Puketutu in 1845, but throughout the Waikato War there was an established pattern of additional Maori forces arriving too late to fight from within the pa, and they therefore just shouted threats and encouragement and watched the proceedings. It had happened at Rangiriri and Orakau, and now again at Te Ranga. Even at Paterangi, where Rewi was supposedly in command, Kingite chiefs appear not to have had the ability to control and manoeuvre the whole force to tactically respond to the British tactics, which in that case was the bypass of the complete position. There was one plan in place, and if that didn’t work there was no co-ordinated alternative, and no ability to quickly allocate and control new tasks.

As already noted, the need to defend Camp Te Papa was a constant consideration that tempered any British plans for forays into the interior, and Greer was aware of the risk again in this instance. The low tide in the Waikareo Estuary was at 3:30 p.m. on 21 June. The estuary is particularly shallow and there was a ford linking the peninsula where the mission buildings and Camp Te Papa were, and Judea on the western side of the

⁹² ‘Te Ranga-War in Tauranga’ URL:<http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/war/war-in-tauranga/te-ranga>, (Ministry for Culture and Heritage) updated 17 May 2011.

⁹³ AJHR 1864, E3 pp.73-80. Greer’s official report of the battle.

estuary. This was a likely route of attack so Greer landed all available men from HMS *Esk* and HMS *Harrier* to defend the camp while his troops were attacking Te Ranga. Lieutenant Colonel Gamble noted:

During the engagement, reports reached Colonel Greer that a large body of natives were coming down by the Wairoa River to attack his headquarters camp at Te Papa at low water. This information was given by friendly natives, and was in accordance with the previously recorded threats of the enemy.⁹⁴

As soon as the victory at Te Ranga was assured, Greer hurried to be back in camp by 2:30 p.m., and later reported that a large Maori party had indeed been on their way to attack the camp by way of the ford. Their plans had changed with the defeat of the Maori force at Te Ranga. If his information was correct, it does indicate some degree of combined planning and co-operation between the various Maori factions, and the numbers involved suggest a widespread opposition to the British presence. It is likely that the Maori forces were spread rather thinly and that they were unable to react quickly enough to Greer's rapid advance on Te Ranga and then his equally quick dash back to defend the camp. Communication and command difficulties would have again affected their ability to react quickly to changed plans.

William Fraser, a South Australian serving in the 1st Waikato Regiment, claimed that many of the dead at Te Ranga, 'were recognised as *soi-disant* [self proclaimed] friendly natives, to whom arms and ammunition had been served out by the government'.⁹⁵ Mr Peet, an ex-Royal Marine, also recorded a breach of security. He was employed as a 'bullocky' and worked with a team of oxen to drag the heavy guns. He noted that many Maori were in the habit of entering the bullock drivers' camp as 'friendlies' for drinks of rum and gifts of tobacco from the easy going 'bullockies'. One such visitor was found dead the next day in the trenches at Te Ranga.⁹⁶ It therefore appears that there were two types of breach. Firstly, the Kingites had infiltrated the British camps and by passing themselves off as 'friendlies' they were able to obtain information, and probably even equipment. Secondly, there was a flow of information from some of the pro-government Maori to their kin in the Kingite forces. There was also a flow of information in the other direction and it seems clear that the government was able to learn about Kingite intentions from pro-government Maori.

⁹⁴ Cited in Williams and Gifford, p.241.

⁹⁵ Hopkins-Weise, p.33.

⁹⁶ Peet Reminiscence, (TPL vertical file).

Archdeacon Brown buried most of the Kingite dead in their own trenches the day after the battle. He saw the danger of ongoing conflict and cautioned Grey against harsh treatment in a private letter on 27 June. The letter shows Brown as an advisor who had the Governor's ear and his confidence, and it neatly summarises the role that men like him played in advising and informing the government. It is a political assessment that gives information, but also displays an appreciation of the nuances of the local community that Grey would have been unlikely to obtain from his military commanders:

You will receive official communications respecting the 'engagement,' to use the military term, at Te Ranga, but will be anxious to hear whether this will be the last at Tauranga. I fear not, unless you issue a proclamation of a different character to the one already circulated among the natives, for though Rawiri, Timoto, Henare Taratoa, Te Teira and some others of consequence are amongst the slain, yet Kiharoa, Enoka, Hakaraia, Kai Ngarara and many others are amongst the living, besides all the Judea natives, most of Te Wairoa and Hori Kingi and his small tribe. The First Waikato Militia are, I find, expecting their allotments to be immediately laid out on what they call the 'confiscated land.' I hope the Ministry will not be guilty of haste which history will record as a mistake, and Napoleon would have called a blunder. Let us not have a renewal of Taranaki scenes connected with surveying, and let us try to procure a cession of territory rather than keep alive the indignant feelings of the natives by wresting it from them, and above all, let ample provision be made for widows and those whom we have made orphans. I write this freely because you were pleased to express a wish to hear from me and also said that my comments should be confidential.⁹⁷

Summary and discussion

The government had collected quite detailed information about the political situation in Tauranga from officials, missionaries and traders, and the overall assessment was enough to warrant the commitment of valuable resources to blockade the harbour. Once the British landed neither side really understood what the other's military intentions were, despite some attempt by each to do so, and both sides misread the signals given. The situation was complicated by Maori factions, some of whom were pro-government, some neutral, and some determined to force a trial of arms. Consequently there was no one Maori stance. The military officers relied heavily upon the local Europeans and some Maori for information, and there is little evidence that they explored the countryside or attempted to become familiar with the place or the people. The pro-government Maori appear to have been a source of information but their involvement did not extend to taking the field alongside the troops. The apparent loyalty to the government of these

⁹⁷ Archdeacon Brown to Governor Grey, 27 June 1864, cited in Williams and Gifford, p.242.

‘friendly’ Maori may have been somewhat elastic and there was probably an opportunistic element to it.

The large British military presence had no way of concealing itself and Rawiri would have had a very clear idea of the number of ships, troops and guns in the area throughout the campaign. Indeed Hori Ngatai noted that the Maori watching from Gate Pa observed unusual activity among the British troops the day before the battle, so it is likely that they were keeping a close eye on them.⁹⁸ The Kingite Maori were able to infiltrate the camp and pass themselves off as ‘friendlies’, and even acquire weapons from the government. The flow of information within the Maori community in such an intimate theatre would have been two-way. Discussions on marae and at hui could have been easily reported back, and it appears that the European officials, who were well established with deep links into the communities, were able to acquire information through that process. Even so, the British commanders usually had limited information about their enemy.

Cameron’s reconnaissance of Gate Pa was poorly done and he had a very limited idea of the fortification or the number of defenders. There is no direct evidence that the poor reconnaissance contributed to the unexpected defeat, but the lack of knowledge about the pa, both before and during the battle, and the belief that the inhabitants of it were doomed, may have led to a degree of complacency. The excellent design and construction of the pa and the tenacity of the defenders at Gate Pa were more significant factors in Rawiri’s success than any failings of British reconnaissance.

Greer knew little about the exact situation at Te Ranga on the morning that he marched towards it, but because of very good political work by government officers and determined reconnaissance by his cavalry, he had sufficient confidence to deploy a large proportion of his force in the hope of quickly destroying the Kingites before they had the chance to develop the pa. He was clearly not conducting a ‘reconnaissance in strength’ but was undertaking a quick and decisive strike with a powerful force. In fact, it appears that he was aware that the best reconnaissance is one where the enemy does not realise that they have been seen. Such reconnaissance cannot be achieved by a force of 5-600,

⁹⁸ Hori Ngatai Reminiscence, *Whakatane Beacon*, (TPL vertical file), 17 May 1874.

but it can be by four troopers on horseback. Of all of the battles in the New Zealand Wars, the comprehensive victory at Te Ranga was the prime example of good political intelligence by the government officers and thorough reconnaissance work in the field.

In respect to the themes outlined in Chapter One, the Tauranga Campaign presents a further variation on the trends noted in the previous chapters. The British provided an expeditionary force, and this time it included a large naval component. It was expanded as the need arose, but surprisingly, Cameron's very large force was defeated at Gate Pa while a much smaller one was successful at Te Ranga. This was because other factors, particularly intelligence, played a significant role.

The War Office provided no strategic intelligence and the British military had a limited understanding of the military situation in Tauranga before the blockade. The planning and strategic intelligence gathering was undertaken by the government and the ministers developed a good understanding of the political situation in the Bay of Plenty. There was only a tiny European community in Tauranga and it did not include settlers capable of, or even interested in, arming and taking the field. However the small group of missionaries and government officials had very good access into the Maori communities, and most importantly, they remained in place and were able to provide intelligence throughout the war.

The government had no overt Maori allies, and certainly none who took to the field in Tauranga, although Arawa were crucial further south. The amount of information that the government received from 'friendly Maori' and who those groups were is not clear. Maori opposing the government appear to have had a fairly complete idea of the British numbers and dispositions, and they benefitted from the advantages of fighting in their home location.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

'Many intelligence reports in war are contradictory; even more are false, and most are uncertain.' Carl von Clausewitz¹

'The best laid schemes o' mice and men often go awry.' Robert Burns²

It is easy to take for granted that both sides in a conflict have a good idea about the other's strengths and weaknesses and the nature of the theatre in which they are fighting, but that it is often not the case. Commanders are often plagued by doubts caused by an incomplete understanding of their situation, and it is one of the responsibilities of command to resolve those doubts and develop a coherent plan of action. Military intelligence is a significant part of that process; the reality of all decision making being that decisions should be made on the best information possible.

Military intelligence was a forgotten skill in the British military in the mid-nineteenth century. At a time when commissions were still purchased and war was idealised as an expression of national and personal glory, the idea of collecting information on Britain's continental neighbours was considered distasteful and un-gentlemanly. The intelligence structures in place during the Napoleonic period had withered away, and Britain had no centralised agency or office for collecting information or processing intelligence about her current or potential enemies in Europe. Intelligence work was not considered proper employment for regular troops and officers were not trained in it at Staff College. The Crimean War (1854-56) was conducted in an appalling way that revealed many of the weaknesses of the British military; and the gross failing of military intelligence was one of them.

The Crimean War occurred in the same ten-year period as the Taranaki and Waikato Wars, and the Tauranga Campaign in New Zealand, and so too did the United

¹ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984, p.117.

² Robert Burns '*To a Mouse*', 1785

States Civil War (1861-5). The Civil War saw the use of new technology such as telegraph, observation balloons, and a sophisticated and professional espionage network. While the Crimean and Civil wars provide a useful snapshot of intelligence policy and technology, and the way that military intelligence was practised by western armies at the time, their geographical contexts were different to New Zealand. The New Zealand Wars were colonial wars, and they presented unique physical and cultural challenges to the British soldiers who came to fight the strange and exotic inhabitants in their wild, wet, steep, bush-clad and largely uninhabited land.

So how did Britain fight in her numerous distant possessions on the edge of the Empire such as; India, Burma, South Africa, Afghanistan and New Zealand? Their torturous terrain, hostile climates and unfathomable cultures presented far more complex theatres to campaign in than continental Europe; so where was the military intelligence support for the commanders? Again, and even more (or less) so, there was no central agency involved in gathering information about the colonies or distant countries, and no formal process for disseminating that information; British intelligence organisations were not fully developed at this stage.

The commanders waging war in these distant and unique parts of the world were largely on their own. They had to make the best of the resources they had in the area; but they had not been formally trained in the intelligence process, and many had a limited appreciation of the need for it. Even so, as a drowning man clings to a log and a suffocating man fights for air, most generals and colonels, faced with the countless difficulties of an alien land, craved information, and over a period of time organic intelligence systems that relied upon informal networks usually developed. Each was unique and it reflected the needs of the situation and the perception and personality of the senior commanders. The systems were flawed and the analysis of the information gathered was often poor because it could be compromised by arrogance and prejudice, but the innate military need to gain information about the enemy and the theatre of operations usually prevailed.

In 1896, Colonel Charles Callwell summarised the experience of a century of colonial warfare by Europe's imperial powers in his book *Small Wars; Their Principles and Practice*. The book was both a summary of the lessons learnt about colonial warfare and a manual about how to do it. In respect to military intelligence, he observed

that indigenous fighters had an advantage over any imperial army fighting them. He argued that they had far greater mobility than regular troops, a far greater knowledge of the theatre of war, and that they always seemed to know the movements of the imperial army. In essence, the indigenous fighters were at one with the environment, they knew where everything was, they were more able to live off the land and move across it quickly and lightly, and were able to use their own population and the familiar surroundings to find out information about their enemy.

Callwell concluded that an imperial army usually faced enormous difficulties because of a lack of knowledge of the place and the people they were fighting. It was confronted with many unknowns; the existence or viability of routes, the availability of resources such as water and supplies, and the exact location of places. As well as a paucity of knowledge about the physical environment, the commander would also be unsure about the number of men his enemy could put in the field to oppose him, and would have difficulty finding out about their movements and intentions. He would be unsure about the allegiance or hostility of the local population and the intentions of neighbouring tribes, and even when or why they might fight. He would be unsure whether to trust his allies, would question their ‘honour,’ and he would have difficulty obtaining accurate and reliable information and be unsure about the trustworthiness of his sources. All of these problems created uncertainty in the commander’s mind and affected his ability to be decisive, which in turn influenced the success of his military operations. Callwell acknowledged that each campaign was different and it is therefore appropriate to consider his observations as general principles rather than immutable laws.

There has been little attention paid in the increasing literature about the New Zealand Wars to the role and influence of military intelligence. The outcomes of battles and campaigns have often been explained in terms of tactics, weight of numbers, firepower, logistics, courage, chance, and even the brilliance or stupidity of individual commanders; but military intelligence, the knowledge of the enemy, his strengths weaknesses and plans, and the physical and political environment, is almost never discussed as a decisive factor. Fishel³ has demonstrated that an analysis of the United

³ Edwin Fishel, *The Secret War for the Union: The Untold Story of Military Intelligence in the Civil War*, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996.

States Civil War from an intelligence perspective changes the understanding of campaigns by introducing perspectives and information that had been previously ignored.

This thesis posed three fundamental questions about the nature of military intelligence in the New Zealand Wars and the effect that it had in the final outcome of battles and campaigns.

Did each side employ military intelligence, and if so, what was the nature of that military intelligence?

Military intelligence was used throughout the New Zealand Wars although neither side had sophisticated systems. Maori enjoyed all of the intelligence advantages of fighting on their home turf and held the upper hand in that respect. Their information gathering capability had developed over generations of inter-tribal fighting and must have been particularly honed during the recent Musket Wars period. There are very few, if any, instances where Maori were surprised by British or colonial troops because they didn't have a good understanding of where they were, or what they were planning to do. However it is difficult to even use the word 'side' for Maori forces in the New Zealand Wars; because that implies that they fought with a large, coherent and unified structure. In fact most Maori fought as small sub-iwi groupings, and while there may be some evidence of strategic cooperation, there is no evidence of a co-ordinated system of military intelligence, even at the height of the Waikato War when they had, what Belich has over-stated as, a high command. So, although Maori might have been good intelligence gatherers at a local level, this did not translate into the ability to share that intelligence at an operational level or to act on it in an inter-tribal way. Their military structures were very much dictated by their socio-political structures, and those, in turn, limited the way that they could share and use intelligence.

Heke and Kawiti in the Northern War and the Kingite tribes in the wars of the 1860s gathered information through passive and active means. The passive methods were simply a result of interacting with the European world. Information about the government's policies and the movement of troops was freely available from the English language newspapers and the various propaganda papers that were disseminated throughout the North Island. Government officials, whose role it was to influence Maori away from war, and other Europeans, were also avenues by which

Maori learned about the government's activities and plans. Maori could also observe the camps, towns and harbours and watch military preparations as they visited and traded in those locations. The active methods of acquiring information included the close observation of troops and military activities, and following them on the march. Maori also made good use of scouts for reconnaissance and sentries and piquets for security. Maintaining the security of its information was always a problem for the British Army. There was a significant flow of information from 'friendlies', who were ostensibly working with or for the government, back to their kin. It is clear that Maori were also able to deliberately infiltrate the British camps and acquire information in that way. Information flowed quite rapidly between Maori communities and news and rumour was also spread by the constant movement of warriors and non-combatants in and out of the war zones.

Government intelligence systems developed gradually and by the end of the Waikato War they were reasonably effective. That is not to imply, however, that the system was well planned, because a large amount of the information came from informal sources. Information was gathered by military and non-military means. The British military units that came to New Zealand, not unsurprisingly, were not structured or trained in the art of military intelligence, and throughout the wars the military was a less effective avenue for gaining information than non-military sources. The most common form of military intelligence gathering was reconnaissance. Because intelligence was not a well established function like the commissariat or artillery, the scale of military intelligence activities was very dependant upon the attitude of individual commanders. The successful commanders used intelligence as part of their overall planning process and made concerted efforts to gain good information. Others undertook operations with little idea about the terrain that lay ahead or the strength and inclinations of their enemy, and they usually failed dismally.

The non-military sources of information comprised three general groups; government officers, civilians, and Maori allies. In the Northern War there were very few government officials, but the Police Magistrates Beckham and Clendon did manage to provide Governor FitzRoy with a steady flow of information. Clendon, in particular, saw the need for good information, and he was effective in the way that he collected and passed it on to the military commanders and the Governor. By the 1860s, the machinery of government was more developed and far-reaching, and government

officers included Native Department staff such as interpreters, assessors, and regional Resident Magistrates and Civil Commissioners in districts. All government officers were obliged to report on activities in their districts and this provided the government with a continual flow of information. Robert Parris in Taranaki, for example and numerous officials in Waikato and Tauranga were just some who performed a valuable role as ‘political officers’. A number of excellent guides who worked for the department were attached to British Army units. They were usually ‘half-caste’ men who had grown up in the area and they knew locations and routes and understood the Maori mind and spoke their language.

There was also a steady flow of a range of information from settlers and citizens in European settlements and farming communities across the North Island. The settlers were also able to provide specific information about the physical geography of their area. In some instances local farmers acted as guides and they also frequently joined the militia and volunteers. In Taranaki, for example, the citizen soldiers made only a modest military contribution but their local knowledge was a valuable intelligence commodity. In the Waikato War very few Europeans had knowledge of the area so other solutions had to be found. And so in a variety of ways, the frontier settler communities mobilised to fight the Maori. The degree of co-operation between the various departments of government and civilians within a region depended upon the unique circumstances of each conflict. In each of the wars surveyed in this thesis, the type of community was different and the mix of personalities and agencies that combined to create an intelligence function was also different.

The most important civilians were the missionaries because they held a special status within the Maori communities. Many had been long-time residents in their localities and they had been involved in the transformation of the communities through agriculture, commerce, education and religion. They could speak the Maori language, and they had a unique and close relationship with their flock, which gave them a deeper understanding of the nuances of the political situation in their area than other Europeans. So in an intelligence sense, they had better access. They also had an intimate knowledge of the physical geography and some were able to give information on routes and locations, and even the layout of pa. Some missionaries were quite overt in their information collection and others walked a middle road. However, the net effect

was that the government received a steady flow of information about the political and social climate from numerous parts of the North Island.

Reverend John Morgan played an extraordinary role as an intelligence operator at his mission station in the Upper Waikato. He collected valuable intelligence in his own right, and operated a network of local contacts within Maori communities and collected and passed on information from a range of Europeans living in various communities. His information about the political situation in the Upper Waikato over a number of years, and then the information he provided about communication routes during the Waikato War, was invaluable. In each of the wars, the leading missionaries in the area played important roles in the intelligence process. Sometimes they were used as intermediaries or negotiators and nearly always they tried to be agents for peace, but overall, they were valuable sources of information and advice for the government: Williams and Burrows in the Northern War; Govett, Riemenschneider, Whitely and Wilson in Taranaki; Morgan and Ashwell in the Waikato; and Brown and Baker in Tauranga.

Maori allies were a crucial intelligence asset for the government in all of the wars. Grey assessed in December 1845 that any British force fighting in New Zealand and struggling with the physical environment would need a native force to accompany them, and that assessment generally held true for all of the wars. He developed a proper relationship with Nene, and as a result, he received information and military assistance that Despard had been unable to obtain. There is a striking difference between Hulme and Despard's failure to use the information that their Maori allies could provide, and Grey, who actively sought information and processed it in a perceptive way to develop a clear strategy and win the decisive battle.

Maori allies were used in the Taranaki War as guides and informants and for defending parts of the town of New Plymouth. They had a mixed reputation with the British soldiers and may have leaked as much information as they obtained, but they did fulfil an intelligence function. In the Waikato War there was a similar pattern of using Maori loyal to the government, particularly in the Lower Waikato area. Te Wheoro, Kukutai and several other chiefs were valuable assets throughout in their role as guides, interpreters, negotiators, advisors and political allies. The situation was probably similar in Tauranga, although the identity of pro-government Maori is less clear and the records

do not reveal the names of any as intelligence assets. A government-funded and European-commanded native contingent played an important combat role for the first time at Maketu, and the military contribution of the Te Arawa tribe as government allies who were prepared to take the field was pronounced.

Over a protracted period of time, an intelligence system of sorts did develop, but it was not particularly formalised, and there was no significant transfer of skill or understanding from the Northern War to the wars of the 1860s. Information on all manner of subjects from this diverse range of sources was generally sent to the capital in Auckland where it was absorbed by the governor and his ministers. Anything relevant to the military situation might then be sent on to the military commanders. There appears to have been no formal or structured process for the analysis of the information, and no particular office was delegated with that task. There was usually a similar process of information transfer between civil and military authorities at the local level. The British Army did not undertake any active political intelligence and its information gathering activities were largely limited to reconnaissance. Much of the information that reached Auckland or the military commanders was informal and had been obtained through the initiative of individuals who thought it valuable enough to pass on. However by the time of Waikato War and the Tauranga Campaign, the government's methods added up to a moderately effective system that was able to provide the information that Cameron and his senior officers needed.

Governorship at the time was a very hands-on matter and the Governors were the key policy figures throughout the wars. FitzRoy (Northern War), Gore Browne (Taranaki War) and Grey (Northern War, Waikato War and Tauranga Campaign) had effective working relationships with their military commanders and they directed the general nature of the military operations. They had personal discussions and correspondence with individual pro-government, neutral and enemy chiefs, and because both the overall population and the scale of the conflicts were small, they were able to develop a personal 'feel' for the political and military situation. Similarly, the military commanders had very small staff headquarters, and certainly nobody dedicated to intelligence, so they too were the main player in the analysis of any information that came to them. In this way, the military and the executive arms of government acted in concert and interacted quite personally with the raw information. Information sharing between the government and the military commanders was relatively easily

accomplished, and even though all that now remains in the extant record is mostly what was written down in formal communication and records, much of the exchange must have been in conversations, hastily written notes, telegraph messages and other types of informal communication.

Fishel's factors of intelligence were introduced in Chapter One: espionage; the interrogation of deserters, prisoners and refugees; scouting by individuals and small parties; reconnaissance by cavalry *en masse*; visual intelligence from balloons; interception of flag messages; serendipity resulting from massive intelligence effort; home advantage; and the commander's role. The interrogation of prisoners does not appear to have been a noteworthy practice. Observation balloons were not used and the interception of flag messages does not appear to have been a factor. Similarly, the intelligence effort in the New Zealand Wars could not be described as massive and there are no instances of spies being flooded into an area in the hope of chancing upon crucial information. Fishel's factors that were effective and which are explained elsewhere in this conclusion were; espionage, scouting and reconnaissance, home advantage and the commander's role.

What was the effect of military intelligence and was it a factor in the final outcome of the battles and campaigns?

The British Army underwent major changes throughout the long reign of Queen Victoria, and those changes were reflected in the forces that served in New Zealand. The troops that fought the Northern War 1845-6 were representative of the early Victorian Army that was little changed from the time of the Napoleonic Wars. A generation later, the units that fought the Taranaki 1860-1, and more particularly the Waikato War 1863-4, were different and they often had more operational experience. By 1860, some of the post-Crimean War reforms and thinking of the mid-Victorian period were starting to take effect. There were significant changes in technology and weaponry, and the methods used in fighting colonial wars had been gradually evolving. In addition, the total force included a large number of volunteers and militia who had either grown up in the war zones or had lived in the country for a numbers of years. The Northern War had not involved any European locals as fighters, but the settlers of the 1860s, particularly in Taranaki, had a personal stake in the land that they fought over and they brought a different set of skills and knowledge to the conflict.

The Royal Navy too, was experiencing a similar revolution. The change from the sail-powered wooden ships of the Northern War to iron-clad steam ships of the 1860s gave much more flexibility and speed of communications around the dangerous New Zealand coast. Cameron's steam powered, armoured river flotilla used much of the latest naval technology and it provided him with the capability to undertake deep reconnaissance well behind the lines. The boats were multi-functional but their reconnaissance role was a vital factor in Cameron's success in the Waikato.

Maori had also changed significantly since the 1840s, and their adoption of aspects of European education, farming, religion and technology had changed their mode of warfare, and must have given them greater insights into the nature of their enemy. The interaction of the two societies, and the rapid growth of the European population and the authority of the government, meant that the socio-political environment that the Northern War was fought in was quite different to that of the wars of the 1860s, and the two should not be seen in the same light. These differences were reflected in the intelligence activities, and particularly so in the understanding that each side had of the other.

The British military failed miserably in its use of military intelligence in the battles of Kororareka, Puketutu and Ohaeawai, and that failure was one of the main reasons for its defeat. The commanders had no idea where their enemy was, they had no maps, no understanding of the routes to be used, little idea of how pa were constructed and no idea about how to attack them. By contrast, Heke and Kawiti (and Waka Nene and his chiefs too), enjoyed all of the advantages that Callwell argued that indigenous fighters possessed. Their victories at Kororareka, Puketutu and Ohaeawai were based upon sound local knowledge and an understanding about how the British would fight. Despard and Hulme did not understand what was required to win in an environment like the Bay of Islands, but Grey certainly did. His victory at Ruapekapeka was built upon a clear intelligence assessment of the military capability of each side, and the underlying political situation. By collecting and processing the relevant information he was able to devise a way to bring the war to an end in favour of the government.

The early battles of the Taranaki War, Te Kohia, Waireka and Puketakauere were strangely similar to the Northern War. The British and colonial troops acted with a bravado that showed an under-estimation of their enemy's military capability, and they

paid the price. Major Nelson attacked Puketakauere with a completely inadequate understanding of what he was up against and he failed appallingly. By contrast, Kingi and his chiefs would have had an almost complete understanding of the British Army's strength and intentions, gained by infiltrating the settlements and camps and observing military activities. The British success at Mahoetahi contained an element of good luck, but it was built upon a foundation of political intelligence from government officials such as Parris and the missionary John Morgan. From that point onwards, the new commander Pratt was able to go on the offensive, and the Kingite coalition struggled to compete with the new tactics of bush scouring and sapping.

The invasion of the Waikato was the culmination of two years of planning, and that careful and methodical approach was also reflected in the intelligence process. Cameron usually tried to get as much information as he could about the country that lay ahead and the Maori fortifications he was to confront. He routinely conducted reconnaissance of routes, rivers, the locations for camps and staging posts, and most importantly, of pa. While the military concerned itself with military matters, the government agencies sought to understand and manipulate the political situation within the Waikato. As the invasion progressed, information from a variety of sources was brought together and passed on so that the military generally knew where it was going and what physical obstacles and fortifications lay ahead. The reconnaissance of Meremere was effective and the ability to reconnoitre the river beyond it helped checkmate the position. Rangiriri was more difficult to observe from the river and Cameron experienced problems there that were compounded by an inadequate understanding of its strength. The by-pass of Paterangi, which was the decisive move in the war, was based upon careful reconnaissance of the pa complex and the availability of excellent guides who knew the area well. Cameron collected sufficient information about the pa, its defenders, and the surrounding countryside to enable him to assess that the by-pass was preferable and feasible. The Kingites had correctly assessed Cameron's route of advance to Paterangi, and would have been aware of the size and capability of his force, but in the end, they lacked the manpower and the tactical agility to defeat him.

The Tauranga Campaign brought together many elements that showed that the government intelligence system had become quite effective. Good use of information from settlers, traders, missionaries and government officers convinced Premier Whitaker and his ministers of the need to blockade the harbour to prevent food and

manpower passing over to the Waikato. However, Cameron's reconnaissance of Gate Pa was inadequate and he did not fully understand the strength of the position, a failure which was a contributing factor to the British defeat. The Kingite Maori appear to have been able to infiltrate the camps and even acquire weapons from the government in the guise of 'friendlies'. Their attempt to inflict another defeat at Te Ranga was confounded by excellent government political intelligence, thorough cavalry reconnaissance, and effective liaison between the civilian and military authorities. Greer's comprehensive victory at Te Ranga, which brought the Waikato War and the Tauranga Campaign to an end, was built upon excellent military intelligence.

How did the geography of New Zealand affect the acquisition and use of military intelligence?

The regiments that fought the early battles of the Northern War behaved as though they were in a strange and foreign land, which they were. They struggled with the weather, were poorly equipped with tents and suitable clothing and had insufficient food. Rain fell as 400 troops marched from Onewhero Bay to Kerikeri on 3 May 1845, and because the route was unknown, and the men were so poorly equipped, the ration of biscuit and the ammunition supply was ruined. They had to shelter at the mission station for several days while they dried out and were re-supplied. A simple rainstorm had reduced the British Army's punitive expedition to a matter of survival. This was the first salutary indication of the problems that British troops would encounter throughout the wars, coping with the physical geography of New Zealand.

It would be easy to overstate these difficulties, but in general, the wet climate, swampy ground and thick bush of much of the country made military operations difficult and life for the rank and file unpleasant. Much of New Zealand was virtually empty of people, distances to travel were large and there were few maps. Lieutenant Colonel Gamble summed up the previous difficulties and sounded a note of relief, when he observed, prior to the invasion of the Waikato that the troops would have a good road, river transport and fewer physical difficulties to encounter than they had had in other regions.⁴ And indeed equipment, technology and efficient logistic systems made the military operations more efficient as the wars progressed. However it is fair to

⁴ Journal of the Deputy Quartermaster General, (VUW) p.42.

conclude that the government's forces, encumbered as they were with enormous quantities of equipment, were never as at home in the physical environment as Maori were.

In such an environment, the acquisition of information about the countryside, the rivers and swamps, the bush and the impassable mountain ranges was hard to obtain. Most of the land was Maori-held and troops could not pass through it without extreme danger. The information might be obtained from limited reconnaissance where possible, but more often from settlers, missionaries and pro-government Maori. Units moving ahead of the main body invariably used guides and scouts.

As much as Europeans struggled with the physical geography of New Zealand, the human geography was even more unfathomable. It seems clear that few Europeans understood the Maori, the reasons that they fought and the reasons that they might not. Michael King, Erik Olssen and Lachy Paterson have all warned about the danger of taking the Maori-ness out of Maori.⁵ They were a completely different culture to the British and they reacted in different ways. Maori did not think like Europeans and their political and social structures meant that they could not behave, militarily, as the European military textbooks might suggest that they should. These structures were more dynamic and less formalised than those of the British military, and for example, they had difficulty forming and maintaining a coalition of forces. There is danger in using concepts like 'high command' when discussing tribal armies. From the perspective of military intelligence then, access to Maori society was very limited and the thinking of individual chiefs and their communities was hard to know for the government and British command. The only insights came from a handful of Europeans and pro-government Maori who had limited access and incomplete knowledge.

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As Callwell would have predicted, Maori benefitted from fighting on their own ground and they enjoyed the consequent advantages in military intelligence. The British military was not equipped to conduct its own intelligence activities and apart from reconnaissance, which was often quite limited, it contributed little to the overall

⁵ Lachy Paterson, *Colonial Discourses*, Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2006, p.12.

process. British commanders usually had an incomplete understanding of the nature of their enemy and the country ahead of them, and the achievement of the most successful commanders was to resolve most of those doubts before committing to battle.

Throughout the wars the broader intelligence effort was initiated by the government and it relied upon a loose network of government officers, missionaries, settlers, traders and pro-government Maori to build up the picture. In this way the situation in New Zealand was similar to other frontier settler communities where there was little differentiation between aspects of the government, the military and the wider community. The degree of mobilisation of communities to defeat their Maori adversaries depended upon the nature of those communities and the type and location of the fighting. In each of the wars studied in this thesis, the mix of settler, missionary, trader, Maori ally, government official, British regular and colonial volunteer that produced military intelligence was subtlety different, and it reflected the unique nature of each conflict and the location in which it was fought.

This thesis has shown that military intelligence played a significant role throughout the wars. An understanding of the way that military intelligence was used by each side, the problems that they experienced producing it and the successes that they obtained because of it, enhances our understanding of the conduct, outcome and unique characteristics of the New Zealand Wars.

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Appendix 1

Memorandum upon the mode in which military operations can be most advantageously conducted in New Zealand.

The enemy to be encountered in New Zealand are as brave as any people in the world, trained to arms from early youth, acquainted with the thickly wooded and mountainous country they occupy, and skilled to turning to advantage the numerous strong and almost impregnable positions with which it abounds. Their arms are generally a double barrelled shot gun, sometimes a musket without a bayonet, and a hatchet for close quarters, but which is a useless weapon when opposed to bayonets or cutlasses. They invariably carry two or three pouches filled with cartridges, they put a larger charge of powder in their cartridges than Europeans use, and their guns consequently carry further than the muskets of the British Soldiers. They are at present abundantly supplied with arms and ammunition: probably they have a sufficient supply of these to last for from two to three years, even if the introduction into the Colony of arms and war like stores can be prevented for the future.

The mode of warfare pursued by the inhabitants of New Zealand is to skirmish in their forests and mountain passes, and to place ambushes in similar situations whenever a convenient opportunity offers; and finally to retreat into and occupy their pah or fortified village.

These pahs are so strongly fortified with regular ramparts of earth and strong stockades as to be impregnable to anything but heavy artillery: an 18 pounder is the lightest gun which will produce the slightest useful effect against the large trees of a particularly tough wood of which these stockades are constructed. The pahs are generally filled with bomb-proof holes into which the natives retire, if shells are thrown into the pah. There is however no doubt that a battery of 18 pounders, or 24 pounders, or of 32 pounders would in a few hours knock these stockades to pieces. Probably the medium 32 pounder of 25 cwt is the most useful gun to be brought up against these pahs.

The materials of which the natives construct these pahs (viz timbers and supplejacks to tie the posts to cross rails) are invariably found in their immediate vicinity: indeed many of their pahs are constructed in a forest. Their plantation of potatoes generally surround the outer fence of the pah, they therefore require neither roads, nor means of transport, for bringing up either the materials of which their fortifications are constructed, or the supplies of food on which the garrison are to subsist. Hence if the pah to be attacked is situated in a forest, it is approached only by winding intricate pathways, through which European troops can with difficulty find their way in single file, whilst the general variety of climbing plants with which the New Zealand forests abound render it impossible for European troops to quit these pathways either to attack an enemy or defend themselves.

Neither the supplies requisite to subsist European troops, nor artillery for an attack on the pah can therefore be brought up without regular roads being cut through the forests which are to be traversed as well as along the sides of open hills. Many bridges will frequently also require to be constructed before a European force can advance even a few miles into the country.

It is therefore absolutely requisite that any European troops advancing into the interior of New Zealand should be accompanied by a considerable force of pioneers, or of sappers, and miners. A force of pioneers sufficient for any operation likely to be commenced can be raised in a few days in New Zealand, composed of persons accustomed to cut timber in the forests of that country and therefore calculated to form a most efficient corps.

Admitting then that such a corps of pioneers is attached to a British force about to take the field in New Zealand, the arms which can be made use of are: artillery for breaching, or for operations against masses of the enemy at a distance, bayonet or cutlass for close encounter with the enemy and muskets, for skirmishing and for the ordinary operations in which that arm is used.

In the first two of the above arms, the British forces have so decided an advantage that all operations dependent on them must result in a successful issue: but in all operations in which musketry is to be depended on, the enemy being better armed (with good double barrelled guns) better clothed for skirmishing in forests, better acquainted with the country, and practiced from youth in this kind of fighting, the advantage is so decisively on their side, that wherever a British force is committed in an affair, the result of which depends upon this arm, although British courage and endurance may ultimately triumph, a large loss will certainly be sustained, possibly even defeat will ensue.

It may be said that a British Force should never be committed in such an affair: but the nature of the country, if operations are to be carried on at all, would frequently render it impossible to avoid being forced into an affair of this kind.

The only mode of avoiding this difficulty would appear to be, to attach to the British forces a body of loyal natives, who supported by the regular troops, should in all instances when affairs of musketry are likely to occur, be pushed on in advance. Such a body with a certainty of support from British Soldiers, upon whose courage they place the greatest reliance, would prove superior in affairs of the kind contemplated to any force that the enemy could bring into the field. They would also effectively secure our men from being surprised by ambushes, and from being suddenly attacked in forests or mountain passes.

By attaching therefore to a British force about to take to the field, a corps of pioneers, and a body of loyal natives, led by their own chiefs and allowed to fight in their own way, yet ready to make any movements which may be required, and always to act in cooperation with the troops, military operations in New Zealand may be

conducted with a positive certainty of the most decisive success, and the several reverses which have hitherto been experienced may without difficulty be retrieved.

Before however a native force can be expected to act in cordial cooperation with British troops, and to make such movements as they may be directed to execute, it will be necessary , that their chiefs should be treated with more consideration than here to fore, that they should be consulted upon the movements intended to be made, that they should in all instances be employed in operations of that kind which they are fitted successfully to perform, and that they should be regularly rationed by the Government whilst in the field.

If the Governor who they regard as in some way the greatest of chiefs, and whose orders would have more weight with the natives than those of any other person, could himself take the field and direct the movements of the native force, there can be no doubt that any military operations it may be found necessary to undertake will be brought to a speedy and successful issue.

(Signed) G. Grey

Kororareka

6 December 1845

Re-typed copy of the original document which was hand-written. Grey's Letters 1845-9, (ANZ G36), Item 2.

Appendix 2

Copy of a letter from T. H. Smith Civil Commissioner Tauranga to William Fox the Colonial Secretary: an example of the detailed information that was collected on Maori who had gone to fight in the Waikato War.

No. 13.

COPY of a Letter from Mr. T. H. SMITH to the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

Te Papa, Tauranga,
February 11th, 1864.

SIR,

I have the honor to forward herewith the information required by the Government as to the Natives of this place who have hitherto implicated themselves in the rebellion.

See next page.

The enclosed sketch and return have been carefully prepared, and may be relied on as containing correct information on the points referred to in Mr Shortland's letter of the 25th ultimo.

I received Mr. Shortland's letter at Rotorua, where I had to attend several important Native meetings. On its receipt I lost no time in coming over here for the purpose of obtaining accurate information on the points referred to, and communicating it to Colonel Carey.

I have to express regret that I should have misinterpreted the wishes of the Government with reference to the information communicated to me by Mr. Baker, in accordance with his instructions. Having, when in Auckland, represented to the Government the importance of stating distinctly to the Natives in this district the intentions of the Government, before even sending a man-of-war down to Tauranga, and having received no other intimation whatever from the Government with reference to the object of the Tauranga expedition, I certainly supposed that the information which Mr. Baker was instructed to communicate to me "immediately on arrival" was intended to be circulated in the district.

As the agent of the Government here, I am supposed to be informed as to the objects and intentions of the Government in matters affecting the district under my charge, and in a matter of such importance as the military occupation of a portion of it, it would not be believed by the Natives that I was without such information. I had, then, the alternative of remaining silent, or of giving such information as had been furnished to me by the Government. Had I chosen the former, it would have increased in a tenfold degree, the suspicion which already exists in consequence of the sending of troops here without previous notice. My statement that I was uninformed on the subject is disbelieved, especially having so recently returned from Auckland, and I am charged with purposed concealment.

Without presuming to dictate to the Government on the subject, I beg respectfully to state my opinion that any false position in which the Government or its officer may now stand would have been avoided by placing that officer in a position to state plainly, to those who looked to him for such information, what the intentions of the Government were in sending troops into the district.

As regards the assurance given by me in the circular letter referred to in Mr. Shortland's communication, I have to state that that circular was not sent to any tribes in the Bay of Plenty district who are actively engaged in the rebellion, or are known to be aiding or abetting it. It was sent to the Arawa and Ngatiawa tribes, and my object was to counteract the effect which I feared might be produced among the latter—at Te Matata and Whakatane—by the news of the arrival of troops reaching them, unaccompanied by any explanation from Government.

When in Auckland, my opinion was asked as to the effect likely to be produced on these Natives, and others, not implicated in the rebellion, by sending down a man-of-war to Tauranga. My reply was, that if due notice were given, and the object of doing so explained, no ill consequences would follow; but I strongly urged that these precautions should be taken, and I left town under the impression that the course indicated would be followed. I was, therefore, much surprised, after hearing and contradicting a report circulated among the Natives a few days before the arrival of the Tauranga expedition, to the effect that steamers and soldiers were on their way hither, to find that the report was verified.

©

PAPERS RELATIVE TO NATIVE AFFAIRS.

13 E.—No. 2.

With respect to the statement made by me in the Attorney-General's office, with reference to the line of boundary between those Natives who were for the most part compromised, and those who, as a whole, were not implicated, I cannot perceive that any discrepancy exists between that statement and the letters addressed by me to the Government and to Colonel Carey on the 22nd ultimo. The return now sent, I submit, bears out the statement that the majority of the Natives and tribes on the west side of Tauranga are concerned in the rebellion, and that, with few exceptions, those on the east side are free from complicity in it. It also shows that there are important exceptions in favour of the former, the existence of which was pointed out in the letters under notice.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

THOS. H. SMITH, C. C.,
Bay of Plenty.

Enclosure.

RETURN showing NATIVE SETTLEMENTS and TRIBES in TAURANGA, with Number of ADULT MALE POPULATION in each and Number from each which have joined INSURGENTS since commencement of HOSTILITIES.

Number in Sketch.	SETTLEMENT.	TRIBE.	Have joined Insurgents in Waikato.	TOTAL. Adult Males.
East Side of TAURANGA.	1 Maungatapu	Ngatihe, Ngatiwhaino ...		
	Ohinekahu	Te Whanauwhero ...		
	Aubi Tokitoki	Ngatirakei, Ngatirurea ...		
	Te Apitiu	Te Matekiwaho ...		
	2 Poiki or Hairini (hoisted King flag)	Ngai te Ahi ...	16	30
	Poihakena, Ranana	Ngatiruhine ...	3	11
	Okaeke, Tongaporoa	Ngatitama, Ngatirehu ...	0	13
	3 Te Matapihi, Tumatanui ...	Te Rangihouhiri, Ngaitukairangi ...	10	78
	Karikari, Te Mania, Te Rauwahine	Ngapotiki, Ngatitapu, Ngatiuarere ...		
	Otuawahia	Ngatipau ...	0	12
	4 Opoutea	Ngatirawhao ...	0	20
	5 Huria	Ngaitamarawaho ...	18	30
	6 Otumoetai W	Patutahora ...	2	13
West Side of TAURANGA.	7 Otuatara (hoisted King flag) ...	Te Matewaitai ...	19	25
	8 Peterehemia	Ngatihangarau ...	19	21
	9 Papaoharia, Poteriwhi ...	Ngatitamahapai, Ngatirangi ...	30	43
	10 Pukekonnii, Purakautahi ...	Ngatipango, Ngatimotai ...		
	11 Opounui	Te Ngare ...	4	30
	12 Matakana	Ngaitanawharina ...	30	31
	13 Poututerangi (hoisted King flag) ...	Te Pirirakau ...	23	27
	Te Ngarue	Ngatitokotoko ...	20	21
	Motuhon	Te Pohoera ...	4	12
	Tuhua, Mayor Island ...	Te Urungawera ...	19	23
	Motiti, Orooungatia ...	Te Whanau o Tawhao, Te Papauwhi	11	22
	Otungahoro, &c. ...	Te Patuwai ...	0	35
			233	571

SUMMARY.—

East Side of Tauranga	34 out of 238
West Side of Tauranga	169 out of 253
Islands off the Main, not down in Sketch...	30 out of 80

233 out of 571

PAPERS RELATIVE TO NATIVE AFFAIRS.

RETURN showing the Number of NATIVES who have joined the WAIKATO INSURGENTS.

No. on Sketch, showing Localities.	NAMES OF NATIVE SETTLEMENTS.	Gone to Waikato. Adult Males.	TOTAL.
			Adult Male Population.
EAST SIDE OF TAITANGA,	1 Maungatapu }	5	73
	Ohinekahu }		
	Auhi Tokitoki }		
	Te Apititu }		
	Poike or Hairini }		
	Poihakena, Ranaua }		
	Okaeke Tongaparoa }		
	Te Matapihi, Tumatanui }		
	Karikari, Te Mania, Te Ruawahine }		
	Opoutea }		
WEST SIDE OF TAITANGA,	5 Huria, Otuawahia }	18	41
	6 Otumoetai W., Otuatara }		
	7 Peterehema }		
	8 Papaohara Poteriwhi }		
	9 Pukekonui, Purakautahi }		
	10 Opounui (Te Ngare tribe) }		
	11 Matakanu, Tuhua, Motiti }		
	12 Poututernangi }		
	13 Te Ngarue }		
	Motuion }		
		260	542

Mr. Smith's two Returns differ materially.—This shows, on the West side, more than two-thirds of the Adult Males gone to the War.

W. F.