

## 6. Central North Island

Fortifications in the Taupo district mostly relate to the Te Kooti Campaign in 1869 and the events that followed. At the south end of Lake Taupo the last significant fighting of the New Zealand Wars took place at Pononga and Te Porere, when Te Kooti's force was pursued by Ngāti Kahungunu, Arawa, Whanganui and Armed Constabulary. In later military activity to 1872, Pākehā forts secured the north end of the lake and the Napier-Taupo Road, to close down the options for Te Kooti's diminished force. Some of these posts were held until the Armed Constabulary was disbanded in 1885. A group of pā near Waiouru dates from a land dispute between Māori groups in 1880 and may be the last to be built in New Zealand.

Central North Island fortifications are listed under:

- Napier-Taupo Road
- South end of Lake Taupo

Note that all seven European forts along the Napier-Taupo Road (now SH5) are included here for convenience, including those at the Hawke's Bay end of the road.

### NAPIER-TAUPU ROAD

#### 6.1 Opepe Redoubt

U18/29 (2789600E 6265600N); N103/1; recorded 1966, updates 1999, 2006.

Opepe, Taupo; 15 km from Taupo by the Napier-Taupo Road (SH5), a car park in Opepe Bush gives access by walking track to the site, 100 m south of the road. The Opepe Bush Scenic and Historic Reserve is managed by the Department of Conservation.

In June 1869 a group of 14 Pākehā cavalry volunteers was surprised by Te Kooti's advance party at the junction of several tracks in Opepe Bush, nine being killed. In 1870, the Armed Constabulary put up a 30-man stockade within a redoubt earthwork at Opepe, with barracks, stores and officers' quarters inside. Opepe was the Armed Constabulary district headquarters until 1877 when this was moved to Tapuaeharuru Redoubt (6.4), and Opepe was wound down. From 1871 to 1874 there was a garrison of 44 to 61 men; Opepe was abandoned in January 1885 (Mitchell 1983: 19-23).

The remaining earthwork is c. 20 × 20 m with narrow bastions at east and west angles and an entry on the south side. Hut sites and one surviving building are on the adjacent terrace to the south and a well is in a gully to the east. Nearby are associated remains of a settlement, which included a hotel.

The site is now a scrub and grass clearing in regenerating bush; defensive earthworks are in fair order, and there is one standing hut with pumice block chimney; the site has suffered from fossicking attention (Mitchell 1983: 122).

#### 6.2 Pahautea Stockade

U18/95 (2796900E 6255000N); recorded 1983.

Iwitahi, Rangitaiki; Napier-Taupo Road (SH5) on a spur southeast of the Pahautea Road corner.

Built by Armed Constabulary in 1870, with a 45 ft (13.5 m) well. Abandoned by the end of the year, possibly when the road was completed across the Kaingaroa Plain (Mitchell 1983: 18).

Described as ‘substantial stockade’ in one 1870 report and 40-man redoubt in another (Mitchell 1983: 18).

Bulldozed, disced, burned over and under pines when recorded in 1983.

### 6.3 Runanga Stockade

V19/14 (2813700E 6244850N); N104/8; recorded 1975, update 1983; Fig. 57.

Rangitaiki; 1.6 km southwest of the Napier-Taupo Road and Waiarua Stream on a broad ridge, c. 1000 m a.s.l.

One of several Armed Constabulary posts along the Napier-Taupo Road. Established in September 1869, with a flanked stockade and buildings inside completed by May 1870. The stockade was reshaped and enlarged in 1871, although the garrison was only 30 men that year. In 1874 the garrison was 16 men; the post was abandoned in March 1876 (Mitchell 1983: 14-15).

Archaeological excavations in 1983 and 1984, showed a generally rectangular work, c. 30 × 22 m, marked by a 1 m high bank, with triangular bastions at the centre of three sides, except the southeast side where there is a larger square-fronted bastion next to the entrance (Mitchell n.d.: 21-26). Inside were five buildings around a small yard. Cowan (1983 II: 513) tells of a stockade with bastion defence at two opposite corners, built in ‘Māori style’ of 10-11 ft (c. 3 m) timbers, loopholed at ground level with an internal firing trench. The archaeological excavations found this earlier 25-20 × 18 m stockade under the later work (Mitchell n.d.: 26-28). Nearby, on the south side of the spur is a line of dug-out living huts.

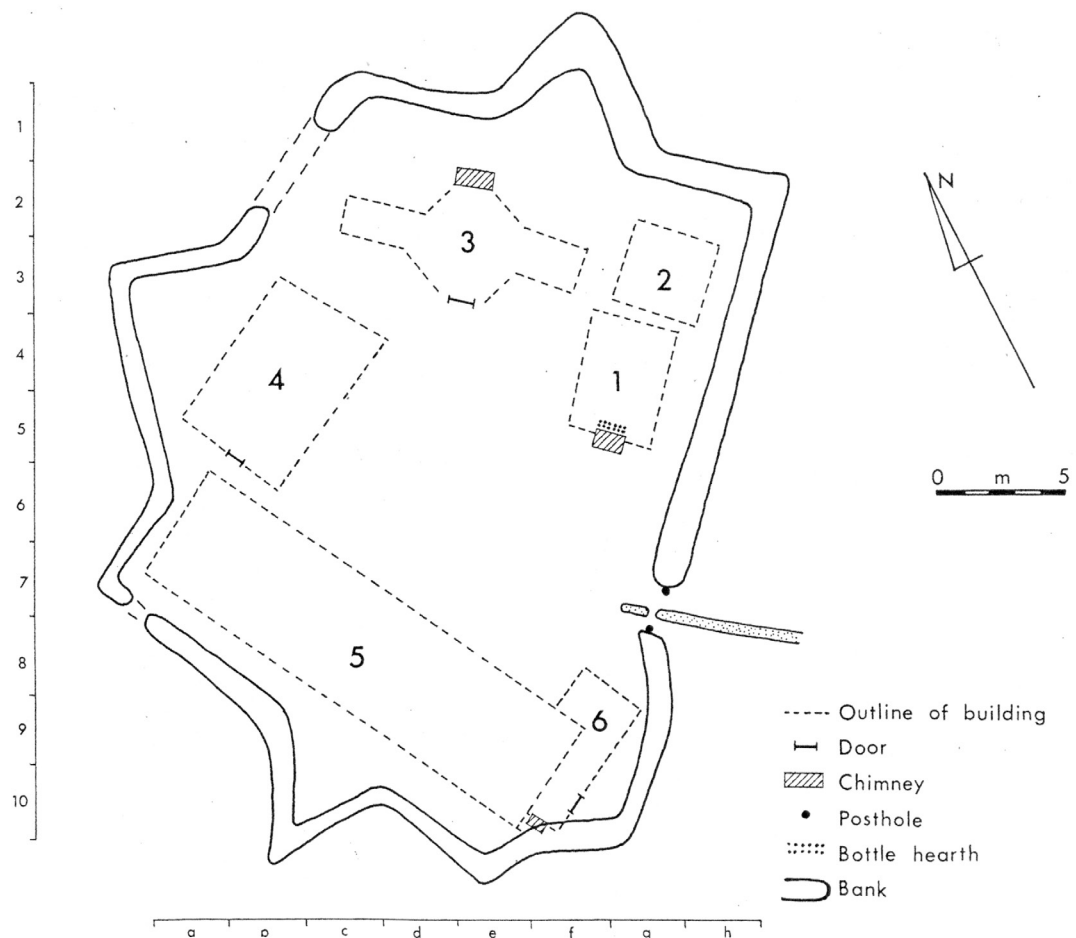


Figure 57. Runanga Stockade, Napier-Taupo Road: a 1 m high bank defines the 1871-76, c. 30 × 22 m stockade. From Mitchell, n.d.: Fig. 14.

The site is in an historic reserve, except the northeast side of the stockade which is outside the reserve boundary. In 1983 it was in good condition under low scrub but for bulldozing of the reserve fence-line and discing outside; some fossicking. Present condition not known.

## 6.4 Tapuaeharuru Redoubt

U18/2 (2776850E 6275150N); N94/2; recorded 1973, update 2006.

Taupo; Taupo Domain on terrace edge overlooking Waikato River near the lake outlet; access from Story Place; historic reserve.

Established by Armed Constabulary in early 1870 at one end of a line of posts along Napier-Taupo Road; prompted by Te Kooti's activity in Te Urewera and the Lake Taupo district (Adams 1985). The initial redoubt is said to have held 150 men in tents, but in 1871-74 the garrison was 18-24 men; abandoned in January 1885 (Mitchell 1983: 24-25).

Archaeological remains of a 30 × 30 m ditch-and-bank earthwork with a large rounded bastion at the northeast corner; a magazine made of pumice blocks inside the redoubt was largely rebuilt in the 1960s. The historical record of an initial larger work is not confirmed on the ground, but may be located by geophysical work or excavation.

Good order under mown grass, some trees at the west end. Historic reserve; the pumice magazine has Heritage New Zealand Category II registration.

## 6.5 Tarawera Stockade

V19/26 (2819300E 6234500N); recorded 1983.

Tarawera; on the high terrace above Waipunga River east of the Napier-Taupo Road, 1 km south of Tarawera Hotel, 200 m north of a road works depot.

Armed Constabulary post 1870-1877; diminishing garrison of 39 to 16 men 1871-1874 (Mitchell 1983: 11-14).

Was at first a stockade enclosing 10,000 square ft (930 m<sup>2</sup>) for 150 men flanked by two 20-man single-storey blockhouses, 16 × 16 ft (c. 5 × 5 m), 'built in the American fashion', with bullet-proof ceilings for protection against fire from surrounding hills (data from Mitchell 1983: 11-14). The stockade was of an unusual triangular plan, with blockhouses at the east and south angles. Rebuilt in 1874 to 125 yards (114 m) circumference, with a 12 ft (3.7 m) palisade and an earth breastwork 6 × 4 ft (1.8 × 1.2 m).

Department of Conservation historic reserve. No trace of breastwork in 1983; some damage reported from 1996 gorse clearing; present condition not known.

## 6.6 Te Haroto Blockhouse

V19/24 (2822100E 6223700N); recorded 1983.

Te Haroto, Napier-Taupo Road (SH5); access 1 km south of Te Haroto store, then via side-road to the east into the pine forest, to a left fork c. 200 m from SH5; the site is left of the road immediately after the fork in the road.

Armed Constabulary post established in 1869; held by 35 men in 1869, 16 in 1872, and two in 1874; abandoned by 1875 (Mitchell 1983: 9-11).

A two-storey blockhouse for 50 men was built in 1870, with 24 × 24 ft (7 × 7 m) square upper floor extending out from the lower floor all round. A cellar gave access by covered way to a well 20 m east (Mitchell 1983: 10).

In 1983 only the blockhouse cellar was visible on the surface, the site having been largely destroyed by road works and fossickers not long before. Present condition not known.

## 6.7 Titiokura Stockade

V20/76 (2827900E 6215400N); recorded 1983.

Titiokura; top of saddle, a few metres east of Napier-Taupo Road (SH5); a farm road skirts the site, power pylons are adjacent.

Exposed site with wide views west to Te Haroto; occupied briefly in 1869 for protection of the district and telegraph (Mitchell 1983: 8–9).

Stockade c. 40 × 27 m, with two bastions at diagonally opposite corners.

In 1983 under pasture; three corners including parts of both bastions were identified on the ground. Present condition is not known.

## SOUTH END OF LAKE TAUPO

## 6.8 Auahitotara

T21 (2748750E 6189450N); no site record, not located.

Waiouru; 8 km east of town by Home Valley Road and Moawhango Bridge Road, 400 m south of the road junction where Moawhango Bridge Road turns sharply north, on or near Auahitotara ('No 2C' trig, 1147 m a.s.l.).

Pā built early in 1880 by Ngāti Rangituhia (Whanganui) under Te Keepa Rangihwinui ('Major Kemp'), Te Oti and Winiata, to claim land in the district (Wylie 2006: 123). Opposed by Ngāti Whitikaupeka and Ngāti Tamakopiri of Moawhango, inland Patea district, who were in the two Waiiau pā, 5 km southeast (6.18–19).

Present condition not known.

## 6.9 Donnelly's Fort

U21/1 (2779200E 6187700N); N123/1; recorded 1965.

Napier-Taihape Road; Northern Mangaohane Block, south of 'F' trig, 1010 m a.s.l., c. 500 m north of road, north of stream.

Gunfighter pā built c. 1881, associated with Mangaohane earthwork (6.10).

Rectangular earthwork with flanking angles.

Present condition not known.

## 6.10 *Mangaohane earthwork*

U21/2 (2779100E 6187800N); N123/2; recorded 1965.

Napier-Taihape Road; Northern Mangaohane Block, near 'F' trig, 1010 m a.s.l., and c. 600 m north of road; north of stream.

Gunfighter pā built c. 1881, associated with Donnelly's Fort (6.9).

Present condition not known.

## 6.11 Poutu

T19/167 (2748200N 6233600E); N112/114; recorded 1966, update 1989.

Lake Rotoaira; on scarp north of Poutu Stream mouth; access from McDonnell's Redoubt Road.

Rifle trenches indicate Māori origin.

Probably occupied by Māori who were part of the government force pursuing Te Kooti in spring 1869 (Newman 1988: 82; Walton 1989; see also Poutu Redoubt (6.12)).

Archaeological excavations 1966. Present condition not known.

## 6.12 Poutu Redoubt

T19/166 (2748050N 6233400E); N112/113; recorded 1966; also McDonnell's Redoubt; Fig. 58.

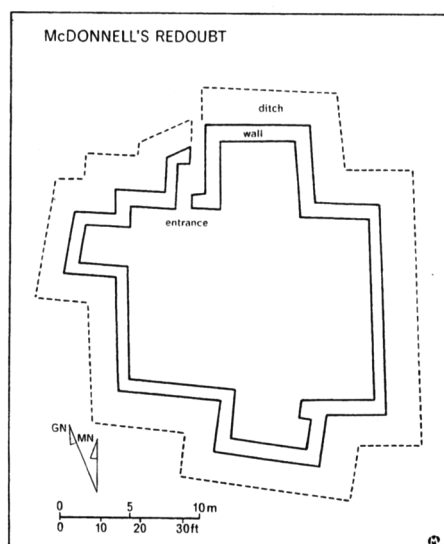


Figure 58. Poutu Redoubt, Lake Rotoaira. From N.Z.A.A. Site Record.

Lake Rotoaira; south of Poutu Stream mouth; access from McDonnell's Redoubt Road.

Dates from the 1869 fighting between government and Te Kooti's forces. Named 'McDonnell's Redoubt' only after European material was recovered in 1966–67 excavations, but Walton (1989: 14) has suggested it was first built by Te Kooti in August 1869, and on 12 September taken over and modified by McDonnell's combined Armed Constabulary and Māori force (see Poutu (6.11)).

Off-square bastioned earthwork with external ditch.

Reconstructed by Ministry of Works in the 1970s, but after erosion of the light pumice soil, walls and ditch were returned to a stable contour in 1977 (Walton 1989).

## 6.13 Tauranga Taupo

T18/T19; no site record, not located.

Lake Taupo; near lake shore by Tauranga Taupo Stream.

Pā erected in two days in September 1869 by Henare Tomoana and c. 120 Ngāti Kahungunu, who were the first government troops to reach the south end of Lake Taupo in pursuit of Te Kooti. Attacked on 10 September by Te Kooti, who withdrew next day to Te Ponanga (Cowan 1983 II: 373; Binney 1995: 182–184).

A contemporary plan shows a work above the bank to stream, angled for gun defence (Wilson 1961: 35; Binney 1995: 183).

Present condition not known.

## 6.14 Te Ponanga

T19/61 (2748500N 6240900E); N112/7; recorded 1965, update 2006.

Turangi; on a ridge north side of Mt Pihanga, east of Te Ponanga Saddle Road.

Te Kooti's position ('gunfighter pa' in the site records) on the north side of the Te Ponanga saddle was attacked on 25 September 1869 by Ngāti Kahungunu, Arawa and Taupo Māori, and the defenders driven off with some casualties (Wilson 1961; Cowan 1983 II: 374–376).

A series of rifle trenches, 'walls' or 'embankments' and pits extend for c. 100 m length of a c. 50 m wide ridge.



A near-square earthwork, interior c. 20 × 20 m, entry defended by interior traverses and divided inside by a low bank. Bastions at two opposite corners cover all sides as in a classic form of Pākehā redoubt (Wilson 1961; App. IV).

Good condition; but reconstructed by NZ Historic Places Trust (now Heritage New Zealand) in 1961; 1993 vegetation cover and site condition described by Jones & Simpson (1995: 89–95).

**Rifle-pits: T19/116 (2734600E 6235900N); N112/63; recorded 1966**

Te Porere; southeast of sites addressed in 6.15–16; south of SH47, next to 751 m a.s.l. ‘Papakai B’ trig. Possible association with the Te Porere engagement.

Shallow rifle trench with parapet on the east side; two storage(?) pits nearby. Present condition not known.

## 6.16 Te Porere (2)

T19/56 (2734300N 6236500E); N112/2; recorded 1965, update 1993; also Roipara (Cowan 1983 II: 376); Heritage New Zealand Category I registration 7652 with site in 6.15; Fig. 60.

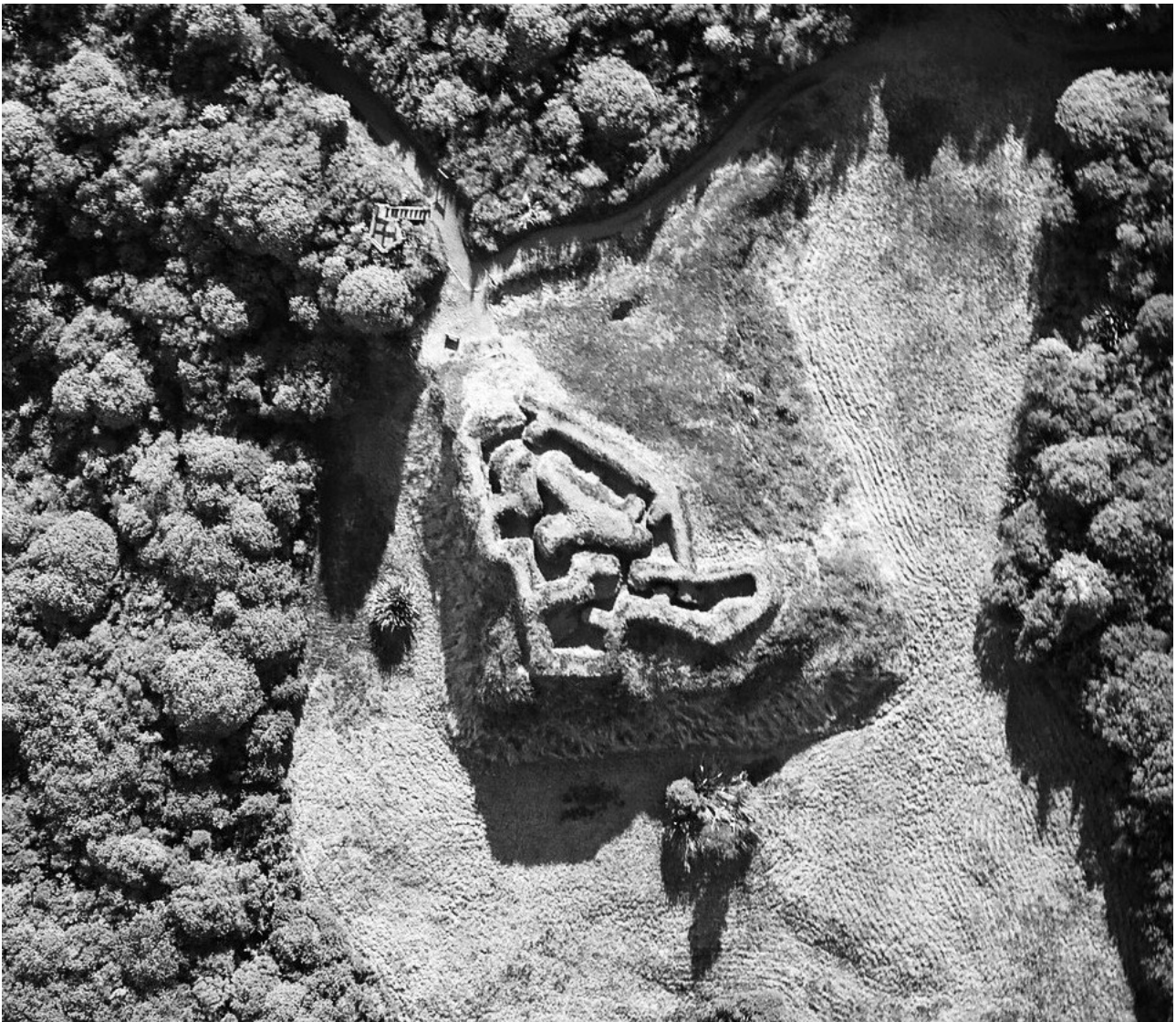


Figure 60. Roipara, Te Porere: the lower pā has the complex interior characteristic of Māori fortifications. *Photo: K.L. Jones, 2005.*

Te Porere, near Lake Rotoaira; lower Te Porere earthwork; access to historic reserve from SH47.

For history see Te Porere (6.15).

Irregular compact rifle trench earthwork on small knoll above west bank of a headwater stream of the Whanganui River (C. Smart in Wilson 1961; App. IV).

Good condition; but reconstructed by NZ Historic Places Trust (now Heritage New Zealand) in 1961; vegetation cover and site condition in 1993 described by Jones & Simpson (1995: 89-95).

## 6.17 Te Wehengaiti

T19/41 (2736400E 6242300N); N102/45; recorded 1966, update 1993; Fig. 61.

Lake Rotoaira; on a terrace edge c. 500 m west of Otamangakau Dam.

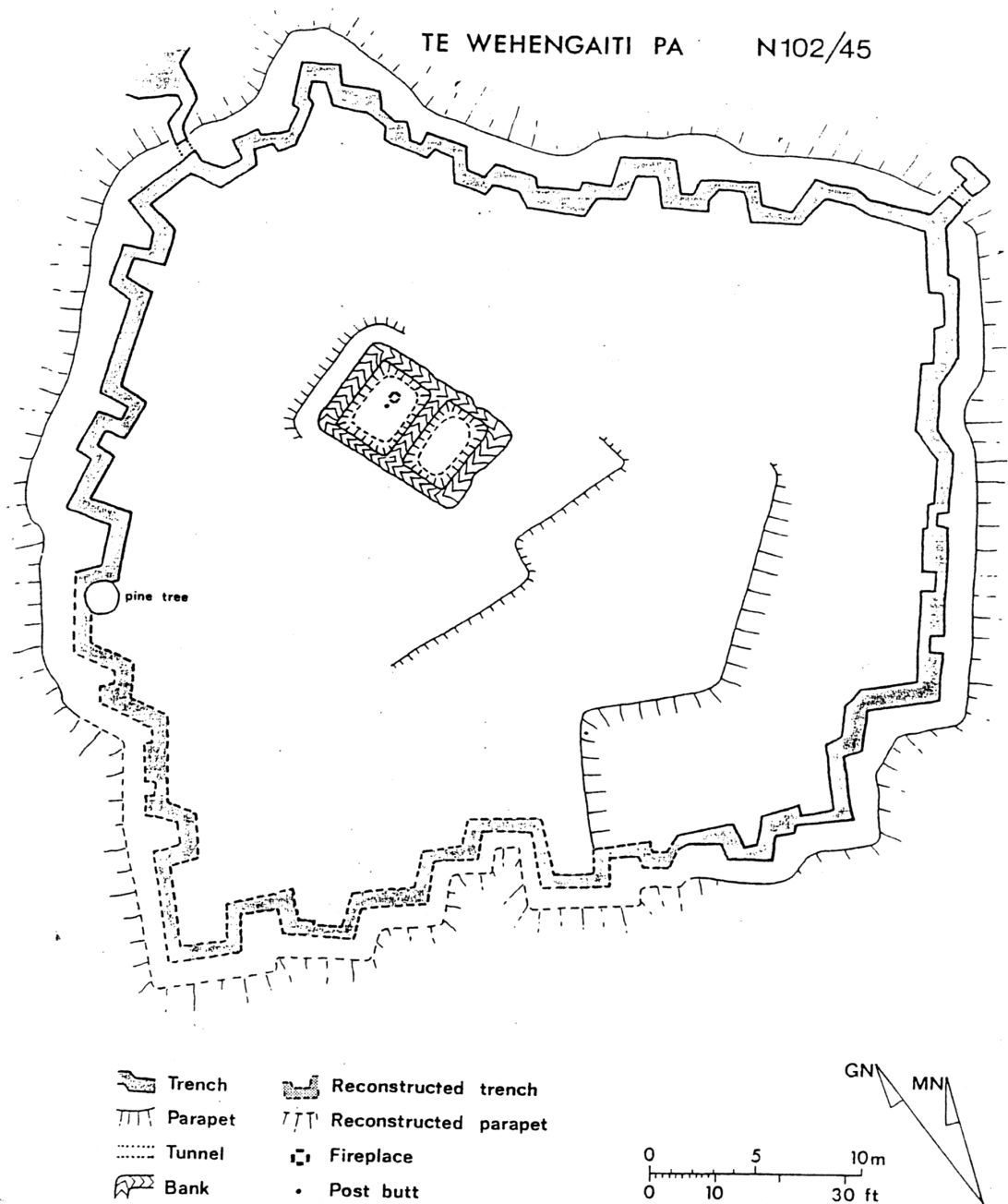


Figure 61. Te Wehengaiti, Lake Rotoaira: an 1860s pā probably dating from the 1869 fighting in the district. From N.Z.A.A. Site Record.



Earthwork fortification, dated to 1869 Te Kooti campaign from its form, but not known if built by Te Kooti, or by Ngāti Tuwharetoa who were divided in their support and opposition. The name is from early survey maps of the locality, but is not confirmed as that of the recorded earthwork (see Newman 1988: 124).

An angled and traversed rifle trench and external parapet encloses a rough square of c. 40 × 40 m. Tunnels connect outlying rifle-pits at two corners.

Damaged by logging in the 1930s. Under scrub in 1966 when much of the western perimeter was restored. In 1993 under grass and bracken surrounded by pine forest (Jones & Simpson 1995: 95–96).

## 6.18 Waiu (1)

T21/1 (2750480N 6185610N); N132/1; recorded 1959, updates 1971, 1993, 2004; Fig. 62.

Waiouru; within the Army Training Area, 10 km east of Waiouru, north of Hautapu Stream; 250 m NNW of site in **6.19**.

One of two pā built and briefly occupied in early 1880 by Ngāti Whitikaupeka and Ngāti Tamakopiri of Moawhango, Inland Patea district, in response to land claim by Te Keepa Rangihiwini and Ngāti Rangituhia of Whanganui (Wylie 2006). Occupied on 22 February 1880 by 45 men and 12 women (Wylie 2006: 124).

Gunfighter pā, L-shaped, c. 33 × 21–14 m, with traversed firing trench all round and outlying rifle-pits at the southwest and northeast corners.

Tussock cover; good condition under army protection. Vegetation cover and site condition described in Jones & Simpson (1995: 96–100).

## 6.19 Waiu (2)

T21/2 (2750570N 6185390E) N132/2; recorded 1960, updates 1993, 2004.

Waiouru; 10 km east of Waiouru, north of Hautapu Stream, within the Army Training Area; 250 m SSE of site in **6.18**.

For history, see **6.18**.

Gunfighter pā, c. 30 × 20 m, L-shaped with traversed firing trench all round.

Tussock cover; poor earthwork definition. Vegetation cover and site condition described in Jones & Simpson (1995: 96–100).

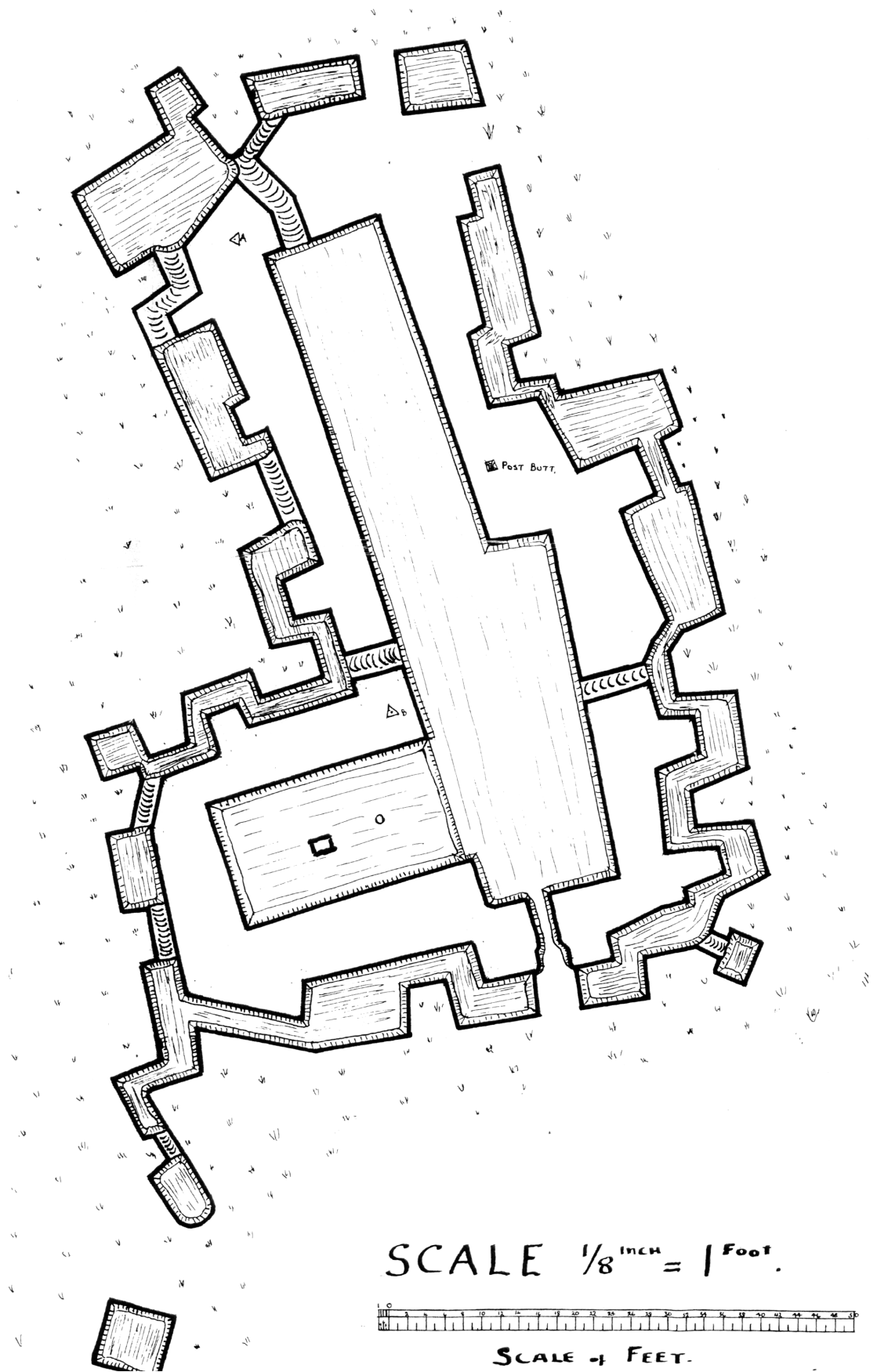


Figure 62. Waiu (1), Waiouru: one of two Waiu pā east of Waiouru dating from inter-tribal conflict in early 1880. From N.Z.A.A. Site Record.